The months between March through May are characterized by celebrations, endings and beginnings in our academic calendar. We celebrate the success of our students in their courses and programs; we celebrate the faculty, in recognition of their excellence in teaching, scholarship and service; and we appreciate and celebrate the myriad roles staff and faculty play supporting our students’ success through advising, mentoring, and guiding them. With the ending of the semester comes the realization for many of our students that final exams and capstone experiences compose the last part of the WCU academic experience before beginning the next phase of their lives by going on to graduate school or seeking a job. For faculty and staff, it is a poignant time as we host commencement and see our undergraduate and graduate students move on to the next phase of their lives.

Many of our graduating students are considering re-enrolling at WCU to be part of our excellent graduate programs as a result of a concentrated marketing of our master’s programs. Faculty and staff have been heavily promoting the graduate programs to qualified students; we know that 26% of our graduate students are WCU undergraduates and are highly successful in our master’s degree programs. Many of our graduate programs have 100% employment rates after graduation and a significant number of our students are accepted into doctoral programs in North Carolina – keeping our best and brightest within the state.
Data from the student clearing house indicate that within any graduate program at WCU, students come from a variety of undergraduate programs. For example, in our current MBA program, out of 74 enrolled students, 11 are from Business, while the remainder possess undergraduate degrees in Biology, History, English, Entrepreneurship, Commercial Music, Engineering and other diverse disciplines. The same can be found in the Master of Public Affairs Program, with eight out of 41 enrolled students possessing a Political Science degree while the remaining possess undergraduate degrees in Criminal Justice, Parks and Recreation Management, Social Work and Finance, to name just a few.

Within this newsletter you will find a variety of articles that showcase the excellence of our programs, faculty, staff and students. It is an exciting time to be at WCU!

Beginning in April, Academic Affairs will be convening a number of conversations on issues of race, equality, and civil discourse, as well as the political, cultural, and historical contexts in which these issues unfold. Next fall, we will roll out a more robust consideration of these issues. This will not be an initiative for a single month or a single year, but rather a sustained academic conversation of the issues that shape our students’ lives and our own. These are difficult conversations to have, but they are necessary and important. Our faculty are particularly well-suited to help us lead them. If you are interested in taking part in these activities, please let me know.

**Campus Discussion Groups:**
- Tuesday, April 5, Noon–2 p.m., UC Multipurpose Room – Dialogue with Students
- Wednesday, April 6, Noon–2 p.m., UC Multipurpose Room – Dialogue with Faculty, Staff
- Thursday, April 7, Noon–2 p.m., UC Multipurpose Room – Dialogue with Students
- Monday, April 11, 8–10 p.m., UC Dogwood Room – Dialogue with Students
- Tuesday, April 12, 5–7 p.m., UC Dogwood Room – Dialogue with Faculty, Staff
- Tuesday, April 12, 8–10 p.m., UC Dogwood Room – Dialogue with Students

Thank you for a rewarding and productive academic year so far. We are continuing our tradition of excellence in our core mission of preparing students for their lives beyond Western Carolina University.

Sincerely,

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

**North Carolina Association for Institutional Research**

*from the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness*

Two Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness staff members gave presentations at the 2016 annual North Carolina Association for Institutional Research (NCAIR) conference, held March 14-16, in Wilmington, NC. David Onder, Director of Assessment, partnering with CampusLabs, the provider of WCU’s assessment management platform, Compliance Assist, gave a presentation entitled, “Analytics: Reflective to Predictive.” Johnny Lail, Social/Clinical Research Specialist, partnering with Rapid Insight, the provider of a predictive analytics software platform used at WCU, presented on, “The Final Frontier: Fully Automated Reporting.” At the same meeting, Tim Metz, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Institutional Planning and Effectiveness, was installed as president of NCAIR.
Upcoming Event

Saturday, April 2, 2016

Brief Description: A scenic course, featuring rolling hills, on the campus of WCU and along the Tuckaseigee River in Cullowhee, NC.

Proceeds: The proceeds of the race will go to students at WCU to assist in professional presentations and travel to conferences. We have a strong tradition of undergraduate research and professional engagement, which often leads to student travel and presentations at conferences in his or her field of study. Race proceeds will assist students with the expense associated with these outstanding opportunities.

Many students are not able to engage in professional development without financial assistance. The race is hosted by the School of Health Sciences and the Department of Campus Recreation & Wellness.

For more information, please visit:

REGISTER TODAY AT
http://www.imathlete.com/

American Conference of Academic Deans

submitted by the College of Fine and Performing Arts

Andrew Adams, Associate Dean of the College of Fine and Performing Arts and Associate Professor of Music, has been elected to the Board of Directors of the American Conference of Academic Deans (ACAD). Based in Washington, D.C., ACAD was founded in 1945 and is affiliated with the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

His appointment was based on a nomination process by members from across the United States and a review and election by ACAD’s Board. His two-year term began in January of this year and will end in January 2018. He will serve on the Board with only four other academic leaders from around the country.

The first meeting of the Board will be held from April 1st to 3rd at California State University, Monterey Bay. As part of his duties Andrew will serve on the Governance and Board Development Committee.
President-Elect Margaret Spellings
from the Office of the Provost

Margaret Spellings was elected president of the 17-campus University of North Carolina during a special meeting of the UNC Board of Governors in October 2015. Spellings plans to visit every campus in the UNC System between her first day on the job, March 1, and the end of the semester. Western Carolina University was among the first of her visits on March 10th and 11th. This successful visit gave administration, faculty and staff leadership, and other representatives from our campus opportunity to share concerns and challenges with our new president.
Graduate School Updates

submitted by Brian Kloepel, Interim Dean, Graduate School and Research

The core strength of our Graduate School at Western Carolina University is the quality of the classroom, lab, library, and clinical teaching and scholarship that is led by our expert Graduate Faculty. Faculty continue to develop tools and techniques that best engage our students whether they are teaching in Cullowhee, in Biltmore Park, online, or at an off campus location. Our programs continue to garner recognition for their student’s achievements and most recently the Master of Accounting program was notified that it had a 67.1% student pass rate in the Certified Public Accountancy exam, outpacing the nationwide average of 51.2%. Even more impressive is that WCU’s students outperformed those from Appalachian State (53.0%), ECU (47.6%), NC State (54.1%), UNCG (48.7%), UNCW (49.4%), UNCC (64.3%), UNC Chapel Hill (63.7%), and Clemson (61.3%). Go Cats!

The Graduate School has also updated our application requirements and applicants no longer need a minimum cumulative grade point average to apply and no longer need official transcripts to apply. Some people are shocked by this, but this is the standard across universities in the nationwide Council of Graduate Schools. We still want applicants with high GPAs and will need official transcripts for applicants after they are accepted, but we are empowering the Graduate Program Directors to be more holistic when reviewing and considering all of an applicant’s qualities and experiences rather than just a simple GPA and transcript.

Western Carolina University has received approval from UNC General Administration to reactivate the M.S. in Sport Management program, based in the College of Business, that will now be exclusively online and will be teaching their inaugural classes starting in Fall 2016. Dr. AJ Grube is the Program Director and we expect that Dr. Grube’s strong ties to athletic administration both at the Southern Conference level and at the NCAA level will provide some great exposure for this new online program. We know that there is a large student demand and we will be collaborating with the College of Business to grow the enrollment.

Mike Langford was recently hired as the Director of Graduate School Recruiting and Marketing and we are excited to have him onboard. Mike comes to us with 16 years of recruiting and marketing experience at Lenoir-Rhyne University, at Our State magazine, and as a higher education marketing expert. He brings a wealth of experience to our team and we look forward to tapping into his expertise as we continue the climb to increase the quality and quantity of applicants and enrolled graduate students. Mike has a B.A. in Vocal Performance from Lenoir-Rhyne University and a M.A. in Higher Education Administration from Appalachian State University.

We appreciate the support of numerous departments and offices across campus. Please visit us at our newly migrated website, grad.wcu.edu, or please feel free to call (828-227-7398), email (grad@wcu.edu), or stop by to visit at 110 Cordelia Camp Building.
Provost Fellow for Faculty Relations

from the Office of the Provost

Nearly one year ago, WCU appointed from among the faculty ranks, a Provost Fellow for Faculty Relations. Similar to the role of an organizational ombudsman, this position provides members of the faculty with a resource to address difficult issues and conflicts. The role of the Faculty Relations Fellow is to provide the academic members of the campus community an opportunity to address matters of concern in an informal setting with a measure of confidentiality. According to Teri Domagalski, who serves as the Faculty Relations Fellow, university faculty and department heads are invited to reach out to discuss, problem solve, and seek clarification and assistance in matters related to their work lives. While this role is not an ombuds in a pure sense since it is not a fully independent office, the Faculty Relations Fellow is here to provide a neutral and informal resource for the community from one of their own.

The services offered by the Faculty Relations Fellow include research on and dissemination of university policies, navigation of other campus offices to gain answers to questions, exploration of options for addressing conflicts, serving as a sounding board and coach, reviewing correspondence for appropriateness, communicating with others, and mediating disputes.

The role is one that requires neutrality and impartiality, rather than advocacy. It also provides a large measure of confidentiality in that there is no paper trail or recording of constituents who reach out. Teri notes, however, that certain information may not remain confidential such as a situation in which an individual acknowledges engaging in illegal behavior or a clear violation of university policy. In those circumstances, the role necessitates reporting the information to other pertinent university officials. For example, should a faculty member admit to involvement in sexual misconduct, it would be necessary to report this activity to the appropriate authority. Teri also serves as a Deputy Title IX coordinator for the university.

The Faculty Relations role is one for which Teri Domagalski finds herself well suited. With undergraduate degrees in psychology and social work, she worked as a psychiatric social worker for several years. She returned to school to pursue a Master’s Degree in Business with a concentration in Human Resource Management. After a short period of working in the human resources field, she completed her Ph.D. in organizational behavior, which emphasizes an understanding of individual human behavior in an organizational context. Her teaching and research interests have been concerned with the phenomenon of anger in the workplace, the intersection of gender, power and status issues, and employment discrimination. She has taught courses on employment discrimination, and conflict resolution and negotiation, along with leadership effectiveness. Her experiences have positioned her well to serve as Western’s Faculty Relations Fellow. She is available to assist at the Cullowhee and Asheville campus locations.

You are welcome to contact her at tdomagalski@email.wcu.edu or 227-3589.
"I started my educational journey at WCU through the Academic Success Program (ASP) in the summer of 2010. That opportunity changed my life forever. It helped redefine my personal philosophy of education and sparked my passion for intellectual curiosity. Had it not been for ASP, I sincerely believe the many successes I have been able to achieve since would not have happened. I went from a student identified as academically "at-risk" to graduating from my department with the Dean's Outstanding Scholar award. I am a living testament to the success that comes from the commitment and influence our dedicated faculty and staff have for our students here at WCU. ASP changed my life for the better and WCU helped define my commitment to education. To those faculty who both challenged and supported me along the way - thank you! I am glad to be back at my alma mater working towards my Masters degree so that I too can give back to the students who will walk our campus ground. I could not be more proud to be a Catamount!"

It seems to be that Devan is sticking true to his favorite quote, "Do. Or do not. There is no try." - Yoda/Janina DeHart

Devan is a Graduate Research Assistant for the Offices of the Provost and First Year Experience, a Graduate Intern for the Writing and Learning Commons, serves on the Quality Enhancement Plan Development Committee, the Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Committee, the Campus Theme Committee, and serves as a Student Government Association Graduate Senator.

Devan earned a B.S. in Sociology, and minors in Management and Leadership and is working towards his M.Ed. in Higher Education and Student Affairs (HESA), and is expected to graduate in 2017.

Graduate school takes the bulk of his time and energy, the remainder goes to Magee Middleton. Magee is his 6 month old Blue Italian Greyhound that happens to have her own Instagram!

Devan is a USA Archery certified level-one instructor and also deeply enjoys rock climbing and belaying. He is WCU Safe Zone certified and co-owns a Kenyan goods import company called Rafiki Kenyan Imports, LLS (ShopRKI.com).

On top of everything else, Devan was also an intern to UNC President Ross and the Board of Governors in 2014-2015.

Devan's motto: "If we stop making excuses and say, 'I tried my best,'-- and truly do all we can to do our best-- we will be successful."
Ms. Anne Elizabeth Aldrich has been the Executive Assistant to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs since January 2007. Prior to coming to WCU, she spent ten years working in mental health as Director of Human Resources for Meridian Behavioral Health and Human Resource Specialist and Therapeutic Home Coordinator with Smoky Mountain Center. Anne also owned and operated Jack the Dipper Ice Cream Shop from 1986 to 2004 in its original location by the Tuckaseegee River on Highway 107. She was born in Michigan, raised in Atlanta, and has been a resident of Jackson County since 1984.

During Anne’s nine plus years in the Office of the Provost she has supported five provosts and worked with over 30 deans. She provides support to Provost Council, Provost Executive Council, and Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Personnel committee, as well as managing the day to day activities in the Office of the Provost. Anne has a strong interest in supporting professional development opportunities, in particular for SHRA staff. In collaboration towards that effort, the Office of Human Resources and the Coulter Faculty Commons have partnered with the Office of the Provost in the creation of the Summer Institute for Administrative Support Professionals (SIASP). The summer of 2016 will be the third annual SIASP.

Anne has a bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice from West Georgia State University and in December of 2015, she received her master’s in Public Affairs from Western Carolina University. Anne conducted a Capstone Project for her degree that produced grant and partnership opportunities for an NGO working in Uganda and Kenya. She also had the great fortune to visit both countries in October to see the work of the organization and is building on this experience by serving on the African Campus Theme committee. Anne’s most recent favorite quote is “As one person I cannot change the world, but I can change the world of one person.” This became a true realization for Anne due to her experience in Africa where she is continuing to provide support.

After hours Anne enjoys cooking, renovating her 106 year-old farm house, gardening, and taking her two dogs, and two cats for walks (yes, the cats go too). She and her husband David, her son Matthew of Asheville, and her step-daughter Sarah of Atlanta, love to cook together and create memorable family gatherings around their love of fabulous food, lots of laughter, and great company that also happens to be family.
Faculty Spotlight

Farzaneh Razzaghi
Dean, Library Services

Farzaneh Razzaghi came to Western Carolina University in August of 2015 as the Dean of Library Services. Before accepting the position at Western, she led as the Dean of Library Services at the University of Texas-Pan American.

Farzaneh has been involved in library services to some degree since her graduation from the Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas years ago. With a master's degree and a Ph.D. in Library and Information Studies, and a concentration in Health Sciences Librarianship, it is not surprising that her field of work has included being a nursing librarian, a collection development librarian, assistant director, and an associate director in library services.

Traveling from Iran in 1976 to attend graduate school was Farzaneh's way of putting her motto of, "life is too short", to the test.

Farzaneh is known for working hard and playing hard, while remaining humble. "I don't take life too seriously; I know everything is temporary. I always look for excellence in everything I do or expect to be done."

Outside of traveling, her favorite hobby is to spend time with her two wonderful granddaughters Leyla and Arabella.

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