Honors College, Departments Pilot a Universitywide Plan to Develop Students into ‘Intentional Learners’

Why are you here? Where do you want to be in four years? Six years? Where will this lead? “The really interesting discussions we have with first-year students in the Honors Forum begin with questions such as these,” said Brian Railsback, dean of the Honors College. “We move first-year students into careful, long-range college and career planning from day one.”

The Honors Forum course is one of the first steps on what the college calls the Honors Path, an educational framework developed two years ago based on the university’s Quality Enhancement Plan, “Synthesis: A Pathway to Intentional Learning.” The plan was developed as part of the institution’s reaffirmation of accreditation completed last year.

Western Carolina will demonstrate how the plan was implemented and its results during the five-year interim review in 2012.

A key aspect of the intentional learning plan entails helping students see the connections between all of their university experiences – in and out of the classroom – to their personal learning and career goals. The idea is that as students make a habit of reflecting on and synthesizing their experiences, they will become intentional participants in their own learning at WCU and for the rest of their lives. Other aspects of the plan relate to preparing students to become active global citizens committed to making a difference in their world.

“Until we were inspired by the QEP, the Honors College didn’t have such a coherent educational framework,” said Railsback. In the Honors Forum class, one of the first steps along the Honors Path, students learn what opportunities exist at WCU, including study abroad; undergraduate research; hands-on learning experiences that benefit the university and local community; regional, national or international internships; leadership; and a range of social and student activities. They each develop personal learning plans in which they intentionally select the learning opportunities they will pursue as WCU students to help them achieve their post-graduation goals, said Railsback. “It’s really improved the way we approach undergraduate education in the Honors College,” said Railsback.

PILOTING THE PLAN

Beyond the Honors College, a dozen academic departments are officially piloting courses or activities this fall...
Honors College, Departments Pilot a Universitywide Plan—Continued from Cover

inspired by the intentional learning plan. Students have chosen to be part of living-learning communities developed around topics such as leadership, Spanish culture and language, and protecting the environment.

Nearly 250 students are testing a tool called the Education Briefcase, an electronic portal where they will interact with faculty, advisers and career counselors. Their eBriefcases contain career planning tools such as aptitude tests and personality profiles, and space for personal learning plans, resumes, academic and co-curricular transcripts, information or photos about student activities, examples of their coursework and reflection papers.

“You can put together all of your information about everything you’ve done, which will be a great resource as we begin meeting with potential employers,” said Melissa Saenger, a senior health information administration major from Emerald Isle who is testing the eBriefcase. “It’s a great representation of yourself—a great way to bring everything together.”

The first four academic departments and programs to commit to piloting the intentional learning plan are putting it into action in different ways. The history department is expanding its interdisciplinary and interactive courses, as well as field experience, research, internship and public history courses. Health information administration students will be involved in more activities, such as etiquette dinners and networking events, to prepare them for working in professional hospital and health care offices. They also have adapted an assessment method used in the health care field to regularly assess their own experiences.

The recreational therapy program is fine-tuning a reflection-focused admission process and expanding service learning activities, such as working with Special Olympics, patients at nursing facilities, and student-designed fitness programs for adults with developmental disabilities. “The only exercise the adults we work with may get is when the students from our major are there,” said Nicole Rollings, a senior recreational therapy major from Landis who helped launch and design the service-learning program at Webster Enterprises this fall. Webster Enterprises is a community rehabilitation center where people who have disabilities or disadvantages learn manufacturing skills. “When we go to Webster, the participants are excited and ready to go as soon as we arrive,” said Rollings. “The time seems to fly by.”

The chemistry and physics department hosted a residential summer research program featuring career preparation and reflection components. Participant Mickey Yost, a senior clinical lab sciences major from Maggie Valley, wrote about “kicking herself” during the summer for not paying more attention to the dilutions portions of a previous class, and realizing what she missed by not taking an optional chemistry lab. Then she wrote about her success—finally understanding not just how to do a laboratory test, but why. “My mind was able to work differently,” said Yost, who wants to pursue a doctorate in microbiology. “Before, I was able to do a test and tell you what the result was. I thought that was all that was needed. Now I’m able to wrap my head around a process and come up with new ideas and possibilities, then think of ways to test them.”

Other departments that have signed on to begin implementing the QEP this semester are biology; communication; engineering and technology; geosciences and natural resources; and health, physical education and recreation.

GOING COLLEGEWIDE

The first college to completely pilot the intentional learning plan will be the College of Fine and Performing Arts. The official pilot will be in fall 2009 for the stage and screen department, School of Music and School of Art and Design, although pilot courses and related activities are taking place now. Developed by Erin Tapley, associate professor of arts education; Glenda Hensley, assistant professor of theater; and Travis Bennett, assistant professor of horn, the plan features a new interdisciplinary class for first-year students. Called “integral arts,” it will help students see the relationships among fine and performing arts, and require them to participate in a final project that is interdisciplinary in nature and calls on the talents of a range of artists. “We are hoping to nurture in students not only a love for the arts, but also an appreciation for what they entail,” said Tapley. “We hope students will develop a habit of attending arts events and encouraging their friends to join them.”

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The college will build on such programs as Theatre in Education, which brings together arts and education students to develop an educational production for young audiences and perform it for Western North Carolina students. Music and theater students recently prepared and performed the educational show “School House Rock Live!” for hundreds of elementary students in the region. On Oct. 22, the Smoky Mountain Brass Quintet and Woodwind Quintet within the School of Music are presenting a performance and introduction to the wind instruments to the Jackson County elementary school students in the Fine and Performing Arts Center, where WCU’s student chapter of the Music Educators National Conference will invite students to try out the instruments. In addition, students in the college will assist with instructing at a new arts academy to be developed for the community. The School of Art and Design recently hosted a campuswide contest asking students to create works of original art intended to raise awareness about the importance of registering and voting in the November election.

The project called on students “to make connections between what they’re learning in terms of their curriculum and the broader issues we deal with as a society,” said Carol Burton, assistant vice chancellor for undergraduate studies and Quality Enhancement Plan project director. Selected work is on display through Saturday, Nov. 8, on the main floor of Hunter Library.

Robert Kehrberg, dean of the college, said the plan will help the university better prepare students for the real-world arts atmosphere. “A university campus is not the real arts world,” said Kehrberg. “We believe that the courses and activities that we will implement in the next few years will develop graduates who are not only artists, but also advocates that the arts make a difference in their world and in their communities.”

WCU to Participate in National Effort to Develop Civic Leaders

Participants will share and plan strategies to develop civic agency in undergraduate students, design ways to measure civic agency, and share their findings and teaching methods with others nationwide.

“The faculty and staff at Western have been redesigning the university experience for students in ways that will help students become dedicated and effective civic leaders, and we are excited to be able to share and exchange ideas about the successes of those efforts so far as part of this initiative,” said Carol Burton, assistant vice chancellor for undergraduate studies. “Western is committed to helping our students become true citizens for life, and true citizens are civic leaders in their communities.”

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Burton said she is excited to see how the plan is coming to life. “As our efforts to enhance the educational experience of our students become institutionalized, I am thrilled with the response from our campus community,” said Burton. “These are just a few of the many examples of academic and nonacademic departments and programs that have embraced the concepts of intentional, integrated learning and transformed those concepts into concrete actions.”

- By TERESA KILLIAN

Carol Burton has been selected to participate in the American Democracy Project’s Civic Agency Initiative, a three-year effort to develop national models for successfully preparing and motivating undergraduates to be leaders in their communities.

The 16 participating institutions will work with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, and the Humphrey Institute’s Center for Democracy and Citizenship to define the characteristics of “civic agency.”

Western Carolina University will coordinate the American Democracy Project Civic Agency Initiative at WCU and attend an organizing meeting in November at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. Committee members working with her include Bart Andrus, associate director of leadership; Christopher Cooper, associate professor of political science, director of the master’s degree program in public affairs and director of the Public Policy Institute; Glenn Bowen, director of the Center for Service Learning; John Habel, associate professor of educational psychology; Kathleen Brennan, assistant professor of sociology; Marie Cochran, assistant professor of art; Marsha Lee Baker, associate professor of English; Niall Michelsen, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Scott Philyaw, director of the Mountain Heritage Center and associate professor of history; Sean O’Connell, associate professor of biology; and Provost Kyle Carter.

“The goal of this initiative is to integrate citizenship into core curricula in fields such as teaching, business and health, so that students leave higher education with the skills and confidence needed to make ongoing civic contributions as professionals, as well as residents of their communities,” said George Mehaffy, director of the American Democracy Project, in announcing the initiative. “Specifically, students will develop skills of collaborative problem-solving and working across partisan, economic and cultural division by engaging in hands-on work with campus and community partners, supported by faculty and staff coaches.”

- By TERESA KILLIAN
New IT Director of Web Services Herr-Hoyman

There’s another side to Dirk Herr-Hoyman, self-professed “hard-core geek and tychie.”

“I’ve come to appreciate simplicity,” said Herr-Hoyman, who will begin work at Western on Oct. 22 as the new information technology director of the Office of Web Services. “If things are too complicated, they just don’t get used.”

He interprets his position as that of an advocate. “Faculty and staff should know that somebody in IT is looking out for them,” he said.

Herr-Hoyman has worked for the University of Wisconsin at Madison’s Division of Information Technology since 1997. His projects have included the implementation of a portal similar to Western’s My Cat and a University of Wisconsin systemwide course management system similar to WebCat. He also helped develop an open-source tool, called eTEACH, that allows faculty to author multimedia presentations, such as lectures and accompanying notes, and post them online, freeing up class time for more face-to-face discussion.

“Dirk has a lot of experience in applying Web technology to higher education,” said Bil Stahl, associate provost for information services and chief information officer. “The Web environment continues to evolve rapidly and is increasingly the glue that ties all of our systems together. Dirk’s specific responsibility is to really keep up with that, to prepare and position faculty and staff to take best advantage of Web developments, and to help us avoid false starts and dead ends.”

The Office of Web Services is part of the approximately 78-member Division of Information and Technology, charged with oversight of the university’s more than 3,500 computers and accompanying systems, operations and applications. Herr-Hoyman, in his first director’s position, has a staff of three. He replaces Newt Smith, who has been holding the position of acting director of Web Services in addition to his position as associate CIO.

Herr-Hoyman arrives in the midst of Western’s Web site redesign and conversion into the content management system RedDot. The launch of the university’s logo and revised colors, part of its branding effort, will further affect the redesign, but are manageable, Herr-Hoyman said.

“Branding, from my experiences, isn’t hard once you’ve got it into a content management system,” he said. He envisions a users’ group to foster community and spur ideas among Western’s more than 150 faculty and staff trained in RedDot.

Herr-Hoyman also plans to give attention to the eBriefcase, student assessment software that is part of the Quality Enhancement Plan. The eBriefcase synthesizes the educational experience by allowing students to blog, communicate with faculty and advisers, and post documents critical to their education, such as research and resumes. “Student engagement is an important initiative, and the Office of Web Services will certainly be there to help,” Herr-Hoyman said.

“I am excited about coming to WCU,” Herr-Hoyman said. “I’ve had enough contacts with people in North Carolina schools over the years that I have a very good feeling about the state system.”

Tops on his to-do list, Herr-Hoyman said, is meeting the campus community and gaining an understanding of Web-related needs.

“One thing I’ve learned and honored, and I think it’s important, is you really have to listen,” he said. “I want to hear more about how the Office of Web Services can help people do what they want to do.”

Herr-Hoyman will live in the Whittier area while his wife, Susan, spends the next year in Madison before moving. They have a daughter, Rachel, who is a junior at the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire.

- By JILL INGRAM

Combined Campaign Under Way at WCU

Members of the Western Carolina University community may once again give to their favorite charities through the annual N.C. State Employees Combined Campaign, now under way through Friday, Oct. 31.

The SECC provides all state employees, including faculty and staff at WCU, opportunities to support charitable causes and to help those in need. It is the only officially sanctioned charitable fund drive conducted on the WCU campus.

This year, faculty and staff have the option of directing their SECC giving to an organization that’s very close to home. For the first time ever, the Western Carolina University Foundation, which receives funds to provide scholarship assistance to qualified students and academic programs supporting all disciplines, is now an official charitable organization approved to participate in the campaign.

“Including the Western Carolina University Foundation among the charities that state employees can give to through the combined campaign makes it easy for state employees who are Western alumni, parents of students and others to easily support the university through payroll deduction programs,” said Jim Miller, associate vice chancellor for development.

Gifts to WCU through the SECC will count toward the Campaign for Western, the first comprehensive fundraising effort in the university’s history. The combined campaign, launched in February 2007, has a goal of at least $40 million in private support for Western by 2010.

In the 23-year history of the combined campaign, state employees across North Carolina’s 100 counties have donated close to $70 million to charitable organizations. Last year, WCU faculty and staff, retirees and students contributed $43,704, far above the year’s goal of $39,000. This year’s goal for the WCU campus is $40,000.

“I am confident that, together, we will not only meet that goal but exceed it,” said Leila Tvedt, associate vice chancellor for public relations and 2008 campus campaign chairperson. “Whether you give a little or give a lot, our combined resources truly do make a difference in our community, and that is especially important to many people less fortunate than we are.”

Contributions by permanent employees can be made by payroll deduction, and all employees, retirees and students may contribute by check or cash. All contributions are tax deductible.

For more information, check out www.ncsecc.org or contact Leila Tvedt by phone at 227-3080 or by e-mail at tvedt@wcu.edu.
UNC Governing Body to Meet on Western's Campus

The governing body of the state’s 16 public institutions that grant baccalaureate degrees will convene on Western’s campus in October for its regular monthly meeting.

The University of North Carolina Board of Governors meets outside Chapel Hill twice a year on average, said Bart Corgnati, secretary of the university. The visit to Western, the first since 1999, grew from conversations between the board and Western administration, Corgnati said.

Sometimes the board visits a school on invitation, and sometimes the board has an interest in a specific school, Corgnati said. “In the case of this visit, it was a bit of both,” he said.

Twenty-nine of the board’s 32 members have confirmed their attendance, said Christy Ashe of WCU’s Office of the Chancellor. Staff members and chancellors from throughout the university system also will be attending, Ashe said.

The General Assembly elects the Board of Governors to four-year terms. The board, in turn, elects the university system president.

Board members will hold committee meetings throughout the day Thursday, Oct. 16, at various locations around campus. Evening activities are a reception at the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching and dinner at the Ramsey Regional Activity Center.

On Friday, Oct. 17, board members will attend a 9 a.m. ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new Campus Recreation Center before holding their monthly meeting at 9:30 a.m. in the Grandroom of the A.K. Hinds University Center. This general meeting is open to the public. For more information, contact Dianne Lynch at 227-7100 or dlynch@email.wcu.edu.

By JILL INGRAM

Alumna Named Associate Provost

Western alumna Beth Tyson Lofquist, associate vice chancellor for academic affairs, has been named the university’s associate provost. Provost Kyle Carter said the title change, effective Monday, Sept. 15, reflects Lofquist’s increasing responsibility within the Office of the Provost, which oversees every aspect of academics at WCU.

“The university is in great transition, including realigning the responsibility and authority of the deans to be the chief academic officers of their colleges and schools,” said Carter. “As I assume a greater leadership role for the entire academic affairs division, I find that I rely more and more on Dr. Lofquist to oversee areas formerly under my purview as well as represent me when commitments conflict. She has done a great job in both filling in for me as well as overseeing and leading areas assigned to her.”

As associate vice chancellor for academic affairs since 2005, Lofquist oversees curriculum development; the faculty reappointment, tenure and promotion process; course evaluations; professional development for department heads; the associate deans council; the director of the Coulter Faculty Center; the academic calendar; the Visiting Scholars Program; new faculty orientation; and publication of the undergraduate catalog and faculty handbook. Her responsibilities also now include oversight of residential summer sessions.

Lofquist joined WCU as a full-time faculty member in 1993 and served as head of the department of birth through kindergarten, elementary and middle grades education from 2002 to 2005. She holds three degrees from Western – a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education, a master’s degree in early childhood education, and an educational specialist degree in intermediate education. She earned her doctorate in curriculum and teaching from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 1997.

Western alumna Beth Tyson Lofquist

Newsfile


Chris Cooper, associate professor of political science and public affairs and director of the Public Policy Institute, recently published “Entertainment Media and Political Knowledge: Do People Get Any Truth out of Truthiness?” in the book “Homer Simpson Goes to Washington”; Multimember Districts” in the book “Democracy in the States”; and “Representative Reporters” in the journal Social Science Quarterly.

Kathleen Topolka Jorissen, assistant professor of educational leadership and foundations, co-authored “Instructional Coaches: Lessons From the Field,” published in the October issue of Principal Leadership.

Anna Fariello, director of Hunter Library’s Craft Revival Project, and Scott Philyaw, director of the Mountain Heritage Center, made presentations to a committee of heritage and tourism professionals convened on behalf of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area initiative. As a result, both Hunter Library’s Craft Revival Project and the Mountain Heritage Center’s Digital Heritage Project recently were voted for inclusion in the Jackson County Heritage Plan, a tool to be used by local governments and community organizations as they develop tourism appropriate to the region.

By JILL INGRAM
Children Can Spend Fridays Climbing Wall

The climbing wall at the Campus Recreation Center will host a “Kids Climb” event from 6–8 p.m. every Friday (with the exception of breaks) through the fall semester.

Children of faculty, staff and students are invited to climb the 50-foot wall, which is operated by WCU’s Base Camp Cullowhee. All gear is provided with the entry cost, which is $5 for CRC pass holders and $10 for others. There is no age requirement, but harness sizes require that children weigh at least 40 pounds. Climbing wall manager Danielle Schulta said turnout has been steady.

“It’s just great to see them because they’re supertiny, and they just fly up the wall,” Schulta said.

For more information, call Base Camp Cullowhee at 227-3633.
**WCU Takes Part in New Online College Accountability Initiative**

Western Carolina University is among 302 public four-year colleges and universities taking part in a new initiative designed to provide high school students, parents and guidance counselors with access to basic, comparable information about student characteristics, costs, student experience and learning outcomes, presented in a user-friendly online format.

The College Portrait Web site was launched Monday, Sept. 29, at www.collegeportraits.org. Western’s College Portrait can be viewed at http://collegeportrait.wcu.edu.

The site is a product of the Voluntary System of Accountability project, a partnership between the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, with funding from Lumina Foundation For Education.

“As a regionally engaged public university, publication of our College Portrait is consistent with our core institutional values of transparency and accountability,” said Melissa Wargo, director of assessment. “We feel strongly that the more comparable information available to students and their parents, the easier it will be for them to find the university that is the best ‘fit.’ And, for many, that best fit will be Western.”

Much of the information contained in the College Portrait is not available to students in any other easily accessible location, particularly information related to student satisfaction, engagement and learning, Wargo said. “Yet, these are the factors that will have the most impact on a student’s college experience,” she said.

Since the project began in November 2007, nearly 60 percent of the 520 member institutions of the two higher education associations have agreed to participate in the project, and 194 have already posted an online portrait, including all 16 institutions in the University of North Carolina system. This represents four-year institutions enrolling some 3 million undergraduates and nearly 60 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment in four-year public colleges and universities.

“No one should be surprised that public higher education has taken the lead on accountability,” said Constantine W. Curris, president of AASCU. “Our institutions have a long history of commitment to public accountability and learning outcomes. College Portrait is being unveiled at a time when severe financial constraints for both families and state governments increase our obligation to provide dependable, accurate information in keeping with our public trust.”

Web site visitors can view a sample portrait, which includes descriptions and explanations of the data contained in each report. An interactive map allows users to easily locate participating colleges by state and includes links to each institution’s portrait, general Web site and an e-mail address to request admissions information.

College Portraits are divided into three sections: Student and Family Information, which addresses issues such as cost of attendance, degree offerings, living arrangements, student characteristics, graduation rates, transfer rates and post-graduate plans; Student Experiences and Perceptions, which provides a snapshot of student experiences and activities, and results from student engagement surveys; and Student Learning Outcomes, which focuses on student learning using either institution-specific outcomes data or a new pilot project to measure student learning gains in critical thinking and written communication.

Western measures student satisfaction and engagement through the National Survey of Student Engagement, and participated in a pilot project of the Collegiate Learning Assessment, which is designed to measure student learning gains in critical thinking, analytical reasoning and written communication. Results from both are included in WCU’s portrait, said Wargo.
**Wednesday, Oct. 7**

**Weight Loss Tuesdays** – Education on diet, exercise and stress management. 12:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. (Choose one). Bird 224. (227-2088)

**Faculty Conversations** – 12:35-2:05 p.m. Catamount Room, UC. (227-3012)

**Spanish/Latin American Film Festival** – “Como Agua para Chocolate” (subtitled). 7:30 p.m. UC theater. (227-3872)

**Concert** – Wind Ensemble. 8 p.m. FAPAC. (227-7242)

**“Economic Update”** – Addressing the financial crisis, led by Ronald A. Johnson, dean of the College of Business. 12:30 p.m. Grandroom, UC. (227-3227)

**Wednesday, Oct. 8**

**Country Music Televison on Tour** – Jason Aldean and Lady Antebellum. 7:30 p.m. RRAC. $. (227-7338)

**Conference** – High school marching band competition. Begins 8 a.m., with finals beginning at 7 p.m. WCU Recreation Center. $. (227-7733)

**Saturday, Oct. 11**

**Tournament of Champions** – High school marching band competition. Begins 8 a.m., with finals beginning at 7 p.m. WCU Recreation Center. $. (227-7733)

**Sunday, Oct. 12**

**Catamount volleyball** – vs. Davidson. 2 p.m. RRAC. $. (227-7733)

**Catamount soccer** – vs. Eton. 2 p.m. CAC. (227-7733)

**Wednesday, Oct. 15**

**Catamount volleyball** – vs. Appalachian State. 7 p.m. RRAC. $. (227-7733)

**Thursday, Oct. 16**

**Third Thursdays at the Fine Art Museum** – Wine and cheese social. 5-6 p.m. Star Lobby. (227-3591)

**LCE Foreign Film Series** – “Vampyr,” 1931 German horror film. 7 p.m. UC theater. $. (227-7206)

**Kayak roll clinic** – All levels, no registration required. 7-9 p.m. Buesee pool. (227-3633)

**Friday, Oct. 17**

**Ribbon-cutting** – For the Campus Recreation Center. 9 a.m. CRC. (227-7733)

**Meeting of the UNC board of governors** – 9:30 a.m. Grandroom, UC. (227-7733)

**University Club** – TGIF for members and their guests. 5 p.m., with Oktoberfest event to follow. University Clubhouse, Central Drive. $. (227-3933)

**Movie** – “Hancock.” 5 p.m. and 9 p.m. UC theater. $. (227-7479)

**Kids Climb** – For children of students, faculty and staff. 6-8 p.m. CRC climbing wall. $. (227-3633)

**Saturday, Oct. 18**

**Movie** – "Hancock." 5 p.m. and 9 p.m. UC theater. $. (227-7479)

**Saturday, Oct. 18-Sunday, Oct. 19**

**Rock climbing** – Learn technique, belay methods, basic anchor building. Routes of variable difficulty. Register by Oct. 16. $. (227-3633)

**EXHIBITS**

**Fine Art Museum**


“Worldviews” – Selections from the permanent collection. Ongoing. Hours: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tues., Wed. and Fri., 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Thurs. and 1-4 p.m. Sat. (http://fapac.wcu.edu or 227-3591)

**Mountain Heritage Center**

“Going Places” – Slideshow spotlight, October.

“People of One Fire” – Cherokee pottery. Gallery B. Through Nov. 16.

“The Artistry of Plain-Style Furniture” – 19th century handmade WNC furniture. Gallery C. Through Dec. 15. Hours: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Mon.-Fri. and 2-5 p.m. Sun. (www.wcu.edu/mhc or 227-7129)

**Hunter Library**

“Bartram’s Journey” – The botanist’s life and observations. Ground floor, through December. (227-3398)

**Election art** – Theme of registering and voting. Main level, through Nov 8. (227-3599)