Western’s Teacher Education Program Wins National Christa McAuliffe Award

The third time proved the charm for Western’s College of Education and Allied Professions, 2007 co-winner of the Christa McAuliffe Excellence in Teacher Education Award presented annually by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

Western for the past three years has been among the national finalists for the award given in recognition of excellence in teacher education. The award is named in honor of Christa McAuliffe, the teacher who died when the space shuttle Challenger exploded shortly after liftoff in January 1986.

Western shares this year’s award with teacher education programs at the University of Northern Colorado and St. Cloud State University in Minnesota.

“Our philosophy of teacher preparation at Western is in alignment with Christa McAuliffe’s often-quoted motto ‘I touch the future. I teach,” said Michael Dougherty, dean of the College of Education and Allied Professions. “Through our ongoing work with our many public school partners across Western North Carolina, we know we are living up to her legacy. By preparing and nurturing high-quality teachers who work in our schools and make a difference in pupil learning, we play a role in shaping the young people who represent the future of our region, our state and our nation.”

The award recognizes that Western is advancing the field of teacher education by identifying promising practices for measuring the impact of programs on teacher candidate knowledge, particularly on pupil learning from pre-kindergarten through grade 12, Dougherty said.

The McAuliffe award is the second national recognition for Western’s teacher education program in the past two years. The Association of Teacher Educators in February 2006 presented its Distinguished Program in Teacher Education award, given to teacher education programs that exhibit outstanding collaboration with local school systems, to WCU in recognition of the success of its School-University Teacher Education Partnership, better known as SUTEP.

Through SUTEP, WCU provides assistance to educators at each step in their development – as student teachers, as they first enter the teaching profession, and as they reach the middle of their careers and seek additional professional development. Established in 1997 as one of 14 such partnerships in North Carolina, SUTEP has formal agreements with 96 schools in 18 WNC school systems and informal partnerships with the remaining school systems and charter schools in the region, said Ruth McCreary, director of SUTEP since 2001.

Chancellor John W. Bardo said the national honors provide important, independent validation of the strength of the university’s teacher education program. “I can think of no stronger evidence of the efforts of our faculty, staff, students and school partners than for Western to win two national awards for its teacher education program within two years. That is unheard of,” Bardo said. “We are facing serious shortages across the state and nationally in the number of qualified teachers needed to help ensure that our children are prepared for careers in an increasingly global economy. I hope these awards will increase the number of teacher education majors at Western. I am convinced than no institution prepares teachers better than Western – period.”

“We play a role in shaping the young people who represent the future of our region, our state and our nation.”

–Michael Dougherty

By BILL STUDENC
Faculty Test Ideas this Spring To Improve Large Enrollment Courses

Faculty members participating in a large enrollment course redesign pilot project will test the use of online resources and technology to enhance hands-on and interactive learning experiences. Faculty fellows at the Coulter Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning are exploring such techniques as administering pre-class quizzes online to assess comprehension of reading assignments; posting narrated PowerPoint lectures; and incorporating video and podcasts into the curriculum.

"Today, interactive communication technology is evolving at an unprecedented pace, and it’s time to bring our courses in line with those advances and with current events," said Will Dulaney, faculty fellow and assistant professor and director of human communication.

The challenges of teaching large enrollment courses range from the quantity of record-keeping to teaching in a way that engages students who are "very diverse in preparation, learning style and motivation," according to information from the University of North Carolina Teaching and Learning with Technology Collaborative, which is supporting course redesign efforts at WCU and other UNC campuses.

Guiding WCU’s pilot project are Amy Martin and Robert Crow, instructional developers for the Coulter Faculty Center; Bill Papin, who teaches health and wellness; Dulaney, who teaches introductory speech communication; Michelle Scifers, who teaches nutrition, fitness and wellness; and Claire Eye and Peter Savage, who teach theatre experience.

"We are exploring how we can use technological tools and innovative classroom techniques to better engage students in these classes so that they are more likely to learn and synthesize the material," said Martin.

When Papin faced the challenges of teaching 160 students in different sections one semester, he started to think creatively about how to keep up with the administrative work and communicate effectively with each student. He began putting notes and tests online. What developed into the course’s "one-stop shop" proved to be especially useful if students were absent or had questions, and positioned him to teach the course online. "At first I wondered how I could take what I did in the classroom to the online environment, but what I found was that I wanted to take the extremely active environment online where every student participates and try to replicate that in the classroom," he said.

This spring, he wants to pilot administering pre-class online quizzes that can be taken multiple times until the student achieves a certain percent of correct answers. "The idea is to help students come to class prepared so we can spend more time with active learning activities," he said. "Instead of lecturing about body composition, we could dedicate more time to calculating body composition and discussing which methods students believe are the most accurate and practical for their personal use."

Scifers said she is exploring putting voice to PowerPoint presentations for students to review before class to create more time for hands-on activities. "If you are teaching someone about nutrition, it is not until you teach someone to read actual nutrition information that they apply the information to their own lives and become smarter consumers," said Scifers. Dulaney said he wants to modernize a 10-year-old speech communication course. He is researching interactive online textbooks and exploring ways to make the content more relevant to today’s students. "We will continue to help students develop interpersonal and small group communication skills, but we also need to help them become media literate," said Dulaney. "We want them to understand how information and interactions that seem interpersonal in cyberspace can very easily become unfortunate forms of mass communication."

Martin said the redesign effort directly relates to the university’s Quality Enhancement Plan, or QEP, through addressing synthesis and engaged learning.

"If we redesign large courses for maximum student engagement, our students will be more engaged in their coursework, which leads to better grades, higher retention and, hopefully, better progress toward graduation," said Martin. "The effects will be felt throughout the university."

Newsfile

• Robert Crow, instructional developer at Coulter Faculty Center, and John Habel, associate professor of psychology and senior Coulter Faculty Center fellow for the scholarship of teaching and learning, presented "Integrating the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at Western Carolina University" at the 15th Annual Improving Student Learning International Conference at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, in September. While in Dublin, they also attended the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning institutional leadership meeting.

• Jeff Kiska, WebCat system administrator for Coulter Faculty Center, and Mary Teslow, assistant professor of health information administration and Coulter Faculty Center fellow for e-learning, presented "Connecting at the CORE: Community Online Resources for Engagement – Site Creation and Administration" at the Blackboard World Conference in Boston in July.

• Michael Smith, associate professor of management and international business and director of the master’s degree program in business administration, chairs the Indirect-MRO Buyers Group, an organization associated with the Institute for Supply Management that serves people involved in buying indirect materials and maintenance, repair and operations supplies. Smith spoke at the Indirect-MRO Buyers Group’s 10th annual meeting in Chicago in September.

• The Olympic Park Institute has elected Rob Young, professor of geosciences and director of the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines, to its board of directors. Young is involved with an ongoing collaborative partnership with Olympic Park Institute and the Elwha Science Education Project, which invites young people from Washington’s Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe to investigate how the nation’s largest dam removal project will impact the tribe’s cultural heritage. Young also has been invited to serve on the Science Panel on Coastal Hazards that advises the North Carolina Coastal Resources Commission.

By TERESA KILLIAN
The University of North Carolina Tomorrow Commission, which is charged with assessing what North Carolinians need most from their university in the next 20 years, hosted a listening forum at Southwestern Community College on Oct. 4.

Erskine Bowles, president of the UNC system, and commission members including Jim Phillips, chairman of the UNC Board of Governors, heard from community members about the region’s shortage of health care professionals and math and science teachers. They heard interest in expanding WCU’s presence in Hendersonville. They also heard about the need to help students from rural, mountain communities go to college and the need to support entrepreneurs.

The event was one of a series of community listening forums held to help the commission recommend priorities for the university system to the Board of Governors.

Serving on the Scholars Council formed to support and advise the commission is Bruce Henderson, professor of psychology at WCU. The council is composed of top faculty from each university within the system and from different areas of expertise. Henderson, who authored “Teaching at the People’s University,” brings knowledge from his research and experience with state comprehensive universities.

He and other Scholars Council members have conducted research, prepared reports and helped frame questions for commission meetings. They have led and recorded small group discussions at community listening forums, which have averaged about 300 attendees. Henderson said he has been struck by the regional nature of many challenges facing communities throughout the state.

“I was not aware of how a growing military could affect the needs in the eastern part of the state, or just how rapidly UNC-Charlotte is growing to meet the needs of the city,” said Henderson. “What has impressed me is the great respect for the university system held across the state. People from every kind of background trust the university system and look for leadership from the university in dealing with the problems of the state.”

UNC Tomorrow reports, an online survey, recordings from each community listening forum and other information about UNC Tomorrow are posted online at www.nctomorrow.org.

**Theatre Professor and Student To Present at National Conference**

The Southeast Section of the United States Institute for Theatre Technology selected a WCU faculty member and a student to represent the region at the national conference to be held in Houston this spring.

Glenda Hensley, visiting assistant professor of stage and screen, was one of three faculty selected for a “Cover the Walls” exhibit with her display about the costume design for Western’s performance of “The Music Man.” Hensley designed costumes to be bold, bright, energetic and larger than life with an eye toward director Terrence Mann’s vision to be “one shade short of cartoon.”

An exhibit about costume design for “Dogwood’s Search” by Leeanne Deaver, a junior from Canton, was selected as one of the three student presentations for the national conference. Deaver said the challenge in designing costumes for “Dogwood’s Search,” an adaptation of a Cherokee legend developed as an educational production for young audiences, was to bring legendary human and animal characters on stage together.

“This is very impressive as the student exhibition includes that of graduate students as well as undergraduates from across the region,” said Susan Brown-Strauss, head of the department of stage and screen.

Glenda Hensley

Theatre Professor and Student To Present at National Conference

WNC Community, WCU Scholar Guide UNC Tomorrow Commission

Members of the UNC Tomorrow Commission (top photo) take notes at a community listening forum in Sylva on Oct. 4. William Kane, professor emeritus of management and international business (above left), shares his thoughts with Bruce Henderson, professor of psychology and member of the commission’s Scholars Council.
**THE Reporter Calendar**

October 22—November 4

**Tuesday, Oct. 23**

Advising Day — No classes meet. (227-7216)

**Films4Thought Series** — Spanish and Latin film festival. “Maná Full of Grace,” with a discussion following the film. 7:30 p.m. Theater, UC. (227-3872 or 227-3870)

Catamount Concert Series — Odds and Ends. 8 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

**Wednesday, Oct. 24**

Catamount volleyball — vs. Wofford. $ 2 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

**Evening of Spoken Word and Comedy** — Paul D. and Cerrome. 9 p.m. Illusions, UC. (227-7206)

**Thursday, Oct. 25**

Catamount football — vs. Wofford. Southern Conference game. 7:30 p.m. WS/BW. (227-7338)

Business After Hours — 5:30 p.m. MHC. (227-7129)

**Friday, Oct. 26**

**Last Minute Productions** — Jamie Kennedy, “Unwashed: The Stand-up Special.” Opening act: comedian Flip Shultz. 7:30 p.m. RRMC. (227-7722)

**Saturday, Oct. 27**

Make a Difference Day — Volunteer with Haywood Habitat for Humanity, REACH of Macon County, REACH of Jackson County, Pathways Thrift Store, Pumpkinfest or Project FIRE. Transportation provided. (Melanie Clark at 227-3595 or mclark@email.wcu.edu)

Catamount cross country — Southern Conference Cross Country Championship. All day. CAC. (227-7338)

**Sunday, Oct. 28**

Catamount volleyball — vs. Georgia Southern. Southern Conference match. 2 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Cooking program — “Delectable Dishes from Yesterday for Today” by Kay Moss. 2 p.m. $ MHC. (227-7129)

**Tuesday, Oct. 30**

Catamount volleyball — vs. Chattanooga. Southern Conference game. 7 p.m. RRRC. (227-7338)

**Films4Thought Series** — Spanish and Latin film festival. “Cria Cuervos” (“Raise Crows”), with a discussion following the film. 7:30 p.m. Theater, UC. (227-3872 or 227-3870)

Catamount Concert Series — Christopher Palestrant, guest composer. 8 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

**Thursday, Nov. 1**

Lady Catamount basketball — vs. Carson-Newman College. 7 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

**Saturday, Nov. 3**

Catamount soccer — Southern Conference Women’s Soccer Championship Tournament, first round. $ Time and location TBA. (227-7338)

**Sunday, Nov. 4**

Arti-Facts — Aprons with Dot Conner 2:30 p.m. MHC. (227-7129)

**Exhibits**

**Mountain Heritage Center**

**SLIDESHOW SPOTLIGHT FOR OCTOBER:**

“Corn: Milling, Tilling and Stilling”

**SLIDESHOW SPOTLIGHT FOR NOVEMBER:**

“Irons in the Fire”

**Gallery A:**

“Migration of the Scotch-Irish People.” Includes text panels, illustrations, artifacts and vibrant murals that trace the Scotch-Irish Appalachian settlers from Ulster to Pennsylvania, through the Shenandoah Valley, and into Western North Carolina. Permanent exhibit.

**Gallery B:**

“Southern Stews: Traditions of One-Pot Cooking,” a national, traveling exhibition organized by the McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina. Through March.

**Gallery C:**

“After the War: Conflict and Domestic Change in the North Carolina Mountains.” Portrays how wars and their aftermath have shaped the lives of people and communities in Western North Carolina. Through December.

**Online Exhibits** (http://www.wcu.edu/2397.asp):

“After the War”

“Horace Kephart: Revealing an Enigma”

“Southern Appalachian Quilts”

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

“Craft Revival: Shaping Western North Carolina Past and Present”

**Mountain Heritage Center hours:** 8 a.m. — 5 p.m. Monday—Friday, and 2 — 5 p.m. Sunday. (227-7129 or http://www.wcu.edu/2397.asp)

**Fine Art Museum, Fine and Performing Arts Center**

**ONGOING EXHIBIT:** “Worldviews.” Selections from Western Carolina University’s permanent collection in all media by local, regional, national and international artists.

**OPENING NOV. 1:** “To Rise and Begin Again.” (pictured below) Illustrations by Luzene Hill for two Cherokee children’s books. Through Dec. 1.


**School of Art and Design Student Portfolio Exhibition.** Through Dec. 1.

**Fine Art Museum hours:** Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays 10 a.m. — 4 p.m., Thursdays 10 a.m. — 6 p.m.; Saturdays 1—4 p.m. Donations appreciated. (227-3591 or http://fapac.wcu.edu)

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**Submit items for the university’s online calendar at least one week prior to the event.**