Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Plans to Retire This Summer

Robert Caruso, vice chancellor for student affairs at Western since 1998, has announced plans to step down after a 37-year career in higher education that has included administrative leadership in nearly every facet of student life.

Selected in 2005 as one of three outstanding professionals by the American College Personnel Association for membership in its prestigious Senior Practitioner Program, Caruso won praise from his colleagues nationally who wrote in support of his nomination. Their comments included, “a treasure in our profession,” “always looking out for the needs of the students,” and “experienced, knowledgeable and well-respected throughout the country.”

The same year, the North Carolina College Personnel Association recognized Caruso as a distinguished scholar. In 2004, the ACPA recognized him as a “diamond honoree” for his outstanding contributions to the association and his profession. And in 2003, the University of Maryland’s College of Education honored him with its distinguished alumni award as an “outstanding scholar/practitioner.”

“Dr. Caruso’s nine years at Western have been marked by strong leadership of the many outstanding programs that serve our students and promote their academic, social, mental and physical well-being,” said Chancellor John Bardo. “He has served as an able administrator, respected professor and mentor, and outstanding advocate for student services.”

During Caruso’s leadership as vice chancellor for student affairs, Western has developed faculty-in-residence and faculty fellows programs and other collaborative efforts between the offices of student affairs and academic affairs; expanded the activities of A.K. Hinds University Center to include the Multicultural Center, Women’s Center and Center for Student Involvement; established the first Judicial Affairs and Service Learning departments and Enrollment Support Office; initiated the Student Affairs Scholars Series; completed construction of three new residential facilities; begun construction of a new student recreation center; and launched a summer Freshman Reading Program and a graduate program in college student personnel.

A search committee to identify candidates for Caruso’s successor has been formed, chaired by WCU Provost Kyle Carter, and a national search has begun. Caruso holds a doctorate from the University of Maryland, a master’s degree from Rutgers University and a bachelor’s degree from Tufts University.

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Fenton’s Book Explores Connections Between Hope and Land

A new book penned by a Western Carolina University faculty member explores the connection between the concept of hope and land in the works of 17th-century English author John Milton—an examination, she says, that has relevance for a modern society that seems to have largely lost its need for that connection.

“Milton’s Places of Hope: Spiritual and Political Connections of Hope with Land,” by Mimi Fenton, WCU associate professor of English and an internationally recognized scholar on Milton’s work, was published recently by Ashgate, one of the world’s leading academic presses.

Fenton’s book argues that the concept of hope is intrinsically connected with place and land in early modern culture and in Milton’s poetry and prose. Back then, Fenton says, hope came from commitment to literal places such as the land, ideological places such as the nation, and sacred places such as the soul.

Fenton worked on the book, conducting research and writing, almost daily beginning in 2000 and continuing until December 2006. The study of Milton’s work is a “huge and demanding field,” and research required visits to places such as the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., to examine archival materials, Fenton said.

“It’s such deep and fascinating material to work with, but there’s also tons of it, so it takes time and lots of thought,” Fenton said. “It’s my first book, and it’s the book of my heart. It mattered so much to me to write a book that would matter—that would, hopefully, make a real and significant contribution to our understanding of not only Milton and early modern culture, but ourselves and our own culture.”

Fenton said she’s been interested in Milton’s work since her days as an undergraduate student at the University of Wyoming.

“I’ve been fascinated by him because of his relentless intensity about life and his vigor for the life of the mind and spirit,” she said. “He takes on so many of the big questions that really are timeless, no matter where or in what time period you live—questions like

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FEED Event on Feb. 21 Promotes Collaboration

The conversations that surfaced during a panel discussion in October about bridging the gap between academic and student services gained so much momentum in one faculty learning community that the members planned a day-long event.

“We started asking how we could draw people out of their offices to talk with co-workers they would not normally encounter, learn what they are doing, and start collaborations that result in initiatives that could be vital for student development here at Western,” said Chesney Reich, chair of the “Learning Reconsidered” community and director of the Catamount Academic Tutoring Center. The answers evolved into plans for Faculty Enrichment and Education Day, which will be held Wednesday, Feb. 21.

At FEED, 50-minute interactive workshops will update faculty and staff about what is happening at WCU and create opportunities to network and spark ideas for future collaboration.

Topics range from “Do We Know What We Think We Know About What Our Students Know?” to “So…You Want to Study Abroad?” One FEED workshop will highlight the collaboration behind the Early Alert System. For the past four semesters, the program has taken referrals from faculty or staff members concerned about a student and then contacted the students to offer a range of assistance such as counseling or tutoring, said Allen Taylor, an academic adviser who works with the program.

“There are students we help who truly needed someone to reach out to them,” Taylor said. FEED will begin with an opening reception at 8:30 a.m. with comments from Provost Kyle Carter. A comprehensive information table will be set up outside the University Center Theater.

The idea took shape after the community consulted with Marie Cochran, visiting instructor of art, who described an event for faculty and staff at Prince George’s Community College that had the feel of a mass open house.

“We went to different venues on campus to see what other people were about,” Cochran said. “A lot of people may not visit a studio on campus because of time constraints or fear of losing a parking space, but this was a day that made that possible, and helped us see more possibilities for our students.”

— by TERESA KILLIAN

Book by Fenton continued from page 1

why aren’t we perfect, what’s religion got to do with spirituality, why aren’t we all good all of the time, even when we want to be, and about a million more questions.”

Fenton said her book started out “as a kind of boring, compendious study on the nature of spiritual, psychological and poetic hope,” but in the course of her research she discovered that the original meaning of hope is land—from the Old English and Old Norse word “hop,” meaning a secluded valley or remote enclosed space.

“I realized that my 21st-century American version of hope was very different from what Milton and early modern culture’s notion of hope might have been,” she said. “So, I had to take it seriously, and my research led me to all the wonderful, deep-seated Biblical, iconographical and cultural connections of hope with land and place, and what Milton does with that in his poetry like “Paradise Lost.”

Fenton said the connection between hope and land is an idea that has immediate relevance when she observes the impact of development in Jackson County and subsequent loss of what was once farmed or forested landscapes.

“Right now, we’re dealing with positives and negatives of that relationship with hope and land,” she said. “Some of the development is good, of course—good for the culture and good for the economy—but much development appears to be thriving without a real and respectful regard for either the land itself or for the legacy, history and spiritual value of the land and culture.

“Place is space that has historical meaning and an historical identity,” Fenton said. “I think a lot is being done to space as it consists of acreage, plots and gated communities, and very little is being done to preserve the legacy of this local place and its future identity or destiny. There’s a lot of economic hope for some people, and simultaneously, a lot of cultural and spiritual hopelessness about what’s being imposed upon this place in the name of progress that we literally ‘buy into’ or must resign ourselves to being subject to.”

Fenton will be honored during a reading, reception and book-signing that will be held at 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 16, at City Lights Bookstore in Sylva.

Fenton is a past winner of WCU’s highest teaching honor, the Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award, and the top prize for superior teaching given by the University of North Carolina system, the Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching.

— by RANDALL HOLCOMBE

Caruso to Retire

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At Western, Caruso has served as administrator, graduate program coordinator, student adviser and faculty member. Throughout his career, he has worked with programs involving college admissions, enrollment management, orientation, residential life, health services, judicial affairs, multicultural affairs, community service, Greek life, student government and other student organizations.

In addition, he has served as speaker and presenter at dozens of regional and national workshops and conferences, and authored several papers and journal articles on student affairs topics. His most recent publications include “Student Affairs and Service Learning: Promoting Student Engagement,” in the spring 2006 edition of College Student Affairs Journal, and a forthcoming chapter titled “Active Outreach” in “Academic and Student Affairs Collaboration: The Divine Comity,” for the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

— by LEILA TVEDT

Search Begins for Director

The College of Business has taken another step in the realignment process through establishing the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, which the board of trustees approved in December.

A search is under way for a director who will be part of the leadership group for the college and supervise faculty and the entrepreneurship curriculum. Roger Lirely, associate professor of accounting, will serve as interim director.

Kimmel School Goes Solo

The Kimmel School of Construction Management and Technology began operating independently of the College of Applied Sciences on Feb. 1. The move is part of the university’s reorganization plan, which the University of North Carolina’s Board of Governors approved in November.

Duane Dunlap, associate dean of the College of Applied Sciences, will serve as interim dean of the Kimmel School. A national search for a permanent dean will be launched this fall.

Carl Slagle, a construction management student, reviews plans for a building project.
**February 5–March 11**

### 2007 WCU Calendar

#### Tuesday, Feb. 6–Wednesday, Feb. 7

**Performance** — “The Vagina Monologues” by Eve Ensler. $ 7 p.m. Studio Theatre, FAPAC. (227-2393)

#### Tuesday, Feb. 6

Catamount Concert Series — “Classical Meets Jazz,” featuring Pavel Wlosok and Andrea Adamcova, piano. 8 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

#### Thursday, Feb. 8

**Expo** — second annual Community Service Learning Fair. 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Grandroom, UC. (227-7184)

#### Friday, Feb. 9

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

#### Saturday, Feb. 10

Lady Catamount basketball — vs. Chattanooga. Southern Conference game. $. 4 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Catamount basketball — vs. Georgia Southern. Southern Conference game. $. 7 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Catamount basketball — vs. Furman. Southern Conference game. $. 4 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Catamount basketball — vs. Davidson. Southern Conference game. $. 7 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

#### Sunday, Feb. 18

Nature’s Tracks — “Our Fine Feathered Friends.” 2:30–3:30 p.m. MHC. (227-7129)

#### Wednesday, Feb. 14

**Meeting** — Faculty Senate Planning Team. Noon–2 p.m. Mary Will Mitchell Room, Brown Cafeteria. (227-7495)

**Reception** — honoring finalists for the Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award. 2 p.m. Illusions, UC. (227-7196)

**Highest Honors**

Finalists for the Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award, the highest teaching award bestowed by WCU, will be honored at a reception in Illusions at the University Center at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 14.

Jay Scifers, associate professor of health sciences and last year’s winner, will introduce the finalists: James Ullner, assistant professor of economics; Shan Manickam, professor of mathematics and computer science; Tracy Zontek, visiting assistant professor of health sciences; Burton Ogle, program director of environmental health for health sciences; and Jeanne Dulworth, visiting assistant professor of social work.

All faculty and staff are invited to the reception. Contact Jane Kneller at 227-7196 if you wish to attend. The winner will be announced at the General Faculty Meeting and Awards Convocation on Friday, April 20.

### Exhibits

#### Mountain Heritage Center

**Gallery A:**

“Migration of the Scotch-Irish People.”

Permanent exhibit.

**Gallery B:**

“Cherokee Baskets in the Twentieth Century, Part II.”

Through April 30.

**Gallery C:**

“After the War: Conflict and Domestic Change in the North Carolina Mountains.”

Through December.

**Lobby:**

OPENING FEBRUARY 7: “Airing of the Coverlets.” Through April 5.

**Online Exhibits** ([www.wcu.edu/mhc](http://www.wcu.edu/mhc)):

“After the War”

“Horace Kephart”

“Southern Appalachian Quilts”

“Watts in the Mountains: Rural Electrification in Western North Carolina”

#### Slideshow Spotlight

FOR FEBRUARY: “Mountain Trout” tells the 10,000-year history of the relationships among humans, trout and running water in the Southern Appalachians.


#### Mountain Heritage Center hours:

8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday–Friday (227-7129 or [www.wcu.edu/mhc](http://www.wcu.edu/mhc))

#### Fine Art Museum

**Fine and Performing Arts Center**

“WORLDVIEWS. Selections from Western Carolina University’s Permanent Collection and New Acquisitions.” Continuing exhibit.

“After the War”

“Horace Kephart”

“Southern Appalachian Quilts”

“Watts in the Mountains: Rural Electrification in Western North Carolina”

#### Fine and Performing Arts Center hours:

8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday–Friday (227-7129 or [www.wcu.edu/mhc](http://www.wcu.edu/mhc))

#### Submissions:

Send news items and calendar notices to calendar@wcu.edu. Submit items for the university’s online calendar at least one week prior to the event.

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**Key:** $—Admission fee; BB—Belk Building; CAC—Catamount Athletic Center; CAT—Center for Applied Technology; CCB—Cordelia Camp Building; CSC—Catamount Softball Complex; FAPAC—Fine and Performing Arts Center; HA—Hoey Auditorium; HFR—H.F. Robinson Administration Building; HS/CF—Hennon Stadium/Childress Field; MHC—Mountain Heritage Center; NSA—Natural Sciences Auditorium; RH—Recital Hall, Coulter Building; RRAC—Ramsey Regional Activity Center; UC—A.K. Hinds University Center; WS/BW—Whitmire Stadium/Bob Waters Field.
Monday, Feb. 19  
Catamount basketball—vs. Appalachian State. Southern Conference game. $ 7 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Tuesday, Feb. 20  
State of the University—address by Chancellor John Bardo. 3 p.m. RRAC. (227-7100)
Appalachian Folklife Series—“Telling Mountain Stories: The Queen Family and Neal Hutchinson.” 5:30–6:30 p.m. MHC. (227-7129)
Catamount Concert Series—Daniel Cherry, trombone. 8 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

Wednesday, Feb. 21  
Phi Beta Delta Honor Society brown bag lunch—“Of Trees, Memories, and Love: A Literary Walk Through Spain in Two Novels of Marina Mayoral,” Nancy Norris, modern foreign languages. 12:15–1:15 p.m. Catamount Room, UC. (227-7494)
Appalachian Cultural Lunchtime Series—author Anne Mitchell Whisnant discusses “Super-Scenic Motorway: A Blue Ridge Parkway History.” 12:15–1 p.m. MHC. (227-7129)
Catamount softball doubleheader—vs. Winston-Salem State. $ 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. CSC. (227-7338)
Meeting—Faculty Senate. 3–5 p.m. Room 104, Killian Building. (227-7495)

Thursday, Feb. 22  
Sunday, Feb. 25  
The Theatre—The University Players present The Music Man by Meredith Willson. Thursday–Saturday, 7:30 p.m.; Sunday matinee, 3 p.m. $ FAPAC. (227-2479)

Catamount baseball—vs. Connecticut. $ 1 p.m. HS/CF. (227-7338)
Southern Conference basketball—women’s championship tournament. Charleston, S.C. (227-7338)

Open House—including reception and demonstration for “Cherokee Baskets in the Twentieth Century, Part II” exhibit. 2:30–4 p.m. MHC. (227-7129)

Monday, Feb. 26  
Concert—Smith Percussion Duo. 8 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

Tuesday, Feb. 27–Saturday, March 3  
Southern Conference basketball—women’s championship tournament. Charleston, S.C. (227-7338)

Tuesdays, Feb. 27  
Concert—WCU Symphony Band. 8 p.m. FAPAC. (227-7242)

Wednesday, Feb. 28–Saturday, March 3  

March  
Thursday, March 1  
Old Time Music and Bluegrass Jam Series—concert featuring Stoney Creek Boys followed by jam for all musicians. 7–9 p.m. MHC. (227-7129)
Legends on Stage—“Cirque le Masque,” a theatrical European Cirque stage show $. 7:30 p.m. FAPAC. (227-2479)

Friday, March 2  
Lady Catamount tennis—vs. College of Charleston. Southern Conference match. 1 p.m. CAC. (227-7338)

Sunday, March 4  
Arti-Facts!—“Weavings.” 2:30–3:30 p.m. MHC. (227-7129)

Coverlet Discovery Afternoon—hand-woven pieces digitally photographed and documented by Susan Morgan Leveille and Cassie Dickson. 2:30–4 p.m. MHC. (227-7129)

Monday, March 5–Friday, March 9  
Spring holiday.

Wednesday, March 7  
Catamount baseball—vs. Mercer. 3 p.m. $. HS/CF. (227-7338)

Friday, March 9  
Catamount baseball—vs. Xavier. 3 p.m. $. HS/CF. (227-7338)

Saturday, March 10  
Catamount baseball—vs. Xavier. 1 p.m. $. HS/CF. (227-7338)

Sunday, March 11  
Catamount baseball—vs. Xavier. 1 p.m. $. HS/CF. (227-7338)
Novel by WCU’s Ron Rash Named “Top 10 Read” for Young Adults

“The World Made Straight,” the latest novel by Ron Rash, the Parris Distinguished Professor of Appalachian Culture at Western, is one of the nation’s top 10 books for teenage readers.

Announcement of the 2007 Alex Awards, presented by the Young Adult Library Services Association, came as part of the American Library Association’s midwinter meeting held Jan. 19-24 in Seattle.

Sponsored by the Margaret Alexander Edwards Trust, the awards are designed to recognize that many teens enjoy and often prefer books written for adults, and to assist librarians in recommending adult books that appeal to teens. The award is named in honor of the late Margaret Alexander Edwards, called “Alex” by her closest friends, a young adult specialist at the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore. She used adult books extensively with young adults to broaden their experience and enrich their understanding of themselves and their world.

“The World Made Straight” also will be required reading for the 2007 freshman class at WCU, as a university committee has picked Rash’s novel as the Freshman Reading Program selection. Through the program, now in its ninth year at Western, new freshmen each summer receive a copy of a book selected by a university committee. Students are expected to read the book over the summer, and discuss it and write about the book as it is incorporated into their fall semester studies.

This marks the second time WCU has selected a work by Rash for its Freshman Reading Program. His debut novel “One Foot in Eden” was the 2004 selection.

Nursing Association Approves WCU as Continuing Education Provider

Western has been named a provider of nursing continuing education by the North Carolina Nurses Association, giving nurses a new opportunity to take approved professional development courses at a convenient time and place.

Through gaining status as an approved provider, nurses may use the continuing education contact hours gained from the courses to meet requirements of continuing competency to the North Carolina Board of Nursing.

Western has begun offering courses on hypertension, overactive bladder diagnosis and management, and irritable bowel syndrome in order to demonstrate quality instruction to the NCNA. More courses are in development and will be available soon, said Susan Fouts, WCU’s director of continuing education.

“WCU will be able to better serve the nursing community and our nursing graduates in their professional capacities by providing approved nursing continuing education,” said Pat Brown, dean of Educational Outreach.

The North Carolina Nurses Association is accredited as an approver of Continuing Nursing Education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation.

“The nursing faculty is excited about continuing to serve our graduates and advance practice nurses with professional development as an NCNA approved provider,” said Vincent Hall, head of WCU’s Department of Nursing.

WCU joins Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as university-based approved providers of continuing nurse education in North Carolina.
Coastal scientists from across the Southeast joined officials from Duke and Western Carolina universities Friday, Jan. 19, to celebrate a partnership that will ensure the continuation of a program internationally known for its efforts in using science to influence public policy affecting management of the nation’s shorelines.

Orrin Pilkey, who founded the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines at Duke in 1986, is passing the program to former student Rob Young, currently an associate professor of geosciences at WCU and one of the nation’s leading experts in the science of hurricane impacts and coastal management.

“You may be wondering why is it that the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines is now located at Western Carolina with our beautiful coastal views,” Chancellor John W. Bardo said during a ceremony and open house for the program’s new offices in Cullowhee. “It’s because Rob Young is clearly an international expert in this field. His strong work with Dr. Pilkey over the years has made this partnership possible. This will enable us to keep the data alive, to keep the research going, and to continue the vital work of this program.”

Bardo said the partnership is in keeping with a longstanding tradition at WCU of focusing faculty and student efforts on important environmental and economic issues. “Duke and Western are coming together to deal with one of the major environmental issues facing the country today,” he said. “Out of that partnership will rise a much greater whole than either institution could have created separately.”

William Schlesinger, dean of the Nicholas School of the Environment and Earth Sciences at Duke, called the partnership a wonderful example of the way universities should collaborate on important issues. With increasing development on the nation’s shorelines and in the face of predictions of more frequent and more intense storm activity on the coast, the program’s work is more important than ever before, Schlesinger said. “The issues this program deals with are here every day and in increasing importance,” Schlesinger said.

Although retired from full-time work, Pilkey will continue to serve as director emeritus of the program. Under Young, the PSDS will maintain its emphasis on research focusing on beach replenishment and other forms of shoreline stabilization, hazard risk mapping on barrier islands, sedimentary processes on shorefaces, and mitigation of hurricane property damage on barrier islands. Andrew Coburn, who was associate director of the PSDS when it was housed at Duke, is now at WCU in a faculty research position.

—by BILL STUDENC