CONQUER & PREVAIL
WOFFORD COLLEGE

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Lifelong Bond



Once a teammate, always a teammate.

Van Burgess '04 was reminded of that recently. Some of his former Wofford golf teammates held a tournament in the fall to aid Burgess' 4-year-old daughter, Lettie, who is battling cancer.

"It really kind of came out of the blue," says Burgess. "As far as contact with those guys, we'd maybe exchange a random Facebook message. But on a daily basis, we had drifted away. It really caught me off guard."

Lettie, the third of the Burgess' four children, was diagnosed with T-cell lymphoblastic lymphoma on April 27. She had a large mass in the middle of her chest that was crushing her airway and pressing on her heart. Burgess says members of the medical team treating Lettie told him it was one of the largest masses they had seen in a child Lettie's age.

The mass was inoperable. Lettie began her first round of chemotherapy on April 28 and was fully sedated for about 12 days. **Read more**.

Town Hall for Students and Families

The college will host a virtual town hall from 5-5:45 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 12 for students and families. President Nayef Samhat, Vice President and Dean of Students Roberta Hurley, Provost Mike Sosulski, Director of Parent Engagement Thom Henson, Associate Vice President and Director of the Wellness Center Beth Wallace and Director of Business Services and Risk Management Dan Deeter, along with members of the COVID-19 Student Response Team, will discuss COVID-19 guidelines and answer questions. Click here to **pre-register**. Pre-submit questions by emailing **WoffordNews@wofford.edu**.

A message from President Samhat

The message below was shared with the campus community earlier this week.

As a new year and a new semester begin, I would like to once again thank you all for your commitment to each other and our college. While there is light at the end of the tunnel, the tunnel remains long and filled with uncertainty. We can successfully navigate the semester ahead if our focus is on following our Wofford Together plan; engaging in the strategic vision for justice, equity, diversity and inclusion; maintaining the integrity of Wofford College's academic program; and remaining patient and kind with others in our community.

Over the past year, our college, community, nation and world have been involved in important conversations on health, race, justice, the economy, sustainability and politics. These conversations touch every aspect of our lives, and they will most certainly continue into 2021 and beyond. Because the issues debated are those we care deeply about, the exchange of ideas can generate great passion, discomfort and even anger.

For this reason, it is important that places like Wofford College remain committed to the free exchange of ideas. This exchange of knowledge and perspective — with civility and respect for the views of all — is the foundation of a transformational liberal arts education. Like colleges and universities across our nation, Wofford's commitment to academic freedom is consistent with the values articulated in the **Chicago Principles** as well as to our own **mission and core values**. In this tradition, faculty and student speech may agree or disagree with college policy without fear of reprimand or discipline.

However, it is important to note that faculty do not speak on behalf of Wofford College. Still, the college defends the freedom and the space for faculty and students to share their ideas. Because of the responsibility to protect freedom of inquiry, thought and debate, Wofford College does not restrict speech, which means Wofford does not command apologies or levy disciplinary consequences on faculty or student speech that remains within legal bounds or does not violate college policy.

To be clear, Wofford College defends the freedom to express ideas — even ideas that are at odds with the institution's official position — because our intellectual enterprise, our mission and the advancement of our community and nation depend on this freedom. This freedom is perhaps no more important than when those ideas and the subjects they address are controversial and disagreeable to others. In the face of such debate, we will stand firm in our commitment to civil discourse, the pursuit of knowledge and understanding, and service to our community.

Wofford College is a place where thought leads, where each day members of our community and our wider family find support and opportunities for growth and transformation. As we start a new year with hope for the future, let us bring empathy, civility and shared purpose to our engagement with the issues of our time.

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