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WOFFORD COLLEGE

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## “The American Dream is slipping.” Rahm Emanuel calls for a new kind of leader in 2028

Madison Bush '27  
Staff Writer

Rahm Emanuel warned me he was rushed when he walked into the private room beneath Leonard Auditorium.

A crowd was already gathering above. The former White House chief of staff, mayor of Chicago and U.S. Ambassador to Japan had less than five minutes.

“Walk with me,” Emanuel said.

We took five steps into the frenzied hallway before he stopped, turned and looked at me.

“I’m not gonna rush you,” he said. “I’m going to call you from the road, and we’ll finish this.”

Emanuel visited Wofford College on April 1 for the latest installment of the A Candid Conversation speaker series, moderated by TODAY co-anchor and Wofford alum Craig Melvin '01.

On stage, Emanuel outlined what he believes is broken in government and how he believes it can be fixed.

He has not declared to run for the Democratic nomination in 2028, but he talks like someone who already knows the kind of candidate he would be.

He followed through.

On the call, I asked him about that directly: If he were to run, he would be only the second president born under the 50-star flag.

Did that generational perspective shape how he would lead?

He called it a “gold star question,” and what followed was less a deflec-

tion than a declaration.

“Not to add another star,” Emanuel said, “but to promise a true America to the American people.”

As the son of immigrants, Emanuel framed his answer around what America is supposed to promise, and what he thinks is slipping away.

I had just come through LaGuardia Airport a few days prior, where the effects of the Department of Homeland Security shutdown were hard to miss. I asked how he would break Washington’s cycle of gridlock.

Emanuel was direct in his assertion that members of Congress should receive no paycheck and no health-care while Americans go without.

“If everybody gets to travel, or nobody gets to travel,” Emanuel said. “Washington needs to be held accountable.”

He referenced U.S. Senators, despite not completing their job, receiving benefits and leaving Washington, while constituents were unable to.

On stage with Melvin, he further emphasized the need for accountability for those in Washington, referencing how small violations left unchecked lead to something larger.

“DC has lost their nerve,” Emanuel said. “We have normalized corruption.”

On technology and artificial intelligence, he emphasized the need for oversight and intervention.

Emanuel argued that there are benefits to advancing technology, but they cannot be allowed to concentrate among the privileged few.

He addressed how artificial intel-

ligence is shaping lives in higher education, but emphasized the value of human intellect.

“Nothing replaces the critical thinking that a liberal arts education provides, like Wofford,” Emanuel said.

Emanuel repeatedly returned to young people and education, where he is wary of the adverse effects media exposure has on children today, specifically with social media.

“I don’t want an algorithm raising a child,” Emanuel said. “I want an adult raising an adolescent.”

Emanuel views this not just as a policy, but also as a responsibility the adults owe the next generation.

On economic mobility, he pointed to ideas like two years of national service in exchange for a down payment on a home, a direct response to a generation that increasingly feels locked out of stability.

He was often harder on his own party than on the opposition.

Democrats, he said, have been “intellectually flabby,” assuming voters would come to them without earn-



photo by Mark Olencki

Rahm Emanuel and Craig Melvin '01 spoke on the current political climate. The Candid Conversation event was held in Leonard Auditorium on April 1.

ing it solely because of demographics.

Emanuel made clear he isn’t focused on fighting Trump.

“Fight for America, not against each other,” Emanuel said.

Taken together, Emanuel’s arguments read less like a list of policies and more like a framework, focused on opportunity, accountability and a sense that something foundational has been lost.

Whatever he decides, the picture that emerges, from a rushed con-

versation and a follow-up phone call from the road, is of a man who has already done the thinking.

The only question he isn’t answering yet is whether he’ll act on it.

## Dowd named Wofford’s 12th president

Nola Webb '26  
Staff Writer

After many weeks of searching for a new president for the college, the Board of Trustees has made their decision.

John Paul “Jay” Dowd III, Ph.D., will step into place as the college’s 12th president on July 1.

President Dowd brings experience in leadership and service.

He currently serves as the president and chief executive officer in The Citadel Foundation.

He has spent over three decades working in senior roles focused on higher education planning, development efforts, organizational growth

and leadership at the executive level.

His background as a graduate of Winthrop University and the University of South Carolina have also greatly prepared him for the new position.

Dowd states that it is an honor to serve as the 12th president of Wofford College.

“I have so much appreciation for the power of a Wofford College education and am grateful for the college’s commitment to student success and the impact the Wofford experience made on our son,” Dowd said.

President Samhat’s thirteen years of leadership will be fondly remembered as part of the college’s legacy.

“Serving as the 11th president of Wofford College has been a singular honor and a great privilege... When Prema and I came to Wofford, we were committed to putting our all into this presidency. We didn’t realize how much this place and, more importantly, the people, would affect us. We came to Wofford on a professional journey, and we will leave as family,” Samhat said.

The roles and responsibilities of a college president are quite extensive—serving not only students but faculty, staff, parents of students, the board of trustees and coordination with nearby collegiate institutions. Wofford defines its president as the chief executive of the college.

The president is “elected by the board of trustees, attends all meetings of the board, and serves as an ex officio non-voting member of all standing and special committees of the board.

In addition, the president attends meetings of the faculty, ensures that the directions of the trustees affecting the administration and work of the college are implemented, provides for the internal governance of the college, directs, is subject to the authority of the board of trustees, [is involved in] internal affairs of the college, and leads all campus constituents,” according to Wofford’s presidential search catalog.

Dowd eagerly dove into the com-

munity atmosphere by hosting various engagement events as an opportunity to meet students, staff and faculty.

His efforts to connect with the community offers a smooth transition into his upcoming role as the twelfth president of Wofford College.

Read more about the presidential search and Dowd’s recent induction at [www.wofford.edu](http://www.wofford.edu).

## A musical you can be a part of: Wofford Theatre's production of Godspell

Lillian Galloway '29  
Staff Writer

As we watch the closing of the ex-Watching a play sitting in a dark house, the seats are packed, while you watch a cast act on stage is what the appeal of a live show has. It is like a movie, but one also understands that the night you watch the show is only one night, and that the show will change for other nights.

Mainly what theatre is is that it's exciting. Even a long detailed interpretation of Shakespeare is exciting because you are watching a show that is tailored to the moment that show's night holds.

However, plays don't bring in money like a musical does. Musicals have been popular for decades, even centuries. Broadway's musical productions in the 70s however boosted the public opinion of theatre, and brought in a lot of revenue.

Godspell was originally a college production that didn't move to Broadway until 1976. However, its first highly acclaimed production opened in 1971. A year later in 1972, Godspell's "Day By Day" hit number 13 on the Billboard Hot 100, staying on the chart for thirteen weeks.

Then in 2011, Godspell was revived on Broadway at the Circle in the Square Theatre. It was a high energy production complete with pop culture references and audience interaction.

Though Godspell is already a lively show itself, the 2011 revival changed the idea of how we can modernize a

musical. Godspell is about the retelling of the Bible's Book of Matthews. Judas gathers a group of disciples and Jesus leads them in the retelling of various parables.

Now, it opens at Wofford Theatre on April 16th. A production with months of work behind it, Godspell at Wofford was a highly ambitious and monumental project.

Wofford has not attempted a musical since Cabaret, which was cancelled by COVID-19.

Wofford's production, "The Missing Moon," had musical elements, but it was an original play written by Kerry Ferguson. And though "Macbeth" last semester included music, it is on no level of Godspell.

This production required the time of a hard-working and creative director, and an experienced and adaptable musical director. Called to the plate was assistant professor of theatre, Abigail Dillard; and director of choral and vocal studies, assistant professor of music, and chair of music, Dr. Aaron Harp.

The process was a long parade of conceptual thinking and collaboration. Since July when the musical was announced to faculty, Dillard had dedicated her time giving Godspell the justice it deserves.

This musical highlights counterculture movements and the community within them. In the 70s, the counterculture was hippies, and then was portrayed onstage. Dillard asked the question of what a counterculture movement looks like now in 2026.

Her interpretation is an animat-

ed group of modern artists that use their art and music to aid their retellings of the Bible.

Dillard believes this specific cast is a perfect mix of personalities and backgrounds to bring the show to life. She states, "this cast is not just theatre majors, and that's been really fun because we're relying on the cast's diverse backgrounds to put on the show."

The non-theatre majors are her favorite as they challenge her in a new way.

"Theatre majors ask me questions about 'what is my character's motivation,' but the non-theatre major members simply ask me why. It pushes me to teach and explain my-

self, so it's been an educational production," Dillard said.

What the directors had to rely on most was the way the cast chose to bring the show to life. The personalities in the ten person cast is the perfect mix for a lively group to watch on stage.

They often ad-lib and showcase a wide understanding of their text and relationships on stage. What's really important though, is that every run of this show I have seen has been exciting, hilarious and interactive.

Other cast and crew members described the show in three words: "parables through art," or the mix of "art and faith." Many believe in the show's message, "power of commu-

nity," or how "ensemble-driven" the production is.

It's an exhilarating show with a long history, and it will be a fun night when you sit in the audience. There's never a moment where you will be bored, and make sure to sit on the edge of your seat the entire time.

Godspell opens on April 16, shows through April 18 and then the April 22-25. All shows begin at 7 p.m., and tickets for students are \$5. Seating is limited. Please visit <https://www.wofford.edu/academics/majors-and-programs/theatre/box-office> to purchase your tickets.



photo by Susanna Woodward

The Wofford Theatre department works on getting the lighting right for opening night.

## Newly elected Campus Union exec seeks to "set the tone"

Nola Webb '26  
Staff Writer

The recent battle for Campus Union's executive council for the 2025-26 academic year was arguably one of the hairier and more competitive campus elections to take place in the past few years. With an array of experienced and vocal candidates, four upperclassmen rose to the top and will take on the executive roles on April 20.

Matt Meyers '27 will lead Campus Union as Student Body President with Wilson Frerichs '27 serving as his Vice President. The role of Student Body Treasurer will be filled by Stokes Graham '28 and Student Body Secretary by Mary Lois Mitchell '28.

Many of the campaigns for these new executives hinged on communication with the student body and amplifying the student experience at Wofford.

Meyers, who has been serving as student body secretary for the current year, has held firm on last year's campaign promise to openly share attendance and bill status with the student body.

While these initiatives were largely successful in recording the activity of Campus Union, several within the new executive council still see space

to improve accountability on behalf of the delegates and overall student awareness of what bills are passed each semester, with transparency being a central promise in many of their campaigns.

Graham cited issues within the bylaws themselves for fostering a culture where delegates take their roles "too lightly," and his growing personal concern that some students take part in student government purely to pad their resumés.

Mitchell mentioned a similar concern surrounding the current culture of student government.

"There are people that will sign up (for Campus Union elections) just so they can win... and those are the people who maybe don't play by the rules as much, necessarily. So I think by enforcing those rules (within the bylaws), we really want to make sure we have people that are willing to put in the work that it takes," Mitchell said.

Frerichs shares that he sees an important part of keeping a positive and productive culture to lie not so much in the rules themselves.

Rather, he underlines the importance in making sure students can see the changes that are being made across campus to "hold a standard," for the work of the delegates and committees.

Meyers credited the previous cohort of delegates and executives for their persistence with following up on developing bills while still amplifying the importance of the upcoming year in regards to setting an expectation for student government at Wofford.

"With all of the new changes that are coming in, it's definitely a tone-setting year, especially with the new president," Meyers said. "We want him to have the best possible understanding of Campus Union."

What does this "tone-setting" look like for Meyers, Frerichs, Mitchell, and Graham?

Again come mentions of accountability and transparency, but for Meyers, the upcoming "tone" seems to be fast-paced progress.

Meyers and his fellow executive members seem keen to keep the expectations high for student representatives by being present and active voices on campus and by proving to the student body, and the president, that they are a group that achieves the goals set out before them.

"A lot of my goals are two years in the making," Meyers said. "And so a lot of it is coming to fruition next year, maybe the following year."



photos by Caroline Parker

Matt Meyers '27, Stokes Graham '28, Mary Lois Mitchell '28 and Wilson Frerichs '27 were elected as the 2026-2027 Campus Union Executive Council. The election was held March 17 and 18, 2026.

# FROM THE PUB ROOM

## Wofford Women's Lacrosse makes history

Brooke Meltcher '27  
Staff Writer

On April 1, the Wofford College Women's Lacrosse team made history, defeating longtime rival Furman University 16-12.

The victory improved the Terriers to 5-7 overall and 3-0 in conference play, marking the first time in the program's history. They have opened conference play with three straight wins. Wofford now sits at the top of the Big South Conference standings, while Furman moves to 2-1 in conference play, just behind the Terriers.

Coming into the game, Wofford had never beaten the Paladins, holding an 0-8 all-time record against them.

The breakthrough win not only shifts the trajectory of the current season but also marks a significant moment for the program against the school's rival.

The game began in Furman's favor, as the Paladins took control early and carried a 9-5 lead into halftime.

However, this would be the last time the Paladins held the lead, as

the Terriers came out of the halftime break and never let go.

After halftime, Wofford adjusted its approach and executed with greater control.

Following a few adjustments and finding their rhythm, the Terriers scored eight unanswered goals while holding Furman scoreless in the third quarter.

Offensively, it was one of Wofford's most complete performances of the season. McKenzie Moeller '28 and Olivia Graebner '27 each recorded four goals. Mia Leon '27 and Carlie Cutinella '26 added two goals apiece. The Terriers' depth continued to show, with four additional players also getting on the scoreboard.

Defensively, Wofford came together as a unit, especially in the second half.

The Terriers led in caused turnovers, forcing 10 compared to Furman's six, with Barrett Rowe '26 accounting for three. Norah Teff '27 entered the game in the second half and provided a key shift in momentum, recording a .500 save percentage and helping close out the win.

Historically, Head Coach Jessie Aguglia had not beaten Furman in her coaching career, falling short by two goals in each of the last two seasons. This win marks an important milestone for both her and the program.

Wofford now sits at 4-1 in conference play, the best start since joining the Big South.

After a bye week, Wofford will close conference play at home against Presbyterian College on April 18 and Mercer University on April 22, before traveling to Radford University on April 25.

Wofford women's lacrosse has positioned itself as a team to watch this season and continues to build on a strong start in conference.

With six teams qualifying for the Big South post season tournament, Wofford will look to finish somewhere within the top three seeds if they keep this hot streak going in conference.



photos by **Jeremy Fletcher, Furman**  
Ella Davis '27 cradles the ball on the field. Wofford Women's Lacrosse beat Furman University for the first time in history two weeks ago.



photo by **Mark Olencki**  
Jay and Kim Dowd hosted multiple events on campus to meet students as they prepare for Dowd's presidency.



photo by **Hailey Hirter**  
The Music Department has seen exponential growth since the beginning of its installment in 2009. Read more on our website at [woffordogb.com](http://woffordogb.com).



photo by **Mark Olencki**  
Wofford Theatre is preparing for the spring musical, *Godspell*.

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