The Division of Student Affairs Newsletter

April 2020

COVID-19 Message from Chancellor Brown
Dear Western Carolina University community:

The past couple of weeks have seen the impact of COVID-19 expand across the state of North Carolina, continuing to disrupt the normal operations of the 2020 spring semester at Western Carolina University. Recent predictions from public health officials indicate that the peak of the virus's spread across our state may not arrive until late April or early May. In light of that new information and given Governor Roy Cooper's statewide "stay home, stay safe" order, which remains in effect at least until April 30, university leadership has agreed that we cannot yet set a date for the rescheduling of commencement exercises originally set for May 8 and 9.

To students and their families, we want you to know that we are absolutely committed to hosting in-person commencement ceremonies so that we can celebrate this important milestone together. We fully understand that you are anxious to know when we will hold these on-campus events, but the fluid nature of this global health crisis means that we simply are not in a position to make a decision today with any degree of certainty. Indeed, it may be a number of weeks before we can definitely set a new date. We are looking at possible dates in early August or mid-December, depending upon the success of efforts to slow exposure to and transmission of the coronavirus disease. We will set a firm date for the rescheduled spring commencement ceremonies in the weeks ahead and will do so in consultation with public health officials, the University of North Carolina System, and state leaders.

In addition, all instruction during the summer months at WCU will be offered online, with no face-to-face courses. Students who are wondering about the status of summer internships, cooperative education assignments, and similar experiential learning activities should consult with their specific program directors for guidance, as there is no "one-size-fits-all" answer.

I once again thank you for cooperation, your patience, and your understanding. I continue to be amazed at the resilience of our Catamount community in coming together by remaining apart in these extremely trying times. And for those of you on track to graduate at the end of this semester, I am looking forward to the time when this
pandemic has passed and I can acknowledge you as you walk across that stage at commencement.

Be safe and be well,

Kelli R. Brown
Chancellor

Coronavirus and COVID-19
Resources

The Coronavirus situation remains very dynamic and there is a lot of information online. Please visit the sites below to learn more about the COVID-19 epidemic. Stay safe and be well:

- WCU Health Services’ Public Health Info page
- CDC Coronavirus Disease website
- CDC Facts about Coronavirus
- CDC Coronavirus Interim Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education
Information Technology Resources

IT can help you be productive through COVID-19. Check out the topics below:
Smartphone to Mobile Hotspot: Apple or Android
Guidance for Internet Service
Receiving and Sending Fax Documents from Off-campus
Closing the Door on “Zoom Crashers”
Disinfectant Guidance for Electronic Devices
Using VCAT Virtual Desktops and Apps
Faculty: Emergency Online Instruction Checklist
Take Your Device Off-Campus: Off-Campus Asset Form
Other articles and links:
US Carriers, ISPs Remove Data Caps During Coronavirus Outbreak
Campus Updates and Resources
Charter to Offer Free Access to Spectrum Broadband and Wi-Fi For 60 Days For New K-12 and College Student Households and More

How to contact IT?
Call the IT Help Desk at (828) 227-7487
Email the IT Help Desk at ithelp@email.wcu.edu
Submit an IT Ticket on help.wcu.edu
Ask Madison – Log into your myWCU account to access the chatbot

COVID-19: Extended IT Service
The Technology Commons is working on access channels and appointment processes for students, faculty, and staff to access its services and support. Further information will be posted to the Technology Commons website, Social Media and in the Division of IT’s weekly email.

CENSUS 2020

The 2020 Census counts every person living in the United States and five U.S. territories. In mid-March, homes across the country began receiving invitations to complete the 2020 Census. Once the invitation arrives, you can respond in one of three ways: online, by phone, or by mail. When you respond to the census, you’ll tell the Census Bureau where you live as of April 1, 2020.

Visit 2020census.gov to be counted.
Managing Stress and Anxiety During the Coronavirus Pandemic

Tips from Dr. Kim Gorman, Director of WCU's Counseling and Psychological Services, for helping us to adjust to our new work (and social) environment:

1. Step away from the computer several times during the course of the day. In fact, you might set a timer so that you get up and walk at least for a few minutes each hour of your work day.
2. Admit that this is hard...because it is! We are all being asked to do things that are new and likely uncomfortable for us. Give yourself grace when you inevitably make mistakes. And do the same for others.
3. Find a way to connect with your social support and do it by talking and not just texting.
4. Go outside! Nature calms, it soothes and it heals.
5. Make sure to keep a routine. And make sure that sleep is a part of that routine!
6. Consider how much news you are exposed to and if that is causing you to experience more anxiety. If so, limit your time watching or reading about the events of the day.
7. Manage interruptions. It is likely that your workflow will be very different given these circumstances. It will take time to figure out what works for you.

8. Make a list of the self-care activities that have worked for you in the past. Pick one each day and do it!

In addition, I would suggest that folks check out the self-help videos on the CAPS website. We have videos that provide good tips on *perfectionism, motivation, sleep, self-esteem, managing depression and anxiety, mindfulness practice, and the happiness myth.*
Welcome - New Staff

Katie Sorel joined the Department of Campus Activities as an Administrative Support Associate on April 1, 2020. Before coming to WCU, she worked as a paralegal, a freelance writer, and a community support companion for people with disabilities.

Katie is excited to work with WCU's students and organizations. Outside of work, she enjoys knitting, yoga, and writing.

Congratulations
Student Affairs is happy to congratulate Pam Degraffenreid on her retirement after 35 years at Western Carolina University. Pam’s last day of work was March 31.

We thank Pam for her service, commitment, and leadership to Western Carolina University, her dedication to making a difference, and her advocacy for all State employees in North Carolina. Pam leaves behind a legacy of excellence at the WCU bookstore and an indelible mark on the campus.

Thank you Pam Degraffenreid! Enjoy your Retirement.

NEWS & UPDATES

ENROLLMENT
• Campus Tours
• Enrollment Update
• Orientation Contingency Plans
• Financial Aid - FUSS Regulation Changes

Read more

HEALTH & WELLNESS

• CRC Virtual Programming
• Events Rescheduled
• Dance Team Tryouts
• CAPS Online Help
• Coronavirus Communication

Read more

CAMPUS ACTIVITIES
• Student Staff Training
• UC Closed
• Student Appreciation Week
• SGA Inauguration
• Miracle

Read more

CAMPUS SERVICES

• Students move out of Residence Halls
• Students On Campus
• Lodge@Brown
• Student Refunds
• Bookstore Closed

Read more

DEAN of STUDENTS
• ICA Graduation Ceremony
• Greek Registration & Recognition Deadline
• Student Emergency Fund
  Read more

MARKETING & ASSESSMENT

• DSA Emergency Operations Protocol
• Kneedler CDC Closed
• VC Advancement Search
• Dashboards Due
  Read more
**DSA IT COMMITTEE**

The meeting initially scheduled for Friday, March 20th will be re-scheduled for a later date. Harold Thomas and Carl Cortright will be invited to attend the next meeting to share the recent changes in Business Intelligence and Catalytics.

**Zoom Security Concerns** - As more of us are using Zoom for meetings and to assist with teleworking there are a few security concerns you should be aware of. In recent weeks Zoom has noticed an increase in the number of meetings that are being crashed and taken over by uninvited guests. Make sure your meeting isn't one of them.

*Close the Door on Zoom Crashers*
MAR Transforms to MER

On Monday morning, March 30, the Board of Governors approved recommended revisions to the UNC System Minimum Admission Requirements (MAR). Initially proposed to go into effect for the 2020-2021 recruitment cycle, the approved revisions go into effect immediately—in response to canceled standardized testing this spring because of the COVID outbreak.

The revisions rename these regulations—from MAR to MER: Minimum Eligibility Requirements. Below are a few points of clarification as to what MER does and does not mean:

• **TRUE:** MER provides more professional judgment within the admission deliberation process for UNC institutions. [The Office of Admission can now consider an applicant primarily on the merits of classroom performance OR on the merits of standardized test performance.]

• **FALSE:** MER mandates WCU to admit any student who meets MER criteria. [Neither MAR nor MER ever mandated UNC institutions to admit students who meet minimum criteria. Institutions can set higher criteria and standards than MER. MER is NOT synonymous with admissible.]

• **FALSE:** Minimum Eligibility Requirements (MER) mean that meeting the minimum makes someone eligible for admission. [MER makes someone eligible to be considered...}
Failure to meet MER makes someone ineligible for admission consideration.]

- **TRUE**: High school students, with few exceptions, still must submit at least one set of SAT or ACT scores. [Unless a student falls into an MER exemption category—e.g., sufficient college credit or military service, or a non-traditional student—the applicant must submit at least one set of test scores to enroll, even if those scores are not used as the basis for admission.]

- **FALSE**: MER makes applying test-optional. [Applicants still must submit test scores. The BOG actions DO NOT equate to test-optional admission. These changes were approved as a three-year pilot study and GPA and test score data must be collected, reported, and analyzed as to how these changes affect student success metrics and goals.]

- **FALSE**: WCU will dramatically change its holistic admission decision philosophy because of these revisions. [WCU has placed and will continue to place the greatest weight on proven classroom performance—the strength of courses and strength of grades. MER will merely enhance WCU's ability to adhere to this philosophy. Classroom performance remains a better predictor of student success than do standardized test scores.]

- **FALSE**: Students with outstanding GPAs need not concern themselves with competitive test scores anymore. [Standardized test scores could still have a bearing on Admission deliberations, academic program eligibility, Honors College selection, Scholarship consideration, etc. WCU still recommends an applicant to take the same type of standardized test at least twice and consider taking a test at least once in the fall of the senior year.]

For more information, contact the Office of Admissions at admisss@wcu.edu.
Tuck River Cleanup are postponed until **Saturday, August 29, 2020**. Tuck River Cleanup will be scaled down due to the number of community partners available when they are still “in-season”. We appreciate everyone's continued support of these events!

![Tuck River Cleanup 2020 Poster](image)

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE GO**

**Learn What COVID-19 Means for Higher Ed Strategy**

Dr. David Attis, Managing Director of Research, and Carla Hickman, Vice President of Research Growth Strategy, discuss the immediate effects of COVID-19 on higher-ed as well as long-term impacts on enrollment and multi-modal learning.
Listen to the Podcast

How to Build Relationships With Students Near You

As social distancing keeps people home, it may feel more challenging than ever to build relationships with students and their families. Learn how paid search and virtual tour content can help you build and maintain relationships with prospective students until campus visits resume.

Build Relationships

5 Questions Every Provost Should Ask When Responding to COVID-19

The rapid institutional responses to the coronavirus pandemic have raised concerns relating to the core academic functions of colleges and universities—what will social distancing, spreading illness, and economic strain mean for teaching and research?

See the Questions

3 Surprise Benefits of Remote Instruction

Instruction as we know it might be disrupted for longer than anyone initially planned. Learn how universities can help academic leaders and staff understand the surprise benefits that remote instruction, when done well, can provide for students.

Read More

What Coronavirus Could Mean for Summer College Programs
EAB's Madeleine Rhyneer tells U.S. News and World Report how colleges are weighing summer orientations and bridge programs amidst the coronavirus crisis, according to a survey of more than 250 enrollment leaders.

Read More

REMINDERS

Professional Development

Please take advantage of the training opportunities available on campus:

HR Trainings
Talent & Professional Development
Diversity Related Trainings
MANAGING STRESS & ANXIETY ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS

We encourage you to use the following 7 tips to manage stress or anxiety that can arise in the midst of uncertainty or fear about your or a loved one's safety.

1. **Acknowledge reactions.** Allow yourself time to reflect on what you are feeling and how you may be reacting to any fears and uncertainties of the future.

2. **Maintain your day-to-day normal activities and social outlets.** Resist withdrawing and isolating yourself from the support and caring that others can provide.

3. **Seek accurate information from "The Center for Disease Control & Prevention" and limit exposure to social media and news reports that provide no new information.**

4. **Pay attention to positive news instead of only focusing on negative and fear-producing reports.**

5. **Follow the protection and prevention tips given by medical professionals given by national medical authorities and your own medical doctor.**

6. **Practice calming rituals:** Stay grounded in the present moment, which can help you maintain an internal sense of stability and balance when outside events feel threatening.

7. **Seek supports & use campus resources.** Reach out to friends and family and learn about campus resources available. If you or someone you know has high distress that does not seem to be lessening, talk about it with others or come to the counseling center. Your campus community is here to help!
STOP
THE SPREAD OF GERMS.

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19
UPCOMING DATES

May 1    Last day of classes
May 2-8   Final Exams

Campus Events

Division of Student Affairs
Western Carolina University