

New club for women and gender minorities in econ

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Features Editor

One of the new clubs currently navigating the charter process is the Wooster Women and Gender Minorities in Economics (WWGME) club. The idea for the creation of this group came from students working collaboratively in their classes and research. Through these experiences, they realized that the support they were providing each other was a valuable asset. Not wanting this network of support and comradery to end after they all graduated, they decided to work towards formalizing their activities in the form of a club. The group is co-advised by Professors of Economics Melanie Long, Brooke Krause and Huitang Tian, and all three advisors look forward to the opportunities and connections this group can create.

"The Wooster economics department's mission is rooted in pluralism," explained Amyaz Moledina, the chair and an associate professor of the department. "This pluralism is not just about what we teach. It is also how we work with our students, recognizing that each of them comes from a different worldview with different and unique capabilities and levels of privilege. I am grateful that our students and faculty support equality and inclusion. They do so with concrete actions. I am really proud to be part of a department that has nurtured and supported the creation of WWGME by our students."

Krause is thrilled to advise such a great group of students who are passionate about creating this student organization. "I am so excited to see this group of students initiate WWGME and to create a space for women and gender minorities within our major," Krause said. "I look forward to working with this group as they get established and connect with other liberal arts colleges."

This club will ultimately benefit those who wish to study economics or generally have a passion for advancing equality within traditionally male-dominated fields. "Dr. Krause, Dr. Tian and I were happy to support their efforts by serving as co-advisors for the club," Long added. "As faculty, we also learn about career development and educational

opportunities through our professional networks and will be passing these on to WWGME. For instance, I am the department's liaison with the American Economic Association's Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession. This professional organization offers many resources that would be helpful for students considering further studies or careers in economics."

The students are even more excited about this upcoming program because as women and gender minorities, the group allows them to feel more empowered and welcomed in the department.

"Economics is mostly seen as a male-dominated subject," acting Public Relations Manager Srushti Chaudhari '22 said. "During my first year on campus, Dr. Moledina talked about how much representation matters in economics, and that has stayed with me throughout my college career. Women and gender minorities who are passionate about it are often discouraged and feel like they don't belong because they don't see others like them in their peers or in the professors."

Acting co-President Mahi Lal echoed this sentiment in a recent interview with the *Voice*, explaining: "In a highly male-dominated space such as the Economics department, something that my female and gender minority majors or minors and I shared in common was this feeling of not belonging. Most of these economics majors were double majors, indicating that they were not comfortable in this space or felt that their needs were not met just by the economics department. Intersectionally speaking, even within the female economics major, I felt like an outsider because these spaces were predominantly white."

She continued with her hopes for what the club might become, saying, "I believe that this club will provide a safe and comfortable space for women like me. With the recent increase in representation in both gender and race in the department, students are already feeling more comfortable. This club will further provide an escape and solidarity to not only those who feel left out, outside of classes, but also to everyone who sees how narrow the field of economics can be."

Tessa Ireton '21, acting treasurer of



The WWGME acting executive board and founding seniors gather on the steps of the Arch. From left to right: Srushti Chaudhari '22, Nasua Labi '21, Mekdes Shiferaw '23, Maggie Dougherty '21, Mahi Lal '22, Rishika Todi '22, Rita Chiboub '21 and Tessa Ireton '21 (Photo by Laura Barnhill '21).

the club, shared more about the club's overall mission and goal. "The mission of WWGME is to elevate female and gender-minority students in the economics field, but I also hope the organization becomes a model through which all economics students develop a community of collaboration where we are comfortable lifting each other as we rise. A space to promote the academic and career success of diverse voices in economics is something that the owners of those voices obviously need and deserve, but every student in the field benefits from the perspectives their peers bring to the conversation. I'm confident that the space that WWGME aims to create on campus can make Wooster's community of economics students even wiser, smarter and more compassionate than before."

Acting Vice President Mekdes Shiferaw '23 spoke on how the club was born. "The idea came from Maggie Dougherty — she was really grateful and inspired by the circle of friends and fellow students she came across as a G.I.S. and economics student and wanted to create a space to formally organize it for others," Shiferaw explained. "Watching [this club] evolve from a group chat to the constitution has been rewarding. Big kudos to the seniors in the team for their time, experience and desire to create something we hope to sustain — I mean, what a legacy."

Part of this legacy would include networking, educational and career advancement programming, including trips to conferences. For example, the group hopes to provide opportunities inspired by the Economics Department-sponsored trip to the Women in Economics Symposium put on by the Federal Reserve in Cleveland last February, which was attended by twenty students who able to learn about gender issues in the field of economics. In addition to conferences and networking, the club hopes to bring light to issues of gender equality globally, nationally and at The College of Wooster. They aim to do this by elevating the voices of women and gender minorities, creating space for them in leadership roles and providing a safe environment and community in which members can share their experiences.

The organization's charter and constitution are set to begin the review process in mid- to late-October, according to Director of Lowry Center and Student Activities Julia Zimmer. The club leaders say they are very excited to begin moving forward with the process. Co-President Maggie Dougherty described the passion of the group, saying "This whole process started by just sending an email with a half-baked idea, and it's hard to believe how far we've come in such a short time since then. I

think it is a testament to how energized everyone is about this idea, giving us the motivation to stay up late writing the constitution long after giving up on our other work. I know all of us, but especially my friends of color in this group, have often felt a sense of imposter syndrome, or have struggled with envisioning ourselves in high-ranking positions in the field. Having such a wonderful group of female economists as our professors, advisors and role models has really inspired us, and to see how we could live up to the example they have set."

Dougherty continued, explaining, "We really just want to leave behind a better department environment for those who come after us. I know my fellow seniors and I are unlikely to benefit directly from the programming and mentorship of this group, but we all want to provide the infrastructure for something great for our underclass members. Personally, I consider many of the younger members in this group to be my little sisters and siblings, and my greatest hope is just to provide a space where they feel supported and empowered to be the wonderful people they are. If we do even that, I feel like we have succeeded."

For more information on WWGME, please contact acting co-presidents Maggie Dougherty '21 and Mahi Lal '22.

Writer Sarah Viren virtually visits English Department

Ellen McAllister
Contributing Writer

It is not every day that you get the chance to hear an award-winning author read and speak about their work, but students and faculty at the College had the opportunity to do just that. Sarah Viren, a translator, author and journalist, spoke to around sixty members of the campus community on Thursday, Oct. 1 via Microsoft Teams. She also met with Assistant Professor of English Kate Beutner's creative writing classes the day before. Viren has won countless awards for her work, including the Riv-

er Teeth Prize and the Great Lakes College Association (GLCA) New Writers Award.

At the beginning of her career, Viren was an award-winning journalist in Florida and Texas for six years. Her articles were published in the *Oxford American*, *Texas Monthly* and *The New York Times Magazine*. She has a masters of fine arts from the University of Iowa and a doctorate from Texas Tech University. In addition, Viren has translated a novella and is co-editing an anthology of essays. She has also written a memoir, *Autobiography of Shadows*, soon to be published. Viren comes with

lots of writing experience and knowledge, so it was a privilege to have her interact with the students.

During the online event, Viren read one of her award-winning essays from her collection titled "Mine," and another unpublished essay. Afterwards, students asked her questions about what inspired her writing career and how she chose her writing topics.

Langston Hood '23, who was meeting Viren for the second time, enjoyed listening to her read her work aloud because authors know how their work should sound and where to put accents and

pauses in their writing. He also appreciated the level of meaning conveyed by the author which readers may not get when reading it alone. When asked about the event, Beutner said, "I enjoyed both the class visit and her reading because of her thoughtful, engaged answers to student questions, especially regarding the use of detail in creative nonfiction writing and how her background as a journalist shaped her writing life." Viren talked about writing as a child and how analyzing that work now has also contributed to her writing style and how it has impacted her spirituality.

Overall, Viren was a joy to listen to because she was able to bring new light to her work, discussing why she liked being an author and encouraging students to continue writing and to keep being themselves.

The College often has the winners of the GLCA Award visit campus to speak about their work, and although these events are currently being held remotely, this event proved it can still be entertaining. If you enjoyed this event, or want to join the next one, Aaron Coleman, another winner of the GLCA New Writers Award, will be speaking on Oct. 21, 2020.

STEM Bash Scatter altered for COVID-19 protocols

Kayla Bertholf
Contributing Writer

Traditions are a large part of Wooster's social experience, although they must be open to change when necessary. This is exactly what happened with Wooster's annual STEM Bash. Usually, students gather in the Knowlton Commons and go table to table with the promise of food and a prize for attending all of the presentations. STEM Bash is a chance for students to learn more about the STEM-focused academic clubs offered on campus.

To accommodate COVID-19 guidelines, this year the STEM Bash became the STEM Bash Scatter. Since they could not all be in one place this year, clubs and organizations that center around STEM were scattered across campus. Astronomy

Club, BCMB Club, Biology Club, Chemistry Club, First-Responders, Geology Club, Greenhouse, Math and CSCI Club, MiSTEM, WiSTEM, Neuroscience Club, Physics Club, Pre-Dental Society, Pre-Health Club and the SSI attended with both in-person and virtual activities, club information and, of course, candy handouts. Abbi Tarburton '23, president of Greenhouse, commented, "This year's STEM Bash was subject to the circumstances and resources we had. Chemistry Club did experiments with liquid nitrogen and Greenhouse did a recycling game. Attendance was low but the people who came enjoyed it."

Events like this are crucial to advertising clubs to the students that may be interested. With more stu-

dents being remote and on-campus events limited, this year it is harder than ever to cultivate interest in doing more STEM outside of STEM classes. A member of Geology Club stated, "It's harder to recruit this year ... It's tougher to get to know people in an academic club." This event helped to bring students of all disciplines and grades together both virtually and in person. With the added incentive of entry into a t-shirt raffle, students were encouraged to visit every club's station or Teams link and get a code word to submit in the STEM Linktree. Although not what some of us are used to, many students got the opportunity to experience a bit more of what Wooster has to offer in a less than traditional way.



President of Greenhouse Abbi Tarburton '23 performs an experiment (Photo courtesy Lily Maclean '22).