

Shepherd Program

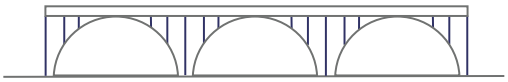
Annual Report 2025-2026

BY THE NUMBERS



96

• *Volunteer Venture Participants*



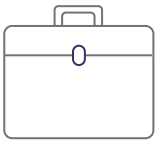
128

• *Students in the Gateway Course*



17,391

• *Bonner Service Hours*



46

• *Summer Interns*



40

• *Graduated Minors*



681

• *CKWL Backpack Program Recipients*

Shepherd is turning 30!

This year, as we celebrate the 30th anniversary of Shepherd at W&L – as well as the 25th anniversary of Bonner at W&L and the 20th anniversary of Campus Kitchen at W&L – we also remember founding director Harlan Beckley, who passed away on Oct. 21, 2025.

From the beginning, Harlan and a handful of dedicated faculty, community partners and alumni, including Tom '52 and Nancy Shepherd, had one overarching goal. The mission? To offer courses and community engagement opportunities that prepare students — whatever their backgrounds, majors, career paths, passions or political perspectives:

To understand and address the causes and consequences of poverty and inequality in ways that respect the dignity of every person.

And it's that last bit — "respect for the dignity of every person" — that was, is, and will be central to the Shepherd experience.

As I say to students on the first day of class — and on many days afterward:

"Smart, good people can — and often will — disagree. But there's one thing we won't debate here: People matter."

But students sometimes ask: If we share a commitment to the dignity of every person, then why would we ever disagree about what we *should* do?

1) Practical Effectiveness. We may disagree about whether a particular policy or practice will work — whether it will have the positive effects planned, while minimizing its negative unintended consequences.

2) Political Feasibility. We may disagree about whether we can get sufficient support for the proposal — whether we can get enough people to take action to make the recommendation a reality.

3) Moral Permissibility. We may especially disagree about whether the proposed policy or practice will be morally permissible — whether it will respect the fundamental equality and dignity of all, those it aims to help as well as those it might hurt.

It's one thing to admit that smart, good people disagree. But it's something else — something more valuable, especially at this time — to understand why we disagree and how to disagree in ways that respect the dignity of every person.

If you are committed to a better, more just world for all, come join us here in Shepherd as we practice: ***The art of respect!***



Howard Pickett

Director of the Shepherd Program

Professor of Ethics and Poverty Studies

Voices
ACADEMICS AT W&L

“I so appreciate what Shepherd Program students bring to elective classes. They tend to be empathetic, curious and intrinsically motivated young scholars. And by working through the Shepherd curriculum, they practice joining ethical and social-scientific modes of inquiry with community engagement in ways that often make their class participation extra insightful.”



Professor Jon Eastwood
William P. Ames Jr. Professor of Sociology



POV 296
Justice and Mercy
Morgan Schuckman ’27

As a global politics major with minors in poverty and human capability studies and law, justice and society, the Shepherd Program’s emphasis on dignity has fundamentally influenced my ambitions. I look forward to serving as a prosecutor who seeks justice not only for victims and the state but also for defendants by promoting rehabilitation and restoration alongside accountability. I want to dignify those experiencing the criminal legal system by reducing unnecessary correctional control while strengthening reentry support through access to food, transportation, housing, employment and the restoration of rights. Professor Pickett’s Justice and Mercy course modeled what that vision looks like in practice. While we studied strategies of nonviolent resistance, the most valuable lesson came from confronting our own limits and asking whether we were willing to live out our beliefs when doing so was difficult. Through the writings of Martin Luther King Jr., Simon Wiesenthal and others, we grappled with questions of forgiveness and what it truly means to recognize the dignity of every person, even those who have caused harm. It was inspiring to read the words of people who desired a greater mission so deeply that they willingly placed it above their own wants and needs. The course challenged me to put my belief that every person is worthy of redemption and dignifying forgiveness into practice rather than simply affirming it in theory. Those lessons continue to shape not only the kind of legal system I hope to help build but also the kind of person I hope to become. ■



BIOL 275

Food for Thought

Kendall Schlueter '26

I enrolled in Food for Thought Winter Term of my senior year as an opportunity to connect my neuroscience major and pre-medical studies with my poverty studies minor. After 3.5 years of volunteering with Campus Kitchen, culminating in serving as president, I brought to the course a strong appreciation for the importance of providing nutritious, balanced meals. However, learning how nutrition shapes nearly every aspect of health — from metabolism and disease prevention to even the brain's ability to think — reinforced why access to high-quality, balanced meals is vitally important for the well-being and dignity of the clients we serve. The course further expanded my understanding of how food insecurity and barriers to healthy living vary across communities. Studying food access on American Indian reservations complemented my experiences with Campus Kitchen, Volunteer Venture, my Shepherd internship in Mexico and my global health semester abroad, underscoring the diverse structural factors that shape health outcomes across the U.S. and globally.

As a student planning to attend medical school, this course also strengthened my conviction that medical care must be tailored to the realities of patients' lives. The first quarter of the course centered on a case study of a woman living on a Native American reservation with diabetes and other metabolic conditions. As we evaluated different medical treatment options, we assessed how factors such as her insurance coverage, geography, work schedule and access to healthy food and fitness facilities could make treatment more or less realistic and effective. Ultimately, this course challenged me to investigate the intersection of medicine and social structures, both of which must be understood and leveraged to promote health, well-being and dignity. I will enthusiastically carry this perspective into medical school and beyond, striving to care for each patient as a whole person and to better understand and address the social factors that shape health locally, nationally and globally. ■



POL 232

Public Policy

Riley Mitchelson '27

I took Public Policy with Professor Harris during the Fall Term of my junior year. During that time, I had a huge interest in policy work, so the class was right up my alley and fit into my major. Overall, the class breaks up U.S. policy into sections like climate change, education, energy, etc. The class then goes through case studies of successes and failures of policy within these areas. This class setup allows students to understand how policymaking works in the U.S., and what tends to work and what doesn't. The final project was my favorite part of the class; we had to examine a specific policy area and map out all the inner workings from the national to state level.

Professor Harris does a great job of making this class a hands-on experience. She requires that for the project you interview two experts in the field and that you do so in person. This form of teaching helps the students grow their communication skills while opening them to a whole new world of possibilities.

My project focused on the regulation of AI in rural areas, so I interviewed my hometown city manager, Jim Frydl. What was supposed to be a 30-minute chat turned into a two-hour conversation about how AI can seriously harm resources available in rural communities. Greene County, Virginia, my birthplace, has banned data centers from ever being built, though, unfortunately, the language within the ban allows for federal overrule.

The class pushes you outside of your comfort zone while educating you about all aspects of policy within the U.S. Professor Harris gives her all to her students during this 12-week course, encouraging them to grow within the policy sector. ■

COURSEWORK FOR CREDIT

Course	*Title*	*Faculty*
AFCA/HIST 269	Topics: History of the Civil Rights Movement	Dennie
ARTH 379	Mexico/U.S. Border Art: Contemporary U.S. Latinx Art	Lepage
BIOL 275	Food for Thought	Blythe
BUS 304	Seminar in Management: Consulting for Social Impact	Landry
BUS 366/ENGL 267	Social Enterprise Storytelling	Landry & Staples
BUS 381	Social Entrepreneurship	Landry
BUS/SOAN 368	Tech for Good	Eastwood & Frimpong
CBL 100	Introduction to Community-Based Learning	Goluboff & Ozorak
CBSC 329	Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination	Woodzicka
ECON 229	Urban Economics	Shester
ECON 235	The Economics of Social Issues	Goldsmith
ECON 236	Economics of Education	Smith
ECON 250	Public Finance and Public Policy	Guse
ECON 280	Development Economics	Casey
ECON 288	Buddhist Economics	Casey
ECON 376	Health: A Social Science Exploration	Blunch
EDUC 230	Educating Citizens for Democracy	Moffa
ENGL 376	Postcolonial Literature and Theory	Chowdhury
ENGL 394	Topics: Native American and African American U.S. Literature	Gray
ENV 203	Environmental Humanities	McCoy
ENV/PHIL 265	Seminar: Food Ethics	McCoy
ENV 295H	Environmental Justice in Appalachia	McCoy
ENV 295L	Plantations to Pollution	Passidomo
ENV 310	Food, Place, and Power	Passidomo
FREN 342D	Migration in France and the Francophone World	Cordova
HIST 229G	History of the Holocaust	Holland
HIST 229H	Topics: What is a Child? Introduction to the History of Childhood	Fernández-Fontecha
HIST 235	Historical Memory in Latin America	Green
HIST 269Q	Between Paradise and Terror	Dennie
HIST 275	African Women in Comparative Perspective	Ballah
HIST 377	Terrorism in Contemporary Africa	Ballah
HIST/SOAN 239	Collective Memory: Society, Culture, Identity and Power	Bell

JOUR 268	The Framing of Race and Ethnicity in Mass Media	Deggans
JOUR 295V	Media, Culture, and Society in Tanzania	Abah & Kamara
LJS 295AG	Topics: Civil Disobedience, Pardon, and Punishment	Sayid
PHIL 253	Philosophy of Race	Sun
PHIL 260	Political Philosophy: The Social Contract	Taylor
PHIL 296	Reckoning with the Past	Ranweiler
PHIL 346	Medical Ethics	Taylor
PHIL/WGSS 242	Social Inequality and Fair Opportunity	Bell
PHIL/POV 245	Poverty, Dignity, and Human Rights	Pickett
PHIL/POV 247	Medicine, Research, and Poverty	Taylor
POL 232	Public Policy	Harris
POL 288	Food, Shelter, Space, Voice: Bologna	LeBlanc
POL 295N	Topics: Frederick Douglass	Barretta
POL 388	Architecture of Urban Community	LeBlanc
POV 101	Introduction to Poverty and Human Capability	Eastwood, Pickett, Robinson
POV 102	Introduction to Community-Based Poverty Studies	Davidson
POV 121	Effective Altruism	Pickett
POV 192	Blue Ridge Mile Training	Elrod
POV 193	Blue Ridge Mile Clinic	Elrod
POV 197	Bonner Program	Charley
POV 202	Respect, Community, and the Civic Life	Charley
POV 295	Child Abuse and Neglect Seminar	Hammond
POV 296	Justice & Mercy	Pickett
POV 423	Poverty and Human Capability: A Research Seminar	Pickett
SOAN 202	Contemporary Social Problems	Jones
SOAN 213	Sociology and Criminology of War	Shmatko
SOAN 222	Data Science Tools for Social Policy	Eastwood
SOAN 248	Producing Culture from the Margins	Sutton
SOAN 278	Introduction to Medical Sociology	Chin
SOAN 290F	Social Inequality in American Cinema	Sutton
SOAN 290H	Topic: Fines and Fees	Jones
SOAN 291	Global Migration	Oubou
WGSS 296A	Topics: Reproductive Justice: Beyond Abortion	Yang
WGSS 296B	Sexual Assault Intervention: Media and Reality	Yang

CAPSTONES

Sylvia Agatako '26
"Rwanda's English Medium of Instruction Policy: Capability Deprivation, Structural Reproduction and the Case for Mother-Tongue-First Bilingual Reform"

LeAnna Baker '26*
"Beyond the Charity-Justice Binary: The Catholic Worker Movement and the Limits of Secular Humanitarian Thought"

Meagan Baxley '26
"Time Enclosure: Availability Exploitation in the Gig Economy"

Darby Burgett '26
"Food for Thought: Explaining Child Malnutrition and What We Should Do"

Evan Clark '26
"Rising from the Asphalt: Automobility, Capabilities, and the Built Environment of Phoenix, Arizona"

Addie-Grace Cook '26
"The Difference Between You and U(ser): Freedom of Choice, Expression and Development in the Digital World"

Angeline Costello '26*
"Medicalization and Stigma of Mental Health: The Impact of Labeling on Stigmatization of Mental Health Disorders"

Autumn Crawford '26*
"Disabling Grief: How Grief was Considered Disabling in 19th-Century Virginia"

Cassandra Dalton '26
"Neglected Dignity: Deficiencies in the U.S. Nursing Care Facility System"

Riley Debiec '26
"Between Harm and Healing: Injection Drug Use and the Complex Reality of Needle Exchange Programs"

Sydney Devory '26
"The Illusion of School Choice"

Cecelia Eklum '26
"Smile to Stay Alive: Investigating the Complex Causes and Consequences of Oral Health Problems Among People with Substance Use Disorder and Exploring Dental Care in Substance Use Rehabilitation Centers as a Potential Solution"

Emery Goerig '26
"Under-Identification of Learning Disabilities in U.S. Schools"

Joanna Guevara-Hernandez '26*
"Revisiting the Oregon Health Insurance Experiment"

Dani Hackman '26
"Environmental Pollution and Mental Health in Economically Disadvantaged Communities"

Maddy Hayes '26
"'A Child is a Child': Harm, Dignity and Human Capability Threats Facing Immigrant and Refugee Children in the United States"

Rebecca Hoffman '26
"From Dearth to Death: Investigating, Addressing and Alleviating the Disparate Suicide Gap and Mental Health Resources Between Urban and Rural American Communities"

Riho Iijima '26
"How Digital Platforms Shape Youth Capabilities Through Structure and Engagement"

Brian Kim '26
"The Moral Price of Meat Consumption: Harms, Structures and Reforming Animal and Worker Suffering Under Factory Farming"

Tetiana Kozachanska '26
"Complexities and Solutions in Reintegration of Ukrainian Veterans"

Amelia Macholz '26
"Regulating Persuasion: Public Health Consequences of Pharmaceutical Advertising"

Anna Maloof '26
"Are Churches Really Welcome to All? How the Christian Church Excludes America's Largest Minority Group"

Dev Maniar '26*
"Poverty Beyond Income: A Capabilitarian Comparison of Jharkhand and Central Appalachia"

Leyti Ndiaye '26
"Remontada: Who Gets to Write the Rules?"

Olaide Olatunbosun '26*
"Perceptions of Academic Success: How Race and SES Impact Predictions of Academic Achievement"

Diane Pierre-Louis '26*
"Unsung Heroes of Health Equity: A Comparative Analysis of Community Health Workers' Impact and Recognition in South Africa and the United States"

Reagan Radocesky '26
"'It Takes a Village': A Community-Based Approach to Ending MCDs in Rural Appalachia and the Gulf South"

Kat Repka '26*
"Talking with Screenagers: An Exploration of Gen Z's Relationship with Digital Technology"

Natalie Richards '26
"Ethical Representation in Nonprofit Advertising: How Communications Contribute to Global Poverty and Ways to Advertise with Impact and Dignity"

Emmy Richey '26
"Gerrymandering: Legal Election Rigging"

John Santowski '26
"Falling Through the Cracks: Lacking Health Insurance in the U.S."

Kendall Schlueter '26
"Building Equitable Surgical Systems: Structural Barriers, Human Consequences and Pathways to Reform"

Emma Scott '26*
"Agroecology and the Metabolic Rift in Rockbridge County, Virginia: Integrating Farmers' Perspectives"

Chris Smith '26
"Locked Away: The Harms Incarceration Places Upon Rural Areas"

Patrick Solcher '26
"On the Basis of Disability: Addressing the Overpromotion of Disability-Selective Abortion"

Jaeya Taxali '26*
"Examining the Food Vortex: Where Unhealthy Abundance Meets Healthy Absence"

Gibson Ward '27
"Flaky Foreign Aid: Understanding and Addressing the Harms Caused by the Removal of USAID"

Austin Winslow '26
"Sustainably Addressing the Housing Crisis of New York City"

**Indicates a capstone project completed outside of POV 423*

VOLUNTEER VENTURE

Volunteer Venture (VV) is a service-learning Leading Edge program for incoming students. Sponsored by the Shepherd Program, VV allows participants to build meaningful relationships and explore issues related to poverty, injustice and opportunity through service with community-based agencies, guest speakers and group discussions related to a thematic issue. Topics for the experience include food and housing insecurity, law and justice and the social determinants of health. ■

8 Trips | 7 Cities | 38 Peer Leaders | 96 First-Year Participants

Service.

“I think the most valuable aspect [of VV] was working with people from the community. It was amazing to feel seen by the people we were working with. For example, at Habitat for Humanity, the experts there were happy to teach us how to construct houses and offered encouragement. This helped me remember that the purpose of our volunteering was to work with the community.”

— VV 2025 Local Immersion participant



At Rockbridge Area Habitat for Humanity, VV participants installed insulation at a new build.

Learning.

“The pre-trip lecture Professor Pickett gave to each group was extremely important in remembering that volunteer/service work can be an incredibly life-changing activity, but its success depends on respecting the dignity of all clients. I aimed to remind myself to listen to the clients and truly understand their needs and wants rather than just assuming what they need. By doing this, I started understanding the root causes of poverty we encountered and discovered ways in which it can possibly be prevented in the future.”

— VV 2025 Law and Justice participant



On the Washington, D.C., Food and Housing Insecurity trip, participants sort and bag fruit for clients.

Community.

“My VV trip has influenced me to continue to serve the community at large and play a role in bettering my surrounding community in any way necessary while still respecting their dignity.”

— VV 2025 Public Health participant



The Baltimore Law and Justice participants pose at the Maryland Food Bank.

CAMPUS KITCHEN

The mission of the Campus Kitchen at Washington and Lee (CKWL) is to strengthen bodies, empower minds and build communities through food. Student leaders coordinate food preparation and delivery logistics, attend events and discussions, and work with staff to facilitate financial stewardship and development for the organization. ■



Students on the Lexington Volunteer Venture trip assist with growing produce for Campus Kitchen in the W&L Campus Garden.



Students and staff enjoy a slice of pumpkin pie at the annual Campus Kitchen Pumpkin Pieve-K fundraiser.

Strengthening Bodies.

At CKWL, we promote nutrition and address the issues of food waste and food insecurity in Lexington and Rockbridge County. We work toward this by transforming food that would otherwise go to waste into balanced meals for low-income members of the community as well as collaborating with community organizations to provide groceries through our Mobile Food Pantry, Backpack and Produce Delivery Programs.

Meals Delivered: 16,244
Pounds of Groceries Distributed: 36,760
Backpacks Filled: 18,681

Building Community.

We collaborate with other student organizations at W&L and the wider Rockbridge area in joint events around relevant topics to the food system. During students' time with CKWL, they develop meaningful relationships with clients that go beyond service. Our students learn to think critically about the variety of ways that they can have a lasting impact within our community by supporting existing organizations and projects.

Volunteer Hours: 4,461
Hunger Fighters Cohort Members: 12
Campus Kitchen Leadership Team Members: 41

Empowering Minds.

This year, the Campus Kitchen developed student understanding of the context in which food insecurity and food waste arise through the Just Food event series. By cultivating an understanding of the broader system in which food insecurity persists, the Campus Kitchen fosters students' abilities to identify the root of the issues they are passionate about addressing. This series encourages students to think beyond the meals they provide to the ways we can all work to ensure equitable access to food for everyone in our communities.

Just Food Series Unique Attendees: 275
Average Event Attendees: 82



Members of the Hunger Fighters first-year cohort cook and package meals on a Campus Kitchen cooking shift.

BLUE RIDGE MILE

The Blue Ridge Mile (BRM), in collaboration with the nonprofit law firm Drive-To-Work, was established in 2020. BRM assists clients in acquiring or maintaining Virginia driving privileges, which can be difficult due to hefty requirements, confusing rules, difficulty obtaining necessary documents and lack of finances. BRM advocates help clients navigate the process, access resources and offer encouragement. In 2025-2026, there were eight client-facing advocates who served 31 new clients. ■

Clinic.

Advocates updated the Blue Ridge Mile's vision statement to refine how they view the core values of the Shepherd Program are reflected in the clinic's work: The Blue Ridge Mile Clinic envisions a community where individuals facing barriers to obtaining or reinstating a driver's license are empowered to overcome systemic challenges and achieve mobility with dignity. Our commitment extends beyond mere assistance; we strive to foster relationships and build a supportive environment where clients are empowered to navigate everyday problems they face in our community.



Advocate Chloe Kim '28 works with a BRM client.



Saaraim Núñez '27, Jana Hulsey '26 and Fran Elrod, adviser, present at the Projects for Peace conference.

New Developments.

BRM had the opportunity to share its work through public presentations, including a conference in Arlington, Virginia, hosted by Projects for Peace and Blue Ridge Court Services, who became a new referral source. Additionally, the clinic added Rockbridge Regional Jail as a referral site where students meet with clients weekly.



Current and incoming BRM Advocates

NABORS SERVICE LEAGUE

The Nabors Service League, in collaboration with community-based agencies, connects students with opportunities to learn, serve and reflect on issues of poverty and justice. The student leadership team includes members from these committees: Local Service, Educational Programming, Alternative Breaks, Friends of Nabors and Good Nabors Mentorship. ■

Educational Programming.

NSL's educational series focuses on issues related to youth enrichment and education. The series included a panel of local community partners.



Ramsey Greene '28 moderates the local community partner panel featuring Leyna Hansley with Maury River Middle School, Devan Nicely with Buena Vista City Schools and LaTonya Douglas with Head Start.



Students volunteer at the Greenwood Cemetery in Buena Vista alongside community partners Mike Guinn and Preston Evans. Eddie and Doris Nabors (far right), parents of NSL's namesake, Jonathan Nabors '02, visit annually for Nabors Service Day.

Community Engagement.

NSL sponsored volunteerism throughout the year. The annual Nabors Service Day was held in March. Students also participated in an alternative break trip over the fall Reading Days, serving in Richmond, Virginia.

Good Nabors.

Through the Good Nabors Program, NSL offers the opportunity for first-year students to intentionally commit to service in the Rockbridge community and learn and reflect on critical issues related to poverty and inequality with peers and peer mentors.

Good Nabors Program participants gather in the Mattingly House for their kickoff meeting in the fall.



BONNER

W&L's Bonner Program is an initiative of the Corella and Bertram F. Bonner Foundation and the Shepherd Program. Bonner Scholars are committed to working alongside communities to develop as professional and civic leaders, foster relationships, cultivate community and work to create increasingly compassionate systems.

Bonners serve in internship-style community partnerships for 8-10 hours per week throughout their time as a student and complete at least one summer of service. In addition to the professional development offered by these opportunities, students participate in a credit-bearing academic developmental model that is rooted in the poverty and inequality studies curriculum of the Shepherd Program. Critical and creative reflection, paired with transdisciplinary approaches to complex social issues, creates a rich landscape for exploring the problems associated with poverty and inequality and for developing a purposeful civic life. ■

Bonner Highlights.

This year, W&L Bonners had the opportunity to travel to Richmond, Virginia, for their First-Year Service Trip. This was a return to Richmond for several Bonners who had served there with Volunteer Venture, and students enjoyed working with Doorways, Goochland Cares, the Richmond SPCA and FeedMore.



First-year Bonners serve with Goochland Cares over Washington Break.



Bonners enjoy coffee with Richard Harrill, Bonner Foundation vice president, during his recent visit.

Student Growth.

"It's important for the group to spend time in an unfamiliar community to come to know and rely on each other. Returning to Richmond after Volunteer Venture to go on the First-Year Service Trip, it was interesting to see how much my perspective has changed. Since our Richmond service was removed from everything else going on in my life, I could really compare my experiences and learning across the two trips. During that second trip, it became clear to me that my capacity to care for a community outside of my own had changed."

—Brennan Martin '29

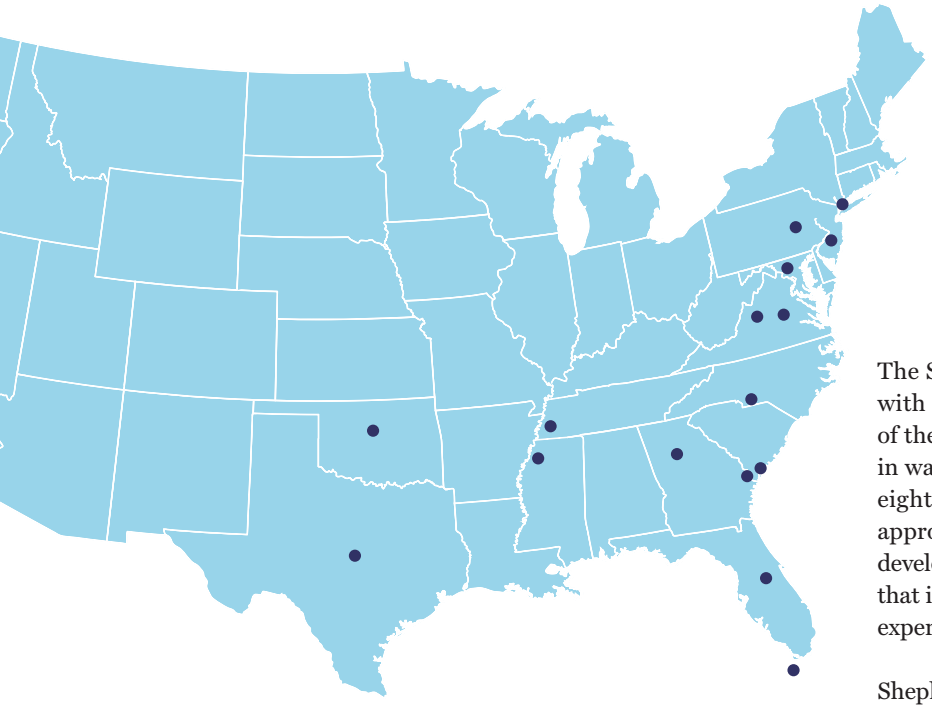


Kat Repka '26 discusses with Carol Branscome, Hoofbeats executive director, the mural being added to the tack barn at Hoofbeats Therapeutic Riding Center.

Community Partnership.

"Leading up to the capstone, I learned what it looked like to participate in community efforts; the capstone turned the leadership role over to me. Over the course of an academic year, I communicated with my community partner (Hoofbeats) to collaborate and visualize a (shared) plan for this project. I effectively led a group of volunteers over six consecutive weekends to finish the project, and I felt the warmth of Bonner love when the largest group came out to support me and my project. I learned when collaboration, creativity and community converge, something beautiful is created, made and lives on."

— Kat Repka '26



SHEPHERD INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Number of participants: 46

The Shepherd Program internships provide students with opportunities to complicate their understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and inequality in ways that respect the humanity of all people through eight-week summer internships. While students approach the experience with an eye toward professional development, it is equally important for them to understand that important lessons are learned outside the internship experience and will come in ways they least expect.

Shepherd internships are located in various urban and rural sites in the United States and globally, with a focus on education, health care, legal services, housing, hunger, social and economic needs and community-building efforts.

Many W&L students intern through the Shepherd Higher Education Consortium on Poverty (SHECP). Additional students support local organizations in the Lexington area, participate in international internship programs or propose internships in communities across the United States. ■

Jayden Pautz '28
Campus Kitchen

This summer, I stayed in Lexington working for Campus Kitchen, a long-running program at W&L that combats hunger and promotes nutrition by recovering and reusing food that would otherwise go to waste into balanced meals for low-income community members in Rockbridge County.

As interns, we were responsible for gardening and harvesting produce from the campus garden to later be utilized by Campus Dining or Campus Kitchen; planning, preparing and packaging over 200 meals each week to be distributed to those in need within Rockbridge County; and volunteering time to provide meals and produce to local partner organizations such as The Community Table, Rockbridge Connect & Nourish and the Rockbridge Baths Farmers Market.

As a part of this experience, I worked closely with staff at Rockbridge Area Relief Association (RARA), Lexington's local food bank, to teach kids in a summer program about healthy food. I spent my summer in Lexington because I wanted to meet and connect with people in the community. Since last year was my first year in college, I spent most of my time on campus, getting my bearings. Spending time in Lexington was equally valuable and worthwhile as I got to engage with the community on a deeper level compared to being in school during busy semesters. ■



Jayden Pautz '28, left, serves at the Community Table with fellow Campus Kitchen interns.

Nazaha Amatullah '28
BRAC

During the summer, I was able to secure a placement with BRAC, an international NGO renowned for its work across education, health and social development, in my hometown of Dhaka, Bangladesh. I joined BRAC's social compliance unit, a department dedicated to creating safe and inclusive workplaces in schools, universities, communities and, most notably, factories. This decision to join in on the work and mission of BRAC was both personal and practical.

My experience highlighted the gender dynamics at the heart of Bangladesh's garment industry. BRAC's leadership trainings encourage women to step into supervisory roles, equipping them with knowledge of labor laws, factory policies and strategies for navigating workplace politics. I spent my time shadowing and assisting with these sessions, contributing reports, illustrations and logistical support.

Something that really stuck with me was visiting a factory that produced jerseys for the World Cup. The clothes are the ones everyone across the world is wearing, and you get to see the lives of the women workers. Stories on labor exploitation or unfair wages are what we read about in books but seeing it in person, even in better-resourced factories, was very powerful. ■



Nazaha Amatullah '28, right, presenting on her Shepherd Internship.

Annabelle Sutliff '27
Tharros Place



Annabelle Sutliff '27, far right, with fellow run club members

I spent my Shepherd summer at Tharros Place, a nonprofit organization supporting teenage survivors of human trafficking in Savannah, Georgia. My work involved direct engagement with the girls in the organization's residential facility, initiatives aimed at improving their health and well-being and the outreach department's work with volunteers, donors and community partnerships.

My favorite project was organizing a run club for the residents involving various workouts and guest runners each week, culminating in a community-based 5K at the end of the summer.

Through this experience, I learned so much about the type of work that I enjoy. I'm most passionate about efforts that promote public health and wellness, but this internship taught me about the type of work that I enjoyed behind the mission I cared about. The Shepherd internship allowed me to work directly within the community while building useful skills and forming long-lasting professional relationships. ■

Shepherd Higher Education Consortium on Poverty

Founding Director of the Shepherd Program **Harlan Beckley** *not only envisioned an academic program for poverty studies at W&L but also an opportunity for direct experience working with community-based agencies for students from W&L and beyond — this was the genesis of the Shepherd Alliance. To further his dream to expand poverty studies programs in undergraduate institutions, the Shepherd Alliance transitioned to an independent non-profit organization in 2012 — the* ***Shepherd Higher Education Consortium on Poverty*** *(SHECP). Since then, SHECP increased its membership from six to 17 higher education institutions and expanded programming, adding the Springboard events, Practitioner Insights series and Policy & Nonprofit Leadership (PNPL), a paid, second internship available to SHECP alumni, while continuing to run the Frueauff Annual Conference. Additionally, it serves as a space for poverty studies programs to network and collaborate. Since 1998, the Shepherd Alliance and then SHECP has placed over 2,000 students into cohort-based internships to work full-time with community partners engaged in anti-poverty work. In 2025, 16 W&L students completed their Shepherd internship through SHECP.*

2025 INTERNSHIPS

Student	Internship Partner	Location
Debora Abera '27	So Others May Eat*	Washington, DC
Martha Afoakwa '27	Bradley Free Clinic*	Roanoke, VA
Ericka Aliaga '28	CrossOver Ministries*	Richmond, VA
Nazaha Amatullah '28	BRAC (Social Compliance & Safeguarding Program)	Mohakhali, Dhaka
Casey Arkoette '28	Rescue Mission of Roanoke Fralin Free Clinic*	Roanoke, VA
Brandon Bishop '26	Grameen Bank	Dhaka, Bangladesh
Olivia Close '27	The Andy Center	Seattle, WA
Marett Cole '27	Ronald McDonald House	Greenville, SC
Angeline Costello '26	Good Samaritan*	Atlanta, GA
Mariyyah Daniel '27	House of Ruth*	Baltimore, MD
Riley Debiec '26	West Virginia Health Right*	Charleston, WV
Stella Ewald '27	Fresh Air	Fishkill, NY
Makayla Foust '26L	Public Defender Dekalb County	Atlanta, GA
Madi Gilgo '27L	Legal Services of Northern Virginia	Fairfax, VA
Emery Goerig '26	Kentucky Refugee Ministries*	Louisville, KY
Lily Ha '28	PIDA: People's Initiative for Development Alternatives	Seoul, South Korea
Connor Holloway '28	Mobile Integrative Navigation Team (MINT)	Grants Pass, OR
Catherine Keightley '27	St. Francis Manchester, Assisted Living	Richmond, VA
Aiden Kelsey '27	Blue Ridge Area Food Bank*	Lynchburg, VA
Chloe Kim '28	Arlington Commonwealth Attorney's Office	Washington, DC
Leandro Laperne '28	Greensboro Urban Ministries*	Greensboro, NC
Melina LaPlante '27	Project Horizon	Lexington, VA
Darcy Leight '27	Guilford County Public Defender*	Greensboro, NC
Anna Maloof '26	Hope Heals Camp	Nauvoo, AL
Fatma Nayer '27	ReSOURCE LEAP*	Burlington, VT
Reese Nelson '28	Broad Top Area Medical Center*	Huntingdon, PA
Alana O'Hanlon '27	Morrison Family YMCA	Charlotte, NC
Jayden Pautz '28	Campus Kitchen at W&L	Lexington, VA
Boris Pekar '27	MUSC Health	Charleston, SC
Cody Pfeiffer '27L	Legal Aid Justice Center	Richmond, VA
Abhishek Pradhan '28	Canopy Nepal	Kathmandu, Nepal
Jackson Ransom '28	Families Matter	Memphis, TN
Geena Ravelo Cepero '27	Project Merilyn	Las Vegas, NV
Mia Remington '28	New Arrivals Institute (SLAMM)*	Greensboro, NC
Alyssa Sanchez-Sine '27	Campus Kitchen at W&L	Lexington, VA
John Santowski '26	Taylors Free Medical Clinic	Greenville, SC
John Schiff '27L	Georgia Justice Project	Atlanta, GA

Morgan Schuckman '27	Rockbridge Area Relief Association and Blue Ridge Mile	Lexington, VA
Cecelia Schweitzer '26	Campus Kitchen at W&L	Lexington, VA
Brianna Shuttlewood '27	St. John Center*	Louisville, KY
Ciara Smith '27	Camden Care Coalition	Camden, NJ
Emorie Stockton '28	Ronald McDonald House	Charleston, SC
Annabelle Sutliff '27	Tharros Place*	Savannah, GA
Xandy Veague '27	Safe Sisters Circle	Washington, DC
Joaquín Villagran-Hernandez '26	National Immigration Forum	Washington, DC
Gibson Ward '27	Campus Kitchen at W&L	Lexington, VA

Indicates SHECP Internship

SHEPHERD ALUMNI IN ACTION

Shepherd Alumni in Action, a student-facing summit held in November, featured a poster session, workshops and three panels: Good People, Tough Questions: Working Together When We Disagree; The Art of Respect: Dignity in Practice; and Creatively Living the Mission. The summit also featured opportunities for personal connection between students and alumni. ■



Adhip Adhikari '27 shared about his internship with Shepherd Advisory Board chair Shiri Yadlin '12.



Mason Grist '18 moderated the Good People, Tough Questions panel with Hernandez Stroud '15L, Austin Piatt '17, Charles Allen '99 and Shiri Yadlin '12 as panelists.



Mariyyah Daniel '27 presented on her internship with the House of Ruth legal team in Baltimore.



W&L's POV202 students mingle with community attendees of their Civic Health Club event.

Making Civic Magic

Pronto, a coffee shop on Main Street in Lexington, Virginia, attracted a larger crowd than usual for a rainy Wednesday afternoon in February. Washington and Lee students spread art supplies, stickers and other giveaways on tables covered in craft paper, waving people over as they came in the door to take a seat, mingle and engage in what their professor — Marisa Charley, instructor of poverty studies, Bonner Program director and associate director of the Shepherd Program — calls "civic magic."

The gathering was the beginning of a series of events that represented the culminating project of POV 202: Respect, Community and the Civic Life, a Shepherd Program course. For the Winter Term class, Charley asked students to design and facilitate what she calls "civic health clubs" — casual, creative events that bring strangers together to talk about the place in which they live and talk directly to the people they live alongside. In addition to the event at Pronto, Charley's class partnered with Leaf and Lore, a co-op bookstore in downtown Buena Vista, Virginia, and Rockbridge Barbell, a gym in Lexington that offers personal training and group classes. Students worked throughout the term in small teams to partner with each venue and shape an event around a civic question such as belonging or loneliness. Each event offered hands-on activities such as potting plants or creating small art projects along with free refreshments and food. Participants were encouraged to talk informally, and students were tasked with event setup and cleanup as well as welcoming attendees.

Ovella Huddleston '29, a classics major and poverty and human capability studies minor from Fort Collins, Colorado, said the the planning and execution of each civic health club event provided valuable lessons.

"I've realized that I can't just stand by and let community happen," she says. "I have to be an active participant and an active facilitator of it. This class has given me the tools to do that."

> ***"I've realized that I can't just stand by and let community happen. I have to be an active participant."***
>
> *OVELLA HUDDLESTON '29*

She says she also noticed something similar in the people who showed up. In a small town, she notes, loneliness often looks different than it does in a city.

"Because it's so small, those people you've known forever, you continue to stay with that one group," Huddleston explains. "This is an opportunity to grow that."

Natalie Ochieng '29, a biology major and poverty and human capability studies minor from Nairobi, Kenya, was excited for this course to build on the foundations that she learned in her introductory poverty and human capability studies course during her first semester at Washington and Lee.

"Taking POV 101 was one of the most transformative and enriching experiences for me here at Washington and Lee," she says. "It helped me truly understand what poverty is and gave me a strong foundation for thinking about its impact. Moving into POV 202, I was excited for a more hands-on experience. As someone who deeply cares not only about poverty but also its causes and consequences, I saw this class as an opportunity to learn how to better understand community needs and how I can help meet those needs, even as a student."

Ochieng says the course taught her how to practice civic engagement, often through simply having the courage to take the first step. ■ *By Kelsey Goodwin*

To read the full article online, go to ***columns.wlu.edu****.*



Shepherd Program graduates pose with the team in front of the beloved Mattingly House.

Commencement 2026



The Mattingly-based work-study graduates Cece Schweitzer, Evan Clark and Olaide Olatunbosun stand alongside the Shepherd team.



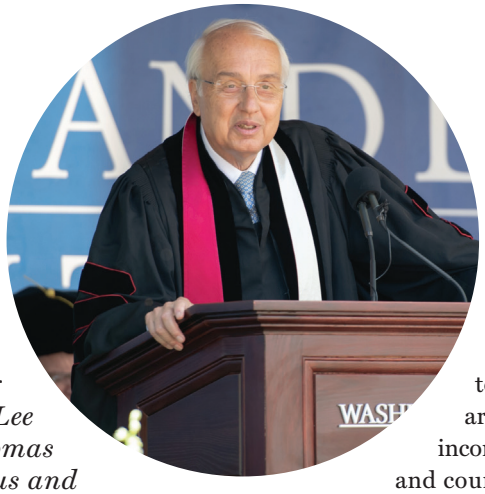
Nabors Service League (NSL) adviser Jenny Davidson '08 with Evan Clark '26, Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award recipient and NSL president, and Stacy McLoughlin Taylor '02, Baccalaureate speaker and founder of NSL.

SHEPHERD ALUMNI MENTORS

Shepherd is — and always has been — special because of the people involved! The connections and community here are invaluable to what we do and why we do it. In the Shepherd Alumni Mentor Program, our goal is to make and maintain meaningful connections that provide encouragement, advice, opportunities and enjoyment, especially during life's transitions from college to career, from one career to another, and beyond. The program creates a supportive community of alumni and community partners with a shared interest in living out the Shepherd mission through their professional and civic lives. ■

Alumni Mentors	*2026 Graduates*
Jennifer Strawbridge '01	LeAnna Baker
Mary Wilson Grist '22	Meagan Baxley
Shirley Keating '17	Darby Burgett
Angelica Marmorstein '14	Addie-Grace Cook
Cynthia Cheatham '07	Autumn Crawford
Charlotte Collins '14	Riley Debiec
Maisie Osteen '14L	Sydney Devory
Shiri Yadlin '12	Tom Finnegan
Hannah Witherell '20	Joanna Guevara-Hernandez
Bowen Spottswood '18	Maddy Hayes
Mason Grist '18	Rebecca Hoffman
Bonnie Kibbie '08	Brian Kim
Tyra Barrett '18	Amelia Macholz
Jamila Seaton '09	Olaide Olatunbosun
Jonathan Wortham '04	Diane Pierre-Louis
Kelli Jarrell '12	Kendall Schlueter
Kerriann Shabanowitz '13, '16L	Emma Scott
Duke Cancelmo '80, P'12	Patrick Solcher
Ellen Wiencek '15	Jaeya Taxali
Lorena Terroba '21	Austin Winslow
Elizabeth Grist '22	Joyce Yoo

THE LEGACY OF HARLAN BECKLEY



Harlan Beckley, former acting president of Washington and Lee University, Fletcher Otey Thomas Professor of Religion Emeritus and founding director of the Shepherd Program for the Interdisciplinary Study of Poverty and Human Capability, died on Oct. 21. He was 81.

Beckley was born to William and Bernadine Beckley on Nov. 27, 1943, in Bellflower, Illinois. His parents raised Beckley and his two brothers, Lelan and BJ, on a corn, soybean and livestock farm.

Beckley graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 1966. Upon graduation, he spent a year at Wesley Theological Seminary before moving to Tennessee, where he enrolled in Vanderbilt University for all his postgraduate degrees. He completed his Master of Divinity in 1972 and earned his Master of Arts there the following year. In 1978, he completed his Ph.D. in Christian theological ethics, writing his dissertation on "Economic Justice in a Pluralistic Society: A Study in Christian Social Ethics."

While working through his graduate studies, Beckley served as a Methodist minister for three churches in Kingston Springs, Tennessee, before accepting a position as instructor of religion at Washington and Lee. He was promoted to assistant professor of religion in 1978, associate professor of religion in 1984 and then professor of religion in 1989.

While Beckley was conducting research and teaching a course on social justice and economic issues, he crossed paths with then W&L Board of Trustees member Tom Shepherd '52. In conversations with Shepherd, Beckley expressed a vision of creating an interdisciplinary program at W&L that tackled the questions of poverty through coursework and community engagement. Not wanting to create a new major at W&L, Beckley hoped to lean into the nature of the liberal arts, with colleagues across disciplines incorporating poverty into their teachings and coursework. Shepherd believed in Beckley's idea and agreed to fund the pilot program for six years. In September 1997, Beckley taught his first POV 101 class, launching the Shepherd Program for the Interdisciplinary Study of Poverty and Human Capability.

"Harlan had many gifts. One was the ability to see what others could not: a new approach to higher education that combines compassion and intellect to prepare students — whatever their backgrounds, majors, career paths or political perspectives — to address the problems associated with poverty and inequality. Another was the ability to work tirelessly with others to make that new approach a reality," said Howard Pickett, director of the Shepherd Program, professor of ethics and poverty studies and adjunct professor of law at Washington and Lee. "I feel surrounded by Harlan's legacy all day every day — but never more than when a new student tells me Shepherd is the reason they chose W&L, or when an alum stops by Mattingly House to tell me how Professor Beckley changed their lives."

"Thanks to his vision, energy and passion for justice, Harlan has left an impressive legacy," Pickett added. "He has left W&L, Rockbridge County and every school that has joined the Shepherd Higher Education Consortium on Poverty better than he found them."

Beckley is survived by his wife of 54 years, Deborah Beckley, children Benjamin Beckley (Jess), Jonathan Beckley (Stephne) and Rachel Beckley Murray (Mark), grandchildren Houston, Scarlette and Sarah and brother Lelan Beckley (Char). He was predeceased by his brother BJ Beckley (Jackie). The family held a public remembrance at 11 a.m. April 25, 2026, at Lexington Presbyterian Church. ■

SHEPHERD CORE MEMBERS



Melina Bell
Professor of
Philosophy and Law



Ryan Brink
Assistant Director
Campus Kitchen Coordinator



Marisa Charley
Associate Director
Bonner Program Director
Instructor of Poverty Studies



Jenny Davidson
Associate Director
Instructor of Poverty Studies



Jon Eastwood
William P. Ames Jr.
Professor of Sociology



Fran Elrod
Associate Director
Instructor of Poverty Studies



Art Goldsmith
Jackson T. Stephens
Professor of Economics



Joseph Guse
John C. Winfrey
Professor of Economics



Molly Michelmore
S. Blount Mason Jr.
Professor of History



Karla Murdock
Jo M. and James M. Ballengee Sr.
Professor of Cognitive and Behavioral Science



Marcos Perez
Associate Professor
of Sociology



Howard Pickett
Director of the Shepherd Program
Professor of Ethics and Poverty Studies



Candice Robinson
Assistant Professor
of Sociology



Katie Shester
Professor of Economics



Alexander C. Sutton
Assistant Professor
of Sociology



Erin Taylor
Associate Professor
of Philosophy

ADVISORY BOARD

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Atlanta, Georgia

Samara Gibbs '10 (2028)
Memphis, Tennessee

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Baltimore, Maryland

Kelli Jarrell '12 (2027)
Cincinnati, Ohio

Shirley Keating '17 (2029)
Brooklyn, New York

Joe Landry '13 (2029)
Winchester, Massachusetts

Natasha Learner '13 (2029)
Winchester, Massachusetts

Melissa Medeiros '09 (2026)
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Kelly Nichols '00 (2028)
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New York, New York

Isaac Webb '13 (2028)
Washington, D.C.

Shiri Yadlin '12 (2024), Chair
Washington, D.C.

Ex Officio Members

Duke Cancelmo '80, P'12*
Houston, Texas

Paul Youngman '87, P'21, P'27
Dean of the College and Professor of German

John Nolan '70, P'99, P'01*
Chevy Chase, Maryland

Howard Pickett
Director of the Shepherd Program

Sonia Siu '07*
Boston, Massachusetts

Stacy McLoughlin Taylor '02*
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Eric White '74, P'10*
Richmond, Virginia

Jonathan Wortham '04*
Atlanta, Georgia

* *Former Board Chair*

The Shepherd Advisory Board Welcomes New Members

Ginny Hodges McLendon '11
Elizabeth Mugo '19
Joan Oguntimein '11
Katherine Telfeyan '10
Mike White '10



Washington and Lee alumni and friends gathered to reflect on Harlan Beckley's life and legacy.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Dave Foster '98

HAVERTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA



The Shepherd Program was established toward the end of my time at W&L, so I did not get to participate directly. I am proud, however, that I was able to play a small role in helping to bring it to campus, and my continued engagement with the program over the past 20-plus years has been deeply rewarding. I believe that it is among the most important advancements in the history of the university. My path has always been directed toward service, but I am very pleased that the Shepherd Program offers a way for great W&L leaders to consider opportunities for service that can run alongside their other career interests.

I am the founder and CEO of BDP Impact Real Estate, a company that raises social-impact capital for projects that deliver important outcomes for communities across the country. Much of our work today focuses on privately financed affordable housing, with a specific focus on serving veterans experiencing homelessness. Our investors are health systems, banks, foundations, private individuals and others willing to accept a concessionary financial return in exchange for a measurable impact on affordable housing and homelessness. Housing is the essential foundation for anyone's life success, and I believe that reducing the housing cost burden and homelessness across the U.S. is a precondition for addressing broader issues of poverty and inequality.

I have had the great pleasure and honor to serve my community in many ways: as an officer in the Army, as the leader of a nonprofit economic development organization and now as the CEO of a social-impact real estate company. All of these roles have proved to be rewarding. I would encourage Shepherd students and alumni to think broadly about the wide range of opportunities that exist to make a meaningful contribution in their community and to find the one that is best aligned with their skills and life goals. ■

Elizabeth Mugo '19

DETROIT, MICHIGAN



Being involved in Shepherd was pivotal to my career in public policy. I came to W&L with a passion for public service, but Shepherd helped me figure out how to direct that professionally. In fact, a fellow Shepherd alum helped me get my start doing policy research at Mathematica. I was also introduced to the Master of Public Policy degree through the Public Policy and International Affairs (PPIA) program, which I learned about from a fellow Bonner alum.

I now work as a Data Storyteller Fellow at The Skillman Foundation through a joint partnership between the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF) and The Skillman Foundation. In my role, I translate research and data analysis into compelling visualizations and narratives to shape understanding, inform action and support education systems change informed by community organizations, policymakers and youth in Detroit. Additionally, I support evaluation and strategy at CMF to guide continuous improvement processes in Michigan's philanthropic sector. ■