

2023-24 Annual REPORT



COLUMBUS STATE
UNIVERSITY

WILLIAM B. TURNER CENTER
FOR SERVANT LEADERSHIP

SERVANTLEADERSHIP@COLUMBUSSTATE.EDU

706.507.8770

COLUMBUSSTATE.EDU/SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Message from the Director

Page 1

Impact

Page 2

Facts and Figures

Page 3



Senior Project

Page 4

SL in Oxford

Page 6

Reflections and Retreats

Page 8

Student Learning Outcomes

Page 10



Care Services

Page 12

Staff Profiles

Page 13



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As I reflect on the 2023-2024 academic year, I am filled with deep gratitude for the expansion of the William B. Turner Center for Servant Leadership. This year has brought new challenges, opportunities, and countless moments of growth that have only strengthened our commitment to the principles of servant leadership.

As they always do, our students in the undergraduate Servant Leadership Program have risen to the occasion, demonstrating the power of servant leadership in action. The Class of 2024, through their Senior Project, focused on the theme "Expand, Equip, Expose," addressing several issues—such as health, wellness, and community engagement—that are of vital importance for Columbus' Mill District residents. Their efforts, which we are immensely proud of, provided immediate support to the community and laid the groundwork for lasting change.

We expanded the horizons of our learning about servant leadership by taking our efforts abroad to examine servant leadership in a broader, international context. We created and introduced a new three-credit hour course into our curriculum to allow students to study selected topics related to servant leadership in depth. This year, for the first time, we offered a Study Abroad Program in Oxford, England. The course introduced students to the city of Oxford and Oxford University as well as organizations and individuals (past and present) who aim to improve the state of the world around them. This unique experience allowed students to examine the individuals and organizations in Oxford through the lens of Servant Leadership while also identifying and analyzing the cultural differences at play. Students were also challenged to consider how their experiences abroad will shape their practice of servant leadership in the future. I am sure the lessons from this course will resonate with the students (and instructors) for years to come.

This year, one of our most substantial developments was initiating an effort to create a holistic care system for all CSU students, introducing a Care Services Coordinator position now housed in the William B. Turner Center for Servant Leadership. Our Care Services Coordinator works closely with the Embark Program, a statewide initiative designed to support students who have experienced foster care or homelessness. This new role, which has been instrumental in our efforts, has allowed us to better meet the needs of students facing housing and food insecurities, ensuring they receive the support and resources they need to thrive. We received a \$25,000 grant from the Fanning Institute at the University of Georgia, which we used to purchase inventory for our Food Pantry, buy gift cards for retailers that the students we see often need the most, like Uber and Walmart, and provide housing for students who were experiencing homelessness.

Of course, this year also marked a significant milestone for CSU and the William B. Turner Center for Servant Leadership with the investiture of Dr. Stuart Rayfield as our sixth president. Dr. Rayfield's leadership has already profoundly impacted the undergraduate Servant Leadership Program, and she now has a big job ahead of her as she takes on the many challenges facing the university. We are thrilled that she is our new President and even more excited about her willingness to focus our path forward on student success and innovation.

As we draw the curtains on this eventful year and set our sights on the future, I am deeply moved by the unwavering dedication of our students, staff, faculty, and community partners. Your steadfast support and commitment have been the bedrock of our achievements, and I am profoundly grateful for your contributions. Together, we have made a tangible difference in the lives of others, and I am filled with anticipation for the continued growth and service that lie ahead.

With Heartfelt Gratitude,

Courtney Wilson



IMPACT

During the 2023-24 school year,
64 students in the undergraduate
Servant Leadership Program
completed various types of service
within the Columbus community.

Here is their impact:

3,375

Hours spent both on campus
and within various
organizations in the community

2,794

Hours spent at community
agencies

574

Hours dedicated to the
Senior Project

For a Total of:

7,122

Hours of Service
Impacting the
Columbus Community

382

Hours participating in
Reflections and Retreats

The service that our students
gave to the Columbus, GA,
community has an estimated
value of:

\$51,634

During the 2023-24 academic year, the William B. Turner Center for
Servant Leadership awarded

\$199,916

in scholarship dollars.

Those funds helped 74 students cover the cost of their tuition and fees,
and 9 students participate in Study Abroad programs.

FACTS AND FIGURES

The undergraduate Servant Leadership Program is full of individuals of diverse backgrounds, demographics, and interests.

ETHNICITY

Asian	4
African American	22
White	33
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2
2 or More Races	3

GENDER



11%

FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS

The undergraduate Servant Leadership Program has students from Alabama, Georgia, Germany, Florida, Kentucky, and South Carolina.

GPA

FALL

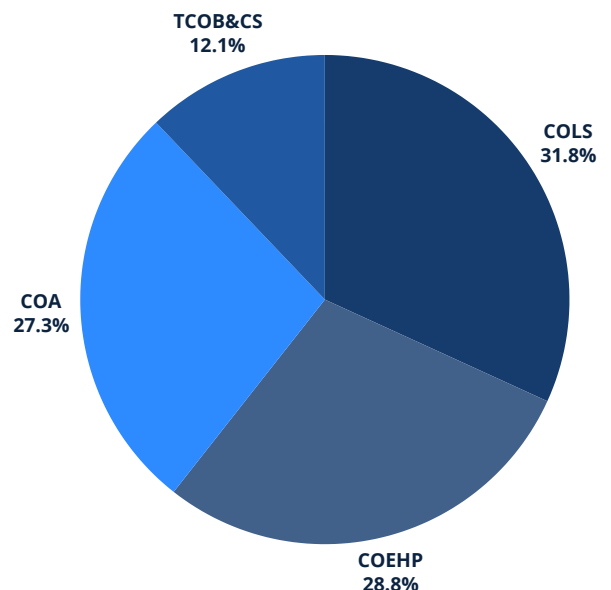
3.36

SPRING

3.58

23 unique majors are represented in the undergraduate Servant Leadership Program.

ACADEMIC COLLEGES



219 CSU STUDENTS COMPLETED LEAD 1705, THE INTRODUCTION TO SERVANT LEADERSHIP COURSE, THIS ACADEMIC YEAR.

SENIOR PROJECT

A highlight and culminating experience within the undergraduate Servant Leadership Program at Columbus State University is the Senior Project, a student-led initiative undertaken in the program's final year. The Senior Project provides an invaluable opportunity for students to practically apply their understanding of servant leadership to address real-world issues within the Columbus, Georgia, community. Through this project, students are empowered to transform their theoretical knowledge into practical leadership applications that exemplify the guiding principles of servant leadership taught to them during their time in the program while benefiting the surrounding community.

The Class of 2024, comprised of 11 dedicated senior members, united their efforts around the theme "Expand, Equip, Expose." Their focus was on addressing issues of health, wellness, community engagement, and education within the Mill District community, which encompasses the historic neighborhoods of City Village, North Highland, Bibb Village, and Anderson Village. As Columbus' industrial sector declined, these neighborhoods faced economic challenges, resulting in increased crime, decreased community engagement, and widespread impoverishment.



During Trunk-or-Treat at Fox Elementary, Karder Samson's pirate themed trunk invited students to test their balance while walking the plank.

The Senior Class contributed to local holiday cheer by participating in the RiverCenter's Gingerbread Village.



Through their Field Day event with the Boys and Girls Club at Fox, Seniors promoted healthy habits through fun physical activities.

The project commenced with the annual Uptown Tree Trail event, which raises funds for the senior class to address their chosen community needs. This event also serves as a community-building opportunity, bringing holiday cheer and gathering as the community gets together on Broadway to witness tree trail lighting.

Throughout the project, the senior class organized various activities and events to address health, wellness, community engagement, and education issues. These initiatives aimed to actively engage children and families at Fox Elementary School while fostering fun, learning, and community building. In collaboration with Fox Elementary and the after-school program Boys and Girls Club, the seniors provided numerous interactive experiences.

The first major event was the Trunk-or-Treat, which featured 12 creatively decorated trunks with Halloween themes and activities tailored for elementary-aged children and their families. This event successfully fostered community connections and enjoyment.

In the spring, the class hosted two additional engaging events or activities. The first was a three-week series of lessons on healthy eating, wellness, and exercise, culminating in an organized field day with the Boys and Girls Club at Fox Elementary. The second event was a health-themed spring fling featuring community partners such as Piedmont Healthcare, Valley Healthcare, The Mill District Inc., MercyMed, and The Food Mill. At this event, families received 110 healthy meals and additional free food at the event, participated in various fun activities, and accessed free health and wellness resources and check-ups.

When not busy hosting events or activities, some project members dedicated their time during school hours to assisting Jolie Brazier of FoodCorps. They helped teach kid-friendly lessons on farming, healthy eating, and the origins of food and also maintained the garden facilities at Fox Elementary. Other students assisted school counselor Mr. Kellog in addressing school-wide needs for uniforms, hygiene products, clothing, and more by hosting drives and collecting these essential items for students and their families.

Meanwhile, other project members interned at Mill District Inc. under Lauren Chambers's stewardship. In their roles, they gained a deeper understanding of the issues affecting the Mill District and assisted with organizing community-wide events and meetings.

The seniors presented their project at CSU's Tower Day, sharing their journey and impact through their poster, "Servant Leadership: Empowering the Mill District Community of Columbus, Georgia." The poster detailed their planning process, the challenges they faced, and the outcomes of their work.



\$10,493.20
Raised by the Senior
Class through the
Uptown Tree Trail



SLP IN OXFORD

For two weeks in July, nine Servant Leadership students, along with instructors Cortney Wilson and Laura Pate, traveled to Oxford and stayed in CSU's very own Spencer House. Thanks to Laura's semester-long stay at the Spencer House as the resident faculty member a year prior, a highly specific and cultivated program was created for the students, which explored the city of Oxford through a lens of 'town and gown.' Oxford, being a university town, has built up two distinct communities over the almost 1000 years of the University's presence, with 'gown' referring to the academic side in reference to the gowns students wear for exams and graduation and 'town' representing the residents of the city.



Students stayed at the Spencer House, donated to CSU by Mr. and Mrs. Kyle Spencer in 2002. They join a long list of CSU alumni who have enjoyed the benefit of a piece of CSU in Oxford, England.



CSU President, Dr. Rayfield, joined students for a tour of Regent's Park College at the University of Oxford. This visit allowed students to gain a deeper understanding how the University of Oxford operates and its unique tutorial system.

While in Oxford, students toured the colleges that make up the University of Oxford, met with people and organizations that highlight the residents' perspectives of Oxford, and engaged in service volunteering at shelters and the Oxford Ronald McDonald House. Students also had the opportunity to go take a day trip to London, themed around leadership in times of war, where they visited the Churchill War Rooms and saw *Les Misérables* on the West End.

One aspect of this trip that really made it stand out was the dialogue partner and case study organizations students participated in. Each student was paired with a resident of Oxford working in their field of study or related to it and met to talk about their field and leadership. This ranged from teachers to doctors and sparked some great conversations and proved to be a unique and unforgettable experience for students. Students also had to pick an organization in Oxford and research it along with meeting someone from the organization and then report to the class on what they learned and if the organization has aspects of servant leadership. This open-ended assignment was a worthy challenge for these students who explored new avenues of the city, which only further deepened their understanding of leadership and the concept of 'town and gown.'



Students were able to tour Ronald McDonald House Charities' Oxford House and hear House Manager John Plumer's approach to leadership before tidying the garden to make it more inviting for guests of the House.

This trip was also a first for many. Some of our students had never been to Europe before, and one had never even flown on a plane before coming with us to Oxford this summer.



Dr. Eric Spears of the Center for Global Engagement connected our group with Ms. Penelope Warner who welcomed us to her home for tea and shared her experience of life and service in Oxford.

"This Servant Leadership course to Oxford was easily one of the greatest experiences in my life so far. Not only did I fly out of the country for the first time in my life, but I also got to explore an amazing area of England with such rich culture and history around every corner. Learning about both the Town and Gown societies here in Oxford was an extreme eye-opener for me and others on this trip. It was also great meeting with my dialogue partner and learning about my agency of choice and their leadership style.

Speaking of leadership style, there are some takeaways from this trip that have enhanced my overall concept of leadership. The main takeaway being that in a field such as this one, there are risks that will have to be taken that could seem impossible at first. But the more you dissect that risk and succumb to it, the better the outcome will be when the dust settles. I don't necessarily know what will happen in the next 6 months, but I know that it will be quite the adventure. Probably not as big as this Oxford course, but who knows?"

- Henry, Theatre Major

To understand the "Town" perspective of Oxford, the group ventured beyond the city center to the area of Cowley. This area grew quickly as the auto industry boomed in the early 20th century.



Tea at The Alice at the historic Randolph Hotel was a great treat for the group as a last group outing.



Blenheim Palace is one England's largest houses with a storied history. Fiza, Reece, and Abigail posed for a picture before racing their way through the hedge maze.

REFLECTIONS AND RETREATS

Reflections and Retreats are a staple in the Servant Leadership Program each semester. They serve not only as a fun and engaging break from classes but also allow students in different classes in the program to meet and make strong connections with each other.



Students enjoying a First Friday Fitness event. This one was a dance class taught by alumnus, JJ Harrison.



Students at a Murder Mystery Night where each person got a character and had to solve the murder.

To give more student involvement and input to the retreats and reflections planned for the program, the reflection committee, made up of students from varying classes and interests in the program, meets to plan reflections. They come together at the start of each semester and some over the summer to plan the events for the upcoming year and semesters. This year's reflection committee had Erin Billiot, Ethan McEntyre, Zachary Griffith, Vinh Huynh, Ta'Mya Talley, Britney Yann, Joshua Jackson, and Jada Washington as members.



Students are encouraged to come to our holiday luncheon in pajamas. Karder is on theme with "Ralphie's Bunny Suit."



During the LEO Retreat, first-year students and seniors on the green team worked to creatively build a sturdy tower made of straws and tape.



Jada in character for the Murder Mystery Party. It's always fun to play a new role!

This year's 15+ reflections included program classics like Convocation, the Holiday Luncheon, and the Spring Celebration Event. We also had some new fun events, such as DIY Flowers, a murder mystery, and dodgeball. Another program classic, The Spring Retreat, an overnight trip, had an exciting location change but kept the famous Cottage Cookoff as part of the retreat itinerary.

In the Fall, 25 freshmen and 8 seniors went on the LEO retreat, a 2-day immersive leadership retreat to get freshmen ready for the program and life at CSU and allow for seniors to act as mentors to the incoming freshman class. While at the retreat, students went through leadership and team-oriented activities and then had downtime at the pool and around the retreat's campus. To wrap up the retreat, students get to tour and explore a few local agencies to volunteer at in the upcoming year. This year, students toured Feeding the Valley, St. Anne Community Outreach, Open Door Community Outreach, and the WC Bradley Co. We are so grateful to our community partners during the retreat and throughout the school year for allowing our students to volunteer with them.

In the spring, students and staff went to Uchee Creek for an overnight retreat. While at the retreat, students are tasked with creating a themed meal to represent their cabin. Students grocery shop using their provided budget and cook their themed meals in the cabin. Then they present their meal to the judges in hopes of winning the coveted Silver Spoon Award. On day two, students are split into teams for a field day of team-building games. Students get the chance to work together and apply Servant Leadership in various games and activities such as Dizzy Kickball and Ultimate Beach Towel Volleyball.

In addition to the various retreats and reflections offered, students can engage with each other and talk about what they learn in class, through book clubs and "not-a-book clubs." This year's books had students exploring and discussing leadership in *The Bean Trees* by Barbara Kingsolver and *Talking to Strangers* by Malcolm Gladwell. "Not-a-book-clubs" are an opportunity where students watch a limited series or a season of a show and have a book club discussion with those, this year that was "Parks and Recreation" and "The Good Place."

The reflection committee did a wonderful job not only coordinating and setting up these sessions but also facilitating and leading the meetings with deep conversation.

Having Servant Leadership students participate in the decision-making and planning process for retreats and reflections brings new life and exciting energy to these events throughout the semester. The Reflection Planning Committee is also a great opportunity for those students to learn new skills and put some of what they learn in the program into practice. We cannot wait to see what they have in store next year!



During our Spring Retreat, students played a fun game of ultimate beach towel volleyball, developed by our student Britney.



Students found a creative outlet in making flowers out of pipe cleaners during the stress of midterm exams.



Students showing off their ornaments at the White Elephant exchange.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

With the increasingly competitive higher education landscape, institutions face more pressure to report and account for their students' performance. This has created an environment of heightened accountability, in which we are expected to identify and anticipate trends in student learning. As such, data has become increasingly important for us because we now understand that data is a powerful tool that can help us make informed decisions and improve teaching effectiveness.

By analyzing student performance trends, we will be able to identify areas of improvement and tailor instruction to meet individual learning needs. Moving forward, we want to assess the Servant Leadership Program more thoroughly by measuring our students' growth and learning through more direct methods. To illustrate one of the many ways we currently evaluate what students learn in the undergraduate Servant Leadership Program, we have displayed some of the qualitative data we collected this year in the boxes below.

All academic programs have student learning outcomes (SLOs) that describe the competencies students are expected to demonstrate upon completing the program. The SLOs for the undergraduate Servant Leadership Program are listed in bold print at the top of each of the boxes below. One of the ways in which we assess SLOs for our students is through their final reflective papers. In their final assignment for the Servant Leadership Program, students are asked to reflect on what they have experienced and learned and on the growth that they have seen in themselves during their time in the program. Here is how the reflections from the Class of 2024 align with the Servant Leadership Program's SLOs.

These reflections demonstrate the alignment of the student's experiences with the Servant Leadership Program's SLOs, providing validation of the effectiveness of our curriculum and programming.

Students will be able to apply the principles and practices of servant leadership in a "real world" context.

Several students expressed how often they were able to apply the principles of servant leadership through their volunteer work and throughout the Senior Project.

Rachel Bello shared how she has been able to recognize what she learned in servant leadership courses present in the great work that is being done at MercyMed: "I have seen Kouzes and Posner's practices being exemplified in MercyMed's mission and methods of providing healthcare."

Vinh Huynh shared how he saw servant leadership in action in Costa Rica during the time he and his classmates were there for a 2023 Spring Break Study Abroad Program: "I was able to learn about leadership and how important it is for leaders to focus on building a sustainable community. I really appreciated the opportunity to get to witness servant leadership in another context."

Students will exhibit enhanced life skills such as self-awareness, interpersonal skills, communication skills, networking skills, time management, and self-confidence.

Students frequently mentioned the development of life skills such as self-awareness and communication.

Karder Samson reflected on how the program improved his delegation and leadership through assessments like MBTI and Emergenetics.

Time management was an essential skill developed by Mariah Lewis and Tyagjah Groce, who navigated busy schedules while contributing to the Senior Project.

Tyagjah shared: "During our Fall 2023 semester, my lack of motivation for nursing and college resulted in me managing my time poorly and falling behind. However, my commitment and dedication to the Senior Project allowed me to implement better time management practices and to contribute more to our project during the Spring semester."

Students will build a network of peers as well as a sense of community on the Columbus State University campus.

Many students highlighted the sense of community that they built without others, the SL staff, and external community partners throughout their time in the Servant Leadership Program.

Lydia Rice and Jada Washington reflected on how the program helped them develop deeper connections with peers and mentors.

"This program has left a profound impact on my life. It has not only provided me with experiences and skills, but I have also made some amazing friends, even lifelong friends. The camaraderie and support we shared throughout the challenges and rough patches of the project have strengthened our bonds and made our success even sweeter. Each obstacle we faced served as an opportunity for growth and learning, shaping me into a more resilient and adaptable person. I will forever be grateful that I joined this program four years ago." – Kensley Zieba

Students will be able to identify the needs of others and articulate how they can contribute meaningfully to those needs.

Emily Urban and Nicole Paul articulated a clear understanding of how they could make a difference in the lives of others. Emily even identified teaching as her calling through her work with Fox Elementary.

"A lot of people go through life without finding that passion and where they truly belong, but I am lucky to have had the Servant Leadership Program, which brought me that." – Emily Urban

Students like Zack Griffith and Karder Samson also noted how their involvement in the Senior Project gave them practical experiences that will have a lasting impact on how they lead.

Zack shared: "I think the strength of the project is it forces you to actually practice what you learned. [...] I recognize that there is a lot more that I could be doing to help grow myself and others as a leader, and I feel like this project served as a mirror for me to reflect on my actual servant leadership practices."

WHAT ARE THEY UP TO NOW?



Rachel Bello
Employed at MercyMed and applying for medical school



Zachary Griffith
Working as a medical scribe and applying for medical school



Tyagjah Groce
Completing her BSN at CSU in May 2025



Vinh Huynh
Creating art in Columbus and applying to MFA programs



Mariah Lewis
MCSD Teacher, Earning her Masters



Nicole Paul
Community Ambassador for The Mill District



Lydia Rice
Resident Teaching Artist at Lexington Children's Theatre



Karder Samson
Nurse at St. Francis



Emily Urban
Teacher at Fox Elementary



Jada Washington
Teacher in Newton County



Kensley Zieba
Marketing for Live30A

CARE SERVICES

This year, we were excited to add a new component to the William B. Turner Center for Servant Leadership by formalizing our support services for all CSU students into a more coherent system. In an effort to streamline the services that we offer to students experiencing housing or food insecurities, we established a Care Services Coordinator position to allow greater focus on students' individual needs. This position connects students to campus and community resources, provides outreach and follow-up to students who need ongoing support services, and oversees the Food Pantry at CSU. Our Care Services Coordinator is also the driving force behind our Embark Program, a statewide initiative designed to provide resources and support to students who have experienced foster care or homelessness.

The need for such services is more pressing than ever. Nationally, it is estimated that 14% of college students experience homelessness at some point during their academic journey, with many more facing food insecurities. A 2023 survey by the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice found that 39% of students at four-year institutions experienced food insecurity within the past 30 days, while 48% of students reported being housing insecure in the previous year. These challenges are not abstract numbers; they represent the real, daily struggles that our CSU students experience.

Students may find themselves in need of Care Services for a variety of reasons. Whether it's the absence of familial support, the impact of unexpected traumatic events, or changes in financial, social, or academic circumstances, we understand that these challenges can call for additional support and encouragement for a student. We empathize with their difficulties and are here to provide the necessary support. This past year alone, our Food Pantry served over 137 unique students. Through our Embark Program, we connected approximately 25 students with critical resources, ranging from emergency housing to mental health support.

The Care Services Program is a natural extension of the William B. Turner Center for Servant Leadership, as it embodies the values of a servant leader. Through our Care Services programming, we aim to assist students in need in building their community and connections. We aim to inspire and empower them to overcome their challenges and envision a brighter future by providing them with resources and opportunities. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that every student, regardless of their circumstances, has the support they need to succeed academically and personally, transforming adversity into a stepping stone toward a brighter future.

During the 2023-24 academic year, the William B. Turner Center for Servant Leadership:

- Raised \$32,052 for Care Services, which included a \$25,000 grant from the Fanning Institute at the University of Georgia.
- Collected more than \$600 in gift cards for students in need from the CSU Faculty and Staff during the Holiday Season.
- Filled 346 requests for 137 individual students experiencing food insecurities through our Food Pantry.
- Worked with 14 different students experiencing housing insecurities.
- Distributed approximately \$6,600 from our Embark Fund to students experiencing housing insecurities to cover various living experiences.

STAFF PROFILES



Cortney Wilson

In her role as the Director of the William B. Turner Center for Servant Leadership, Cortney teaches many of the academic courses offered in the undergraduate Servant Leadership Program, works collaboratively with other departments on campus that offer student leadership development opportunities for all CSU students, and oversees the campus's Embark Program and its Food Pantry.



Laura Pate

As the Assistant Director for the William B. Turner Center for Servant Leadership, Laura is a key figure in the undergraduate Servant Leadership Program. She teaches several courses but also plays a crucial role in coordinating all of the program's engaging activities and events. Her dedication and organizational skills are instrumental in the success of these initiatives.



Theresa Donahoe

Theresa joined the Center for Servant Leadership in February 2023 as the Care Services Coordinator, a newly established role at CSU. In this capacity, she provides critical support to students in need, including access to food, temporary housing, and other essential services. Theresa works directly with students to help them navigate the complex challenges faced by vulnerable populations, ensuring they feel supported and empowered throughout their academic journey.



Paige Abney

Paige joined the Center for Servant Leadership staff as a student assistant in January 2023. Paige is an active member of the undergraduate Servant Leadership Program and is majoring in Theatre Education at Columbus State University. Paige is the Business Manager for Alpha Psi Omega, a theatre honor society at CSU and has volunteered regularly with Clubview Elementary while in the Servant Leadership Program. Paige is from Cumming, Georgia, where she graduated from West Forsyth High School in 2022.



Charlie Hearn

Charlie joined the Center for Servant Leadership staff as a student assistant in January 2023. Charlie is a member of the undergraduate Servant Leadership Program and is majoring in Theatre Education at Columbus State University. He is also a member of Alpha Psi Omega and Vice President of Honoris Causa within the Honors College at CSU. Charlie is from Columbus, where he graduated from Columbus High School in 2022.



COLUMBUS STATE
UNIVERSITY

WILLIAM B. TURNER CENTER
FOR SERVANT LEADERSHIP

SERVANTLEADERSHIP@COLUMBUSSTATE.EDU

706.507.8770

COLUMBUSSTATE.EDU/SERVANT-LEADERSHIP