

A New Home for Professional Development at VSB

The O'Donnell Center moves to a dedicated space on the ground floor of Bartley Hall.

The go-to destination for VSB undergraduate professional development services and initiatives has a new location: Bartley 030. The Charlotte and James V. O'Donnell '63 Center for Professional Development kicked off its grand opening on Nov. 18 with a weeklong celebration of activities to welcome students, faculty and staff to the new space.

Established in 2015 as the result of a generous endowed gift from Jim O'Donnell '63 VSB and his wife, Charlotte, the O'Donnell Center shared a physical space with the Clay Center at VSB for nearly a decade.

"We fondly referred to ourselves as a 'center within a center,'" says Brenda Stover, assistant dean, O'Donnell Center. "The Clay Center provides advising and student-success services, while we provide career and professional support."

The O'Donnell Center leads the delivery of the Backpack-to-Briefcase curriculum, professional development coaching, experiential education initiatives and the undergraduate/alumni Mentor Program. It partners with VSB faculty, VSB academic departments and Centers of Excellence, student business societies, and the Villanova Career Center to offer career education and employer programs. Additionally, the O'Donnell Center collaborates with campus partners to build employer relationships and secure externships, internships and co-op opportunities that align with students' interests.

"As our offerings and staff have expanded, and in recognition of the O'Donnells' continued commitment to our students and mission, it was time for a dedicated space," says Stover, who's been championing VSB's professional development efforts since 2002. An ideal location became available: a 1,725-square-foot space on the ground floor of Bartley Hall, where the former Bartley Print Center was located. In the center of a hallway of classrooms and just steps from Holy Grounds and the Curley Exchange, the new location is thoughtfully designed to support the O'Donnell Center's current staff, services and offerings, with room to grow for the future.

"As part of VSB's strategic plan and the University's capital campaign, we're working toward establishing an individualized professional development career coaching team which would differentiate VSB from other undergraduate business programs," Stover explains.



The Rev. Peter M. Donohue, OSA, PhD, presented O'Donnell with the Bartley Medallion in November.

"The O'Donnell Center provides young students with a real leg up going into the business world and being able not just to succeed, but to contribute."

—Jim O'Donnell '63 VSB

The grand opening of the O'Donnell Center's new home coincided with another milestone event celebrating the former trustee and retired CEO of American Eagle Outfitters. On Nov. 14, 2024, Jim O'Donnell received the Rev. Joseph C. Bartley, OSA Alumni Medallion, the highest distinction VSB can bestow to one of its alumni. Awarded annually, the Bartley Medallion recognizes alumni who have distinguished themselves in their careers while also demonstrating extraordinary service to their communities and to VSB.

10
Years in operation



“The O'Donnell Center team is privileged to bring Jim and Charlotte's vision to life. Their commitment provides students with a distinctive business school experience—a journey that integrates career development and professional preparation due to their generosity.”

Brenda Stover ▶

7
Dedicated staff members



600+
Student coaching appointments annually



100+
Career events each year



The Mentor Program brings VSB students and alumni volunteers together to support the student's career and professional development goals. ▶



28
Student-led business societies

From Phone Booths to Zoom Booths

Across the hall from the O'Donnell Center, the iconic wooden phone booths in Bartley received a modern makeover, thanks to a idea from Kaitlin Grady, O'Donnell Center associate director of Experiential Education and Employer Outreach, and technical expertise of VSB's IT coordinator Erik Germanovich.

Many VSB alumni fondly remember big moments in these tiny telephone booths, like job-clinching interviews and promising recruiter phone calls. Now these booths offer students spaces for video conferencing and virtual meetings. ▼

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