

Academic Affairs

News & Reflections

Provost on the Ground

From the Provost's Desk



Dear All,

Congratulations on the completion of another eventful academic year. Our campus has been buzzing since last August, with the establishment of a new Quality Enhancement Plan (“Courses to Careers”), a visit from new UNC System president Margaret Spellings, successful passage of the bond measure which includes the funding for our new Natural Sciences

building, and robust campus discussions on a number of social and political issues (see the article below for more details)—to name just a few of the highlights.

It was an honor to officiate the Spring 2016 Commencement ceremonies on behalf of Chancellor Belcher, and I was incredibly proud to watch the Catamount class of 2016 cross the stage. Commencement is always a rewarding event; after all, the ceremony represents the culmination of our mission as educators. A big “congratulations” goes out to our graduates and their families!

Members of the Catamount Nation have rallied together with support and love for Chancellor Belcher and we are all keeping him in our hearts and minds as he takes the necessary time to recover from his recent surgery. I am very glad to report that he is in the hands of the best medical professionals available. We will keep you all updated with his progress as information becomes available.

School of Health Sciences	April 4
College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Scholar Awards Ceremony	April 4
WCU Latina/o Speakers Series- Judith Ortiz Cofer	April 5
Department of Construction Management	April 6
EYE on FYE Celebration	April 7
14th Annual Literary Festival Reception	April 7
Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award Recipients Reception	April 8
Staff Senate Forum	April 11
Telling Our Stories Event	April 11
Department of Communication	April 12
College of Business Awards Ceremony	April 16
Spring Musical "Gypsy" and Gala	April 16
Kimmel School Awards Ceremony	April 19
Meet with President Kwesi Yankah of Central University College, Ghana	April 22

Provost on the Ground

Thank you for your dedication to Western, and for your contribution to another exciting academic year.

Wishing you a wonderful summer,

Alison Morrison-Shetlar,
Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs



Spring Faculty and Staff Excellence	April 22
Student Athlete Gala and Awards Ceremony	April 23
Spring Campus Forum	April 25
School of Nursing Development	April 28
Engineering Students Capstone Luncheon	April 29
WCU Leadership Tour Reception	May 3
Masters of Social Work Hooding Ceremony	May 5
School of Nursing Convocation	May 5
Undergraduate Commencement Ceremonies	May 7
WCU Leadership Tour	May 9-16
Inaugural Cherokee Center Advisory Board	May 16
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Luncheon	May 19
Hannam University Delegation, South Korea	May 23

Civility and Respectful Discourse

from the Office of the Provost

Western Carolina University is committed to civil discourse and the free exchange of ideas. Those central values are at the core of what a university should be, a place where all can pursue knowledge, voice concerns, and offer opinions on the issues that face our world.

The Provost, Student Affairs, and the Department of Intercultural Affairs have been heavily involved in brainstorming ways the university can encourage safe and respectful discourse on campus. At a gathering in early April, more than 40 faculty and staff members committed to working together in support of respectful discourse and support for all of our community. Each participant provided at least one action item that he or she will commit to, now and into the future.

These commitment statements can be found in the article below.

Civility and Respectful Discourse Commitment Statements

from the Office of the Provost

- I will, as an external member of the university community, participate in a campus-wide forum on race and racism that synthesizes the mission of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, and that incorporates the ethics of service learning.
- I will bring LGBTQ speaker Marie Rollis to campus April 13 and 14.
- I will help use technology to make linkages around societal concerns and connect people with support structures that already exist.
- I will stress diversity in staff orientation - open the dialog.
- I will engage directly with students to learn where their heads are regarding current campus civility.
- I will propose that FYE systemically includes content on how to carry out responsible discourse.
- I will develop a plan to improve our campus culture on issues of race, diversity and civil discourse.
- I will develop and be more intentional in my efforts for our LEAD classes to focus more on one of the 7 c's on leadership - controversy with civility and social action.
- I will foster a more institutional approach to civil discourse through service learning.
- Address the lack of trust that exists in our community.
- Create models of civil discourse (e.g. "don't let hate happen here campaign").
- Create more opportunities for helping our students to be able to process and discuss issues.
- Be intentional about integrating civil discourse in our first-year courses.
- Foster a climate of disagreeing agreeably.
- Investigate a social norm campaign and share the results.
- Address a lack of authenticity perceived by students regarding diversity issues.
- Create opportunities for students to intentionally engage with others who are different from each other, in and outside of classes.
- Campus should orchestrate more opportunities for staff and faculty to convene around important topics.
- I will speak on my own experiences, not generalize.
- I will meet the needs of all students.
- I will continue to offer a diverse cultural perspective in my class.
- I will encourage the College of Fine and Performing Arts to present creative works that serve as a catalyst for conversations on topics of inclusion and diversity.
- I will make sure that we market the resources we have on campus (to support our students, faculty and staff).
- I will plan and implement a campus climate survey regarding culture, race, ethnicity, orientation, etc.
- I will plan and implement regular listening sessions with students.
- I will incorporate these issues into my orientation presentation.

Civility and Respectful Discourse continued:

- I will collaborate to offer and facilitate cultural competency professional development for staff and leadership
- I will think about how to integrate democratic study circles into one of my courses.
- I will encourage students to have civil discussion when they disagree.
- I will advocate to bring speakers like Ta-Nehisi Coates to campus.
- I will continue to check in with students who expressed concern to me.
- I will work with Intercultural Affairs to develop exhibits focused on STEM achievements of people with diverse backgrounds.
- I will be careful to not single out students and ask them to speak for a specific race, gender, religion, etc., I will listen and encourage dialogue.
- I will continue to try to be a positive force in designing gender-equity programming.
- I will work with our leadership team to inform and discuss diverse matters. Invite Mary Ann Lochner to future meetings to discuss policies.
- I will facilitate small group discussion in class with guided prompts.
- I will work with administration to ensure that speech is heard.
- I will start program activities of inclusion in the College of Health and Human Sciences.
- I will continue to integrate these issues (i.e. privilege, race, ideology, free speech, civic engagement) into my courses.
- I will reach out to campus support services/organizations (i.e., Counseling and Psychological Services, Intercultural Affairs).
- I will discuss the idea of “speech with consequence” and “speech without consequence.”
- I will think about how to address these issues with my University Studies students.
- I will ask my students if they are distressed.
- I will support student advocacy and cultivate open spaces for honest and authentic discussion.
- I will encourage hard conversations (racism, sexism, etc.).
- Invite a visiting scholar to talk about white privilege - Peggy McIntosh would be great.
- Before end of semester, I will ask my first-year seminar students to talk about our campus culture and these recent manifestations of oppression.
- I will talk with our dean about the role writing and rhetoric (WRCS) can take/play in the teaching and learning of civil discourse.
- I will bring in support to help facilitate difficult studies.
- Campus forum on racism and race from the historical and cultural perspectives.
- I will identify faculty who are able to participate in lecture/seminar senior topics on cultural awareness and community diversity and inclusivity.
- I will be more observant of diversity in all of our graduate school applicants.
- I will use department head workshops to propagate the conversation and actions around diversity.

Civility and Respectful Discourse continued:

- I will continue to plan and implement experiential learning opportunities for students (i.e. trips).
- I will engage in my own ongoing development of cultural competency and advocacy.
- I will convene faculty and staff with empowerment to have difficult conversations.
- I will accept invitations to listen.
- I will collaborate to create an outreach presentation around diversity available to campus.
- I will help students make connections...with one another; with their values; with campus resources.
- I will openly defend the rights of all people.
- I will openly support programs of inclusion.
- I will work to foster critical thinking and dialogue among my students, my colleagues, and my community.
- I will promote discourse, protect individuals on all sides of an issue.
- I will listen, even to those who do not listen themselves.
- I will remember and be patient with the realization that students may not be aware of the complexities of cultural competence.
- I will investigate opportunities to utilize expertise on campus to improve my own competency.
- I will spend time at Intercultural Affairs dialoging with students.
- I will discuss civility and citizenship and respect more emphatically in orientation for new students.
- I will continue to work with the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust.
- I will help to promote conversation about race and racism.
- Look at supporting a robust student newspaper.



Morehead State's Nazario-Colon to lead diversity, inclusion initiatives at Western Carolina University

A yearlong process to find a campus champion for inclusion and diversity initiatives at Western Carolina University has reached a successful close with the appointment of Ricardo Nazario-Colon, currently the director of student activities, inclusion and leadership at Morehead State University.

Nazario-Colon's appointment as Chief Diversity Officer at WCU is effective June 1, said Provost Alison Morrison-Shetlar.

The appointment contributes to initiatives in the university's "2020 Vision" strategic plan calling for increasing the diversity of the student body to serve the needs of the changing demographics of the region and state, and improving the diversity among faculty and staff.

"We know that the greatest opportunity for our university in leveraging diversity is that it influences the strength, productivity and intellectual personality of the institution and its members," Nazario-Colon said. "Our challenges are known to us. We know there are people who resist diversity and the changes that it brings, but they are not the majority. We extend ourselves to these individuals and offer the opportunity to learn, to grow, to embark on conversations about ideas that may seem strange or even fearful. The goal is to empower, to educate and to help maximize the potential of the individuals."

Kickstart: Assessment

from the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness



On March 18, the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness, Coulter Faculty Commons, and the Office of the Provost hosted Kickstart: Assessment, the first meeting of an ongoing assessment learning community for faculty volunteers and administrators from all the programs scheduled for review during the upcoming academic year.

The format of the learning community is a series of workshops spread out over the five-year program review cycle during which faculty will gain assessment knowledge to use in the program review process through shared experiences and speakers.

The kickstart event included sessions on developing assessable program and curricular learning outcomes.

The departments of Chemistry, Communication, Environmental Science, and History, and the Schools of Art and Design and Music were all represented at the event.

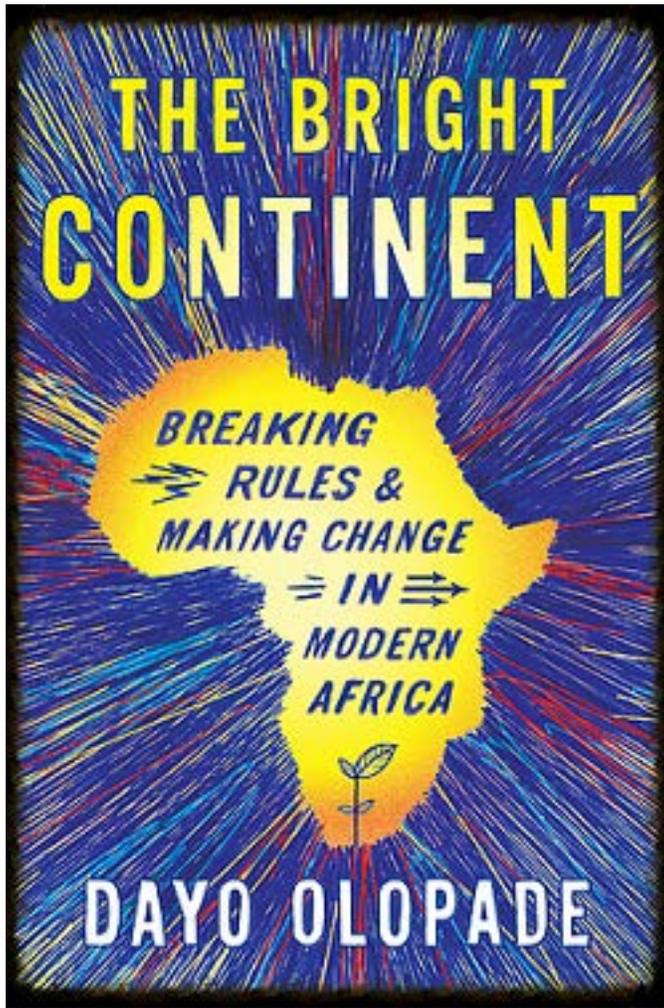
A big thank you to our speakers: Lorrie Willey (College of Business) and Maurice Phipps (College of Education and Allied Professions).



Vacancy in OIPE

from the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness

The Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness is currently short-staffed, with the recent vacancy of the social research specialist position previously held by Elizabeth Snyder. This position is responsible for 25Live Administration, course evaluation (CoursEval) administration, and student surveys. A search is underway to fill the position, with the goal to have it filled by the end of May. In the interim, questions about 25Live space reservations can be directed to Paul Hammer, x2570. Questions pertaining to CoursEval can be directed to Billy Hutchings, x2413. OIPE appreciates your patience during this time.



The Bright Continent

FYE 2016 Selection

Breaking Rules and Making Change in Modern Africa

By: Dayo Olopade

Common Intellectual Experiences are one of the ten high impact practices identified by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U).

A common reading experience encourages new students to engage early without faculty, staff, and peers as they launch their college career. Early engagement fosters student success!

Excerpted from the book jacket:

"Dayo Olopade knew from personal experience that Western news reports on conflict, disease, and poverty obscure the true story of modern Africa. And so she crossed sub-Saharan Africa to document how ordinary people deal with their daily challenges. She found what cable news ignores; a continent of ambitious reformers and young social entrepreneurs, driven by kanju - creativity born of African difficulty. ...A shining

counterpart to the conventional wisdom, *The Bright Continent* rewrites Africa's challenges as opportunities to innovate and celebrate a history of doing more with less as a powerful model for the rest of the world."

The mission of the One Book program is to engage first-year students, as well as the campus community, in a common intellectual experience that promotes critical thinking and interdisciplinary conversation. This experience will allow participants to strengthen academic skills, create connections with peers, instructors, and community members, and relate universal themes to personal experience and identity. The program seeks to reflect WCU's core values and responsibilities as a regionally engaged university.

One Book committee members will serve as ambassadors who aid in integrating reading selection themes into course curricula, campus events, service learning opportunities, and departmental goals. The committee comprises individuals from across campus, ensuring that values and views of all academic units are considered and represented.

Intercultural Affairs

“We may have different religions, different languages, different colored skin, but we all belong to one human race.”

-Kofi Annan

The Department of Intercultural Affairs works with all members of the university to provide a campus environment where all students feel appreciated, respected, and valued. Through educational, social, and leadership programs, ICA promotes inclusive values of social justice and human dignity while preparing students to thrive in a diverse and interconnected world.

The purpose of the department is to prepare students to thrive in a diverse and interconnected world.

Our mission is to provide an inclusive environment that examines, recognizes, accepts, and affirms human differences and similarities related to national origin, religion, gender, disability, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and socioeconomic status. We contribute to fostering a culturally rich campus through advocacy, diversity and social justice education, leadership and the development of global citizens. ICA provides lectures, cultural awareness programs, films, and workshops to promote social justice and cultural competency as well as to respond to acts of discrimination and bias.

We accomplish our purpose by creating programs and services that recognize, examine, accept and affirm human differences and similarities.

Some programs include:

- Bystander Intervention Workshop
- Diversity/Inclusion Presentation
- Safe Zone Training
- Social Justice Institute
- Women's Leadership Conference

We invite you to become an active member of Western's intercultural family. The Department of Intercultural Affairs is home to:

- A spacious lounge for small meetings and events
- Resources including books, activities, periodicals, and artifacts representing various cultures
- Media and computers for student use
- Experienced staff who are available to provide academic, social, and personal support to students

Please feel free to come see us at the University Center, call 828-227-2276, or email ica@wcu.edu for more information.



Student Spotlight

Terry Chavis

Graduate Student, Higher Education



Terry Chavis spent his undergraduate years at Mars Hill University, a small Liberal Arts Institution that molded Terry into the leader he is today. Throughout his journey at MHU, Terry was involved in the Bonner Scholarship program, which gave opportunity to serve over 1,400 community hours with non-profit organizations. This opportunity also allowed Terry to engage with the social justice issue of Education. Being involved in his campus community, as well as the surrounding community, lead Terry to pursue a degree in Higher Education. His goal is to help students develop holistically as they achieve their educational goals.

As Terry continued on his social justice path, he found himself in the HESA program here at WCU. "It has been a wonderful experience to transition from MHU to WCU. WCU offers an array of experiences like no other institution I have visited. Between the exquisite mountain range and the close community, I have found my niche. I have happily assumed my role as a Catamount!"

A quote from Norman Vincent Peale that Terry holds himself to is "Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars." Most of his successes and failures are grounded in this quote. Terry's interpretation of life is to always try your hardest at what you are interested in achieving. Even if you are not successful, you have learned far more than you did without trying.

Terry is the Graduate Community Coordinator in Residential Living here at WCU. His area of supervision is the Village: Student Organization Housing. The role in Residential Living is to create a comfortable living environment for the residents, while encouraging social development through programming. Terry is also the Graduate Intern for the Office of Sustainability and Energy Management. His role at the OSEM is to organize campus-wide sustainability events to educate students on the importance of recycling, energy conservation, and ecological resources.

Terry received his Bachelor of Science in Biology with a concentration in Laboratory Science, with minors in Chemistry and Pre-Medicine. Terry's research as a student focused on Multi-Drug Resistant Proteins, specifically in mouse CP. He is currently a graduate student in the M.Ed. program in Higher Education Student Affairs.

Terry has focused his research in the areas of minority persistence in STEM and Native American identity development. These foci derive from his lived experiences as a Native American who persisted in the STEM field. He has a passion to help improve the successes of others in STEM.

In his free time, Terry enjoys creating wheel-thrown ceramics and is learning to play the piano. Prior to graduate school, Terry maintained a small business selling ceramics.

Staff Spotlight

Shauna Sleight

Director, Campus Recreation and Wellness



"Every accomplishment begins with the decision to try" ~Author Unknown

This is Shauna Sleight's favorite quote because change or trying something new can come with a lot of fears. As she reflects back on life, her biggest decisions to try something new or challenging resulted in some of her largest accomplishments to date. It also resonates with Shauna because of her work in fitness and recreation.

"I often come across individuals who see a final product or result they want, but may not be ready to put in the effort to "try". To take the next step forward, you have to put in the effort, and effort means time and energy".

Shauna received her Bachelor of Arts from Kalamazoo College in Kalamazoo, MI, majoring in Economics with an emphasis in Business and a minor in Psychology. She then went on to receive her Master of Arts in Sport Administration from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, MI. Most recently, Shauna completed requirements to graduate in May 2016 from Western Carolina University with a Doctorate in Educational Leadership.

Shortly after graduating with her master's degree, Shauna moved to New Jersey for a position at Montclair State University. In 2006, she came to WCU as the Assistant Director for the Fitness Center in Reid Gym. In 2009, she was promoted to Associate Director for Campus Recreation and Wellness before eventually obtaining the Director's role in 2012.

Shauna is originally from Kalamazoo, MI. She and her husband of two years currently reside in Franklin, NC. Shauna also has a 12-year old stepson. As most people probably expect from the Director of Campus Recreation and Wellness, Shauna enjoys fitness-related activities in her spare time (running, hiking, mountain biking, and playing basketball with her stepson).

Since coming to WCU, she picked up distance running (thanks to some colleagues). Shauna would not say she is an avid runner, as she only runs 1-2 times in a typical week; However, over the past six years, she has completed a handful of half marathons, 7 marathons, and 4 ultra 200-mile relays (with 5 to 6 of her fearless WCU colleagues each completing 30-45 miles per race!)

Shauna is currently on the 2016-2017 Leadership Academy, which is broadening her horizons as to the complex internal and external workings of our institution. She also serves on the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) development committee after her and Ty Marion's QEP proposal, Courses to Careers, was selected by campus as WCU's next QEP. Serving in this capacity has allowed Shauna the opportunity to learn from her institutional peers, while also serving her institution through a committee that she knows has the ability to make a profound impact on the student experience.



Faculty Spotlight

Leigh Angel

RIBN Program Director and Assistant Professor

Leigh Angel is originally from High Point, NC. She came to Western Carolina University for undergraduate studies in 1998 and earned her BSN in 2002, and her MS(N) in 2012. What drew Leigh to WCU is our Pride of the Mountains Marching Band. An avid trombone player, she marched with the Pride of the Mountains Marching Band in her freshman year.

Leigh has worked as a staff nurse since 2002, a nurse manager/director, an accreditation specialist, and now has her dream job as an educator and program director for the Regionally Increasing Baccalaureate Nurses (RIBN) program.

Leigh's interest in the RIBN program sparked during her graduate work at WCU. Specifically, her graduate project entitled "Transition to Employment for RIBN students" is what really triggered her pursuing this position.

Leigh is passionate about sharing knowledge with new nurses and mentoring to support new nurses that are beginning their careers as they impact the health and wellbeing of our community.

Leigh was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 2003 which has resulted in a significant vision impairment... "this does not slow me down too much!" Leigh is able to work full time, raise a family, and live life with intention!

She has two daughters, Rebekah, age 11, and Eden, age 6. She, her husband Chris, and daughters, live in Fletcher, NC.

Leigh became a self-taught runner in 2013. She has had a huge weight loss of 78.3 pounds due to her new found love of running.

A great quote that reflects much of Leigh's life today is by Helen Keller: "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched-they must be felt with the heart."

This quote reflects how her perspective in life has changed since her vision impairment occurred in August 2014. Leigh has learned to view life with intention and purpose to live a life of significance instead of only success.



Want to include news in next month's issue?

Please send information to sctobin@email.wcu.edu