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The CoB Continues on Path to Reaffirmation

The faculty, staff and students in the College of Business have continued to make progress in preparing for the reaffirmation of the college's accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International, or AACSB.

In late January, the college hosted a mock maintenance of accreditation team of Joseph DiAngelo, dean of the Erivan K. Haub School of Business at St. Joseph's University, and Greg Bruce, dean emeritus of the School of Business at La Salle University.

In mid-March, the college was visited by Gerald McDougall, dean of the Donald L. Harrison College of Business at Southeast Missouri State University. McDougall is chair of the AACSB peer review team for the maintenance of the college's accreditation.

Dean Johnson noted that, "These visits represent important milestones in the college's efforts toward reaffirmation of AACSB accreditation. We benefited greatly from the constructive suggestions from McDougall and the mock team and were commended on the college's focus on community engagement and action learning."

The next major step in the reaffirmation process is the preparation of a fifth year maintenance of accreditation report and collateral material.

The reaffirmation visit, scheduled for Feb. 20-22, 2011 will center on the quality of the report, classroom visits, and discussions with the college's leadership, faculty, students, learning assurance committees, and working groups.



Henson Gets Firsthand Look at Business and Culture of India



Dr. Steve Henson, associate professor of marketing and director of graduate programs, spent two weeks in New Delhi during January. His trip was funded through a competitive grant awarded by the UNC Center for International Business Education and Research, or UNC-CIBER. Henson was the only representative funded from the UNC system.

Henson actively engages in international activities, especially over the last decade, and credits this involvement with helping him earn the award. He has enjoyed seven extended international experiences in the past 10 years, ranging from teaching in Europe to hosting student-led programs in Asia. He is particularly proud that Western Carolina University has funded only one of these activities; all the others involved work-for-hire or externally funded activities.

Following is a synopsis of the program and Dr. Henson's travel to India in his own words:

The program was a very intensive two week survey of India's economy, culture, politics and business sector. A highlight of the visit was the presentations from distinguished academicians, politicians and business people. I have come away from these presentations with a better grasp of the complications and contrasts that are modern India.

For example, while by one measure (purchasing power parity), India may have one of the largest economies in the world, this is very misleading to business people considering establishing relationships in India. India's economy is large only because it has more than 1 billion people and because many common purchases are very inexpensive. The reality is that

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Students Manage Portion of TVA Portfolio

Western Carolina University is one of 24 universities that participate in the Tennessee Valley Authority Investment Challenge.

The objective of the TVA Investment Challenge is to give college students the opportunity to apply investment strategies learned in the classroom by managing a small portion of TVA's investment portfolio. They also gain knowledge about the fiduciary responsibilities that prudent money managers must have.

Students in the portfolio management and investment strategies courses have managed this \$300,000-plus portfolio for the past 11 years. The performance benchmark for the portfolio is the S&P 500. With a 2009 annual return of 35.11 percent, our WCU student portfolio managers performed better than the S&P 500 by 8.64 percent.

This performance carries a cash award of \$5,374. Of the 24 universities, WCU finished third for the rolling, three-year performance.

continued from cover: **India**



the average Indian is much poorer than the average Mexican, for example. They have virtually no ability to purchase products and services that originate outside India.

That doesn't mean that there are no opportunities in India or that some businesses shouldn't consider expanding activities in India. There is a growing middle class, and Western concepts such as shopping malls are developing very rapidly. Still, compared with China, Brazil and other developing countries, India lags.

Complicating issues is India's confusing tangle of government policies and internal politics. For example, the Ministry of Trade has declared education as an open market and free to foreign investment. The Ministry of Education has objected strongly to this proposal, and no one seems to know what

is really happening. There are some American schools that have established operations in India, but others are still waiting on the sidelines.

India's greatest wealth may be its skilled and highly educated upper class. We were hosted by the Management Development Institute, a very good private business school in Gurgaon. The minimum GMAT score for entering MBA students is higher than all but a few of the GMAT scores I have seen over the past 15 years.

I had an interesting experience with the Indian health care system. I stepped on crumbling masonry one evening and twisted my ankle. By the next day it was obvious that I had a very serious sprain or broken bones. I visited an Indian clinic that

reminded me very much of a US clinic that treated me for a broken arm 40 years ago. I was X-rayed, the doctor confirmed that I had no broken bones, and he wrapped the ankle. He prescribed an Indian medication that included a product similar to ibuprofen and an herbal remedy.

I was able to hobble through the Taj Mahal the following day, something I will remember forever. I'll also remember that the doctor visit, X-rays, bandages, prescriptions and a 20 minute taxi ride cost me about \$12. Posted on the wall of the doctor's office was his fee structure. First visits were about \$1 U.S. and subsequent visits about 50 cents. In one visit, I saw how cost controls help patients but also contribute to an incredible shortage of qualified medical personnel.

Grube to Leave Vice Chancellor Post for New Role as Department Head



Dr. A.J. Grube has been appointed the position of department head in Business Administration and Law and Sport Management in the College of Business starting July 1.

Grube brings a wealth of

institutional knowledge and know-how to the college. She came to the university as an assistant professor of sport management in 1999. From 2003 to 2005, she served as the assistant to the chancellor for equal opportunity programs, and then as assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs, working primarily with staffing and budgets.

In addition to her role in administration, Grube has continued to teach and has served as an academic adviser. She also has been involved directly in helping to continuously improve the curriculum in sport management and is working with

the other faculty members in the design and implementation of the Quality Enhancement Plan in sport management.

Grube earned a bachelor of business administration degree in marketing and another in management from Georgia College in 1991, a master of science degree in sport management from Georgia Southern University in 1992, and a master of public affairs degree from Georgia College in 1994. She earned a doctoral degree in sport management from Florida State University in 1998.

Grube's husband, Dan, is the associate dean of the College of Education and Allied Professions at WCU. They have two children, Trip, 5, and Mary Georgia, 2. In her spare time, Grube enjoys watching baseball, reading and taking her children to Disney World.

Grube will replace Dr. Debra Burke, who has decided to return full time to the classroom. Burke is a highly valued member of the college's leadership team and is a natural servant leader. During her years of service, Burke covered all of the bases in the areas of teaching, research and service and has done an exemplary job in her role as department head.

Arnott Gains Seat on Champion Credit Union Board

In January, Dr. Mike Arnott, assistant professor of economics, was elected to the board of directors of Champion Credit Union.

Champion is headquartered in Canton, with branch offices in Clyde and Arden and soon in Waynesville. It has approximately 17,800 members and \$140 million in assets.

Arnott received his bachelor and master degrees from the University of Tennessee and his doctorate from the University of Georgia.

Most of Arnott's career has been in various banking and finance positions in Atlanta. He has worked as an economist, corporate planner, asset/liability manager, investment manager and the manager of sources of funds and credit risks of church lending.

Arnott joined the College of Business faculty in 2003.

Arnott and his wife of 40 years, Betty Holcombe Arnott, a retired mathematics educator, reside on a horse and cattle farm in Candler. They have

two daughters, Katherine, who resides in Birmingham, Ala., and Bonnie, who resides in Nashville, Tenn. During his spare time, Arnott enjoys gardening, farm chores and traveling with his wife.



Miller Lands Grant to Advance the Study of Economics



The Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation recently awarded a \$12,000 grant to Dr. Stephen Miller, assistant professor of economics. This grant will be used to help the College of Business advance the study of economic policy

at Western Carolina University. Miller also will use the funding to enhance student engagement in business and economics.

The grant is intended to fund a variety of student activities and will be used specifically in conjunction with two courses. Primarily, the grant will be used to bring guest speakers to campus to participate in Miller's fall public finance course and deliver lectures on campus. A portion of the grant also will fund free enterprise activities (including student-run businesses) in "Strategy First," the COB's introductory business course.

Miller received his doctorate from George Mason University and his bachelor of arts degree from Towson University. Miller joined the College of Business faculty in 2006. Miller teaches undergraduate students in business administration and economics, and he also teaches in Western Carolina's MBA program. His research focuses on the political economy of democracy and voter behavior. A native of St. Louis, he lives in Sylva with his wife, Beth, and their three children, Lucy, Chris and Gabe. His interests include motorcycling, hiking and baseball. He also is a beginner at whitewater kayaking.

Thompkins Brings Unique Combination of Skills to WCU



"The mountains of Western North Carolina are the perfect blend of scenic beauty and lifestyle," says Professor William Thompkins Jr., who has lived and worked all across the United States. Tilt, as we have come to know him, arrived at Western Carolina University in 2006.

Thompkins has recently been named director of the Center for Information Technology and Assurance, or CITA, in the College of Business. CITA was started in 2008 under the focused and pioneering leadership of its founding director, Professor William "Bill" Perry. It is a multidisciplinary research and community engagement center focused on assisting business, government and nonprofit organizations in learning how to use information technology to gain and maintain competitive advantage. In addition, CITA helps to leverage efforts by the College of Business to produce "business ready" graduates by supporting classroom learning with student internships and

practicums involving the confidentiality, integrity and availability of information for organizational decision-making and innovation.

Thompkins brings a unique combination of broad and cutting edge research in computational analysis and modeling. He has specialized in developing tools and techniques for collecting, organizing and combining diverse information sets with decision optimization methodologies for applications such as database marketing; insurance claim and risk modeling; real-time pricing and risk visualization for financial derivatives; regime identification in financial and sales data; meta-data catalogs; logistics chain simulation and optimization; and statistical tools for optimal integration of simulation results with experimental results and text data mining. He also has engaged in innovative analysis of economic and demographic conditions and changes throughout the Western North Carolina region at the sub-county, county and regional levels.

Thompkins has worked extensively in academic and commercial institutions. In academic roles, he served as associate

vice president for infrastructure at Purdue University; associate director for emerging technologies in the National Center for Supercomputer Applications, at the University of Illinois; and professor of aeronautical engineering at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In commercial roles, he served as associate director of research for United Technologies Research Center and director of the computer science laboratory for Northrop Research and Technology Center.

Thompkins earned his doctorate and master's degree in mechanical engineering from the MIT and his master's of business administration degree from the University of Southern California.

Originally from Lumberton, Thompkins values family and friends as an important part of his life, especially his wife of 40-plus years, Susan. The couple have a daughter, Amanda, who resides in Brooklyn, New York.

Thompkins is an avid golfer who in his spare time can be found enjoying the courses of Western North Carolina. When he isn't playing golf, Thompkins enjoys football and basketball, along with listening to bluegrass and New Age jazz music.

Jacques Presents Research at Summit for Service Learning and Civic Engagement



Dr. Paul H. Jacques, associate professor of global strategy and management in WCU's College of Business, was selected to present two research papers at the 2010 Gulf-South Summit on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement through Higher Education, held March 3 through 5 in Athens, Ga., and hosted by the University of Georgia.

Jacques' body of research encompasses leadership, personality and social psychology. Following are abstracts of his research papers.

"A Meta-Analysis Examining the Effects of Service Learning on Critical Thinking and Social Justice"

By Paul H. Jacques; John Garger, consultant, Metronome Computer Services; and Glenn Bowen, director of Service Learning at WCU

The purpose of this study is to conduct a meta-analysis on extant research to examine the predictive validity of critical thinking and social justice as outcomes of service learning. Using the Hedges & Olkin paradigm of meta-analysis procedure, mean effect sizes, significance of mean effect sizes, and consistency of effect sizes are calculated for the two major constructs under study. Results are interpreted and discussed in relation to service learning and future research.

"The Impact of Instructor Leader Behavior and Student Personality on Performance in Service-Learning"

By Paul H. Jacques and John Garger, consultant, Metronome Computer Services

This study sampled 248 college students in 12 courses where service-learning was incorporated. The research model explored the impact of student personality and the weighting of the grade in the service-learning component of the course on perceptions of instructor leader behavior and outcomes of leader behavior including student performance. All hypothesized relationships were supported.

For more information on the above research papers, contact Jacques at 828.227.3742 or pjacques@wcu.edu.

Accounting Student Experiencing Washington as Intern with Treasury

With her senior year upon her, Kara Enstad took the advice a great tax professor gave her in regard to playing the lottery – “If you don’t play it, you’ll never win it” – and set her sights on obtaining an internship at the US Department of Treasury in Washington.

Enstad, an accounting major and sociology minor, transferred to WCU in the fall of 2008 from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. WCU’s location, size and quality of the College of Business attracted her to the university, she said.

Enstad’s determination and willingness to take a chance allowed her to land the internship she wanted. She is now participating in a program called The Washington Center, or TWC. At the TWC, she participates in three program components, which include a leadership forum and an academic course. She works a total of 36 hours each week, attends a three-hour evening class and participates in various tours, seminars and civic engagement activities.

Enstad, who is working in a departmental office within the Office of the Chief Information Officer, has multiple job functions. Her scope of work includes running reports, developing a database, and researching and writing a business case, communication plan and project plan for a possible new initiative. There is much opportunity to work on various projects and communicate with members of the Treasury, including the chief information officer, chief technology officer, assistant chief information officers, accountants, program analysts, financial managers and various government contractors. Enstad’s office is located near the White House, where she can see up close many political activists, Secret Service personnel, professionals and many interesting things on a daily basis.

Three central themes that surround her internship program in Washington are culture, opportunity and confidence. Upon her fifth week in Washington, Enstad has been given multiple opportunities, including the chance to meet many diverse individuals who have varying areas of expertise. She rooms with three individuals who are from New York, Mexico and India.



Kara Enstad in front of the Department of Treasury in Washington, D.C.; Kara with motivational speaker Josh Sundquist.

“The culture throughout D.C. is very diverse, and it is exciting to be living in such an area,” Enstad said.

Beyond the culture, meeting people can lead to some great networking. She is learning that many jobs are about who you know, especially in today’s market. It is not rare to be sitting on a subway, walking, being on

an elevator or out eating in a restaurant and meet a financial/tax adviser, business owner, CIO and/or other various business professionals. Being in Washington really stretches ideas and horizons and helps develop skills and character, Enstad said. Confidence is definitely something she feels she will gain and leave with after this experience.

The CoB continues its Longstanding Engagement with Leadership Highlands

Western Carolina University’s College of Business and the Leadership Highlands program will offer the following presentations by College of Business faculty addressing economic development and related issues this spring.

A panel discussion led by Louis E. Buck, Kenneth E. Flynt, Ronald A. Johnson and William “Tilt” Thompkins will be held Tuesday, April 6. They will discuss “After the Crisis: Where are the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Economies Going?”

On Tuesday, May 4, James Walker Busbin, Carroll Anne Brown and Sandra S. Grunwell will co-present “Tourism Potentials and Marketing the Highlands Experience.”

The events are free and open to the public. Both events will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Highlands Conference Center.

Launched in 1999, Leadership Highlands is designed to identify existing and emerging leaders from the community. It provides program participants an opportunity to gain the skills and knowledge needed to become community leaders.

For more information about the College of Business, contact the college via e-mail at business@wcu.edu or at 828.227.7412. For more information about Leadership Highlands, contact the Highlands Chamber of Commerce via e-mail at president@highlandschamber.org or at 828.526.5841.



WCU Makes Best Showing Yet at National Sales Competition

On March 5 through 8, Western Carolina students Ashley Fender and Chelsea Meffert participated in the prestigious National Collegiate Sales Competition at Kennesaw State University.

Of the 61 participating schools, WCU placed 16th – the best finish for WCU in 10 years of participation.

Dr. Jim DeConinck, director of WCU’s Center for Professional Selling and Marketing, said the 2010 competition was the toughest he has seen.

“I am very proud of what our students accomplished. It indicates the commitment of the College of Business to have an innovative curriculum that incorporates an active learning environment with the goal of producing distinctive leaders who are business-ready,” DeConinck said.

Fender and Meffert said the competition was a great experience.

“Although preparing for the competition was very time consuming, the chance to compete was a wonderful experience,” Meffert said. “I met many students and had the opportunity to interact with business people.”

Several companies already have contacted Meffert about internship and employment opportunities as a result. “I greatly appreciate the marketing department giving me this opportunity to compete,” she said.

“I truly believe the education I have received at Western Carolina and the College of Business will allow me to succeed.”

Fender agreed that the competition was a fantastic experience. “I learned so much from competing,” Fender said. “It really allowed me to see and understand the real world of professional selling.”

Fender, a senior from Asheville, is a broadcast sales major and marketing minor. She recently won the annual competition in sales-call role playing while competing



WCU students Ashley Fender, second from left, and Chelsea Meffert, right, competed in the National Collegiate Sales Competition at Kennesaw State University in March. Nate Hunzaker, left, was an alternate in the competition, and adviser Jim DeConinck is second from right.

against more than 20 students from Ball State University, Indiana University, Purdue University, the University of Louisville and WCU.

DeConinck said several students are already training for next year’s National Collegiate Sales Competition.

“Hopefully we can make it in the top 10 next year,” DeConinck said.

Trey White Receives Catawba Christian Business Scholarship



Trey White, left, of Hickory, receives congratulations from Phil Walker, chairman of the Western Carolina University Foundation.

Freddie Steven “Trey” White III of Hickory is the latest recipient of the Catawba County Christian Business and Professional Scholarship and is attending Western Carolina University as a freshman for the 2009-10 school year.

White, the son of Steve and Marsha White, is a 2009 graduate of Hickory High School. He plans to major in business administration and law.

The Catawba County Christian Business and Professional Scholarship Fund is designed to help the university attract some of the best and brightest students from Catawba County, said Phil Walker, BB&T’s senior vice president for corporate banking in the western region and chairman of the Western Carolina University Foundation. Walker and his wife, Joan, spearheaded the effort by a group of Hickory-area alumni and friends of WCU to establish the fund in 2005.

“I consider Trey White to be an excellent example as a person of high character with an excellent academic record while participating in extracurricular activities in high school,” said Walker.

A 1971 graduate of WCU, Walker said he made the initial contribution to the fund and convinced other alumni and friends from Catawba County to donate because he wanted to give something back to his alma mater.

Since its founding, the fund has been providing scholarship support of up to \$2,500 toward students’ cost of tuition. Awards are presented to entering freshmen on the basis of high academic achievement and moral character.

Preference is given to applicants from Hickory and Saint Stephens high schools. The number and amount of awards may increase as the fund grows through additional contributions, earnings and appreciation.



From left, Kenneth Flynt, associate dean of advancement in Western Carolina University's College of Business; Tim Barrett, president of BluePrints for Business consulting firm; Ronald Johnson, dean of WCU's College of Business; CeCe Higgs, executive director of the Haywood County Chamber of Commerce; and Bruce Johnson, chairman of the chamber; discuss plans for an economic impact study to help Haywood County chamber members find new ways to meet today's business challenges.

Business Faculty, Students Assist with Haywood County Economic Impact Study

Faculty and students from Western Carolina University's College of Business are joining forces with the Asheville-based consulting firm BluePrints for Business to help the Haywood County Chamber of Commerce conduct an economic impact study.

The project is part of the Business Improvement Grant Program, or BIG Program with the Haywood County chamber being sponsored by BluePrints for Business, which provides consulting services to industries, businesses and organizations throughout the Southeast.

Haywood is the first county in North Carolina to be designated as a "Certified Entrepreneurial Community" by AdvantageWest, Western North Carolina's regional economic development commission.

The BIG Program's economic impact study is designed to help chamber members find new ways to meet the challenges of today's business environment. Measuring the impact of the current recession will help businesses in the county better understand what they can do to stabilize and move forward, said Tim Barrett, president of Blue Prints for Business.

"Businesses in Haywood County, just like businesses everywhere, need to understand how they can reposition the county's economic base to move forward with a sustainable recovery," said Barrett. "The study will provide data that each business can use to plot its own course as part of the Haywood County economic community."

Details of the study, which could begin this spring, are being finalized by BPF, the WCU College of Business and the Haywood County Chamber of Commerce.

University officials say that involving business students in an economic impact study to help local businesses is in keeping with its Quality Enhancement Plan, an institutional effort help students connect their academic and co-curricular experiences.

"This project meshes perfectly with our philosophy of education at Western Carolina University, where we want our students to take what they have learned in their classes and apply it in the real world to help solve regional problems," said WCU Chancellor John W. Bardo.

"This is a win-win. Haywood County businesses will benefit from the findings of the economic impact survey that our students will help conduct. Our students will benefit from a valuable experience that will add to their educational portfolio, and that will enable them to move smoothly from the classroom to the boardroom when they earn their degrees and begin their careers as business-ready graduates," Bardo said.

"WCU students involved in the project will come from graduate and possibly undergraduate programs in the College of Business," said Ronald A. Johnson, dean of the college. "Looking at business-performance metrics, they will evaluate individual company efficiencies and develop strategies to broaden their revenue base, and perhaps expand their markets along product lines or across the region," Johnson said.

CeCe Higgs, executive director of the Haywood County Chamber of Commerce, said that she is looking forward to seeing what the study reveals about the state of the economy in her county.

"We are exceptionally pleased to have Western Carolina University combine its resources with BluePrints for Business to help our members," said Higgs. "Our members will be able to use the results of this study to stabilize the economic base of Haywood County and create the strong business environment that provides secure jobs and an outstanding quality of life for the community."

WCU Small Business Center Part of Statewide Effort

The Small Business and Technology Development Center of North Carolina, or SBTDC, has launched Biz Boost, a statewide small and midsize business assistance initiative of Gov. Beverly Perdue. Biz Boost adds needed resources to help accelerate North Carolina's economic and job recovery. The SBTDC has received funding support from the N.C. Commission on Workforce Development and is the lead organization for administering and implementing the Biz Boost initiative.

The SBTDC is working across the state with North Carolina's seven regional economic development partnerships, the N.C. Department of Commerce, community colleges and work force development boards to reach out to small and midsize businesses.

For additional information about Biz Boost, contact Wendy Cagle, director of WCU's western regional office of the SBTDC, at 828.227.3441 or visit www.sbtdc.org.

Finance Major Jake Robinson Named ESPN Academic All-American

Western Carolina men's basketball forward Jake Robinson has been named to the 2009-10 ESPN the Magazine Academic All-America third team as selected by the College Sports Information Directors of America. The honor is the first for Robinson, a senior who boasts a 3.40 while majoring in finance.

Robinson becomes just the fourth Catamount men's basketball player to garner Academic All-America honors, and the first since Myron Lewis earned second team honors in 1990. In addition to Lewis, Robinson joins Greg Dennis, who was a two-time selection in 1980 (second team) and '82 (third team), and Richard Rogers, who was a third-team recipient in 1986.

In early February, Robinson was a first team Academic All-District III selection to become eligible for the national honor.

Robinson was among 15 student-athletes selected nationwide, and the lone representative from the Southern Conference.

Another notable among the 15 players divided into three teams was 2009-10 Academic All-America of the Year, Cole Aldrich from Kansas.

Robinson, who averages just under 12 points per game, has twice been named the SoCon Student-Athlete of the Week, garnering the plaudits Dec. 2 and again Jan. 6. The Canton native broke the 14-year-old school record for three-pointers in a career and ranks among the career leaders in the SoCon.



A 2009 Southern Conference Coleman Lew Leadership Award winner, Robinson also is a two-time Southern Conference Winter All-Academic selection.

To be eligible, a student-athlete must be a varsity starter or key reserve, maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.30 on a scale of 4.00, have reached sophomore athletic and academic standings at his/her current institution and be nominated by his/her sports information director.



Where Does Your Food Dollar Go?

Winter is a convenient time to consider the true cost of the food dollar.

Farmers and ranchers currently receive just 19 cents of every dollar spent on food purchases. This is down dramatically from 1980, when farmers received 31 cents of every dollar spent on food.

And while today's farmers are earning less of today's food dollar, their expenses are going up. Between 2007 and 2008, farm-level production expenses increased by 14.2 percent. With the agriculture industry employing 20 percent of America's work force, it's easy to see that the economy is influenced by what happens on the farm.

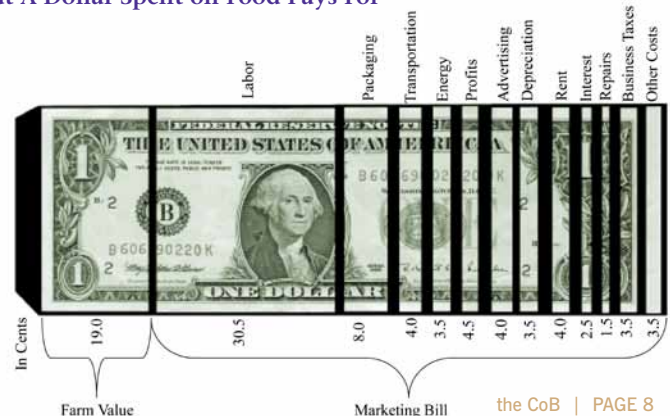
Consider this point: Food prices have actually

fallen in relation to economic inflation over the past 100 years. Adjusting the price in today's dollars to reflect inflation means that today's wholesale price of 82 cents for a dozen eggs would have been \$10.50 in the early 1900s.

Americans also spend an average of less than 10 percent of their annual income on food, which is down from the greater than 10 percent average that most families spent on food throughout the 20th century. The savings is even greater if compared with the percentage of disposable income Americans spend on food and what people from other countries spend.

– Source: N.C. Farm Bureau, January/February 2010

What A Dollar Spent on Food Pays For



Source: USDA's Economic Research Service

financial
THOUGHTS

WCU Students Earn High Ranking for National Research Conference

Western Carolina University students rank second in the nation in the number of research projects accepted for presentation at the country's most prestigious undergraduate research conference.

Seventy-five WCU students had a total of 80 project abstracts accepted by the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, an annual springtime gathering where students from across the nation present their best research. The College of Business had 17 of those project abstracts accepted. Among the 319 colleges and universities that will send students to this year's conference, WCU is second only to the host school, the University of Montana, in the total number of projects approved by the NCUR abstract review committee.

"WCU students have ranked in the top 10 in projects accepted for the conference for five consecutive years, and the students from Cullowhee continue to lead all University of North Carolina institutions with their participation," said Brian Railsback, dean of WCU's Honors College. The college oversees WCU's NCUR involvement each year.

"Behind every undergraduate student who completes a research project that meets the NCUR's high standards, there is a dedicated faculty sponsor who takes mentoring undergraduate research very seriously," Railsback said. "Over the years, undergraduate research has become an important part of the academic culture at WCU."

Railsback said other factors contributing to the strength of the university's undergraduate research are the Honors College's Undergraduate Academic Projects

Grant Program, the Undergraduate Expo research exhibition held each spring, and the Honors College magazine, *Imagine*, which focuses on undergraduate research, creative work and service.

Undergraduate research is also an important component of WCU's Quality Enhancement Plan, a comprehensive plan to improve student learning developed as part of the university's process of gaining re-accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Railsback said.

The WCU contingent will fly to the April 15-17 conference in Missoula, Mont., and aside from the cost of meals, the trip is provided free to the students. At the conference, the students will present their research in front of students and college faculty members from across the nation.

Funding for the trip is being provided through the Honors College and the office of WCU Chancellor John W. Bardo, but Railsback said the trip to NCUR would not have been possible without the financial support of the Honors College's Highlands Advisory Board, a group of Highlands residents who provide mentoring and support for the college's students.

"Led by Honors College alumnus James Hogan and advisory board members Judy Brinson, Carole Light, Jack and Evie Miller, E.J. and Nancy Tarbox, and Mark and Kathy Whitehead, the college has received more than \$19,000 to help us send WCU students to this national conference," Railsback said.

For more information about undergraduate research at WCU, contact Railsback at 828.227.7383.

NCUR STUDENT PRESENTERS AND FACULTY SPONSORS WITH TIES TO THE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS:

BUSINESS

Investigating the Ethical Issues That are Present in Cruise Line Industry
Ashley Leserra, presenter | Kyuho Lee, sponsor

Exploring the Difference Between the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company and Marriot International
Yrome Graham, presenter | Kyuho Lee, sponsor

Investigating the Human Resource Coaching Strategy of J. Alexander's Restaurant Corporation
Christopher Govan, presenter | Kyuho Lee, sponsor

Investigating Corporate Social Responsibility and Front-Line Employee Involvement in the Hospitality Industry
Charity Harris, presenter | Kyuho Lee, sponsor

NCAA Letters of Intent: Where's the Commitment?
Mary Moore, presenter | Debra Burke, sponsor

Investigating the Impact of Employee Morale
Norma Coggins, presenter | Kyuho Lee, sponsor

Investigating the Organized Cultured Environment and Service Standards of the Four Seasons
Hayley Duncan, presenter | Kyuho Lee, sponsor

Examining the Human Resource Management Practices of Brinker International Inc. and How These Practices Have Contributed to the Firm's Ability to Expand Despite Unfavorable Economic Conditions.
Hannah Armstrong, presenter | Kyuho Lee, sponsor

Investigation of Harrah's Casino Efforts to Reduce Problem Gambling Within Human Resource Management
Holly Hyatt, presenter | Kyuho Lee, sponsor

Investigating the Relationship Between Company Culture and Customer Satisfaction in the Airline Industry
Aaron Wilson, presenter | Kyuho Lee, sponsor

Examination of the Relationship Between Success of Fast Food in South America and Training Techniques
Eduardo Moreira, presenter | Kyuho Lee, sponsor

CRIMINOLOGY

Criminal Statutes of Limitations: Need or Nuisance?
Jessica Burkley, presenter | Lorrie Willey, sponsor

ECONOMICS

Healthcare Services and Its Affect on the Economy
Brodie Lowe, presenter | Inhyuck Ha, sponsor

An Analysis of Subprime Lending and the Policy Behind It
Hayden Smith, presenter | James Arnott, sponsor

POLITICAL SCIENCE

When Journalists Protect Their Sources, Who Protects the Journalists?
Seth Crockett, presenter | Janet Ford, sponsor

SOCIAL WORK

Is America Starving?
Michael McLamb, presenter | Inhyuck Ha, sponsor

SPANISH

Cuba: The Forbidden Country
Brittany Bottoms, presenter | Daniel Ostergaard, sponsor

If you have an article, announcement or suggestion relating to this newsletter, contact Kelly Schoon at kmschoon@wcu.edu or Joseph Long at jmlong@wcu.edu to have it included.

All responses will be relayed to the necessary department.

CONTACT CORNER