

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023



DYER CENTER

FOR INNOVATION + ENTREPRENEURSHIP

LAFAYETTE COLLEGE

Message from the Dyer Center



Throughout the past year, we at the Dyer Center have continued to not only scale our most successful programs to build lasting impact, but also partner with Lafayette and Easton community members to innovate new avenues of entrepreneurial education for our students. We also brought dynamic speakers to campus who are global leaders in education, tech, social innovation, and entrepreneurship—including several notable alumni, whom you'll see highlighted in this annual report. In doing so, we have built a bridge between our past successes and our future goals, which—as the engineering professor in me can appreciate—simultaneously strengthens our foundation and enhances our outreach to, and involvement with, the campus and greater community.

Our investment in students' entrepreneurial growth continues to scale through our D.Y.E.R. (Designing Your Entrepreneurial Roadmap) Fellowship. We finished the year with two cohorts (five second year students, 10 first year students) who are building skills, developing mindsets, mapping and expanding their ecosystems, creating value for external organizations, and launching ventures to improve our campus community. We were also excited to interview and accept our third cohort of ten students who began their entrepreneurial journey in the Fall of 2023. We presented our program's success at the 2022 Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers (GCEC) Conference to great interest. The students continue to benefit from the consistent mentoring, financial support, and networking from our dedicated Dyer Center staff and alumni.

We also have welcomed **Rex Ahene**, professor emeritus of economics, as our Real Estate Adviser in Residence. Ahene has spearheaded the development of the comprehensive real estate program Pathways to Real Estate Investment, which incorporates regular workshops led by leading industry experts

Meet the New Director



Greetings, Lafayette College community! I stepped into the director role at the Dyer Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship with immense enthusiasm and a deep sense of purpose. My journey here has been driven by a profound belief in the power of innovation and entrepreneurship to transform lives and communities. I am honored to be entrusted with guiding our talented students on their

entrepreneurial journeys. At the heart of my vision lies a passionate commitment to nurturing creativity and empowering our students to move from passion to action. The Dyer Center is a place of inspiration, providing a nurturing environment where innovative thinking thrives. As your new director, I am dedicated

in conversation with students. Students can then participate in Real Estate Investment Decision Making, a new course developed by Ahene that introduces students to the feasibility and interdisciplinary complexity of sustainable investment solutions. Students who complete the course also receive an Urban Land Institute (ULI) certification and get to compete in our annual Real Estate Case Competition.

Primarily due to our early successes in the development of immersive entrepreneurship education and real estate programs at a primarily liberal arts institution, we were recognized by the GCEC with the award for Outstanding Emerging Entrepreneurship Center for schools with fewer than 5,000 students. This award is shared with all of the students, alumni, staff, administrators, faculty, and supporters who have helped the Dyer Center become a leader in entrepreneurship education.

We look forward to the next academic year, in which we will continue to innovate with new entrepreneurial-minded curricular and co-curricular programming, building an ever larger ecosystem of students, faculty, and staff who are engaged in entrepreneurial activities both in their courses and the community. We also have the great fortune to welcome a new center director, **Rita Chesterton**, who brings a wealth of knowledge and experience—as well as an impressive background in entrepreneurship education and practice—to the role. In short, the Dyer Center and its programming have continued to thrive in the past year, and we are excited about the future. We truly appreciate and recognize the contributions of so many students, faculty, staff, alumni, community members, and partners to help us realize our mission, and we look forward to continuing to grow and serve the entrepreneurial community at Lafayette.

TOBIAS ROSSMANN
Interim Director of Innovation and Entrepreneurship
Faculty Advisor 2023 -2024

to fostering a culture that encourages bold ideas and supports students in transforming these ideas into tangible real-world solutions. I am excited to collaborate with our faculty, dedicated alumni, and, most importantly, our students as we embark on a journey that celebrates innovation, embraces diversity, and propels dreams into the realm of possibility. Together, we will not just dream, but dare; we will not merely ideate, but innovate; we will not just think, but do. Let's embark on this exciting adventure together, creating a future where the spirit of innovation knows no bounds! Cur Non.

RITA CHESTERTON
Bradbury Dyer III '64 Director for
Innovation and Entrepreneurship

by THE NUMBERS

2022-2023 ACADEMIC YEAR

2

BSA TEAMS

1

GCEC
AWARD

7

REAL ESTATE PANEL/
SPEAKER EVENTS

26

WORKSHOPS/SPEAKERS

2

COMPETITIONS

23

STUDENT
CONSULTATIONS

853

PARTICIPANTS

22

ULI CERTIFICATES

3

BOOT CAMPS

17

COURSERA AND PODIUM
CERTIFICATES EARNED

2

ENTREPRENEURS-
IN-RESIDENCE

2

INNOVATORS-
IN-RESIDENCE

4

COURSES



Rachel Carr



Chad Beyer



Marty Johnson



Chirag Nijjer '20

15

FELLOWS

HIGHLIGHTS

GROWTH

GLOBAL RECOGNITION! ▶

The Dyer Center was honored with the 2022 Award for Outstanding Emerging Center at schools with fewer than 5,000 students by the Global Consortium for Entrepreneurship Centers (GCEC) at their annual conference. **Tobias Rossmann** accepted the award, commenting on its significance: "We have been able to build a successful entrepreneurship center on campus that really supports the innovative ideas and capabilities of our students... And now we've been recognized for having built that kind of element on campus by the flagship conference for university-based entrepreneurship centers across the United States."



PROGRAMMING—COMPETITIONS AND EVENTS

TALKS ▶

What makes the Dyer Center the inspiring and bustling environment it is are the people that pass through it, leaving their mark. This year, we held various lectures, consisting of corporate partners and notable alumni, including:

- **Remy Oktay '24**—Value of Lafarm; Journey of Innovation (Flyover talk)
- **Sharad Sagar**, CEO Dexterity Global—Bridging the Gap
- **Meghan Haddad '22**—Life after Lafayette
- **Chirag Nijjer '20**—Life after Lafayette
- **Leidy Klotz '00**—SUBTRACT The Untapped Science of Less
- **Melanie Lino**—Breaking Bread
- **Simmone Taitt '04**—Poppyseed Health
- **Heather Braun '97**—Enriching Engagement and Design Thinking



▲ **Melanie Lino**



▲ **Meghan Haddad '22**



▲ **Simmone Taitt '04**



▲ **Leidy Klotz '00**



▲ **Swings Initiative**



▲ **Sharad Sagar**

◀ ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE CLASSROOM

In spring 2023, the Dyer Center supported the development of a new course titled Real Estate Investment Decision Analysis Seminar. Taught by **Rex Ahene**, professor emeritus of economics, INDS 292 provides students with the resources to understand the interdisciplinary complexities of real estate projects in our communities. In addition to classroom learning, students participating in the course were able to complete an Urban Land Institute Certificate, and gain valuable knowledge and connections from alumni

in the field. This new course adds to these entrepreneurship-centered courses offered during the year:

- Real Estate Investment Feasibility Analysis Seminar, taught by **Rex Ahene**
- Social Entrepreneurship, taught by **Rachel Hogan Carr**
- Biotechnology Innovation, taught by **Chad Beyer**
- High Tech Startup, taught by **Sandy Calvijo**



▲ **Martin Johnson**

◀ INNOVATORS IN RESIDENCE

Martin Johnson and **Chirag Nijjer '20** joined the Dyer Center this year as seasoned entrepreneurs with knowledge and stories to share with students. Johnson gave a talk on social entrepreneurship, specifically about building an organization for change. Johnson also let students in on secrets to pitching social ventures. Nijjer, a recent Lafayette alumnus, shared his experience through a series of talks during Innovation Week, which covered topics like life after Lafayette, starting an online hustle, understanding new tech in plain English, and networking with impact.



▲ **Chirag Nijjer '20** ▶

HIGHLIGHTS



◀ BIG IDEA PITCH COMPETITION

The Dyer Center held its annual Big Idea Pitch Competition in the spring. This year, six student teams pitched their ideas to judges **Chirag Nijjer '20**, Chad Beyer, and Rachel Hogan Carr. The teams competed for a chance to win prize money by preparing 12-minute formal pitches for their business ideas. **Kashif Chopra '26**, **Prem Kumar '26**, and **Christopher Kirch '26** took the first place prize of \$1,250 for their venture idea, Spotr. Spotr was designed to help college and university students find available study rooms on campus in real time.



SUPPORTING STUDENTS ▶

Remy Oktay '24 launched two ventures this year: one in the sky, and one on the ground.

Taking to the skies, Remy flew the first electric airplane flyover of a sporting event at the 2022 Lafayette-Lehigh Rivalry game. While planning his ambitious project, he worked from the Dyer Center every day, “seeing its value as a hub for mentorship and other minds that shared the drive and vision for the flyover,” Oktay says. To take his project from dream to reality, Oktay pulled together a team of over 100 students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and friends of the College, with the Dyer Center at the core. Oktay even produced a short documentary about his experience, *Silent Skies*, which premiered at San Francisco Climate Week.

Oktay’s next project was closer to the ground. After seeing the joy that the swings he installed as part of a class project brought to campus, he recognized there was an opportunity to bring joy to other campuses. To bring his idea to life, Oktay founded a team with his fellow Lafayette students, and participated in the **Big Idea Pitch Competition**. He then had the opportunity to take his idea a step further with the **Bergh Summer Accelerator**. Oktay devoted his summer to this venture, where he and his team had the opportunity to continue working on Branch Out. The team spent just over 950 hours developing their business model, prototyping the product and connecting with customers. “With Dyer Center staff guidance, we are now continuing to work on the various aspects of the business through independent studies and my thesis project,” Oktay says. “We’ll soon be ready to publicly launch, and I couldn’t be more grateful to the whole Dyer community, which nurtured these ventures, or more excited for what’s to come this year!”

The Dyer Center is committed to helping students achieve and carry out their goals and passions, providing aid, mentorship, and coaching every step of the way. Five other notable students were supported by the center. **Jeffrey Ramirez '23** worked closely with Prof. Rex Ahene to pursue a career in real estate, as he was able to attend the eCornell CRE course and gain more proficiency in the field. Following a similar path, **Ben Fisher '25** worked with a partner of the Dyer Center, the Real Estate Lab, to kick-start his real estate journey. **Angela Busheska '25** received support in establishing *Passionate Pards*, a platform for Lafayette students to share their skills with each other. **Swetha Tadisina '25** won a 2023 Austin Regional Cyber 9/12 Strategy Challenge.



▲ Remy Oktay '24

REAL ESTATE CASE COMPETITION ▶

The fifth annual Real Estate Case Competition returned to an in-person format after being online the previous year. Student teams comprised both students who were enrolled in the Real Estate Seminar and other students from across campus with an interest in real estate.

Alumni and industry experts provided additional support for students participating in the competition through a real estate speaker series, which included a CRE ProForma Analysis with **Jen Unterberger '95** and **Dallas Pulliam '98**; a CRE Panel with **Scott Van Cleef '85**, **JB Reilly '83**, **Jared Mast '04**, **Jack Reilly '18**, and Karen Adams; as well as a Financial Modeling presentation with **John Pierce '81**. These sessions were open to all Lafayette students. All participants had access to ULI’s Foundation of Real Estate educational models to prepare their presentations for a panel of industry experts. This year’s competition involved the economic feasibility of construction of The Marquis, a development project that would provide more housing in a historic and vibrant area of Easton. Judges for this year’s competition were **William Felton P'23**, **Dan Huffenus '86**, Robert DiLorezno, and **Jennifer Unterberger '95**. The first prize winner was Ground Up LLC, composed of **Zayn Daniels '23**, **Kwame Adu-Kyei '24**, and **Safina Davis '26**.



BERGH SUMMER ACCELERATOR ▶

The Bergh '79 summer accelerator provides students with seed funding, mentorship, and programming designed to help them accelerate the launch of their venture over the course of one summer.

This year two student teams were accepted into the summer accelerator. Chaotic Carnival, an interactive board game, and Branch Out, on-campus swings that create happiness featured on our cover.



Chaotic Carnival—Matt Moise '24 ▶



◀ Branch Out—
Remy Oktay '24,
Jaden Stone '24,
Swetha Tadisina '25
and Sarah Pezzino '26

Photo: Patrick Hansell '24

“The Dyer Center was the key to unlocking my real estate potential. They not only funded my professional development at Cornell University, but also empowered me as a student assistant in the Real Estate Investment Decision course. They offered me a place to apply my knowledge through creating content for some of the center’s real estate mentoring projects and grow as an aspiring professional. Thanks to their support, I gained the knowledge and confidence to launch my career at a prestigious company like CBRE.”

—JEFFREY RAMIREZ '23



DYER FELLOW UPDATES

2025 D.Y.E.R. FELLOWS

The 2025 D.Y.E.R. Fellows commenced their second year of the fellowship by establishing ventures that served the good of the Lafayette community, allowing them to gain experience and knowledge on the ins and outs of what it takes to start an entrepreneurial venture—including networking, hosting workshops, contacting higher-ups, and creating pitches.

One team, consisting of **Daniel Andrade '25** and **Swetha Tadisina '25**, tackled the topic of mobility on campus and in the Easton community. They researched the LCAT bus lines, conducting interviews with students and bus drivers while testing out the rides themselves, and held meetings with authorities who managed the system. Addressing the disconnect between Lafayette students and Easton residents,

they established the organization named the Lafayette Easton Alliance, which will officially launch during the 2023-24 academic year.

Jahi Heath '25 and **Dina Azar '25** found their shared passion for supporting Lafayette community members who run side hustles, as they run their own. Their goal is to establish connections amongst students who have created something of their own in hopes of providing a space for mentorship, shared resources, and increased visibility of their achievements. Heath and Azar have held marketing workshops, business card designing sessions, and user-research-centered sessions that brought students together to discuss their pain points. They also are in the process of bringing a venture fair to campus.



JAHI HEATH '25
Washington, D.C.
Engineering Studies & Architecture Minor
Projects: PPL Electric and Utilities (System Engineer Intern), Greater Easton Development Partnership (Project Manager)
Accomplishments: Project Management Google Certificate



DINA AZAR '25
Cresskill, NJ
International Affairs and French
Projects: PPL corporation project management intern, The Century Promise UX Designer, Project of Easton UX Designer, Fair Housing for All Communications specialist, Nail technician and business founder
Accomplishments: UX Design Google Certificate



DANIEL WEISPFENNING '25
Ridgewood, N.J.
Mechanical Engineering
Projects: GEDP—Park Access Equity Project in Easton
Accomplishments: Data Analytics Google Certificate



SWETHA TADISINA '25
Hyderabad, India
Computer Science and Engineering Studies
Projects: Developed a database system for ProjeCt of Easton, studied 19th century India's railway and telegraph network as a Digital Humanities Summer Scholar, started the Lafayette Data Community, kickstarted Lafayette Easton Alliance, working in the Hendrickson lab on computational chemistry research
Accomplishments: Project Management Google Certificate



DANIEL ANDRADE '25
Quito, Ecuador
Mechanical Engineering
Projects: Data Analytics Bootcamp, Century Promise Project, kickstarted Lafayette Easton Alliance, Club Leadership includes ISA Social Chair (Sophomore), HSL Event (Sophomore)
Accomplishments: Project Management Google Certificate

2026 D.Y.E.R. FELLOWS



KUSUM SEBEDI '26
Pokhara, Nepal
Mechanical Engineering
Projects: Fellowship as student assistant at Special Collections and College Archives, Bergh Summer Research Scholar, Model U.N. Club, International Students Association, Engineers without Borders
Accomplishments: Google Data Analytics certificate



KASHIF CHOPRA '26
Gurgaon, India
Electrical and Computer Engineering
Projects: Community Bike Works volunteer, Dyer Center Pitch Competition, Brain-Computer Interface Lab volunteer, Model U.N. Club vice president
Accomplishments: Google Project Management certificate



AKEENA HALL '26
Bronx, N.Y.
Computer Science and Africana Studies
Projects: Middletown Township, Meyner Center data analysis
Accomplishments: Google Data Analytics certificate



JAMES KOHLER '26
Larchmont, N.Y.
Economics and Film and Media Studies
Projects: Community Bike Works volunteer, Dyer Center content creator
Accomplishments: Google Project Management certificate



PREM KUMAR '26
Gonpura, India
International Affairs
Projects: First-year student representative, Dyer Center Pitch Competition participant, Wilson Area Communities That Care volunteer, International Students Association equipment project participant
Accomplishments: Google Project Management certificate



FATMA ELBANNA '26
Alexandria, Egypt
Chemical Engineering and International Studies
Projects: LaFarm and Landis Center summer fellow
Accomplishments: Google Project Management certificate



SARAH PEZZINO '26
Nazareth, Pa.
Biology
Projects: Century Promise
Accomplishments: Google UX Design certificate



LANDY RAKOTOARISON '26
Antananarivo, Madagascar
Computer Science
Projects: Nurture Nature Center, Aviation Security for Madagascar airline
Accomplishments: Google AI Engineering and Project Management certificates, Bergh Family Fellow



BAHADIR KARABULUT '26
Mersin, Turkey
Computer Science and Economics
Projects: The Village on College Hill volunteer
Accomplishments: Google UX Design certificate



RENI MOKRII '26
Moscow, Russia
Economics and Psychology
Projects: Bergh Startup Accelerator, EXCEL Scholar, Lafayette Leadership Education Committee, Whitman Fellow, LRAJE, Hillel Society
Internships: Robert B. and Helen S. Meyner Center for the Study of State and Local Government, TFAS D.C., National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)

THANKS TO SPONSORS, PARTNERS AND DONORS

Anonymous (2)
 Margery C. Bennett '78
 Abram I. Bluestein '69
 Christopher Cathcart '67
 Dr. Donald R. Chambers P'09
 Alissa A. Coffey '12
 Ian M. Comisky P'26
 Marci Comisky P'26
 Hilary Craig P'25
 Robert R. Craig '84 P'25
 Dr. Deborah E. Dixon '79
 Eric S. Docknevich '13
 Rebecca H. Docknevich '12
 Laura Zito Dodds '15
 Ryan M. Dodds '15
 Deirdre K. Dunn-Haddad P'22
 Bradbury Dyer, III '64
 Talton R. Embry
 Mario J. Gabelli
 Oyuntugs Gantumur '23
 Stacey A. Gianos-Miranda '85 P'12
 Virginia Gliedman

Tye J. Gonser '02
 Ilene S. Gordon
 Bruce A. Graham '86 P'23
 Meghan Deirdre Haddad '22
 William N. Haddad, Sr. P'22
 Joseph P. Hafer '63 P'87
 Julia Fleener Hamrick '81
 Peter C. Hedley '01
 Maureen J. Hinchey P'20'22
 William M. Hinchey P'20'22
 Henry Thomas Hipp '22
 Townes Johnson
 Valerie H. Kay P'23
 Carol Ashton Keefe '82 P'12
 Harry V. Keefe, III '83 P'12
 Matthew K. Keefe
 Paula J. Kumpf '84
 Roger E. Manzano '06
 Roger Emilio Manzano, Jr. P'06
 Tara C. Mayo '10
 William E. McClure, Jr. '63
 Dr. Joseph D. Miranda '83 P'12

Debra A. Mohr P'11
 Richard J. Mohr, Jr. '82 P'11
 Latham G. Pali '98
 Robert G. Pali '67 P'98
 Anna Avery Pellecchia Pezon '13
 Mathew D. Pezon '10
 James N. Proctor '96
 Kara H. Proctor
 Dr. George E. Rossmann '62
 Lynn L. Rossmann
 William J. Starr '76
 John C. Stephenson '05
 Barbara Strasburg Tucker '84 P'08'11
 William R. Tucker '81 P'08'11
 Randy L. Uhler
 C. Scott Van Cleef '85 P'23
 Lucia P. Van Cleef P'23
 Ellen Poriles Weiler
 Victoria Joy Yordt '20

NOTE FROM Brad

ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSETS NEEDED

The surge in interest in entrepreneurial education following the advent of COVID-19 illustrated that periods of rapid change—new technology, a pandemic, or heightened attention to the risks of climate change—bring out the need or desire for learnings about entrepreneurship... the mindset and both the hard and soft skills. Additionally, I believe that changes underway in the nature of our capitalist system as well as an evolving more critical view of corporate responsibility will create an environment that favors an expanded need for those possessing of the entrepreneurial mindset and skills.

“*Students realize that creating their business or joining young and agile companies can provide significant opportunities to shape the world and solve environmental and social problems.*”¹

Over the past 30-40 years, what has been described as “crony capitalism” has overrun the free market capitalism of Milton Friedman. It has resulted in highly concentrated oligopolistic industry structures, which by their very nature discourage new entrants—think startups and entrepreneurs. This is beginning to change as antitrust enforcement, after almost total dormancy since the Reagan presidency, is becoming increasingly aggressive. In addition to the apparent sunset of crony capitalism, we are experiencing a reemergence of “state capitalism.” COVID, the increasing fear of global warming consequences, and a heightened awareness of semiconductor supply threats have led to an intrusion of the federal government further into the realm

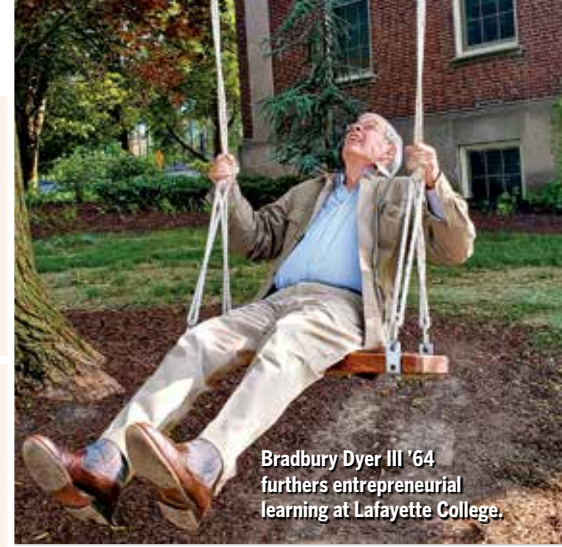
of capitalism as it allocates large financial resources through such recent legislation as the Inflation Reduction Act and the CHIPS and Science Act.

At its extreme, crony capitalism inhibited new entrants and entrepreneurial activity. State capitalism, with its allocation of vast financial resources, will encourage innovation and correspondingly new businesses—again, think startups and entrepreneurship.

There also are increasing calls for a broader view of corporate responsibility; a reaction to the excesses reflected in “Welchian capitalism” (as in Jack), which downplayed responsibilities to employees, the communities in which it operated, and to the environment. This is manifesting itself as a new “stakeholders’ capitalism.” The operating principles that successfully ensure this new stakeholders capitalism will, I believe, be far different from those of companies solely focused on stockholders returns, and will require a more robust staffing with employees possessing an entrepreneurial mindset.

In 2008, the Kauffman Foundation issued a report “Entrepreneurship in American Higher Education.” This reflected the findings of a panel of educators that the foundation had convened to provide insight and advise on the place of entrepreneurship in American colleges and universities. The panel concluded that “entrepreneurship is higher education’s authentic and natural ally.” The report went on to opine that “our nation’s future significantly depends on our nurturing that alliance.” It furthermore allowed “an entrepreneurial society will not emerge or persist by accident. We will have to build it.”

The evolving forces I have referenced make the case that entrepreneurship education has become of even greater importance, and there is widespread anecdotal evidence of a significant recent increase in student interest in entrepreneurial education. At the Dyer Center, our goal, rather than focusing particularly on growing students into instant new business creators, is to further



Bradbury Dyer III '64 furthers entrepreneurial learning at Lafayette College.

the development of an entrepreneurial mindset—creative thinking, intelligent risk taking, and resiliency are several example traits. We also recognize the importance of providing a grounding in such soft skills as leadership, communication, mindfulness, and transparency, and a basic understanding of the hard skills, starting with financial literacy and the analysis of

“*Far too much of the world’s corporate leadership is driven by moral midgets who have been educated far beyond their capacities for good judgement.*”²

economic sustainability.

Is the Dyer Center properly positioned to satisfy student needs for exposure to this mindset and the soft and hard skills that we believe are important? Not yet is the short answer. We have a leadership team, including our director, Rita Chesterton, our faculty adviser, Toby Rossmann, and an actively engaged Advisory Board that are pushing hard to get the necessary curricular course offerings—offerings that will be available to all students—up and running. We believe that a robust and comprehensive offering of curricular courses and co-curricular programs will enhance the education of an entrepreneurially oriented segment of the Lafayette student population. If properly presented, it will represent a branding that will generate strong interest from for-profit and not-for-profit employers. Time is of the essence; students deserve this opportunity.

COMMUNITY

The Dyer Center maintains strong relationships with local businesses and organizations, creating a connection between Lafayette students and their surrounding community through internships and volunteer work. Community partnerships include Community Bike Works, LINC Family Center, and The Century Promise.



LAFAYETTE
 MEYNER CENTER FOR THE STUDY
 OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT



The Village
 On College Hill



(1) Vincenzo Esposito Vinzi, ESSEC as cited in “Entrepreneurship is an Opportunity in Education”, published March, 2021, by Mescom and Van Rest, AACSB.
 (2) Edward Queen, Emory College as cited pg. 14, The Myth of Capitalism, J. Tepper & D. Hearn, Wiley, 2019.



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