

Academic Affairs

News & Reflections

From the Provost's Desk



For spring semester, we've hit the ground running, and are working towards some great things in 2016. Perhaps the most anticipated development is the bond referendum containing the funding for a new and much-needed science building here at WCU. The referendum will be included in the North Carolina primary election ballot on March 15. Don't forget to vote!

As in previous years WCU is committed to continuous improvement for all our academic and support units. To that end, we are implementing an external review process to advance the quality of our core functions: teaching and learning, research, professional/creative activity, public service/academic outreach, and academic support.

As we make our way through these wintery months, I encourage you to stay engaged with campus: "prove your purple" as you cheer on our Catamount basketball teams, take in some great theater with "Macbeth is the New Black," and check out the new Mountain Heritage Center exhibit, "From Apartheid to Democracy."

Please remember that winter weather in the mountains can be hazardous — watch your email and text messages for Emergency Services warnings and class cancellations, and use your best judgement in icy travel conditions.

I wish you all a happy, safe, and productive semester.

Sincerely,
Alison Morrison-Shetlar, Provost

Provost on the Ground

January 23	Football Recruitment Breakfast
January 26	Service Learning Fair
January 29	CEAP Assessment Day; School of Economics, Management & Project Management Meeting; Chancellor's Faculty/Staff Lunch
February 4	Graduate Education Summit
February 9-10	University Collegial Review Committee
February 11	Etiquette Reception
February 12	Foundation Board Meeting
February 16	Faculty Scholarship Celebration

Assessment

from the Office of the Provost, Academic Affairs

Ongoing assessment and strategic planning activities are critical to the review process and in cases where a program or unit is accredited, that accreditation is conducted in place of WCU's external review process. The external review process is designed to provide formative, constructive feedback to the program undergoing review. During the current year, the following programs/units are undergoing an external review:

- Geosciences/Natural Resources Conservation Management
- Parks and Recreation Management
- Psychology
- International Studies
- Philosophy and Religion
- Biology
- The Cherokee Center
- Highlands Biological Station
- Recycling and Surplus
- Information Technology
- Student Community Ethics
- Public Relations
- Marketing

Please check out the self-studies, external review team reports, schedules, and other materials which are available at the following Web site: unitreview.wcu.edu

Space Inventory Update

from the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness

The Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness, with the help of facility coordinators, began conducting a university-wide space inventory update in December. This project is being undertaken to ensure room uses and features as recorded in our database are accurate. OIPE staff has been visiting reservable spaces since December to inventory features and take photographs, and the process of updating is underway.

Changes in the Air for Career Services...

submitted by the Center for Career and Professional Development

Some exciting changes are on the way for WCU's Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD), formerly known as Career Services and Cooperative Education. As WCU's student population increases, so do the demands for focused academic and career-oriented services.

"The department's name changed to reflect and accommodate the professional development component students need to have," said Theresa Cruz Paul, Director of the Center for Career and Professional Development; "it better reflects our new goals and mission to support Western Carolina University and its students, faculty, and staff."

As part of the array of services offered in student employment, the Center is implementing a student professional development program in which students may be engaged and involved in several professional development opportunities offered throughout the semester. A pilot session entitled "How to be a Professional" was offered in September and attracted more than 50 students who learned what employers are really looking for in recent college graduates, beyond academic degrees. Topics covered included proper workplace etiquette, smart communication, and customer service skills. "We're seeing more and more employers who are focusing on candidates with strong soft skills, like strong communication and customer service skills, the ability to manage multiple deadlines, and the ability to make decisions both individually and while working in a team," said Carrie Hachadurian, Student Employment Specialist. "Our goal is to support students in enhancing their skills to make them more marketable and successful after graduation." Additional workshops are forthcoming.



Theresa Cruz Paul, Director of the Center for Career and Professional Development and Career Counselor

The Center, through its career peer counselors, now offers daily drop-in hours (between 2 and 4 p.m.) on a first-come, first-serve basis for students who wish to receive individual guidance on an array of professional development options. Additional support in interviewing and job searching skills, as well as preparing self-marketing materials, is also available by appointment with the staff (Theresa Cruz Paul, Director; Dean Landis, Internship Coordinator; Carrie Hachadurian, Student Employment Specialist; and Cassie Spencer, Graduate Assistant). The Center has a new part-time Administrative Support Associate, Trina Royar (formerly of WCU's Mountain Heritage Center), and has hired a full-time Associate Director of Career Integrated Learning, Christine Harriger (formerly of James Madison University). There is an ongoing search for an Associate Director of Employer Engagement. WCU is ramping up our internship opportunities for students, and to that end, the Center has already restructured staffing responsibilities to meet increased demand and requirements on the part of students, advisors, and employers, alike.

Future changes include moving the Center to Reid Building at the end of the spring semester 2016 (tentative timeline) and hosting more employers on campus for interviews and as guest speakers for classroom presentations. The new Center will be a significant increase over the Center's current space in Killian Annex and will provide a way for the Center to improve its programming to meet demands, including the addition of interview rooms where employers may do on-campus interviews of our continuing and graduating students.

For more information on any of the future changes or growing programs, please call the Center for Career and Professional Development at 828-227-7133 or email careers@wcu.edu; the Center's current Web site is being enhanced and is available at careers.wcu.edu

Staff Spotlight

Suzanne Tobin

Administrative Support Specialist, Office of the Provost



Suzanne joined the WCU Provost Office in July 2015 as our SACS-COC Reaffirmation Administrative Support Associate.

Previously, Suzanne worked as a Division Manager at Drake Software in Franklin, NC for 9 years. From a quaint town in the Florida panhandle, she made her way to the beautiful mountains in 2005 to establish permanent residency.

Suzanne's role in the Office of the Provost has been primarily to support Dr. Arthur Salido, Director of the SACS-COC Reaffirmation. Suzanne works closely with Dr. Salido, the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness, and many other campus constituents on

the essential details of the SACS-COC Reaffirmation process. As of February 2016, Suzanne is transitioning into a new role in the Provost Office that includes working with our Curriculum and Approval Processes and providing administrative support to the Faculty Senate.

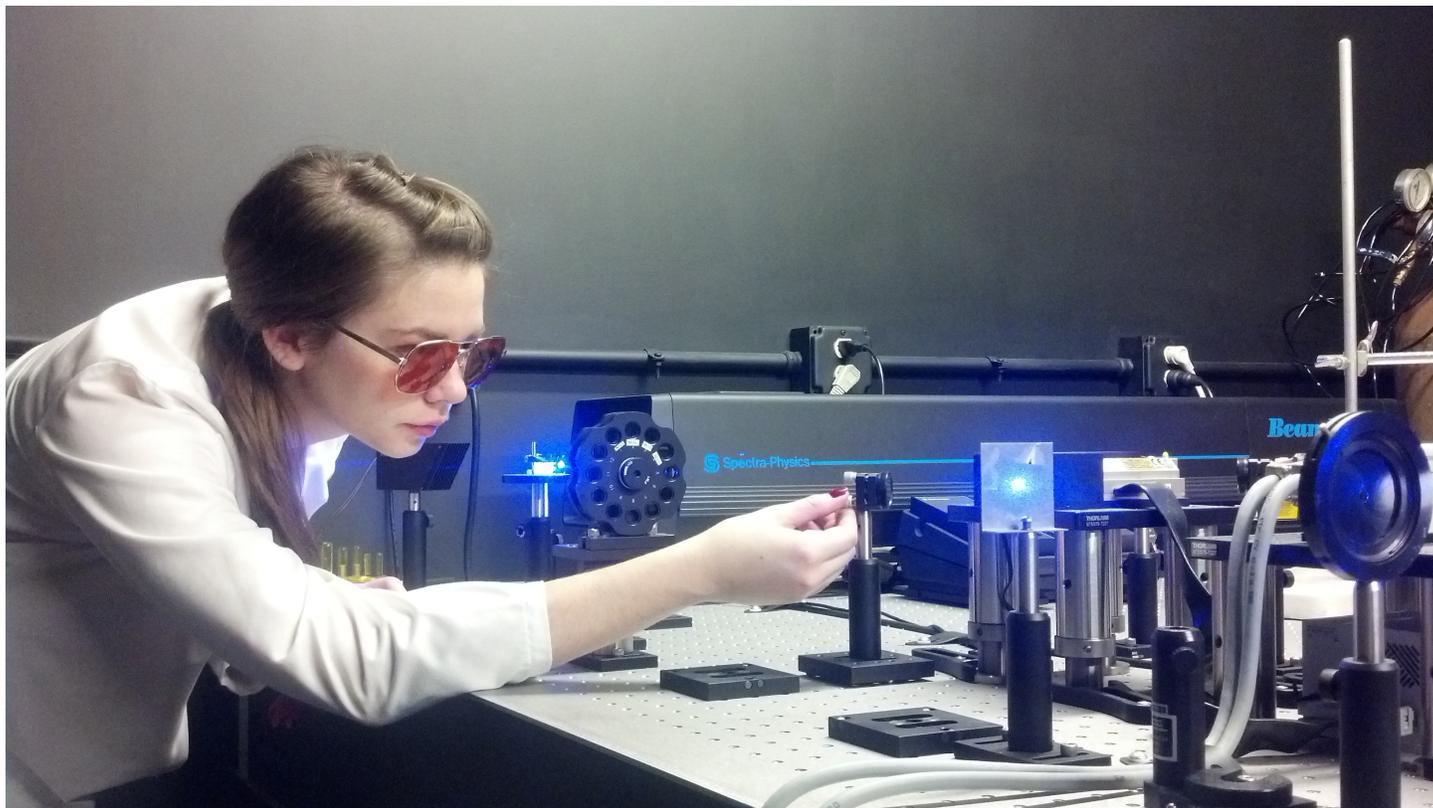
Outside of work, Suzanne enjoys being outdoors, hiking, swimming, and going on road trips. She loves to garden and cook, design jewelry, and sing. Suzanne is a deeply family-oriented person, and most enjoys spending time with her friends and family. Suzanne is the mother of 11 year-old twin daughters, Kadence and Kaira. She also loves animals, and spends much of her time corralling the 5 dogs and 2 cats with whom she shares her heart and home.

Suzanne is excited to have joined our family at WCU.

Student Spotlight

Kristin Cooke

Graduate student, Chemistry



Kristin received her bachelor's degree in chemistry from Western Carolina in 2013. After graduating with Magna Cum Laude honors from the Honors College, she was hired as a heavy metals analyst at the Scientific Analytical Institute in Greensboro, North Carolina.

She quickly worked her way up from laboratory technician to lab analyst/chemist in a matter of months – which is quite rare in the chemistry industry – and then decided to further her education by coming back to Western to pursue a Master's degree in chemistry.

Since August, 2014, Kristin has flourished in the chemistry program, where she is currently an extremely dedicated student, researcher, teaching assistant, and tutor. She has taught three semesters of CHEM 139 lab, and has tutored more than 150 individual students (over the course of 400+ sessions) in various chemistry, physics, and biology classes through the Writing and Learning Commons. She is also engaged in a novel research project entitled “The Investigation of Human Skeletal Tissue Using Raman Spectroscopy and SERS for Forensic Applications.” Kristin will be presenting a poster on her research at the February meeting of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences in Las Vegas.

In her spare time, Kristin is an avid baker and home cook, and is planning to cater a wedding of over 300 people upon graduating in May, 2016.

Faculty Spotlight

Wayne Aho

Assistant Professor, Management



Wayne Aho, Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics, Management, and Project Management, brings a wealth of industry experience to Western Carolina University's College of Business.

Wayne spent 36 years with A-dec, a leading manufacturer of dental equipment. Beginning as a field sales representative, he advanced to leadership positions including Director of Domestic Sales, Vice President of Sales, and Vice President of International Sales.

After joining the A-dec executive team, Wayne felt he needed to focus on his personal development, and returned to school to earn his MBA. This experience inspired his move into academia.

Wayne considers teaching to be the capstone of his career: an opportunity to give back by helping young people to become successful in business, and in life. It's clear that this attitude comes through in the classroom; he has been nominated as a First Year Experience Faculty Advocate for the past two academic years. The FYE Advocate nominees are put forward by students, who have the opportunity to nominate "someone who

cares deeply about your success in and out of the classroom, someone you can count on to give you sound advice and someone you know will be in your corner."

He has also been recognized as an advocate this year by a student on the Chancellor's List. This recognition signifies the important role Wayne has played in the success of this high-achieving student. His multiple nominators have remarked on his helpfulness as a faculty advisor.

Wayne and his wife Pam relocated to western North Carolina in 2012 from Portland, Oregon. The two are glad to be much closer to family—especially their two young granddaughters.

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