

# Academic Affairs

## News & Reflections

### The Incomparable David O. Belcher

Dr. Belcher's unique leadership style, intelligence, energy, sense of humor, sharp wit, and love for Western Carolina University, have been imprinted on our campus and regional community and will have an inestimable impact for years to come. From my first meeting with him over seven years ago, when he was a candidate to be our next chancellor, to my most recent contact with him last week just before his passing, and everything in between, I was in awe of him. He had an uncanny ability to demand high standards while inspiring loyalty and collegiality; he was, simply, incomparable and I will miss him more than I can express. I will forever treasure his friendship and support of me personally and professionally; and he and Susan have my undying gratitude for sharing their lives with us!

Carol Burton



### From the Acting Provost's Desk

Dear Colleagues:

I hope you are taking some time to relax and rejuvenate this summer. For me, it's always stimulating, both personally and professionally, to be able to spend quality time with our faculty and staff to examine an issue of common interest, or to develop plans that will drive us to excellence; this early summer has been no exception. Dr. Jen Schiff, Associate Professor of Political Science and Public Affairs and past chair of the Liberal Studies Committee, led a small team to the American Association of Colleges and Universities' Summer Institute on general education assessment in Salt Lake City, Utah. The five of us immersed ourselves in student learning outcomes, faculty engagement, and assessment practices to chart our path forward in liberal studies assessment. My reward was to enjoy robust and passionate conversations about liberal education, assessment, student learning, and faculty leadership and pedagogy. Thanks to Jen and our colleagues (Gael Graham, History; Erin McNelis, Mathematics; and Terry Martin, Stage and Screen) for their participation and productivity.

I just want to take a moment to update you on a few priorities within our division and on an institutional level.

## **2020 2.0**

The Board of Trustees recently approved our revised strategic plan. Please visit [strategicplan.wcu.edu](http://strategicplan.wcu.edu) for the approved plan.

### **Major Searches**

- Chancellor's Search - four candidates participated in a campus visit in May. Since it is a closed search, campus visit schedules and candidates' cover letters and curriculum vitae were not published. The Board of Trustees submitted three names for consideration to President Margaret Spellings. She will make a recommendation to the Board of Governors later this summer. [chancellorsearch.wcu.edu](http://chancellorsearch.wcu.edu)
- College of Business Dean. The search committee, chaired by Jeff Ray, Dean of Engineering and Technology, is continuing into the fall semester. We hope to have a new dean starting January 1, 2019.
- College of Health and Human Sciences Dean. Search will commence with the next academic year with a new dean in place to begin the 2019 fall semester.
- Director for the newly approved Doctor of Psychology (Psy. D.) program. A successful candidate has been appointed as director. Student enrollment begins in the 2019 fall semester.
- Director of the Kimmel School of Construction Management. Dr. Bruce Gehrig, faculty member at UNC Charlotte, has been appointed the Joe and Cynthia Kimmel Distinguished Professorship of Construction Management in the College of Engineering and Technology effective July 1, 2018.
- Robert Lee Madison Distinguished Professor. David Shapiro, professor of communication sciences and disorders and the first Robert Lee Madison Professor (appointed in 2008), is retiring at the end of this semester after 34 years at WCU. A search will commence for the next Madison Distinguished Professor in fall 2019.
- Carol Grotnes Belk Endowed Professor. Bruce Frazier, professor of music, retires at the end of this academic year after 20 years at WCU and we wish him the very best in retirement. The School of Music will fill the professorship in due course.
- Director of One Stop Student Services. Linda Carmody is retiring this summer as director of the One Stop. Congratulations and good luck LC! Justin Massey is the new director effective Friday, June 1, 2018.
- Director of Accessibility Resources. Wesley Satterwhite, director of the Office for Accessibility Resources, resigned effective May 9. We wish Wesley well. Paul Perrotta is the new director effective Monday, July 2, 2018.

The following employees have announced resignations recently and we wish them the very best in their new opportunities. Searches will commence shortly.

- Sharon McGee, Associate Dean of the Graduate School, has accepted a position as dean of the Graduate School at East Tennessee State University effective August 1; her last day at WCU is July 20.
- Meredith Taylor, Associate Dean of Hunter Library, has accepted a position as Associate Dean of the library at Appalachian State University.
- Martha Diede, Director of the Coulter Faculty Commons, has accepted a position in faculty development at Syracuse University.

*Carol Burton*

*Acting Provost*

# Position Updates

## Student Success

Student Success is pleased to welcome two new members of the team this summer.



**Justin Massey** joined us as Director of the One Stop Student Service Center on Friday, June 1. Justin comes to WCU from UNC Greensboro, where he served as Assistant Director for Tutoring – Student Support Services. He has a wealth of experience in customer service, academic advising, and leadership, and served at UNCA’s OneStop for a number of years. Justin holds degrees in Marketing, Women’s and Gender Studies, and Adult Education, and is currently working on a Ph.D. in Educational Studies, Cultural Foundations.



**Paul Perrotta** will also join the Catamount community as Director of Accessibility Resources on Monday, July 2. Paul has a wealth of knowledge and experience in his field and served most recently as Executive Director of Exceptional Children for Guilford County Schools. Paul has more than 20 years’ experience working with special education and student accessibility issues and 9 years’ experience handling these issues in higher education.

If you see Paul or Justin on campus, be sure to extend them a warm WCU welcome to Cullowhee!

# Position Updates

## Academic Affairs - New Leadership Roles



**Dr. Katerina Spasovska** is an associate professor of communication and will assume the role of Department Head of Communication on July 1, 2018. She teaches news writing and reporting classes in the journalism concentration. She also teaches topic classes such as: International Media and Reporting, Investigative Reporting, Public Affairs, Travel Writing and the professional development classes. She serves as the advisor for the student run news website, the Western Carolina Journalist, and is the advisor for the WCU student chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ).

Dr. Spasovska holds a Ph.D. from University of Tennessee. Her research interests are in journalism, media development and minority media in South East Europe. Prior to her academic career Dr. Spasovska worked as a journalist in Macedonia for 14 years covering the economy, social and human rights issues and working as investigative reporter and editor.



**G. Bruce Gehrig**, a faculty member at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte for 16 years with decades of experience in civil engineering and the construction industry, has been named director of Western Carolina University's Kimmel School of Construction Management effective July 1.

Gehrig will also hold WCU's Joe W. and Cynthia Kimmel Distinguished Professorship in Construction Management. The professorship is expected to play a key role in enhancing Western North Carolina's economy by expanding WCU's construction management programs and improving industry relationships throughout the region and beyond, said Jeffrey Ray, dean of the university's College of Engineering and Technology.

"Dr. Gehrig's many years of experience and leadership in construction management will be an asset to WCU. His background and experience are perfectly aligned with the explosive growth in construction-related employment in Western North Carolina," Ray said. "His commitment to maintaining our historical campus-based undergraduate and online master's degrees in construction management makes him an excellent candidate to lead the Kimmel School of Construction Management as we continue transforming construction education in North Carolina and across the U.S."



**Jonathan Wade** has been appointed to the role of Acting Director of the Coulter Faculty Commons for Teaching Excellence at Western Carolina University. Jonathan joined the CFC staff as the Senior Educational Technologist in 2015. Before coming to Western, he served for a decade in various roles at the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching, including Director of Programming, Faculty Chair, as a member of the faculty, and as the internal manager of a number of initiatives including the Holocaust Education Program, the Data Literacy Initiative, and the Digital Learning Initiative.

In the time before he came to serve the State of North Carolina, Jonathan served as a faculty member at Faulkner University and Abilene Christian University teaching classes in English and Interdisciplinary Humanities. He also served as the Assistant Director of the Honors Program at Abilene Christian University, as an officer in the International Conference on Christianity and Literature, as a gubernatorial appointee to the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust, as a member of the Alabama Board of English Educators, and as a President of the PTA at Cullowhee Valley School. Jonathan has been a resident of Jackson County for 15 years along with his wife, Jodie, and their two children, Anne and Nathan.

Jonathan deeply believes in exploring the depths and diversity of human thought in ways that transcend boundaries. He received a M.A. in Ethics from Vanderbilt University, and a PhD in Humanities from the University of Texas at Dallas. His work in higher education and in the service of K12 public education

has focused on encouraging excellence and compassionate engagement on the part of students and faculty. His strands of interest unite in service to the faculty and students of WCU in the Coulter Faculty Commons.

When asked what his intended agenda for the CFC will be over the next few months, Jonathan replied, "The Coulter Faculty Commons at WCU supports our faculty in a variety of ways. Our current work revolves around celebrating the excellent work of our experienced faculty by facilitating university awards and internal grants, supporting improvements in experience and quality for all faculty in face to face and online classroom environments, supporting and extending the capabilities of our university-wide systems, and serving as one of the connectors for our faculty with the other parts of the university that support our common work. As we face a time of unprecedented growth in our undergraduate program, we are honored to stand beside our faculty in the service of our students. This summer, we will be doing everything we can to get our team prepared for what will be a very interesting and challenging Fall semester." He urges faculty who happen to be on campus this summer to come by to visit with the team.



**Tom Martin**, Associate Professor of Biology, will become the next Department Head of Biology effective July 1, 2018.

I grew up in the coalfields of southwest Virginia in a county that at the time didn't have a single traffic signal. I was lucky to have parents that valued higher education even though neither of them had had that opportunity. My father had finished high school after serving in the Navy during WWII, and my mother's parents forbade her to continue in school after 8th grade, seeing no need of a formal education for a daughter. She resented her parent's decision for the rest of her life, which probably led to her unwavering support of my education.

I decided that I wanted to be a "biologist" when I was in 9th grade without really knowing what that meant. I was inspired by the '60s TV Show "Wild Kingdom." I wanted to be Stan Brock when I grew up; in hindsight, not a bad aspiration, he's still a bit of hero as the founder of Remote Area Medical (RAM). After high school, I earned a BS in

Biology from Lincoln Memorial University, an MS in Biology from East Tennessee State University, a PhD in Zoology from NC State, and did post-doctoral research at the Center for Limnology at UW-Madison. I am forever grateful for the lessons I learned about being a teacher, a scientist, an academic professional, and a citizen from my mentors; Dallas Wilhelm (LMU), Dan Johnson (ETSU), Larry Crowder (NCSU), and Steve Carpenter (UW). In particular, Dan has continued to serve as a role model for how to be a scientist, mentor, and productive member of an academic community.

My first classroom teaching experience was as a sabbatical replacement at NCSU and my first tenure-track faculty experience was in the Biology Department at Clarion University of PA (a smallish regional comprehensive in western Pennsylvania, less than half the size of WCU). I moved to the School of Forest Resources at Penn State University (a biggish R1 in central Pennsylvania, counting 2-year feeder campuses, almost 10X larger than WCU) in 1996 to teach "Case Studies in Ecosystem Management" in the Environmental Resource Management program, an inter-college BS degree program. I quickly grew tired of trying to provide a meaningful "capstone" experience to 60-80 students per semester and only getting to meet those students in their final semester. When a friend who knew of my dissatisfaction sent a copy of the ad for the position I currently hold here at WCU, I leapt at the opportunity.

My family and I truly enjoy being a part of the WCU and the western North Carolina community. My wife, Pam Mullins Martin, became an alumnus of WCU, earning a MAT in Special Education and has just finished her 13th year as a teacher at Fairview School where she now teaches AIG language arts. My two sons, Colin and Galen, graduated from Smoky Mountain High School, and after receiving BS degrees in Math and Biology/Chemistry respectively from Warren-Wilson College have moved on to graduate school at Wake-Forest and UC-Irvine. Now as a true "empty nester," I have time to take on a new challenge.



After arriving at WCU in 2001, I have had the good fortune to work for wonderful department heads in the Biology Department: Henry Mainwaring, Mack Powell, and Seán O'Connell. Their open, team-building, leadership has helped develop and maintain the most collegial department that I have been a part of. My colleagues sometimes kid me when I boast of our collegiality, but it is really true, and a point of pride. WCU has given me the opportunity to gain some significant leadership experience: as Acting Director of Highlands Biological Station for a year while Jim Costa was on professional development leave of absence and as Assistant Department Head and Undergraduate Program Coordinator for the Biology Department. My hope is that as the incoming department head, I can help maintain our collaborative culture as the university and our department continue to grow.

# Position Updates continued

## Undergraduate Studies

Undergraduate Studies has created a new, part-time position to oversee the assessment of the Liberal Studies Program. The Director of Liberal Studies Assessment will have a strong faculty background and be responsible for revamping the Liberal Studies assessment schedule, overseeing the implementation of the new Liberal Studies Student Learning Outcomes, as well as facilitating the Liberal Studies Summer Assessment Workshop in July, among other duties. **Dr. Jen Schiff**, Associate Professor of Political Science and Public Affairs, and previous Liberal Studies Committee Chair, has accepted this new role effective this summer.

The Center for Service Learning is adding a new position in the 2018-2019 Academic Year. The Assistant Director for Student Engagement will be responsible for developing, overseeing and managing student community engagement. The Center for Service Learning is in the beginning phases of the search process, with the hopes of having the position filled by the start of classes in 2018.

## New Programs approved by the UNC System Office

- B.S. Integrated Health Sciences - The Integrated Health Sciences degree program will be launched this fall providing new pathways for students interested in Health Education and Wellness, Pre-professional Health Sciences, or Health Management.
- M.S. Athletic Training – WCU received System Office approval to offer the MSAT. The MSAT will replace the BS degree as the entry-level credential for Athletic Trainers. We are currently seeking SACSCOC approval to offer the new program beginning in summer 2020.
- DPT – Doctorate of Physical Therapy – WCU received System Office approval to expand the existing DPT program to Asheville. The program is seeking approval from the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) to bring in the first cohort to our Biltmore Park Instructional Site in fall 2019.
- PsyD – Doctorate of Psychology – WCU received System Office approval to offer the PsyD, WCU's fourth Doctoral degree. Offering the PsyD will greatly enhance our ability to train much needed clinical psychologists. We are currently seeking SACSCOC approval to offer the new program beginning in fall 2019.

## Happenings

The Office of the Provost is delighted to offer the 5th annual **Summer Institute for Administrative Support Professionals** on Thursday, July 19, 2018. This event has evolved over the past few years with contributions from many units on campus. We have received a great deal of feedback on the institute which has become more popular with each passing year. Therefore, we have decided to formalize the event, create a steering committee and in the future, assign a budget. The summer institute will now be an Office of the Provost initiative with a steering committee comprised of support staff from the Provost Office, Coulter Faculty Commons and next year we will add a representative from Staff Senate. Please watch your email for registration information. If you have questions regarding the 2018 Summer Institute for Administrative Support Professionals, please contact Anne Aldrich at [aaldrich@wcu.edu](mailto:aaldrich@wcu.edu) or extension 3012. We look forward to seeing you there!

## **DIVERSITY CALENDAR in 25LIVE**

- This Diversity calendar resides in two places. WCU website: <https://www.wcu.edu/discover/diversity/eodp/index.aspx> and in MyWCU (intranet).
- After you login to MyWCU, go to the upper left corner and click on the three bars, then type DIVERSITY in the search bar and you will find the calendar.
- To include events in the diversity calendar, select “Calendar – Diversity” under RESOURCES NEEDED in 25Live. We will approve the event to appear on our Campus-Wide DIVERSITY EVENTS calendar.

If you experience a problem or don't see the calendar, please let us know. In the meantime, you can begin to select “Calendar– Diversity” under RESOURCES NEEDED and we will have the programs reviewed for posting.

Please make sure you have a robust description for your program and that all logistical information is included such as date, time, location, contact, etc.

## **SACSCOC Update**

The decennial SACSCOC reaffirmation of accreditation process concluded in December 2017, resulting in successful institutional reaffirmation of accreditation, as well as a request for a monitoring report to address non-compliance with five SACSCOC accreditation standards. Draft reports for the five standards under monitoring are developed and being refined. The final monitoring report will be submitted to SACSCOC by September 6, 2018. The 2017-18 Continuous Improvement Reports (CIR), required of all degree programs, academic and student support units, and administrative units, are critical evidence demonstrating that units are seeking improvement by evaluating achievement of intended outcomes. Attendance at CIR writing workshops this Spring has been very strong.

As a reminder, all 2017-18 CIRs are due to the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (OIPE) (electronic submission to Steve Wallace, [srwallace@email.wcu.edu](mailto:srwallace@email.wcu.edu)) no later than Friday, July 6th. More information on WCU's continuous improvement reporting process is available on the Continuous Improvement Resource site: <https://www.wcu.edu/learn/office-of-the-provost/oipe/assessment-and-program-review/continuous-improvement-resources.aspx>

While the monitoring report will be submitted in September, WCU will not learn of the result until after the annual SACSCOC meeting, held December 8-11, 2018.

Want to include news in the next issue?  
Please send information to [scmelton@wcu.edu](mailto:scmelton@wcu.edu)