

PRACTICES EXCHANGE

NEWSLETTER

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<https://yeswemustcoalition.org>

Issue 54

Growing the Coalition If you know a school that should be a member of the Yes We Must Coalition, please connect us with them. Growing numbers make us stronger in the work we do together and the voice we raise on behalf of low-income students. Please get in touch with Gloria Nemerowicz, President, at glorianemerowicz@yeswemustcoalition.org.

YWMC MEMBER SHOWCASE: Wells College



Wells College is located in Aurora, New York, a small village alongside Cayuga Lake, one of the largest of the Finger Lakes. Founded in 1868 by Henry Wells, the visionary businessman who founded American Express and Wells Fargo & Company, Wells College was established to educate women who would contribute to society's "intellectual culture." In 2005, after 136 years of single-sex education, the College began admitting male students. Today, the College is a nationally recognized co-educational liberal arts college with a diverse student body from many states and countries. Wells became a member of the Yes We Must Coalition in 2022.

The mission of Wells College is to educate students to think critically, reason wisely, and act humanely as they cultivate meaningful lives. A decade ago, the College made clear its

commitment to preparing students for meaningful lives and meaningful work by broadening its program offerings. The College offers both Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees in a diverse field of programs including education, business, health sciences, hospitality management, data analytics, web design, and digital marketing. The College's general education program provides students with the breadth of education and skills needed for today's world and lifelong learning. Wells College has partnerships with Cornell University, community colleges, and graduate programs to extend its reach and support for student learning.



Wells College attracts students from throughout the United States and around the world, with a majority coming from New York State. Approximately 35% of students identify as students of color. Wells is committed to making the education it offers affordable. About 98% of Wells students rely on various scholarships, grants, and other forms of aid, with about 86% receiving need-based aid and 97% receiving merit-based aid.

Wells takes pride in its NCAA Division III athletics program, TRIO and CStep programs for first-generation students, a unique Book Arts program for undergraduates, and summer institutes that bring adults to Aurora to learn together. Wells is also proud to be listed by U.S. News as one of the residential liberal arts colleges in the United States ranked highly for social mobility. Additionally, Wells hosts Syracuse Pathways students who are admitted to Wells as part of a program of preparation for continuing their education at Syracuse University.

Wells College has two programs that extend beyond its core residential mission. Wells in Florence brings students from across the nation to Florence, Italy, for a rigorous educational semester. A new Workforce Partnership program, recently added by the College, connects Wells to corporate partners and individuals, providing a range of micro-credentials and certificates that exhibit the College's commitment to lifelong learning and the value of higher education for career and life. For more information, please contact Susan Henking, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, at shenking@wells.edu.

Institutional Resources/Practices

Bluefield University's Commonwealth Connection Tuition Plan

Higher education is expensive. Ninety-nine percent of on-campus **Bluefield University** (VA) students receive some form of financial assistance. Students are provided institutional aid based on academic performance, athletic abilities, artistic talents, place of residency, and financial need. A list of outside scholarships is provided to each student with the encouragement to pursue tuition assistance grants and reimbursement programs. Staff, working across departments on campus, strive to make higher education affordable and accessible by connecting students with financial aid opportunities.

“We realize that the affordability of higher education continues to be a kitchen table conversation for many families,” said President David Olive at a Board of Trustees meeting in May 2022. “We have crafted our two best tuition models to serve those we were founded to serve 100 years ago both here in our local region of Southwest Virginia and Southern West Virginia, alongside the Commonwealth of Virginia.”

Bluefield's best tuition plan for these students is our Commonwealth Connection scholarship program that was created during Bluefield's centennial and was established to ensure local families have access to the many wonderful features of the University's Christ-centered learning community. All Virginia residents qualify for this special tuition as well as local West Virginia residents in six counties.

The scholarship creates a 50 percent tuition reduction for all Virginia residents and residents of nearby West Virginia counties and includes students from public schools, private schools, and home school programs. In order to qualify, students must be enrolled at the University full-time and maintain a 2.75 or higher GPA to have their tuition reduced from \$27,876 annually to \$13,938. Combined with other sources of financial aid, such as the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant, Pell grant awards, and private scholarships, tuition is dramatically reduced.

Bluefield University also recently benefitted from a scholarship program created by the Tazewell County (VA) Board of Supervisors. The Tazewell County Scholarship provides up to \$2,500 in tuition assistance for up to four semesters. To qualify, students must reside in the county, hold a 3.0 or higher GPA, and complete at least eight hours of community service per semester unless they are part of a reserve military unit.

These two tuition assistance programs are some of the latest ways that Bluefield University reaches more students with a Christ-centered learning community that equips students for servant leadership and professional excellence. For more information, please contact Josh Cline, Vice President for Advancement, at jcline@bluefield.edu.

Submissions for Future Issues

YWMC members are encouraged to submit examples of policies, practices and/or resources that you have found to be effective in promoting student success and that you would like to share with your YWMC colleagues. We are particularly interested in examples of how members are addressing issues of social and racial justice. Send ideas for the newsletter to Barbara Kirby, Operations Manager, barbarakirby@yeswemustcoalition.org.