

Center for Community Based Learning (CCBL)

Wofford's Center for Community-Based Learning (CCBL) (<https://www.wofford.edu/academics/center-for-community-based-learning/>) is the primary coordinating structure for advancing campus-wide community engagement and civic responsibility. The Center facilitates and deepens mutually beneficial partnerships between Wofford and its larger communities that improve the human condition, enhance the public good, prepare Wofford students for meaningful, effective lives as citizen-leaders and enrich the scholarship and character of Wofford College.

Some programs of the CCBL include:

- **Academic Civic Engagement and Community-Based Learning:** Through its Community-Engaged Faculty Fellows program, Wofford faculty are supported in developing authentic, mutually beneficial partnerships with community organizations and engaging their students in academic civic engagement that deepens students' civic and disciplinary learning and meets a community need. In 2017-18, 300 students participated in 19 such classes. 2018-19 promises even more.
- **The Bonner Scholars Program:** Established in 1991 at Wofford, the Bonner Scholars Program is the flagship program of the CCBL. It engages 60 deserving students in a robust servant leadership development program and 10 hours of service/week during the academic year in Spartanburg community plus at least two full-time summers. In return, the Bonner Scholars receive full-need scholarships and numerous other financial and developmental opportunities. Most Bonner Scholars are selected as entering first-year students and remain Bonner Scholars throughout their tenure at Wofford, growing in both their responsibility and impact over time. Student leaders within the program comprise the Bonner Leadership Team (BLT) and join student leaders from other Bonner programs around the country on the national Bonner Congress. Wofford's Bonner Scholars program is a joint venture of Wofford College and the Corella A. and Bertram F. Bonner Foundation in Princeton, New Jersey.
- **iCAN Spartanburg:** iCAN Spartanburg is a near-peer, college access mentoring program that recruits, trains, matches, and supports current Wofford students (many Pell-eligible and/or the first in their families to go to college) as near-peer mentors/friends/coaches for Spartanburg County high school students in the Citizen Scholars Institute, who will be Pell-eligible and/or the first in their families to go to college.
- **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA):** The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) has been called the best poverty-fighting tool we have; and because people must be both working and low-income to qualify, it enjoys unprecedented bipartisan support. But, many people who qualify for the EITC don't claim it, because doing so feels complicated. To make matters worse, some tax preparation outlets claim the EITC for people and then take most of its benefit from them, in the form of tax preparation fees. With VITA, first year Wofford students are trained and certified by the IRS in basic tax preparation. Professor Jenny Bem's upper-level Accounting students double-check the returns they prepare. Some upper-level Spanish students even assist as interpreters. All of the students say they learn about courage and resilience and social justice from the experience - sitting with, for example, parents who are working two or three jobs and are still not bringing in enough to make ends meet for their families. In 2018, the economic impact of Wofford's VITA site was well over \$1 Million (\$800K+ in returns to low-income families, \$200K+ in tax preparation fees saved).
- **Milliken Community Sustainability Initiative (with many campus and community partners):** Wofford was awarded \$4.25M to support student learning and innovation in human and community sustainability. The MCSI includes linked courses in human and community sustainability, embedded practica/internships with community partners, and a new residence hall across Church Street in the Northside of Spartanburg.
- **Intergenerational Connections (with Dr. Kara Bopp in Psychology):** To reduce the social isolation of older adults living in poverty in Spartanburg, the Intergenerational Connections program, funded by the Council of Independent Colleges and the AARP, engages students and faculty in designing and implementing reflective workshops for older adults and their Wofford student "buddies." Both sets of participants enjoy and learn from each other, across differences of age, race, gender and socio-economic status.
- **Community Service Federal Work Study (with the Office of Financial Aid):** If you are eligible for Work Study, you can choose to spend your work study time with one of our nonprofit partners, in an internship/project/placement setting.
- **Database of Community Assets & Needs:** The CCBL maintains a searchable database of community partner assets and needs. Individuals and groups can browse local volunteer opportunities that align with their areas of interest, schedules, and other desired outcomes; register to fill them; and then track their hours, economic impact, and other outcomes all within the system.
- **Recognition & Awards:** The CCBL recognizes campus and community stakeholders' work toward the common good, through awards like the John Bruce and Currie Spivey Awards; and seeks to gain recognition for Wofford's work toward the common good on the national stage, through awards like the Presidential Service Honor Roll Award and (hopefully) the Carnegie Foundation's Classification for Community Engagement.
- **Support for Student-led Organizations:** Wofford is home to many student-led organizations. Whether the organization is a service organization (e.g., Alpha Phi Omega, WoCo Gives, etc.), a solidarity organization (e.g., Association of Multicultural Students, Spectrum, etc.), a religious organization, or a social organization, the CCBL supports them with technical and other assistance in improving their community impact and student development.
- **Social Innovation/Entrepreneurship (with the Space):** The Algernon S. Sullivan Foundation has long been a benefactor of Wofford folks doing good in the world. Now, they are working with their grantee institutions to facilitate social innovation, offering workshops and summer experiences.
- **Collegetown Community Engagement:** Wofford is one of seven institutions of higher education in Spartanburg. Their collective is referred to as "Collegetown." Because the seven share the same community, they often work together in positively impacting that community, exponentially increasing their collective impact.
- **Community Advisory Board:** This group, comprised of the leaders of some of our closest community partner organizations, helps us incorporate community understanding, context, assets, challenges and opportunities in our shared work.

To learn more, please visit the CCBL (<https://www.wofford.edu/academics/center-for-community-based-learning/>) website or stop by the office in the Michael S. Brown Village Center.