Freshman Applications Are Up 62.6 Percent

"You can’t blame the admission counselors and application processors if they appear a bit bleary-eyed these days. After all, they’ve been working extra hours trying to keep up with a 62.6 percent increase in the number of applications for undergraduate admission.

As of Jan. 14, applications for WCU’s fall freshman class were up by 2,061 compared to the same week last year – from 3,291 to 5,352. In fact, just two weeks into the month, Western had already exceeded the total number of applications received for fall of 2007, when 4,792 first-year students sought admission to WCU.

“As retired vice provost for enrollment and director of admissions emeritus at N.C. State with over 35 years of experience in the admissions profession, I can tell you without hesitation that a one-year 62 percent increase in applications for admission is phenomenal,” said George Dixon, who also serves as senior consultant with the National College Access Partnership for the University of North Carolina General Administration.

In addition to having a larger pool of prospective freshmen, applications from students seeking to transfer to Western from other educational institutions in the fall also are up by more than 25 percent (from 306 to 383), and applications for freshmen who sought enrollment this spring semester were up 39.3 percent (from 135 to 188).

WCU officials attribute the dramatic surge in applications to a variety of factors, including the adoption of a more precise system of student recruitment that helps identify prospective students who are more likely to be interested in attending Western.

"Instead of a traditional carpet-bombing approach in which we contacted every prospective student who took the SAT, we have fine-tuned the process and are using a more targeted approach," said Alan Kines, director of undergraduate admission. “This nationally recognized best-practices method allows us to refine our search process through a computerized data-mining process that identifies students who will be a better fit for us.”

The system examines students’ responses to questions about preference for a public or private university, desire to remain in state, willingness to travel more than three hours from home, educational attainment of parents and similar information collected by the College Board when students take the SAT.

By helping Western find prospective students who are more likely to apply for enrollment, the new approach also is expected to play a role in improving the university’s retention rate. “Students who are identified as being a better fit for Western will be more likely to stay here, to succeed, and to graduate,” Kines said.

Although this approach to student recruitment is widely used by colleges and universities in other areas of the country, Western is one of only a handful in the Southeast to adopt the method, said Dixon.

“From my experience, using forecasting models in recruitment is, indeed, an emerging best-practices model in admissions and enrollment management,” he said. “While using student demographic information to look at admissions and yield probabilities isn’t brand new, it hasn’t been widely used until the past few years, and then mostly by smaller private schools.”

Also playing a role in the increase in applications, university officials said, is the addition of several new programs that have proven popular with prospective students, and an increase in Western’s visibility and reputation.

"I can tell you without hesitation that a one-year 62 percent increase in applications for admission is phenomenal.”

— George Dixon
UNC General Administration Consultant
Dana Sally Named Dean of Library Sciences

Dana M. Sally, dean of university libraries at the University of West Florida in Pensacola, is WCU’s first dean of library services, effective Feb. 11.

Sally comes to Cullowhee with more than 30 years of experience in managing and leading academic libraries, including 10 years as associate director of the library at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He has been in his current post at West Florida since 2005.

Sally is filling a position previously held by Bil Stahl, who had been serving as head librarian and chief information officer since March 2005. Through a reorganization announced by Provost Kyle Carter, Stahl is now the university's full-time CIO, and the head librarian position has been elevated to dean status.

“Dr. Sally brings tremendous knowledge and experience to the position,” Carter said. “He will be a great asset to the university as it redesigns its curriculum to implement engaged learning because he understands the central role of the library in supporting faculty as they focus on student learning outcomes.”

The appointment will go to the WCU board of trustees for formal approval at its March meeting.

During his career, Sally has served as co-head of the public services division of the Virginia Tech libraries, head of the Evansdale Library at West Virginia University and librarian for a facility serving five academic departments at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He also has worked in libraries at California University of Pennsylvania, and Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pa.; taught philosophy classes at N.C. State University; served as a Russian translator for the U.S. Army Security Agency; and taught high school science in Pennsylvania.

Sally holds a bachelor’s degree in philosophy from California University of Pennsylvania; master’s degree in library sciences from the University of Pittsburgh; and master’s and doctoral degrees in philosophy from UNC-Chapel Hill.

“I am very excited about joining the academic leadership team at Western Carolina and coming to Cullowhee,” Sally said. “I am looking forward to working with the provost, the other deans and the WCU faculty and staff in continuing to build a strong and vibrant library presence.”

–By BILL STUDENC

Museum Opens Faculty Art Exhibit, Expands Permanent Collection

The creative work of faculty members at Western Carolina University’s School of Art and Design is the focus of a show from Jan. 23-March 15 at the Fine Art Museum on the WCU campus. The Biennial Faculty Exhibition celebrates the inaugural year of the new School of Art and Design, formally established July 2007.

The work, by faculty members who are also professional artists, includes painting, drawing, ceramics, sculpture, photography, printmaking and book arts, installation pieces, digital media and video. Faculty members represented in the exhibition are Patricia Bailey, Joan Byrd, Bill Clements, Marie T. Cochran, Martin DeWitt, Karen Dunn, Cathryn Griffin, Jon Jicha, Kevin Kirkpatrick, Matt Liddle, Susan Martin, Katya Moorman, Greg McPherson, Barbara Eblen-Nussdorfer, Kelly Popoff, William Price, George Rector, Marya Roland, Norma Smith, Erin Tapley and Richard Tichich, director of the School of Art and Design.

The following related events are free and open to the public:

• Wednesday, Feb. 6, a reception for the artists, 4-7 p.m. at the museum.
• Thursday, Feb. 7, a gallery talk by Martin DeWitt, director and curator of the museum, at noon at the museum. DeWitt will discuss the exhibition in the context of artists as teachers and as creators, as well as the challenges and inspirations of contemporary artists.

The museum also will host a “Worldviews” exhibit Jan. 23-March 15. Recent acquisitions include works in ceramic by Norm Schulman, David Crane and Tom Kerrigan; two prints and a painting by Robert Godfrey; and a limited edition print portfolio called “Combat Paper,” which is printed on pulp paper made from uniforms worn in combat in Iraq. For museum hours or more information, check out fapac.wcu.edu or contact DeWitt at 227-2553 or mde Witt@email.wcu.edu.

–By JILL INGRAM
Freshman Applications continued from cover

Students who have applied for admission for fall 2008 at Western say they are attracted to a university that is small enough to provide a more personalized educational experience, but large enough to have the resources of a bigger school, and that offers a diverse mix of academic programs, including traditional areas of study and new programs of study leading to hot careers.

“For me, the deciding factor was Western's size. Western is the perfect size for me. It’s not too big. It's not too small. It's just right,” said Amy Lynn McGinnis, a senior at Hickory High School who plans to study either music education or physical therapy at WCU. “Plus, Western has the best marching band program I have ever seen, and I wanted to go to a school where I could be part of something special like the band.”

The most popular programs among high school students applying to Western for fall are forensic science and anthropology, construction management, music, education, nursing, health sciences, communication, and motion picture and television production. Western's Pride of the Mountains Marching Band – the largest marching band in the Carolinas, at more than 300 members – also draws interest from a large number of prospective students.

Other new student recruitment activities include the development of an Alumni Admissions Council, in which WCU alumni in such key areas as Hickory, Charlotte, Raleigh and the Triad meet with prospective students and share information about their experiences at Western; and the use of faculty members to contact prospective students to discuss academic programs and potential majors.

—By BILL STUDENC

Discussion Heats Up at Global Warming Event

An Eco Film Festival, music, round-table discussion and student debate designed to spark dialogue about global warming will take place Thursday, Jan. 31, at WCU as part of the Focus the Nation “teach-in.”

Focus the Nation is an unprecedented educational initiative on global warming solutions occurring at more than 1,000 universities and colleges in all 50 states on Jan. 31.

“This is really the first national discussion on trying to seek solutions for global climate change, and I’m excited that it’s taking place at the college level with young people who are going to be inheriting this problem and who also will be our next generation of leaders,” said Jane Nichols, assistant professor of interior design and co-coordinator of WCU's Focus the Nation event. The faculty learning community examining sustainability in higher education began organizing the teach-in last spring.

Activities will take place in A.K. Hinds University Center from noon until 8 p.m. Timm Muth, director of the Jackson County Green Energy Park, will deliver the keynote speech, “Turning Trash into Treasure: Industrial-Scale Recycling” at 4:30 p.m. in the multipurpose room on the second floor. Check out www.wcu.edu/5946.asp for a full schedule of events.

“We all can be part of the global warming solution,” said Lauren Bishop, campus energy manager and co-coordinator of WCU’s Focus the Nation events. “All of us can get involved.”

For more information, click on the Web at www.focusthenation.org, or contact Jane Nichols at 227-2178 or Lauren Bishop at 227-3562.

Campus Forum Centered on UNC Tomorrow Report
On January 31

An all-campus forum will be held to discuss the University of North Carolina Tomorrow Commission Final Report in the A.K. Hinds University Center Grandroom from 2 until 5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 31.

The report was developed as part of an initiative to determine how the university system can respond more directly and proactively to the 21st-century challenges facing North Carolina. Findings and recommendations for UNC institutions range from working to be more actively involved in improving the quantity, quality and geographic distribution of public school teachers to assuming a leadership role in addressing the state’s energy and environmental challenges.

The report and executive summary can be accessed at www.nctomorrow.org. Notify Christy Ashe in the Office of the Chancellor by e-mail at cashe@email.wcu.edu, or by phone at 227-7103 if you will attend.

University of North Carolina Tomorrow
Monday, Jan. 28
Lady Catamount basketball — vs. College of Charleston. $ 5 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)
Catamount basketball — vs. Georgia Southern. $ 7:03 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Tuesday, Jan. 29
3rd Annual Community Service-Learning Fair — Faculty, staff and students are invited to speak with various community agency representatives. 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Grandroom, UC. (227-7184)
Presentation — Professor Louis J. Gross, University of Tennessee. “Managing Natural Resources: Mathematics Meets Politics, Greed and the Army Corps of Engineers.” 3:30 p.m. “Mathematics and Biology: Bears,Panthers and Equations,” 7:30 p.m. with reception to follow. Theater, UC. (227-3827)
Catamount Concert Series — Music Faculty Showcase. 8 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

Wednesday, Jan. 30
Documentary — “V-Day: Until the Violence Stops,” followed by question-and-answer session with Women’s Center staff and cast members. 7 p.m. Theater, UC. (227-7450)

Thursday, Jan. 31
Event — Round-table discussions, movies, live music and other activities designed to spark dialogue about global warming solutions for Focus the Nation “teach-in.” Noon-8 p.m. UC. (227-2178)
Campus Forum — WCU community discussion about the UNC Tomorrow Report. 2-5 p.m. Grandroom, UC. (227-7103)
Concert — Travis Bennett, horn, with Andrew Adams, piano. 8 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

Friday, Feb. 1
Concert Choice Variety Show — Members of WCU student vocal ensemble and Robert Holquist, music director. $ 8 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

Saturday, Feb. 2
Lady Catamount basketball — vs. Davidson. $ 4 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)
Catamount basketball — vs. Appalachian State University. $ 7:03 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Monday, Feb. 4
Lady Catamount basketball — vs. Appalachian State University. $ 5 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)
Catamount basketball — vs. Chattanooga. $ 7:03 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Tuesday, Feb. 5
Catamount Concert Series — Jazz Trio with Stephen Wohlbrich, guitar; Eliot Wedopian, bass, and Pavel Wlosok, piano. 8 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

Wednesday, Feb. 6
Appalachian Lunchtime Series — Casey Clabough, author of “The Warrior’s Path.” 12:20 p.m. Auditorium, MHC. (227-7129)
Reception — Honoring artists of Biennial Faculty Exhibition. 4-7 p.m. FAPAC. (227-2553)

Thursday, Feb. 7
Relay For Life — WCU team registration for Jackson County event. 6-8 p.m. Room 358, Belk. (606-4537)
Old Time Music and Bluegrass Jam — Chuck Norris and Daybreak, 7 p.m.; open jam, 8 p.m. Auditorium, MHC. (227-7129)

Friday, Feb. 8
Concert — WCU Wind Ensemble. 8 p.m. FAPAC. (227-7242)
Community Kayak Roll Clinic — S, Pool, Brice Gym. Pre-registration required. (227-3688)

Exhibits
Mountain Heritage Center
SLIDESHOW SPOTLIGHT FOR JANUARY: “Irons in the Fire.”
SLIDESHOW SPOTLIGHT FOR FEBRUARY: “New threads in old patterns.”

Lobby:
“Airing of the Quilts.” Through March 31.
“People of the Land: Rivercane Series.” Ongoing

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.

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 (227-7129 or http://www.wcu.edu/2389.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.

School of Art and Design Biennial Faculty Exhibition. Through March 15.
Fine Art Museum hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays 10 a.m. — 6 p.m.; Saturdays 1–4 p.m. Donations appreciated. (227-3591 or http://fapac.wcu.edu)

KEY: $ — Admission fee; BB–Belk Building; CAT–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; HL–Hunter Library; HS/CF–Hennon Stadium/Children’s Field; MHC–Mountain Heritage Center; NCA–Natural Sciences Auditorium; RH–Recital Hall, Coulter Building; RRAC–Ramsey Regional Activity Center; UA–A.K. Hinds University Center; WS/ BW–Whitney Stadium/Rob Waters Field.

Submissions: Send news items, calendar notices and address changes to WCU Calendar, 420 H.F. Robinson Bldg., Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC 28723 or e-mail to: Reporter@email.wcu.edu. Submit items for the university’s online calendar at least one week prior to the event.

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