

CONQUER & PREVAIL

WOFFORD COLLEGE



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TRANSITIONS

By the Rev. Dr. Ron Robinson '78, *Wofford's Perkins-Prothro Chaplain and Professor of Religion*

The word came to the Wofford community via a thoughtful letter from President Nayef Samhat: Classes for the remainder of the semester will be held remotely. After 10 days of not knowing, now we know. The decision was wise and well-considered, but it didn't come easily.

Over the past week and a half, I have received texts and emails requesting that I do all I can to enable students to come back to campus. The overwhelming majority of these came from students. Like President Samhat said, Wofford is a place, but mostly, it's people.

I think deep down we knew this course of action was inevitable, but we simply didn't want to allow ourselves to embrace a spring without the companionship and relationships that mean so much.

Monday evening, March 16, proved to be the last evening on campus for most students. As I left my office shortly after 8 p.m., I noticed the stadium lights were on at the baseball field. I made my way over and saw players taking batting practice and shagging flies. It was as if they knew they wouldn't have the chance to do this again. Not with these same teammates. They knew that their season, with perhaps the most promise of any Wofford baseball season in memory, was not to be. They wanted to hold on just a little longer.

Transitions are difficult. Anytime we dream of a future one way, and then something happens to circumvent that dream, a grief process ensues. It happens with relationships, with sports, with academic and career aspirations, with cherished preconceived notions, with life. Inevitably the transition to a new future will come. But that transition is rarely easy. The folk who research these things tell us that we have to grieve the loss of our dream before we can let it go. Then comes a neutral, or liminal state.

Only then can we move into a new future and have a new dream. As we know, times of grieving may be accompanied by denial, sadness, anger, fear and an array of other emotions. We all do not experience the same emotional responses to transitions, nor do we experience them in any particular order. But they are there, and we must deal with them.

So, my word for this moment in time, so full of transitions and unknowns, is a simple word of encouragement to be kind to yourself. And be kind to others. We hurt because we care, because we love each other, and because we value the distinctive experience we have at Wofford.

This is a time of transition. A time for grief. A time to acknowledge dreams deferred. A time to just be. And out there yet to come, there are new dreams to be dreamed.

Deep peace dear friends.

PRESIDENT SAMHAT INTERVIEWED BY ETV

South Carolina Educational Television (SCETV) interviewed several Spartanburg college and university presidents, including Wofford President Nayef Samhat, about the impact COVID-19 has had on area institutions. Click [SCETV interview](#) to watch the clip.

PROFESSORS INTERVIEWED ABOUT BMW COVID-19 TEMPORARY CLOSURE

Dr. Phillip Swicegood, R. Michael James Professor and Chair of the Department of Accounting, Business and Finance, and Dr. Timothy Terrell, Stackhouse Professor in Economics and Business, were interviewed by the Spartanburg Herald-Journal after BMW announced plans to temporarily shut down its Spartanburg County plant during the COVID-19 pandemic. Read the [SHJ story](#).

TREASURE HUNTING

By Kellie Buckner '01, Ed.S., LMFT, counselor in the Wofford Wellness Center

"I guess all I can do is embrace the pandemonium, find happiness in the unique insanity of being here, now." – Eleanor Shellstrop, a character in the television sitcom "The Good Place"

We're watching "The Good Place" as a family right now. As we were watching an episode from the third season, the quote above jumped out and grabbed me. It was one of those moments where time slows down a bit to make you pay attention. I feel like this quote presents a good option for us right now in the midst of quarantines and rules that change by the hour. Pandemonium is defined by Google as "wild and noisy confusion or disorder, uproar." That seems like an excellent way to define our current global situation. Pandemonium feels like the right word externally (there is so much news and information — some we need, some we don't) — and sometimes internally (my thoughts can be pretty loud if I don't do some work to quiet them).

Rather than trying to fight this reality or hide from it, we can choose to embrace it. Instead of saying, "This isn't how it's supposed to be" or "Why is this happening?" We can say, "This is what is" and then get to looking for the good stuff. We can be treasure hunters looking for the hidden beauty or meaning in what looks like an ugly, scary mess. Treasures are hard to find, but they are worth the effort. Finding goodness, beauty and meaning in all of this is so worth it for our hearts, minds and bodies. So, if you are willing to try, start looking. If that seems too overwhelming, that's okay. Maybe find a good show and have some laughs.



FUN IDEA: ANOTHER KIND OF TREASURE HUNT

Carolyn Sparks, Wofford's associate vice president for enrollment and financial aid, shares this idea for something families can do while social distancing. Her neighborhood is conducting a "bear hunt" inspired by the popular children's book "We're Going on a Bear Hunt!" Residents hide bears in their windows, and families count them when they're out walking. "The first Saturday of April, the bears will be switched out for bunnies and decorated Easter egg cutouts for a neighborhood walking egg hunt," says Sparks, "while maintaining social distancing, of course!" This project was coordinated through an online neighborhood forum, another good way to stay connected while apart.

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