Season’s Greetings

The fall semester is coming to an end, providing a good time to reflect on the exciting developments that have occurred on our campus in the past year, and a moment to consider the challenges that await us in 2006.

Early this year, the university announced the purchase of 344 acres of land across N.C. Highway 107 from the current campus to allow development of our Millennial Initiative. The stage is set for enhanced learning opportunities for our students and new public-private partnerships that will boost the economy of Western North Carolina.

This effort has the potential to improve the quality of life for residents of Western North Carolina for many years to come. The Millennial Initiative will truly be the gift that keeps on giving!

In the meantime, the transformation of our campus facilities continued with the openings of Norton Road Residence Hall, the One Stop Student Support Center, the Catamount Athletic Complex, and the completion of the Centennial Drive relocation project. And, of course, we all were thrilled with the spectacular grand opening of our Fine and Performing Arts Center. Now, we look forward to the initial stages of construction on our new Student Recreation Center.

This fall, we welcomed a Western record of nearly 8,700 students to campus while the university community jumped headlong into the crucial self-study process for SACS reaccreditation. I know we all thank the many individuals who are participating in this vital task.

In spite of the occasional bumps in the road of progress, by cooperating together we can meet all the challenges we face, working together for the good of the university. I want to take this opportunity to thank every member of the Western family for your dedication and cooperative spirit, and I look forward to working with you as we head into 2006.

Deborah and I wish you and yours a safe and happy holiday season.

Sincerely,

John W. Bardo

Company Gift to Western Means $10.4 Million for Construction Management

As industry experts warn of a worsening international shortage of construction professionals, Western and one of the nation’s largest personnel recruiting firms are teaming up to boost the number of college graduates prepared for management positions in the construction industry.

Officials from Western announced Thursday, Dec. 1, a $10.4 million net investment in its construction management and related programs. At the core of the investment is a pledge of $6.92 million from Kimmel & Associates, a leading construction industry executive search company, which will leverage $3.495 million in state matching money and other support.

In twin celebrations—one held on the Cullowhee campus and one held in Asheville, home base for Kimmel & Associates—university officials announced the naming of the Joe W. Kimmel School of Construction Management, Engineering and Technology in recognition of the gift.

“The incredible gift from Joe Kimmel, his family and his associates will provide much-needed support to an academic program that is near and dear to Joe’s heart,” Chancellor John W. Bardo said in announcing the contribution. “We view this gift as among the most important events in this university’s long and storied history. We expect this pledge, combined with additional private and public support, will result in a school that will place Western on par with the nation’s finest institutions of higher education in preparing students for careers in construction management and related fields that are critical to the emerging economy of the state and the nation.”

The Kimmel contributions will create $9 million in permanent endowments, including $3 million in faculty support that qualifies the university for another $3 million in matching money from the North Carolina Distinguished Professorship Endowment Fund. The gifts also provide $2 million to supplement programmatic operations and activities; and $1 million in scholarship support.

Industry experts say Kimmel’s gift couldn’t come at a better time. The Associated General Contractors of America estimates that the
Board of Trustees Adopts Resolution For Staff Pay Raises

The board of trustees unanimously approved a resolution Friday, Dec. 2, encouraging leaders of the University of North Carolina to seek funding from the N.C. General Assembly to raise salaries for staff members.

Board members say the resolution is designed to help address the needs of Western staff members, whose salaries are lagging behind state and national averages after several years of inadequate salary increases. The resolution is directed at SPA employees—those who are subject to the State Personnel Act.

“We have been concerned for a long, long time about the level of SPA staff salaries,” said board member Genevieve Burda of Mars Hill. “Our SPA employees provide essential services to the university. We must have them, and they have got to be treated right.”

Burda, board secretary, said university officials are concerned that expansion of the local job market will make it difficult for Western to retain current employees or attract new ones, unless the salary problem is addressed.

The board last year approved a local tuition surcharge intended to help address staff salary inequities, but the UNC Board of Governors rejected local tuition as a strategy to generate additional funding for pay increases for staff salaries, saying that the responsibility rests with the state legislature, said Steve Warren of Asheville, chairman of Western’s board.

“This is a starting point to let the Board of Governors know how important this issue is to us here at Western,” Warren said. “We want to let our employees know that we do care deeply about the people who take care of this university.”

Warren said that SPA employees are directly responsible for the quality of living and learning for university students, and that services to students may suffer if action is not taken to improve conditions for workers.

The resolution calls for the UNC board to request from the General Assembly adequate funding to raise the salaries of SPA workers at Western and other focused growth and special-purpose institutions. Western is among seven institutions in the UNC system identified as expected to accommodate a higher percentage of student enrollment growth.

Terry Riouff, chairman of Western’s Staff Forum organization, thanked the trustees for their continuing efforts to address such issues as staff salaries and benefits, which have been eroding due to inflation, increases in the cost of health care premiums, and below-average pay raises over the past several years.

“I will let the other members of Staff Forum and all of the university employees know what you are trying to do on our behalf,” Riouff said.

Company Gift continued from page 1

United States is facing $3.3 trillion in infrastructure construction and repair over the next 10 years, and the U.S. Department of Labor reports that construction is the only goods-producing sector in which employment is projected to grow. Industry representatives say that the growing number of projects, combined with a continuing shortfall of construction management graduates each year and the aging-out of current professionals, is creating a shortfall in the number of educated and trained construction managers nationally.

“It’s an amazingly generous gift, but also an investment in the future,” said Christine Beaudoin of Gilbert Southern, a construction company based in Atlanta that has an active recruiting relationship with Western. “Thanks to the significant commitment that Kimmel & Associates has made, an already good construction management program has the opportunity to become one of the nation’s finest.”

Ken Bullock, a partner in the Charlotte-based design consulting firm Woolpert Inc., also applauded the contribution. “I can tell you this gift is going to present a wonderful opportunity for the university to enhance its programs in construction management, engineering and technology,” Bullock said. “It will help Western develop its buildings and facilities, improve the quality of instruction, and create an endowment for scholarship assistance for students. We, the professionals in the construction industry, depend on the universities to produce the high-quality graduates we need, and this contribution will help Western do just that.”

Students studying construction management at Western say they are excited about the future of their program. “I am proud to be part of a program that caught Mr. Kimmel’s attention,” said Kevin Kirk, a senior from Durham, who also is studying business administration and law. “The name Kimmel & Associates is nationally renowned as one of the best in the field. When they’ve got their eye on Western Carolina, that says a lot. There’s great opportunity at Western. I’ve got a job with one of the top five contractors in the world, and I haven’t even graduated yet.”

Julia Tew, a junior from Zebulon, said a childhood fascination with Lego building blocks followed by an architecture class in high school guided her academic and career choices. “When it came time for college, I was interested in construction management and visited several schools before deciding on Western. Everyone at Western is so friendly and enthusiastic. They are committed to quality. It has lived up to my expectations, and this gift will be an opportunity for the program to progress.”

Kimmel said he is pleased to be able to make the gift to Western on behalf of the company he founded in 1981. “Everyone at Kimmel & Associates is fortunate to have the opportunity to give back to the industry that has treated us so well for decades and to do it through Western Carolina University,” he said. “What better blessing could there be?”

Kimmel is no stranger to philanthropy, as he and his company have made contributions to numerous organizations in Western North Carolina, including the University of North Carolina at Asheville, Asheville Art Museum, Buncombe County Medical Society’s Project Access, Humane Society, Center for Diversity Education, Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministries, Meals on Wheels and the Fine Arts League of Asheville. He also established in 2004 a fund providing $1,000 scholarships for students in construction fields. Thirty-six students from 20 different colleges and universities representing 15 states received scholarships this fall.

Kimmel & Associates is a national executive search firm specializing in the construction, solid waste, freight forwarding and supply chain industries.

The company is one of the largest recruiting firms in the country specializing in construction.
Monday, Dec. 5

Concert—Brass Ensembles. 8 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

Monday, Dec. 5 – Wednesday, Dec. 7
Personal financial counseling—TIAA-CREF consultant, for faculty and staff. Monday, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Tuesday, 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Wednesday, 9 a.m.–noon. Appointment required. Room 203 Jordan-Phillips Field House. (877-267-4505, x5810 or www.tiaa-cref.org/moc)

Tuesday, Dec. 6
Free art classes—for young children, taught by elementary art methods students. 9:15 a.m., printing; 9:45 a.m., stencils. Parents/caregivers must accompany children. Reservations required. 150 FAPAC. (227-3598 or etapley@wcu.edu)

Cherokee Culture Series—David Cozzo, director, Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources program. 7 p.m. MHC. (227-7129)

Wednesday, Dec. 7
World AIDS Day observance—open forum panel on HIV. 6 p.m. Theater, UC. (227-7640)

Concert—Jazz Combo/Technology Ensemble. 8 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

Thursday, Dec. 8
Meeting—Staff Forum. 8:30 a.m. Cardinal Room, UC. (227-7321)

Learning for Fun—“Troubleshooting Your Computer.” $ 9 a.m. UOC. (227-7397)

Free art classes—for young children, taught by elementary art methods students. 9:15 a.m., craft; 9:45 a.m., craft. Parents/caregivers must accompany children. Reservations required. Room 150, FAPAC. (227-3598 or etapley@wcu.edu)

Meeting—Faculty Senate. 3 p.m. 104 Killian. (227-3966)

Traditional dance—no dancing experience necessary. 7 p.m. Grandroom, UC. (227-7129).

Concert—Wind Ensemble. 8 p.m. Performance Hall, FAPAC. (227-7242)

Friday, Dec. 9
Lady Catamount basketball—vs. Radford. $ 7 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Sunday, Dec. 11
ArtiFacts!—holiday program. 2 p.m. MHC. (227-7129)

Concert—Community Chorus. 4 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

Wednesday, Dec. 14
Late night exam breakfast—free to students with student identification. 8–10 p.m. Dodson Cafeteria. (227-7396)

Thursday, Dec. 15
Old-time Music and Bluegrass Jam—local musicians share tunes and techniques. 7 p.m. MHC. (227-7129)

Saturday, Dec. 17
Fall commencement. 2 p.m. RRAC. (227-7495)

Sunday, Dec. 18
Catamount basketball—vs. The Citadel. Southern Conference game. $ 4 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Thursday, Dec. 22
Catamount basketball—vs. Gardner-Webb. $ 7 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Fine Art Museum, FAPAC
Through December 9:
Fall 2005 Student Art Exhibition featuring artwork in all mediums. Atrium Gallery, FAPAC. (227-3591)

Through December 16:
• Worldviews. Selections from Western Carolina University’s art collection
• Contemporary Native American Art
• Joel Philip Myers: Studio Glass
• Strange Beauty. Showcasing art alumni works,
• Emma Johnson Allison Art Awards 1978–2005
Fine Art Museum hours: Closed on Mondays and university holidays. (227-3591 or http://fapac.wcu.edu)

Mountain Heritage Center

EXHIBITS

Key: $—Admission fee; BB—Belk Building; CAC—Catamount Athletic Center; CAT—Center for Applied Technology; FAPAC—Fine and Performing Arts Center; HA—Hoey Auditorium; HFR—H.F. Robinson Administration Building; HS/CF—Henson Stadium/Childress Field; MHC—Mountain Heritage Center; NSA—Natural Sciences Auditorium; RH—Reclat Hall, Coulter Building; RRAC—Ramsey Regional Activity Center; UC—A.K. Hinds University Center; UOC—University Outreach Center; WS/BW—Whitmire Stadium/Bob Waters Field

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.

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

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Western students sold nearly 1,000 paper cranes to benefit the victims of a mid-November shooting at an off-campus restaurant, raising more than $1,700 and inspiring additional pledges of $1,325.

Now, in addition to the ongoing sale of 500 more origami birds, organizers are asking community members from on and off campus to join them in folding the symbols of peace and love.

Masafumi Takeda, coordinator of the Asian Studies Program at Western, invites residents to fold a paper crane, sign or write a message on it and then mail the crane to him. The origami birds will be used to create a display that demonstrates the broad community commitment to peace.

Signed origami birds also will be presented to the China Dragon restaurant, where three employees, including owner Qi Lin, were injured during the robbery.

“The goal is for the Lin family to feel safe and comfortable,” Takeda said.

A member of Western’s Kendo club, Shane O’Huid, who is an exchange student from Ireland, suggested the origami project after hearing a presentation about paper cranes.

Takeda said the story goes that a young Japanese girl developed leukemia after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and decided to fold 1,000 paper cranes to make a wish of living longer come true. Though she did not complete her mission, the practice of folding 1,000 paper cranes came to symbolize world peace and love, he said.

Inscribed by the story, initial volunteers from Western’s Kendo and Japanese clubs folded 1,000 paper cranes.

“The project has grown much bigger than I ever anticipated,” said O’Huid, who used his surf board bag to transport the hundreds of origami birds to campus.

The flock has birds made from a range of papers and in all sizes—even small enough for volunteer Renee Komodowski, a senior entrepreneurship major from Asheville, to use as earrings.

Jackson County Sheriff Jimmy Ashe commended the students’ efforts and said the Lin family needs support. The family must shoulder significant medical bills at a time when they lack insurance and the business is closed, Ashe said.

“They need to know they are welcome back into our community,” said Ashe, who helped establish a tax-deductible account in the Lin family’s name at the Macon Bank in Sylva.

Several medical providers have volunteered to help them now that they have been released from inpatient hospital care.

“This is a quiet, peaceful community,” Ashe said. “When something as tragic as this takes place, it makes an impact on all of us.”

Instructions for how to fold a paper crane are available at www.sadako.com/howtofold.htm.

Paper cranes folded to support the Lin family should be mailed to Masafumi Takeda, Room 118 McKee, Modern Foreign Languages, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, N.C., 28723.

For more information, contact Masafumi Takeda, Asian studies coordinator, at (828) 227-3905 or e-mail mtakeda@email.wcu.edu.

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