MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

The Graduate School and Research team has been adaptive and busy since our last newsletter. Our faculty and staff, supported by our Office of Research Administration, have been successful with over $6.2 million received from 71 research awards in our fiscal
year ending June 2020. That hard work and productivity also show in the Graduate School where our faculty and staff boosted our recruiting and increased our Fall 2020 graduate student enrollment to 1,726 students, the highest graduate enrollment since Fall 2010!

However, we lost a champion for WCU graduate students in 2020 when Dr. Curtis Wood passed away in June. The mentoring award that he funded annually recognized a graduate faculty member for their impactful mentoring of graduate students. Please help us to continue recognizing and rewarding the above and beyond work that our graduate faculty do to benefit our excellent students by making a donation to the Curtis Wood Mentoring Award in the Graduate School and Research!

Happy Holidays,

Brian Kloeppel, PhD

DONATE NOW
Ashley Hyatt is the 2020 recipient of the Curtis W. Wood Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Mentoring

Over the past years, Dr. Ashley Hyatt, Assistant Professor in the Department of Physical Therapy, has received multiple nominations from both colleagues and graduate students for this award. Dr. Hyatt is an engaged teacher and her nominators praised her commitment to helping physical therapy students develop as both scholars and practitioners. Student nominators describe Dr. Hyatt as innovative, compassionate, dedicated and community-minded. One student shared, "She has given me the courage and confidence to pursue opportunities I would typically never consider." A colleague calls Dr. Hyatt, "...one of the most encouraging and engaging teachers in the physical therapy program (using) a variety of teaching methods to accommodate as many styles of learning in her classes as possible." One student summarized their praise for Dr. Hyatt by saying, "This woman doesn't sleep. Seriously. Her level of engagement and care for her students is unsurpassable!"
Congratulations Dr. Hyatt....and thank you.

Kelly McIntyre receives 2019-2020 Graddy award

The Graddy Award, established in 2005, is presented by the Graduate School to a person or unit who, throughout the year, has contributed outstanding service to WCU’s graduate education mission acknowledging that it takes a village to provide a high-quality, graduate student experience. The 2019-2020 recipient is Kelly McIntyre, Graduate Programs Manager for the College of Business.

Kelly has proven to be an invaluable partner to Graduate School staff members in serving our College of Business students at our Biltmore Park instructional site. She is a dedicated professional, committed to student success, working collaboratively with the Graduate School to resolve issues in a timely and courteous manner.

Kelly's contributions extend beyond the student experience. She is active in Graduate School recruiting efforts at Biltmore Park, assisting and organizing with Open House events and representing WCU at various community functions. She has also enthusiastically served on Graduate School search committees. Congratulations, Kelly!
Graduate student wins teaching award

Betty Jo Moore is graduating from WCU's Elementary/Middle Grades M.A.Ed. program in the STEM track in December 2020. She was presented with the 2020 NCSTA Ann Watkins Middle School Distinguished Service Award during a virtual ceremony fall 2020. Betty Jo wrote, "My time at WCU fine-tuned my teaching and that is why I wanted to share this information with you. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity that I had to take classes and receive my degree from WCU."
WCU alumna blends project management with hospitality

Michaela Schmidlin, Master of Project Management '18, can put your fear of hosting holiday company in perspective.

READ MORE

Working professional Summer McMurry achieves a milestone

Summer McMurry claims a singular distinction in WCU's history - she's the first person to earn a doctoral degree in speech communication disorders through a collaborative program with UNC-Greensboro.

READ MORE
Online master's degree in construction management builds a career

A few years ago, Joseph Love, now a construction coordinator at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, in Nashville, Tennessee, looked at WCU and our master's degree in construction management as the curriculum he wanted and the career building block that he needed.
Faculty and staff pursue funding opportunities

WCU faculty and staff made good use of their work-from-home time this summer, applying for 35 grants totaling approximately $12.7M. That brings the total number of grant proposals to 70 ($21.5M) since January 1, 2020. Between January 1 and September 24, 2020, faculty and staff received 43 grant awards totaling $4M. Among the largest is a $517,282 grant from the National Science Foundation for Catamount Collections, to maximize the accessibility and outreach potential of the university’s collection of 47,000 specimens of plants, arthropods, birds, and mammals. The collections will be moving to the new Tom Apodaca Science Building when it opens in 2021. Principal investigators Kathy Mathews, Luiz Silveira, Barbara Ballentine, and Aimee Rockhill wrote the winning proposal in October 2019 and received the award in July 2020.

Recent Graduate School Events
Virtual Three Minute Thesis competition winners announced

Ten graduate students representing seven different graduate programs competed in the 2020 Virtual Three Minute Thesis Competition on November 12. A total of seventeen students submitted their presentations in video format and community leaders, alumni and WCU faculty judged participants on communication, comprehension, engagement and impact during a live stream event. Viewers voted for their favorite, deciding the People's Choice award winner.

Winners were presented with tuition awards by Provost Richard Starnes. This year, through the generosity of the Graduate Student Association, winners also received cash awards.

The 2020 Virtual 3MT Competition winners are:

First Place: Thomas Hennessey, M.S. Biology $500 tuition award and $500 cash award
Second Place: Amy Childers, M.S. Psychology-School $250 tuition award and $250 cash award
People's Choice Award: Morgan Pillsbury, D.P.T. Physical Therapy $250 tuition award and $250 cash award

We thank our judges for their participation!

Dr. Tim Eckard, WCU Assistant Professor in the College of Health and Human Sciences, Physical Therapy Department
Dr. Paolo Narcisco, AARP of Washinton DC and graduate of WCU;'s Master of Entrepreneurship program
Dr. Brandy Tiernan, WCU Assistant Professor in the College of Education and Allied Professions, Psychology Department
NC Senator Terry Van Duyn (D-Buncombe County)
Graduate Education Week

From October 19-23, the Graduate School hosted several virtual events for Graduate Education Week. These events focused on preparing students for graduate study and supporting current graduate students. The week included information sessions hosted by the Math Tutoring Center and workshops facilitated by the Center for Career and Professional Development. The Graduate Student Association hosted a social and Dean Kloeppel met with current and prospective students in a virtual coffee with the dean event.

FULL LIST OF ACTIVITIES

NC Council of Graduate Schools Annual Meeting
Dr. Brian Kloeppel was the 2019-2020 President of the NC Council of Graduate Schools. WCU hosted the Council's annual conference virtually October 22-23 with over 220 graduate students, staff and administrators participating.

We were fortunate to have seventeen speakers present on a variety of graduate education topics. Speakers included UNC System President, Peter Hans and Dr. Kelli Brown, Chancellor, WCU. Both President Hans and Chancellor Brown brought welcoming words of encouragement and support to meeting participants. Dr. Carol Burton, Associate Provost at WCU, delivered the Plenary Presentation on 'Effective Communication in Graduate Education'. With our graduate education batteries recharged, we will continue to serve our graduate students, staff, faculty and administrators and rise above the COVID-19 challenges of the 2020-2021 academic year.