

WHEATON

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\$10M gift funds expansion of entrepreneurial initiatives



KEITH NORDSTROM

Students share their learning experiences each year during Wheaton's Internship Showcase, which is held in Balfour-Hood Center.

A portfolio of options

Findings from a recent survey caught my eye. More than 90 percent of business executives and hiring managers agreed that they preferred to hire people who had participated in internships or other forms of experiential learning during their college career.

The results come from a pair of surveys that were commissioned by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, a national group that promotes the value of studying the liberal arts and sciences. In recent years, the association has conducted studies that highlight the importance of high-impact educational practices—courses tailored to first-year students, collaborative assignments and projects, diverse learning communities and undergraduate research.



Dennis M. Hanno,
president

The survey's findings on the value of internships is welcome, but it is not news, at least not at Wheaton. Experiential learning has a long history at the college, stretching back to Catherine Filene Shouse, a member of the Class of 1918 who organized a vocational conference on the campus in 1917. That event continued annually for more than three decades. In 1986, the college established its career

Wheaton promises every student the opportunity to participate in a funded internship, setting aside more than \$1.2 million every year to back up that guarantee.

services center with the goal of making internships and experiential education central to each student's educational experience. At the time, this was a bold, innovative move for a liberal arts college. But it was brilliant in helping students connect their academic passions to personal and professional goals. Wheaton's commitment to combining scholarship and applied learning has only grown.

Today, Wheaton promises every student the opportunity to participate in a funded internship, setting aside more than \$1.2 million every year to back up that guarantee. That support is key. It allows students to pursue a good opportunity for learning, even if it is unpaid. For some students, those \$3,000 to \$5,000 stipends are essential to replace what they would otherwise earn at a summer job or to allow them to live away from home for the summer.

The fruits of that investment are on display each fall when the college hosts the Internship Showcase, providing students with the chance to share what they have learned and to inspire their peers. It is

an incredible exhibition of the breadth of Wheaton students' interests and capabilities—from financial investment firms to human service agencies, research laboratories to field research at sites around the globe. In some instances, students use the college's support to pursue an independent academic project or to further development plans for a social innovation venture that began through participation in one of our social entrepreneurship programs.

The wide variety of choices and flexibility that Wheaton offers students in putting learning into action is distinctive, and it is part and parcel of the personal approach to education that is our hallmark. The myriad options that are available reflect the varied interests of students. And it's a perfect match for the college's expansive curriculum, which spans more than 100 majors and minors in the liberal arts and sciences. The college helps to ignite the spark of possibility for every student.

Wheaton's promise—more options, more possibilities and more experiences for students to develop their abilities as leaders and changemakers—is its power. By connecting students to a world of possibilities, the college drives social innovation and positive change. It's an inspiring mission.

Triple take

Wheaton encourages students to figure out what they want and go for it. International student Ibrahim Nshimirimana '19 certainly has taken that to heart. He has not one, not two, but three majors and is enjoying the challenge.

Twenty-five percent of 2017 Wheaton graduates chose to pursue two majors, and like these students, Nshimirimana has mastered the art of balance while following his passions.

In addition to studying three subjects—international relations, economics and French studies—Nshimirimana is an admission ambassador, CORE June leader and peer mentor; is a member of the Global Leadership Development Group; plays club soccer and dances with Paraiso Latino; has served as a student representative on the college's Budget and Planning Committee and as a resident advisor; and even starred in the French-language student film "Dance of the Outsiders."

He has had two internships as an undergraduate, with Explo summer camps at Wheaton and at École Militaire in Paris, France, where he studied abroad both semesters his junior year.

"There are many joys that come with choosing three majors, like the relationships you form with the professors across those subjects and everyone's support," he said. "You do not have a dull moment; you are up to something all the time, and that is fun. You feel mostly purposeful; most of the time you feel ready for life after college, as you always repeat to yourself 'I can do this.' You appreciate your 'free time.' There is also the trust that people put in you; some people come to you for advice, and with that comes some satisfaction."

—Becca Manning

Ibrahim's top three rules for taking on big challenges:

BE SURE ABOUT YOUR PASSION. "The beautiful thing is you can allow yourself to explore as much as you can and then maybe narrow it down afterward. Follow your passion, as you will always find time to do what you love."

BE REALISTIC. "Be harsh when assessing what you can and can't do. Understand what works for you and what doesn't. If you are pursuing a liberal arts education then you are in great hands, because at the core of it is flexibility."

USE THE SUPPORT SYSTEM AT WHEATON AND ELSEWHERE. "You don't have to do it alone. There are professors, peer supporters, academic advisors, the deans, the Filene Center for career advice and the counseling center."



Innovation for social change

\$10M gift funds expansion of entrepreneurial initiatives

Wheaton has received a \$10 million commitment from the Diana Davis Spencer Foundation that will strengthen the institution's position as a leader among liberal arts colleges in integrating social entrepreneurship education into the study of the liberal arts and sciences.

The Diana Davis Spencer Foundation pledge establishes an endowed professorship in social entrepreneurship, provides funds for entrepreneurial education programming and launches a fundraising challenge that will support the construction of dedicated space for bringing Wheaton's existing programs in social innovation into a single space with complementary programs.

The commitment, one of the largest philanthropic gifts in the college's 184-year history, will make Wheaton one of a few liberal arts colleges nationwide, and the first in the Northeast, to establish an endowed professorship in social entrepreneurship.

"This is a transformational gift for Wheaton College as a whole and it is a game-changer for our programs in social entrepreneurship and innovation," said President Dennis M. Hanno. "We are committed to being the leading liberal arts college in preparing students to create innovative solutions to big challenges. This commitment will help us

to support them in putting those ideas into action while they are students.

"I am extremely grateful to Diana Davis Spencer, to the foundation and her family for their commitment to the idea that social entrepreneurship has the power to transform lives and shape communities," Hanno said. "We share that belief, and the foundation's gift will enable Wheaton to more fully develop our capacity to support students in pursuing interests that address society's most pressing issues."

Diana Davis Spencer '60 is the president of the foundation, a visionary philanthropist and a trustee emerita of the

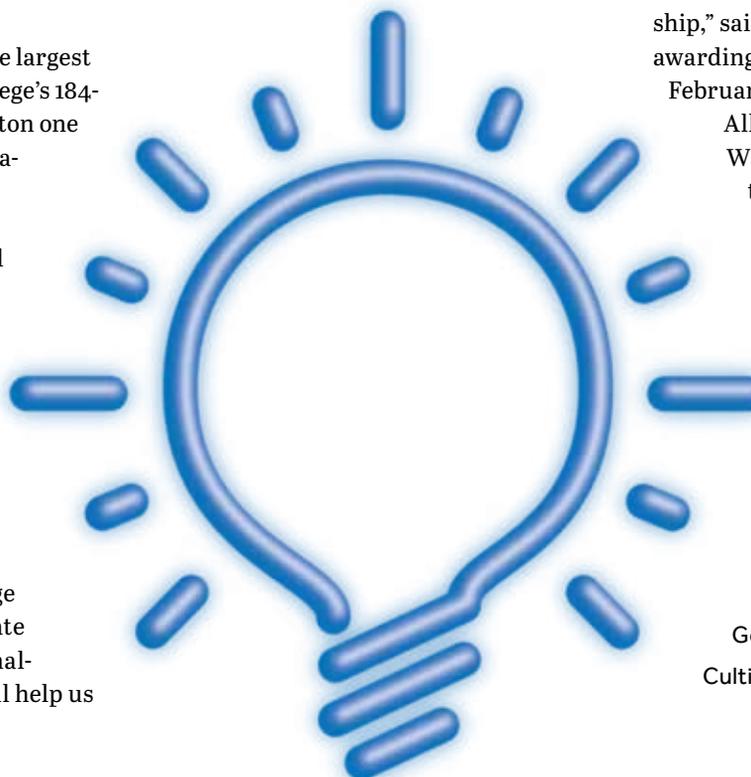
college. Through her work and her family foundation, she has promoted education, entrepreneurship and international peace and understanding.

The foundation and the Davis Spencer family have been generous supporters of education for many years. Earlier gifts from the family and its foundation provided critical support to launch Wheaton's Center for Global Education, support international relations and Russian studies programs, and provide scholarships to undergraduates.

"The Diana Davis Spencer Foundation is excited that Wheaton is leading the way in innovation and social entrepreneurship," said Spencer in commenting on the awarding of the grant to the college in February.

All over campus and beyond, Wheaton already is working to cultivate, educate and support student entrepreneurs who strive to create businesses that are both meaningful and profitable.

—Michael Graca



Ideas into action

Here, we feature a roundup of stories about recent efforts:

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Students participating in social entrepreneurship workshops gather in the WiN Hub with President Dennis M. Hanno to listen as Wheaton trustee Julie Bresee Bradley '90 shares the details of her career, which has included serving in top leadership roles at various companies.

The launching pad

Wheaton offers an intensive workshop for one week in January and one week in May on social entrepreneurship in partnership with the New York-based Global Center for Social Entrepreneurship Network Foundation.

The Social Entrepreneurship Launch Program, which is led by the network's president and chief executive Michael Caslin, teaches key methods and frameworks for entrepreneurial activity while considering the impact of their ideas on people, profit, planet and place.

A diverse group of Wheaton students spend time learning the art and science of successfully launching products, services and

organizations addressing societal problems in the United States and abroad. In conjunction with the workshops, students work on their ideas during the academic

year and have opportunities to consult with expert entrepreneurs and advisors.

This spring, in addition to participating in a session on business plan development taught by President Dennis M. Hanno, and writing and networking workshops, students had breakfast and a conversation in the WiN Hub with Wheaton trustee Julie Bresee Bradley '90, who shared the details of her career. The economics major has had top leadership roles at various companies, including as chief financial officer at TripAdvisor Media Group; chief financial officer of Art Technology Group Inc.; and as vice president of finance at Akamai Technologies, Inc.



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The WiN Hub hosts events, workshops and networking opportunities.

If I had a million dollars ...

What would you do to improve the world if you had \$1 million? It's a question that has many possible answers, which students proved by offering a range of ideas—promoting financial literacy among college students, creating a workshop for upcycling and closing the health gap for people with limited means, to name a few—at a pitch competition sponsored by the WiN Hub in March.

“The purpose of the competition is to give students the opportunity to develop the ability to effectively and engagingly communicate their business idea to a broad audience,” said Courtney Wilson, the college’s social entrepreneur-in-residence who also served as the emcee for the event in Hindle Auditorium.

Nine students presented three-minute pitches to a panel of judges—President Dennis M. Hanno, tech entrepreneur Kathleen O’Neil, social entrepreneur Heather Rotman ’17 and Emily Wanderer,

chief operating officer of the Social Enterprise Greenhouse in Providence, R.I.—who lobbed questions at each presenter.

After all the social innovation ideas were aired, the panel selected Drew Brodney ’21 as the \$500 first-place winner for his plan to develop an organization that will assist teachers in successfully serving students who have special needs.

Angel Bird ’21 scored the \$300 second-place prize for her proposal to launch an Uber-like service to transport college students for health care; Zara Salmon ’18 won the \$200 third-place award for her plan to open a plant-based cafe and community garden; and Ian Kobelenz ’20 was voted the “people’s favorite,” winning \$250 for his idea to recycle and sell carbon dioxide.

Bird, who plans to major in business and management and African, African American, diaspora studies, said she

ultimately wants to be a business consultant for companies and startups to help bring forth ideas.

“I enjoy taking people’s ideas and figuring out how to make them work, and the flexibility of being able to switch between many different ideas,” she said. “Wheaton has helped me realize this by continually exposing me to various aspects of entrepreneurship and allowing me to see what works and what doesn’t.

“There also is something very valuable about having to experience aspects of entrepreneurship for yourself so that, when you are giving suggestions to others, you can approach them from a place of real understanding, as you’ve had to come up with an idea and try to make it viable all on your own.”

Salmon, who graduated in May with a double major in English and political science, is now working as the communications coordinator at the Social Enterprise

Good business

The WiN Hub (Wheaton Innovates) was created in 2016 in collaboration with the Diana Davis Spencer Foundation to introduce the transformative force of social entrepreneurship to the Wheaton community. Through programming, events and workshops, students gain the confidence and competence to follow their passions and launch their own social enterprises.

As Wheaton’s social entrepreneur-in-residence, Courtney Wilson is working to infuse social entrepreneurship into all aspects of campus life.

Her focus: cultivating partnerships among faculty, students and staff to help them develop innovative and marketable solutions to society’s most pressing challenges.

“My charge is to ingrain social entrepreneurship into the fabric of this institution, so it just doesn’t go away with one position or person,” said Wilson, whose office is located in the WiN Hub in the basement of the Doll’s House.



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Courtney Wilson (left), social entrepreneur-in-residence, with students during a WiN Hub event

That mission includes developing programs promoting social entrepreneurship on campus, such as an initiative that pairs 10 students who are participating in the Social Entrepreneurship Launch Program with Wheaton alumni for mentorship.

“We’re trying to make the best connections possible. If the alum works in a similar industry and they have something in common with the student, like a sport or organization, we are looking to match them,” Wilson said.

—Laura Pedulli



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Wheaton students showcased proposals during a business pitch competition for cash prizes that will help them transform their ideas into action.

Greenhouse. (Her boss is Wanderer, who incidentally was the judge who handed Salmon the check during the pitch competition.)

Salmon fell in love with entrepreneurship while studying abroad in Africa. As a senior, she had the opportunity to do two

internships at the Global Center for Social Entrepreneurship Network Foundation.

“Naturally, I started getting more involved with the WiN Hub and meeting other students who were interested in social entrepreneurship as well. Courtney Wilson and Carolyn Hart [WiN Hub staff],

along with my advisor, Professor Deyonne Bryant, have been such a huge support to me at Wheaton and, for that, I am forever grateful,” Salmon said.

—Michael Graca

Cultivating changemakers

In July, 39 high school students from 14 countries around the world converged at Wheaton to discover how the liberal arts can be a catalyst for social change, and to develop their unique ideas for making a difference in their communities.

Led by President Dennis M. Hanno, the inaugural Global Leaders Program drew students from places such as China, India, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico and Tunisia, as well as from right here in Norton, Mass., and from across the United States. Participants lived on campus and were mentored by seven Wheaton students and recent graduates, who were selected for their campus leadership.

“Wheaton is one of the leading liberal arts institutions for helping young people to see how they can create change in their communities,” Hanno said. “This program provides us an opportunity to have a bigger impact on the world, and on



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High school students participate in the Global Leaders Program.

many other communities, by bringing together very talented students who are real changemakers already, and inspiring them and giving them the tools to actually start doing things now.”

Students began the first week by taking a course titled “Innovation and Social Change,” similar to programs Hanno has taught on campus and in Rwanda and Ghana. Participants were split into seven

groups, each centered on a different United Nations Sustainable Development Goal, such as poverty, quality education and gender equality. Together, they created solutions to these issues that they could bring back to their communities.

Additionally, each student worked on a social innovation project, based on their passions and goals, developing these entrepreneurial endeavors throughout the week with the support of their groups, and then delivering a final presentation during a business pitch competition.

More than a dozen area business professionals, Wheaton faculty and staff, as well as alumni, including Ana Bresnescoto '15 and trustees Austin Simko '09 and Benjamin White '12, shared their expertise during the program, in classes, lunch talks, panel sessions and off-site visits.

—Becca Manning

Debate or fight—he wins

At first glance, the disciplines of philosophy and mixed martial arts seemingly have nothing in common. But Lucas Rosa '18, a philosophy and creative writing double major with years of mixed martial arts training, sees connections that link the two across cultures and time as well as inform his own life.

Rosa's desire to explore the parallels and bring them to light has earned him a 2018 Thomas J. Watson Fellowship. He will travel to Holland, Thailand and Cambodia to study the nuances of the hand-to-hand combat tradition at mixed martial arts academies in the three countries.

He is just one of many seniors who were honored with national awards that will take them all over the world.

—Sandy Coleman



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Other winners ready to take on the world:

Since 2000, Wheaton students have won 107 Fulbright awards, and more than 120 other international honors, such as the Rhodes, Marshall and Truman scholarships. Wheaton has frequently been named in an annual list of the nation's top liberal arts colleges in preparing students to win U.S. Fulbright awards. Here are some of this year's awardees:

JUSTIN GAGNON '18, double major in political science and Russian, Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship to the Republic of Georgia

BRENDAN GEIGER '18, double major in English and secondary education, Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship to Taiwan

JENNIFER LONERGAN '18, business and management major, Japan Exchange and Teaching Scholar to teach in Japan

EMMA WYNNE '18, double major in art history and German studies, Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship to Germany

BAY GAMMANS '18, double major in anthropology and film and new media studies, Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship to Malaysia

RILEY HEIST '18, double major in English and secondary education, Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship to Indonesia

SABRINA TEDESCHI '18, double major in biology and secondary education, Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship to Taiwan

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