Academic Affairs Announcements

A Holiday Message from Alison

As we enter the holiday season and the end of the calendar year, it is a time of reflection on our past and planning for our future.

It’s a time to reflect on the great things that have happened in the academic year to date including celebrating our 125th year, the successes of our faculty, staff, and students and the enhanced reputation of WCU for our academic and co-curricular activities. It’s also a time to plan for the start of the next academic year and welcome new faculty and staff to the WCU family.

We have so much for which to be thankful and much to celebrate. I wish you the very best for the holiday season and a very happy new year.

Please enjoy our last edition of the Academic Affairs newsletter for 2014. See you in 2015.

Happy Holidays!

Alison

International Programs and Services Update

The Office of International Programs & Services has recently welcomed a new director and a new international student adviser, and has hosted a variety of global awareness and community outreach activities.

Ling Gao LeBeau joined the office on October 15 as Director of IPS, and Margaret Basehart joined on September 8 as International Student Advisor. LeBeau comes to WCU from Indiana University-Bloomington where she administered the Chinese Flagship Center as associate director for the School of Global and International Students. LeBeau’s experience also includes working as an administrator in the Office of International Affairs at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, and as a faculty of English at Guizhou University, China.

Provost on the Ground

LEAD:WNC Regional Leaders Summit
November 12
Ramsey Center

Head Coaches Meeting
December 3
Ramsey Athletics Conference Room

CEAP Holiday Lunch
December 10
11:20PM - 1:00PM

Facilities Management Lunch
December 17
12:00PM - 1:00PM
Basehart was previously employed in the Student Affairs Division of WCU. She has travelled abroad many times and has a master’s degree in higher education from the University of Louisville.

LeBeau has spent the first few weeks at WCU getting to know the campus’ status in internationalization by talking to deans and department heads, as well as faculty and international students. She also recently hosted a delegation from Guangdong Ocean University, China, at WCU, where representatives from both schools discussed the possibility of faculty and student exchanges.

Basehart planned a number of activities for International Education Week, held on November 17-21, 2014. The keynote IEW speaker was Iranian born journalist and former Rotary Peace Fellow Ali Eshraghi. Eshraghi, a past editor of publications banned by the Iranian government spoke on “U.S.-Iran: Reconfiguring the Middle East.” Other IEW activities included an Open House and IPS information session, a UN Knowledge Bowl, a soccer game involving international students versus WCU Club Soccer, and a presentation from Dr. Saheed Aderinto, a WCU history professor.

Study Abroad coordinator Josie Bewsey hosted a delegation representing various partner universities in Europe. They were accompanied by Linda Stuart, Regional Director of the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP) and discussed the possibility of student exchange.

The Intensive English Program (IEP), housed within IPS, continues to provide academic English training to 35 international students who hope to matriculate at WCU. Some of IEP’s recent activities include an October 20th visit to Summit Charter School in Cashiers where students from Saudi Arabia and Japan made the seventh grade world history come alive as they shared their cultures and traditions. On November 18, IEP students participated in a cross cultural discussion with WCU study abroad students to exchange experiences.

The IEP continues to receive applications from the world and is set to expand its offering during the coming year. IEP instructors also continue to teach and present internationally. Most recently, Jana Williams taught in China over the summer and Jenn Gemma lead a workshop in Guatemala in October at the Instituto Guatemala at the Instituto Guatemalteco Americano on “Compassionate Communication in the Classroom.”

Jill Cargile and Dr. Lowell Davis also recently met with officials at the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) in Washington, D.C. to discuss IEP and WCU programs. SACM sponsors most of the 106 Saudi students currently on campus.

IPS recently launched a WCU International Listserv for the purpose of providing an effective communication tool for WCU faculty, staff, and students to share international news, activities, events, and educational and exchange opportunities, and for enhancing global awareness and fostering international understanding. Click on WCU International List to view this information. A survey was also sent to WCU faculty and staff for campus internationalization assessment, results of which will be distributed in the spring.
WCU is embarking on a project to develop its next Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as part of our reaffirmation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC). However, this does not mean that the intentional learning plan from the 2007 QEP is going away because those activities are now embedded in the academic culture of our campus.

In order to continue to support intentional learning on campus, we want to remind you of some of the assistance that remains available to you and your students. These include:

- Undergraduate Research Education Stipends (student, up to $500)
- Intentional Learning Plan Development Grants (faculty or staff, up to $1250)
- Undergraduate Academic Project Grants (student, up to $400)
- Intentional Learning Plan – Non-Conference Travel Requests (student)
- Student Travel Funds for Conference Presentation (student)
- Assessment Mini-Grants (programs)

For more information about these opportunities, visit: http://www.wcu.edu/about-wcu/leadership/office-of-the-provost/ugstudies/intentional-learning-plan/faculty-staff/grants-and-support-for-qep-implementation/index.asp

Campus Theme

In continuing the practice of developing an institutional theme for the 2014-2015 academic year, both faculty and staff have created the *North Carolina: Our State, Our Time* interdisciplinary theme. The goal of the theme is to connect both curricular and co-curricular experiences across disciplines and provide a framework for common intellectual experiences for all WCU students.

The theme provides faculty, students, and campus offices and organizations with an opportunity to use North Carolina’s past, present and future to explore broad questions in topics such as culture, the arts, health care, business, politics and policy, history, literature, education, then environment, science and technology, athletics, and society.

To date, there have been several events directly linked to the theme that have addressed these and other related areas. One of the major highlights this year relates to the *Serena* book events that have allowed both students and faculty the chance to listen to the author, Ron Rash, discuss several critical subjects addressed within the book and participate in a Q & A session.

Other types of programs have showcased the cultural history of North Carolina through a ‘History Week of Cuisine’ event, sponsored by Campus Dining, which included specialty foods from all over the state. The recent LEAD: WNC Regional Leadership Summit allowed leaders from across the region and collaborate on solutions that will help address the unique challenges that exist within western North Carolina, to name a few events offered as part of the theme.

Looking ahead, there are several events pertaining to the campus theme that will be highlighted over the upcoming months. One such event is that of the North Carolina Tar Heel Tour: Our State, Our Time, scheduled for February 12, 2015. This event closely models the interdisciplinary aspect of the campus theme, as it will allow students, staff, and faculty to take a tour of the various regions of North Carolina and observe the qualities that make each of these regions unique. The topics that will be covered range from the impact of innovation and technology to the influence of social change within each of the regions.

The *North Carolina: Our State, Our Time* interdisciplinary theme is being facilitated by the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the College of Arts and Sciences. For more information related to the theme and to check out the schedule of events please visit the campus theme web page at:


December 2014
Jackie Sievert is currently in her first year as an Assistant Professor of Political Science and Public Affairs at Western Carolina University, coming to Cullowhee this past August. Prior to coming to WCU, Jackie earned a B.A. in Politics from New York University, an M.A. from Dartmouth College, and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University at Buffalo. She teaches introductory and upper-level courses in Comparative Politics and International Relations including Politics of the Middle East and Political Violence. In Spring 2015, she will teach Model U.N. and take students to the Southern Regional Model United Nations Conference in Charlotte. Jackie also serves on the Women’s Leadership Conference planning committee at Western.

Jackie’s research examines the role of judicial institutions in authoritarian states, and the effect on civil war and rebellion. She uses game-theoretic and empirical methodology to examine the causal mechanisms between institutions and conflict. Jackie was a member for the 2014 Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models Institute at Duke University; an intensive research institute funded by the National Science Foundation to integrate formal theory and empirical work into innovative research of high social and scientific value. She also participates in the Visions in Methodology and Journeys in World Politics communities, designed to train and support women in methodology and other fields where they are traditionally under-represented.

Jackie is a native Western New Yorker and long-time Buffalo Bills fan, growing up in a small town in Lake Ontario. She is a runner, and has recently begun participating in CrossFit. She also enjoys spending time with her fiancé Brian and their cat, Charlotte. They are happy to be at WCU and are enjoying getting to know the Western North Carolina area.
Emma Castanho
Junior, Honors College

Emma Castanho is currently a Junior in the Honors College at Western Carolina University. She is studying to be one of the first graduates from Western’s new Mechanical Engineering program. She has lived in Mooresville, North Carolina—Race City, USA—for about 5 years now, but still considers herself a northerner. Emma was born in Rhode Island and grew up in the New England area, and hopes to move back up there at some point in her life. When she graduates in Spring 2017, Emma would love to travel the world before settling into her career. Gaining experience from around the world would enrich any person’s life. Maybe one day she will travel and help those in need. Emma also has an interest in aerospace technology and may pursue a Master’s degree in the future.

Outside of the classroom, Emma loves to explore. From camping to skydiving Emma is constantly on the go; always looking for a new adventure. In fact, that is one of her favorite things about Western Carolina University. The mountains provide so many unique opportunities that many people fail to see. Not only does she enjoy the outdoors, but she has also gotten involved with many student organizations on campus. She works as a Resident Assistant in Balsam Hall and is Vice President of the Honors College Board of Directors. As the Vice President of the Honors College Board of Directors, Emma works closely with the staff in the Honors College, including the Dean, Dr. Railsback. Dr. Railsback has been a positive influence in Emma’s time here at Western, always pushing her out of her comfort zone and into new aspects of academics and school. Emma also plays as a member on the Women’s Club Lacrosse Team at Western in her free time.

Working with the Honors College Board of Directors, Emma has engaged in community service, social programs on campus, and is starting the path to research. In conjunction with being Engineering major, Emma pursues programs and activities outside her course of study. She values being a well-rounded individual because she believes balance is necessary for a healthy lifestyle. As she continues her undergraduate path at Western Carolina University, she strives to keep balance in her life while exploring all the school has to offer.
Staff Spotlight

Jessica Henson
Executive Assistant, Office of the Chancellor

Jessica Henson joined Western Carolina University in August, 2013 as the Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff in the Chancellor’s Division. Prior to WCU, Jessica was an Executive Assistant to the Executive Director of The North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching.

Jessica is currently enrolled in the Business Administration and Law Program at WCU and has an AAS in Paralegal Studies from Southwestern Community College. She is a Notary Public for Jackson County. Jessica is a native of Jackson County and enjoys being a home maker, camping and taking care of her two dogs (Diesel, Australian Shepherd and Rylee, Dachshund).

Want to include news in next month’s issue?
Please send information to vcacademicaffairs@email.wcu.edu