

# Academic Affairs

## News & Reflections

### From the Acting Provost's Desk

At our spring faculty and staff awards ceremony last month we were reminded of the outstanding talent that lives, works, and plays in our midst. Congratulations to all the nominees (and there were a large number of you!) and to the recipients of awards. WCU is better for your efforts.

I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to express my honor for serving as Acting Provost for the past four months. It has been illuminating, rewarding, taxing, and all-consuming. But I have also been touched by your support and generosity; nothing could have prepared me for the outpouring of appreciation so many of you took the time to share. Thank YOU for creating a community and culture that encourages us to give our best in service to our students and to each other.

As we prepare for NC Promise and the potential for record enrollment again this fall, let's remember Dr. Belcher's charge for us, "we're in the business of changing lives..." and his model of selfless leadership. He inspires us every day!

I wish you a safe and restful summer.

Carol Burton

Acting Provost and Vice Chancellor for  
Academic Affairs



# First-year Transition Course Re-Design 2018

*from the Office of Student Success*

In the spirit of continuous improvement, First Year Experience (FYE) (<https://www.wcu.edu/learn/academic-success/student-transitions/first-year-experience/transition-pathways.aspx>) courses are under construction! The purpose of these one-credit courses is to provide new first-year students with an additional layer of support during their first semester at Western Carolina University. Students learn about academic policies, procedures, and resources, as well as strategies for success and opportunities to be involved.

The 2018 course re-design effort has been driven by three primary factors:

1. Every year the faculty, and the students enrolled, are invited to complete an end-of-course survey which addresses course content. Both groups share what they felt was most helpful and what needs to be modified to better address the needs of new students during their first semester at college. This year it was apparent that the time had come to make more significant changes to the FYE curriculum. With the recommendations, contributions, and hard-work of several dedicated and selfless faculty, we were able to do so.
2. The First-year Student Retention Report ([https://www.wcu.edu/WebFiles/R-Report\\_FINAL\\_9Jan18.pdf](https://www.wcu.edu/WebFiles/R-Report_FINAL_9Jan18.pdf)) published this January, included recommendations to increase the amount of time dedicated to the science of learning strategies based on the book, *Make it Stick*. These strategies are designed to help students shift from counterproductive habits and to develop concrete techniques for becoming productive learners. As stated in the book (which will be provided as a resource to all FYE course instructors), “Grappling with the impediments that make learning challenging leads both to more complex mastery and to better retention of what was learned.” (Brown, Roediger III, and McDaniel, 2015). Once students understand that college should challenge them, they are more inclined to persist.
3. During the past year, WCU experienced an unfortunate decline in campus climate with regard to diversity and inclusion. FYE transition courses present an opportunity to engage new students in crucial conversations, as they learn the art of civil discourse and what it means to be respectful members of the community. A faculty-led effort emerged to develop enhanced diversity lessons for the FYE courses. Our commitment includes a five-lesson series on inclusive excellence to be incorporated into all FYE Transition courses, designed by the seven-member faculty team.

Continued...

We will start the 2018-19 conversation with new students during New Student Convocation (<https://www.wcu.edu/learn/academic-success/student-transitions/first-year-experience/convocation.aspx>) on August 17th, as students enjoy the opportunity to hear from keynote speaker, Nikki Giovanni. The campus theme, Defining America, and the One Book selection, The Book of Unknown Americans (<https://www.wcu.edu/learn/academic-success/student-transitions/first-year-experience/onebook.aspx>), further reinforce the university's commitment to diversity and inclusion.



How will we accomplish all this? USI courses will be taught by a record-number of full time faculty this fall, with almost all sections taught by faculty, including three department heads and one Dean. Faculty have stepped up from five colleges and represent 15 different departments. With the expertise of faculty, Transition course revisions, and enhanced co-curricular programming, WCU will speak with clarity and unity: our expectation is that all students recognize their role as members of a productive, respectful, and diverse community.

FYE courses are administered by the Office of Student Transitions (<https://www.wcu.edu/learn/academic-success/student-transitions/index.aspx>), in the Division of Student Success (<https://www.wcu.edu/learn/academic-success/index.asp>)

# Updates from Undergraduate Studies

*from the Office of Undergraduate Studies*

## Liberal Studies Assessment

WCU's Liberal Studies Program engages in an annual assessment of its curriculum to determine how well the program is meeting its stated student learning objectives.

The Liberal Studies Committee and the Office of the Provost asked for faculty to help score Liberal Studies student artifacts during a two-day period in July. During the two-day assessment institute, participants will attend a brief training in which they will receive instruction on interpreting the Liberal Studies rubrics and evaluating related student work. Faculty assessors will then work in groups of two to score the student artifacts assigned to them.

Faculty members interested in assessment-related professional development and/or helping to strengthen WCU's Liberal Studies program were asked to submit a current Curriculum Vita along with a brief statement articulating their experience with assessment and/or Liberal Studies and Department Head approval.

The Liberal Studies Summer Assessment Institute will take place on July 10 and July 11, 2018. This year's selected applicants include:

- Robert Clines, History
- Oai Ha, Engineering and Technology
- Kim Hall, Health and Human Sciences
- Jane Hughes, Interior Design
- Ling LeBeau, International Programs and Services
- Stephen LeBeau, Communication
- Diane Martinez, English
- Tracie Rice, Communication Sciences and Disorders
- Ben Steere, Anthropology and Sociology
- Rebecca Dobbs, Geosciences
- Allison Thorp, Music
- Jessica Zellers, Hunter Library



## Center for Service Learning

The Student Democracy Coalition and the Center for Service Learning are back at it again! In fact, they have never really stopped facilitating the collective civic engagement efforts across campus. Efforts organized in the name of voter and citizen registration, education, and activation do not technically have an off-season. While mid-term and primary elections come roughly every two years, the work of educating an engaged democracy demands a continual good-faith effort. That is what we do here at WCU.

The SDC and CSL strive to reach, meet, and teach our campus about civic engagement through action! The on-campus early voting polling place was open on WCU's campus from April 19 – May 3 in the UC Multi-Purpose room. Students helped run the polling location, organized educational activities, and facilitated Democracy Day on Monday, April 23 on the UC Lawn. Every candidate on the ballot was invited to participate in Democracy Day. For more information see [vote.wcu.edu](http://vote.wcu.edu).



# Community and Economic Engagement and Innovation Updates

*from the Executive Director of Community and Economic Engagement and Innovation*

Dr. Arthur Salido is busy creating relationships with external partners and leaders throughout the region, as well as promoting the great work happening at WCU. Some of Arthur's recent activities include:

- Serving as a contributor on the ARC POWER Initiative grant proposal to foster partnership opportunities and workforce and economic revitalization in the outdoor industry
- Collaborating with WCU employees and external partners to plan an Opioid Crisis Conference
- Working with Andrew Adams to use the faculty activity database to record faculty engagement activities
- Finishing up a natural products market analysis with Wendy Cagle and Yue Hillon to be used as preliminary data for future proposals
- Strengthening partnerships with Southwestern Community College and Jackson County
- Working with Hollye Moss, Todd Creasy, Kevan Frazier, and Kendra Penland to establish a certificate program for brewers
- Meeting quarterly with academic and support units to gather information and collaborate regarding WCU's engagement activities
- Representing WCU on the Economic Transformation and Community Engagement councils
- Developing relationships with corporate partners to increase learning and professional opportunities for faculty and students

Arthur is organizing the upcoming inaugural Outdoor Economy Conference, which will take place in the University Center on October 5, 2018 from 9:00 am - 5:00 pm. In addition to showcasing the ways that WCU supports the outdoor industry, the conference will involve a keynote address by Don Banducci, founder of Yakima. There will also be appearances from David Knight, NC's Outdoor Industry Recruitment Director, and Tom Dempsey, Founder of SylvanSport.

# Updates from the Chief Diversity Officer

*from the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer*

- Ricardo Nazario Colón, WCU's Chief Diversity Officer, read his poetry at the Spring Literary Festival on April 3, 2018 along with fellow Affrilachian Poets, a group Ricardo co-founded that advocates for African American poets and writers in the Appalachian region.
- The National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) training successfully launched in April with training sessions for Module 1 on April 12, 13, and 24. A total of 77 participants signed up for the training and many more expressed their interest in participating in future sessions as well as becoming facilitators. A few sessions are planned for the summer, and sessions will be regularly offered every month starting in the fall. Module 2 is expected to launch in the fall as well.



Two of WCU's NCBI facilitators, Brandon Lokey and Chesney Reich, were chosen to attend additional leadership training on April 25-28, 2018.

- The Council on Inclusive Excellence (CIE) successfully concluded its first semester in operation. A statement was brought forth to the council by the Joint Task Force on Racism (JTFR) Recommendations subcommittee at the last meeting. This statement was written in response to the JTFR recommendation #1: "Clarify the university stance on diversity and inclusion and strengthen the integration of this stance into campus culture." This statement will be voted on within the coming months.

A call-to-action and nomination form for the Inclusive Excellence Award was also brought forth and approved. The Inclusive Excellence award will be presented to one faculty member, one staff member, one student, one unit or department, and one community agency at a special reception on April 19, 2019. Nominations will be accepted from May 14, 2018 to December 3, 2018. Questions regarding the Inclusive Excellence Award can be sent to [diversity@wcu.edu](mailto:diversity@wcu.edu).

- The Diversity Office has a SharePoint site open to faculty and staff, and it will soon be open to students. This site will be used to share diversity resources for faculty, staff, and students, as well as house the NCBI training registration form and nomination forms for CIE and the Inclusive Excellence Award. The site can be accessed through myWCU by typing "diversity" in the search menu, then clicking on "Diversity Resources and Training." The SharePoint site is located at <https://secure.my.wcu.edu/division/AcademicAffairs/Diversity/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

Continued...

- A diversity calendar has been established and is viewable on the external diversity website (<https://www.wcu.edu/discover/diversity/eodp/index.aspx>), as well as the diversity SharePoint site (see above). The diversity calendar can be requested as a resource in 25Live when reserving rooms for events. The events must be approved by the Chief Diversity Officer in order to display on the calendar. When requesting the calendar, make sure to include a detailed description of the event, contact information, and an image if possible. Private events will not be approved as the calendar is a resource for the public.
- The Diversity Leadership Summit is scheduled for October 20, 2018. The summit will be open to students who want to expand their knowledge of diversity and inclusion related issues, as well as gain leadership skills. Registration will open on June 1, 2018. Faculty and staff can also nominate students for the Diversity Leadership Summit by sending a student's name and email address to [diversity@wcu.edu](mailto:diversity@wcu.edu).
- The Office of Equal Opportunities and Diversity Programs will be supporting the campus theme for 2018-2019, "Defining America," by sponsoring events and programs throughout the academic year that tie into the theme. With help from ICA, the Office of Equal Opportunities and Diversity Programs was able to send the Latin American Student Organization (LASO) on a trip to the National Latino Leadership Conference in Albany, NY, April 6-8, 2018. Ricardo Nazario Colón attended the conference with LASO.

This trip has inspired the group to hold their own conference at WCU. The conference is planned to take place April 13-15, 2019, and there will be a Gala fundraiser held September 30, 2018.

- The Black Student Union (BSU) and LASO recently appointed their new officers for the coming academic year:

#### BSU

President: Kirstin Oliphant

Vice President: Winter Carruth

Secretary: Kaleigh Naylor

Treasurer: Jasmine Penn

Parliamentarian: Ashani Smith

Publicist: Erica McCurdy

#### LASO

President: Bianca Bernal

Vice President: Stephanie Rosas

Secretary: Karen Beltran

Treasurer: Yoselin Delgado

Publicist: Edna Loya Luna

Social Chair: Yelina Trejo

Community Service Chair: Alejandra Cespedes

Recruiter(s): Emanuel Marroquín & Orangellys Santiago

Conference Coordinator: Jenifer Montoya

# Updates from Institutional Planning and Effectiveness

*from the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness*

## Continuous Improvement Reporting

Thank you to everyone who has taken time to attend a Continuous Improvement Reporting workshop, and those who have consulted with OIPE staff to improve your outcomes assessment reports. We are hopeful these efforts will help departments see improvements in their desired outcomes, and help WCU become compliant with SACSCOC institutional effectiveness standards. There is still opportunity to attend a workshop or schedule a consultation before reports are due (July 6, 2018). To learn more about workshop offerings and to register, visit [https://wcu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_eWiVPyKnIIV8d9j](https://wcu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eWiVPyKnIIV8d9j).

Self-service resources on outcomes assessment and continuous improvement reporting are available here: <https://secure.my.wcu.edu/division/AcademicAffairs/IPE/Assessment/Pages/default.aspx>.

## Welcome aboard, Greg Higgins!



Greg Higgins has joined the OIPE staff as a Business and Technology Applications Analyst. Greg comes to us from Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, NC, where he worked as the senior research analyst in the Department of Planning and Research. Greg comes to WCU with a professional background in psychology, and significant experience with surveying and SAS programming. Welcome to WCU!

# Faculty Support and Recognition

*from the Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs*

## **Scholarly Development Assignment Program (SDAP)**

The following faculty were awarded SDAP leave in the coming academic year:

Dr. Steve Brown, Professor, Criminology and Criminal Justice, College of Arts and Sciences

While on scholarly leave Dr. Brown will be researching and writing his book tentatively titled “Crime, Deviance and Norms: The Relativity of Social Control.” This research and publication will come back to the classroom, enhancing course offerings in the Criminology and Criminal Justice program, including the course, Theories of Crime.

Dr. Brian Byrd, Associate Professor, School of Health Sciences, College of Health and Human Sciences

Dr. Byrd is finishing work on a professional handbook, the Mosquitoes of North Carolina, which is used by mosquito control professionals. Scholarly Leave will support his work on the handbook, as well as travel and fieldwork for sample and data collection in Florida, South Carolina and North Carolina. The collected mosquito samples are used for both teaching and research, with the work of Dr. Byrd and his students assisting public health professionals in the prevention of mosquito-borne disease.

Dr. Channa De Silva, Associate Professor, Chemistry and Physics, College of Arts and Sciences

Dr. De Silva will spend a semester on Scholarly Leave collaborating with faculty at the Institute of Chemistry, Ceylon and the University of Kelaniya in Sri Lanka, studying natural products that may be incorporated into metal-based nanomaterials with potential anticancer and antimicrobial properties.

Dr. Beth Huber, Associate Professor, English, College of Arts and Sciences

Dr. Huber will be traveling during her Scholarly Leave, conducting research in reading-room-only access libraries including the Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Libraries, as well as the Rare Books and Special Collections Room at Princeton University in an effort to further develop the “Cold War” section of the peer-reviewed archive, the Political Rhetoric Database.

Dr. Eleanor Petrone, Associate Professor, English, College of Arts and Sciences

While on Scholarly Leave, Dr. Petrone will conclude data collection and work on her qualitative analysis of the experiences of returned and removed Dreamers. Dr. Petrone’s goal is to submit an outline for a book proposal on the effects that deportation and reverse migration have on the educational trajectory of Dreamers.

## **Chancellor's Travel Fund Award and Professional Development Grant**

The 2017-2018 Academic Year brought many opportunities to support and award faculty in their scholarship and professional development. The Chancellor’s Travel Fund awarded 177 tenure-track, tenured or emeritus faculty members (applications still pending for May) with a total of almost \$187,000 in awards to date. Traditionally \$150,000 is allocated for this award but with additional support of the UNC System's one-time funding of \$40,000 for faculty retention, the opportunity to support more applications was available. In addition to the Chancellor’s Travel Fund, the Professional Development Grant gives tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure track faculty the opportunity to travel to develop skills to enhance their role at WCU. This year 32 applications were approved for Professional Development Grants, totaling nearly \$27,500.

# Distinguished Professor Spotlight

## Angela Dills, PhD

*Gimelstob-Landry Distinguished Professor of Regional Economic Development*



Coming to Western Carolina University in Fall 2016 felt like a homecoming -- at least as much as any Air Force brat claims one place as a home. Last summer, my husband and I bought a house about a mile away from where my dad graduated from high school. And we work at WCU, the university where my parents met and married while they were students. My professorship has encouraged me to discover more about western North Carolina, the home of generations of my family and now, finally, my own.

WCU's engagement with local communities was a huge draw for me to campus. The shared commitment to serve the people of the region provides our communities with connections to experts in so many fields. For me, these external connections blend my personal and professional interests. I serve as secretary for the Appalachian Women's Museum in Dillsboro. I am a member of the Franklin-Daybreak Rotary Club. I am, with a handful of students, helpful staff, and the CSFE, using my professorship to build a data dashboard for the region to help inform local development efforts, prospective and current entrepreneurs, policy makers, and students. Professor-life requires passion as it permeates many aspects of our days.

Economics is such a fun discipline to study. There's such a rich set of quantitative tools, a strong data orientation, buttressed with fields full of theorists. My research interests range throughout applied microeconomics on policy questions in education, health, and crime.

I love that I can explore a wide range of questions within the field – relationships between peers and learning; school choice and crime; alcohol prohibition and alcohol consumption; insurance mandates and health outcomes; Uber and crime. Geeking out over a new data set or coding new analysis makes for a fun afternoon.

Teaching is a joy for me. My interest in how one learns is reflected throughout my work – in and out of the classroom. Class time is spent connecting economics to our students' lives and building an environment that facilitates engagement with the course material. My role as a teacher is to present students with a new perspective on how to understand the world in which they live. I enjoy witnessing how students' thinking matures and how their new knowledge informs their stands on controversial issues of the day.

This is an exciting time to be in western North Carolina and at WCU. I am excited about contributing to and sharing in the region's bright future.



# Staff Spotlight

## Scottie Kapel

*Outreach & Scholarly Communication Librarian/Assistant Professor*



Scottie Kapel is the Outreach & Scholarly Communication Librarian at the Hunter Library.

She earned a Master of Library and Information Science from the University of Pittsburgh, and her Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of North Florida.

Her areas of focus are: copyright, which entails helping faculty and students in the creation and use of copyrighted materials; open access, which entails helping faculty identify high quality open access resources for use in the classroom, in their research, or as a publishing venue; and undergraduate research support, particularly in the creation of the research product.

Scottie is the library liaison to Criminal Justice, Criminology, and Emergency Management, as well.

As a librarian, it is probably no surprise that one of her greatest loves is reading. Scottie also loves to cook, and is always on the lookout for community cookbooks to add to her growing collection. Scottie likes to knit and do cross stitch, and is slowly learning how to weave.

Scottie is originally from Florida, and ever since she was a child, she has always really enjoyed looking for interesting things on the beach like shark

teeth (which she also collects), whelk egg cases, and sea glass. Now that Scottie is in the mountains, she does the same thing in the woods. Hikes with her take much longer than they should because Scottie is constantly stopping to examine things that catch her eye.

In theory, she loves gardening; in practice, she has pretty terrible luck with it.

Scottie's favorite quote is from Zora Neale Hurston, "Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose."

Zora Neale Hurston is one of her favorite authors and historical figures. When she first began documenting folklore, Hurston believed she was not good at research, but later realized that it was her approach to the subject matter that was flawed. Scottie tries to keep this quote in mind when working with students who think they don't enjoy or are not good at research. "With the right approach, research can be quite fun and intensely rewarding, especially if you can work through those moments of deep frustration! Research is a skill, and like other skills, it can be learned and honed".



# Faculty Spotlight

## Milton Laufer

*School of Music Director, College of Fine and Performing Arts*



Dr. Milton Laufer is the Director of the School of Music. He earned his Master's and Doctorate of Music from Rice University, in Houston, Texas, and earned his Bachelor of Music from the University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Milton grew up in Chicago and is a HUGE Chicago Cubs fan. He loves to cook and make music with his colleagues and friends. Milton spent a summer during college working as an auto mechanic, which was bad for his hands, but taught him a lot about cars—Milton loves them and plans to build a kit car or restore a vintage muscle car with his daughters someday.

Milton is married to an opera singer, Marina De Ratmiroff, who also teaches at WCU. They perform around the world together. Milton is a voting member of the Grammy awards and the Latin Grammys as well!

Together, Milton and his wife have a one-year-old daughter, with another baby girl on the way (due in September). They speak to their daughter in Italian and Spanish, so she will be trilingual.

Milton's favorite quote is from Franklin D. Roosevelt, “A smooth sea never made a skilled sailor”.

This quote reminds Milton to embrace hardships and challenges as opportunities to become a better leader, teacher, artist, husband, father, and son.

# Student Spotlight

## Harmony Bell

*Undergraduate Student, Innovation Leadership*



Harmony Noél Bell is a 25 year old Senior, graduating Fall 2018!

Her major is in entrepreneurship (innovation leadership).

Harmony is currently employed in the Intercultural Affairs Department as an office assistant.

In the Summer of 2018, she will start her internship at Sherwin Williams.

Harmony enjoys singing, distressing clothing, wedding planning, and exercising. She loves muscle cars and drives a Dodge Challenger.

Harmony's favorite quote is from the book of the Bible, Song of Solomon, "You are altogether beautiful, my darling; there is no flaw in you."

This scripture speaks to Harmony because "I've suffered with self confidence in the past and this helped me to acknowledge my beauty and accept and love myself."

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