A concern about whether emergency information such as flood warnings gets to residents near Western fast enough inspired a faculty member and police to find — and find funding for — an innovative solution.

Don Connelly, director of the electronic media program at Western and faculty adviser for WWCU-FM (Power 90.5), and Bob Scott, the now-retired executive officer with University Police, worried about what would happen in the event of a local emergency overnight or on a weekend. During those times, most radio stations use computer systems instead of people to operate unattended. What if a dangerous storm threatened to cause flooding or mudslides? What if there was a forest fire or a child had been kidnapped? How would a radio station such as WWCU get this information on the air as quickly as possible?

To solve the problem, Scott and Connelly teamed up with Tim Neese of MultiTech Consulting of Asheville to develop an emergency management communications system that allows university police at any time to access WWCU, the university’s broadcast service that is on the air 24 hours a day.

The new communications system allows an officer from any remote location to interrupt programming or override the radio station’s announcer. The system supplements the federally required emergency action system, which most listeners would recognize from the long tones heard during periodic testing after an announcement that, “This is a test.” That system requires more steps to activate and transmit information than the new system at WWCU.

“While we sometimes think bad things can’t happen in the mountains, they can and do,” said Scott, who was involved with the project before he retired in January. “We are subject to everything from ice storms to deadly flooding and mudslides.”

Western received a grant of $1,000 to pay for the new communications system from Duke Power, a company that monitors dams and water levels as part of its work with hydroelectric plants.

Don Connelly, director of electronic media, points out features of the radio station’s new emergency communications system to Fred Alexander of the Duke Power Nantahala Area (left) and Tom Johnson, director of Western’s police department.

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The organizational chart shows that the proposed College of Humanities and Sciences would include a new department of communications studies, as well as departments of anthropology, sociology, English, history, modern foreign languages, philosophy and religion, political science, biology, chemistry and physics, geosciences and natural resources management, and mathematics and computer science.

The proposed College of Fine and Performing Arts would include a new School of Music as well as departments of art and interior design, broadcasting and motion picture studies, and theatre and dance.

The proposed College of Health Professions would include a new School of Nursing, new School of Social Services with departments of applied criminology and social work, and new School of Health Sciences with recreational therapy. The department of physical therapy would remain in this college and department of communication sciences and disorders would move in.

continued on page 2
Western’s Costa Chosen to Lead Highlands Biological Station

Biology department faculty member James T. Costa is the new executive director of the Highlands Biological Station, a 21-acre interinstitutional facility of the University of North Carolina system.

Costa will direct all education and research activities conducted at the station, as well as oversee administrative areas such as maintenance and improvement of the station’s academic and residential facilities. He served as interim director of the facility, located in the town of Highlands, since September 2005.

Costa has been a member of Western’s faculty since 1996, advancing through the academic posts of assistant and associate professor to full professor in the biology department. He was named H.F. and Katherine P. Robinson Professor of Biology in 2004, and will continue to hold that title and teach classes periodically at Western.

Costa also will continue as a research associate in entomology at the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University, where he spent the 2004-2005 academic year as a fellow of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.

An active researcher and writer, Costa has authored numerous scientific publications stemming from his research on insect behavior in the United States, Costa Rica and Mexico. His book “The Other Insect Societies” will be published by Harvard University Press in May.

A native of New York state, Costa earned his undergraduate degree in biology and philosophy at the State University of New York College at Cortland, studying biology and philosophy. He earned his master’s degree in entomology and community ecology, and doctoral degree in insect population genetics, at the University of Georgia. He then spent four years at Harvard’s Museum of Comparative Zoology, first as a postdoctoral research fellow and then as National Science Foundation/Sloan postdoctoral fellow in molecular evolution, before joining Western’s faculty.

The Highlands Biological Station was founded and operated as a private institution for its first 50 years. The state of North Carolina began limited funding in the 1950s, and support by the National Science Foundation and the state permitted significant station expansion in the 1960s.

For more information about the Highlands Biological Station and its programs, and the Highlands Nature Center, click on the Web at wwww.wcu.edu/hbs.

N.C. Rep. Phil Haire, a Jackson County attorney (third from left), presents a copy of the book “The Changing Face of Justice: A Look at the First 100 Women Attorneys in North Carolina” to Western Carolina University Chancellor John W. Bardo. The book is a project of the Committee on Women in the Profession of the North Carolina Bar Association. Taking part in the presentation were several female attorneys who work at Western. They are, from left to right, Debra Burke, head of the department of marketing and business law; Mary Ann Lochner, associate general counsel; Lorrie Willey, assistant professor of business law; and Jayne Zanglein, visiting instructor of business law.

Campus Restructure continued from page 1

The restructured College of Applied Sciences would include the new Kimmel School of Construction Management, a new department of engineering technology, and a new department of engineering, which would include electrical and computer engineering technology, electrical engineering and computer engineering.

The College of Business would continue to include departments of accounting, finance, and entrepreneurship; computer information systems and economics; marketing and business law. Sport management would be added to management, international business, and hospitality and tourism.

The College of Education and Allied Professions would continue to include departments of birth-through-kindergarten education; elementary and middle grades education; health and human performance with physical education and parks and recreation management; human services; educational leadership and foundations; and psychology.

At the conclusion of the Feb. 10 meeting, Carter praised members of the college redesign task force for their work. They are: Chair Brad Sims; deans’ representatives James Costa, Bill Ogletree, Terry Kimner, and Judy Mallory; at-large representatives from the Faculty Senate executive committee, Becky Kornegay, Laura Cruz and Alan Mattingly; and associate deans Dale Carpenter and Debashis Banerjee.

The task force acknowledged that acceptance of its restructuring ideas will require “cultural shifts in the way the university conducts its affairs.” Noting that Western has been restructured only six times since 1952 while experiencing significant growth in programs and enrollment, the task force indicated that there might be lower resistance to change because 43 percent of the full-time faculty have been at Western for fewer than five years and are not immersed in the university’s institutional memory.

After four months of extensive discussions, meetings and online surveys, the task force says it selected “a reorganization model that … represents the needs and desires of the faculty while also improving the overall academic and administrative functions of the university.”

Prior to submitting his recommendations to Chancellor John Bardo, Carter will present the plan to the Faculty Senate for advice and comment, and to the Student Government Association. The final restructuring plan is subject to approval by the chancellor, the university’s board of trustees and the University of North Carolina Board of Governors.

– by Leila Tvedt

Emergency Communications continued from page 1

“At the time the request came in, two hurricanes had caused flooding six months earlier and a tropical storm that brought a bit more flooding was on the way,” said Fred Alexander, district manager of the Duke Power Nantahala Area. “This is a good way to help provide timely emergency information to university members and neighbors down the Tuckasegee River Valley.”

Connelly said every second counts during local weather emergencies and Amber Alerts. “This system saves valuable time and connects emergency management officials directly to the listener,” said Connelly. “Listeners will hear emergency information directly from the source and hear it first on WWCU.”

University police completed training to use the equipment in February. “Any time there is an emergency, one of the responsibilities of public safety is to keep the public informed,” said Tom Johnson, director of Western’s police department. “This system gives us another tool for accomplishing that responsibility.”

– by Teresa Killian
Monday, February 27
Colloquium — “Electronic Portfolios,” Helen Barrett, Apple Distinguished Educator and George Lucas Educational Foundation Faculty Associate. 9 a.m.–noon. Room 104, Killian Building. (227-2093)

Learning for Fun art classes — adults, 10–11:30 a.m.; middle and high school students, 3:30–5:30 p.m. $ Room 150, FAPAC. (227-7397)

MFA Artist Talk Series — J. Andy Cline. 4:30 p.m. Room 223, FAPAC. (227-3597)

One World Project — Opening ceremony. 6 p.m. Candlelight Vigil/Field of Flags Walk following ceremony.
— Tunnel of Oppression, journey of awareness to simulate harsh reality of injustice inflicted upon millions of people every day. 7 p.m.
— “A Day Without a Mexican” film. 9 p.m. U.C. (227-2616)

Concert — Choral Ensembles. 2 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

Tuesday, February 28
Airing of the Quilts presentation — “The Great American Quilt Revival.” 12:30–2 p.m. Auditorium, MHC. (227-7129)

Catamount baseball — vs. UNC Asheville. $. 3 p.m. HS/CF. (227-7338)

One World Project — Morris Dees, founder and chief trial counsel, Southern Poverty Law Center. 7 p.m. Book signing to follow. FAPAC. (227-2276)

Catamount Concert Series — WCU Jazz Band. 8 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

Morris Dees

March

Wednesday, March 1
One World Project White Ribbon Campaign — Men Against Violence information table. Noon–3 p.m. U.C. (227-2616)

Appalachian Cultural Lunchtime Series — Gary Carden, author, folklorist and storyteller. 12:15–1 p.m. MHC. (227-7129)

Lady Catamount softball doubleheader — vs. St. Francis (Pa.). $. 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. CSC. (227-7338)

Friday, March 3
Meeting — to discuss concept of leadership in curriculum. 1–3 p.m. Multipurpose Room A, U.C. (227-3623)

Saturday, March 4
Day of Percussion — marimba virtuoso Andy Harnsberger and percussion artist J.B. Smith, professor of music, Arizona State University. 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. RH. (227-3263)

EXHIBITS

Fine Art Museum, FAPAC
Tuesday–Saturday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. (227-3591 or http://fapac.wcu.edu)

Mountain Heritage Center
Mountain Heritage Center hours: 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday–Friday. (227-7219 or www.wcu.edu/mhc)

Slideshow Spotlight, MHC
MARCH: “Streams of Life” tells the story of the revival of Hazel Creek, an Appalachian watershed, from prehistory to Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), focusing on both human and natural history.

Submissions: Send news items and calendar notices to WCU Calendar, 1601 Ramsey Center, 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.
Fitness Center Sponsors Western Walks as a Step Toward Better Health

The new Western Walks program is challenging faculty, staff and students to take more steps every day for better health, and now some participants want to take the challenge a “step” further just for fun.

Sponsored by the Fitness Center, Western Walks equips participants with pager-shaped pedometers worn on waistbands, pockets or shoes that count steps throughout the day. The goal for most walkers is to gradually increase the number of steps taken every day to reach 10,000 steps a day, which is about five miles.

A Ramsey Center group of 10 participants, though, is ready to invite others on campus to a walking challenge. In some communities, businesses in pedometer-based walking programs have competed to see which can log the highest average of daily steps taken or the highest percent increase in the number of steps taken over a period of several months.

Watch out, though — the Ramsey walkers have considered holding group strolls and buying lunch each week for the person who logs the most steps. Plus, one of the walkers, Ramsey employee Debbie Hyatt, logged 15,000 steps on the first day.

“Wearing the pedometer reminds me that taking a few more steps is a healthier way of living,” she said.

That awareness is exactly what Western Walks organizers hope participants take away from their experience, said Kellie Monteith, Fitness Center director. Small changes, such as taking the steps instead of the elevator or walking to someone’s office rather than calling, can add up to a healthier lifestyle. Increasing physical activity can help prevent heart disease and combat obesity.

Western Walks began as an initiative of the university’s physical activity committee of the Wellness Council and the Fitness Center. With an initial goal of attracting at least 50 participants, the program ordered 100 pedometers. Participation exceeded expectations with 103 participants — 15 students, 29 faculty members, 57 staff members and two spouses.

Walkers have been logging their progress in manuals provided at registration, which costs $10. They also can log their steps on free Web sites, such as www.americaonthemove.org, to see how far they’ve walked “virtually” along such routes as the Appalachian Trail or Highway 50. The program marks their progress with a “You are here” sign on a map of the trail and a description of what you would be seeing at that point.

Monteith said she hopes to see Western Walks grow and introduce incentives and special events.

“We are thrilled with the response,” said Monteith, who added a second shipment of 250 more pedometers — of a more durable variety — that should arrive in March. “I’ve been excited to hear about people’s experiences and see them out walking.”

– by Teresa Killian