

Academic Affairs

News & Reflections

From the Acting Provost's Desk

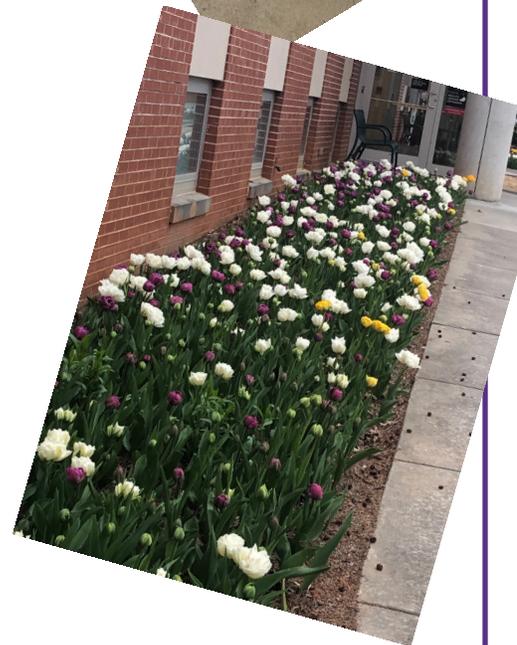
I had the honor of attending many events celebrating the accomplishments of our colleagues as well as our students during the past few weeks; congratulations to those who have received awards and recognitions. The irony of the academic calendar is that the period that requires the most focus and determination to complete the academic year is the same time we focus on celebrating accomplishments, including graduation. On the heels of a full and productive April, we are looking forward to hosting more than 1,800 students at our Spring commencement ceremonies this month. Thank you for providing the opportunities for our students to learn and achieve over the past nine months...our students appreciate you! Please check out a message from our outgoing [Student Government Association President Matt Opinski](#).

This July, we welcome WCU's 12th chancellor. Dr. Kelli R. Brown has pledged to support our mission of regional engagement, student success and development, and faculty/staff excellence, as well as other key WCU characteristics. As I return to my former role in the Provost's Office, I look forward to supporting Chancellor Brown and returning Provost Alison Morrison-Shetlar and to serving our fine institution.

Best wishes for a peaceful summer.

Carol

Carol Burton
Acting Provost



Community Vision for Inclusive Excellence

At the March Faculty Senate business meeting, WCU's Chief Diversity Officer, Ricardo Nazario-Colón, along with a delegated subcommittee from the Council for Inclusive Excellence (CIE), delivered the final draft of a **Community Vision for Inclusive Excellence**. This statement was crafted in part as a response to “The Collective Response to Racial Insensitivity,” written by WCU students and presented to administrators in February of last year, and I am pleased to report that it was endorsed by Senate with a unanimous vote.

Nationwide, diversity and inclusion efforts face an amply funded counter-campaign that even exhorts alumni and other potential donors to withhold funding from institutions that have invested in inclusive excellence initiatives. In this context, and at a time when some in government leadership have all but abandoned the duty to call out and condemn intolerant, bigoted, and in some cases abhorrently violent speech and acts, it has never been more important for us to engage as a campus community. The Community Vision, actively put into practice, will make it clear that diversity and inclusive excellence are not just aspects of a desired campus atmosphere, but moreover form the foundation of the educational experience that it is our mission to deliver.

Please disseminate the statement widely, especially with your students, as appropriate, and join me in thanking the CIE, and WCU student leadership for their important work and ongoing support. As you share it, note that the links to WCU policy at the end of the statement are integral and should always be included.

Damon Sink

Associate Professor, School of Music

Chair of the WCU Faculty, 2018-19

Community Vision for Inclusive Excellence

The diverse perspectives encountered at WCU are an important part of the preparation of students for roles as regional, national, and global leaders who contribute to the improvement of society. It is expected that members of the WCU community will not only coexist with those who are different from themselves, but also nurture respect and appreciation of those differences. We encourage civil discourse as a part of the learning enterprise, and as a campus we do not tolerate harassing or discriminating behavior that seeks to marginalize or demean members of our community.

For more information:

- Policy 53 <https://www.wcu.edu/discover/leadership/office-of-the-chancellor/legal-counsel-office/university-policies/numerical-index/university-policy-53.aspx>
- Diversity Resources <https://www.wcu.edu/discover/diversity/index.aspx>
- To report harassment or discrimination, go to: <https://www.wcu.edu/experience/dean-of-students/complaints-and-concerns.aspx>

Southeastern Writing Center Association Conference

Associate Director Mattie Davenport and four undergraduate writing fellows from the Writing and Learning Commons represented WCU at the Southeastern Writing Center Association's 2019 conference in Myrtle Beach this February. The conference allows writing tutors and administrators to share research and best practices in the fields of tutoring and rhetoric/composition. Junior English major, Lydia Shelley, presented, *White Space: The Conversation on Race in the Writing Center*. Senior English major, Mack McDougald, followed with *The Role of Peer Tutors in Enabling and Empowering Diverse Learners*. Senior Psychology major, Taylor Shuler, presented *The Brother System*. Senior Recreational Therapy major, Kaitlin Fletcher, presented *A Guide to Making Tutoring Inclusive for Medical Writing*. Associate Director, Mattie Davenport, presented *This is Awkward: What to Say When the Writer Decides They are a Bad Writer*. By presenting at and attending conferences such as SWCA, Writing and Learning Commons staff ensure that our tutoring practices remain current and beneficial to the diverse learners who visit the WaLC every day.



pictured: Mack McDougald, Mattie Davenport, Kaitlin Fletcher, Taylor Shuler, and Lydia Shelley

WCU's ComPsych Employee Assistance Program

All North Carolina state employees have access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to help them find worklife balance when facing difficult issues or even when they simply need to access services like child care or elder care in their community. The EAP is free to WCU employees and their household members, and can help to address several pressing issues, including:

- Marital difficulties
- Family problems
- Parenting
- Stress
- Work and family balance
- Relationship issues
- Work related issues
- Depression
- Alcohol and drug use/abuse
- Grief and loss
- Elder care
- Healthy living
- Crisis events

EAP is fully confidential to employees and their household members. Employees can make a self-referral directly or can contact WCU's Office of Human Resources, the administering office for our campus.

When an employee contacts the Employee Assistance Program, a needs assessment is offered by an experienced, licensed counselor. If it is determined that the concern can be resolved through problem-solving sessions, the employee assistance professional will assist in the resolution. If it is decided that referral is needed for continuing support, the EAP will connect the employee with the most cost-effective and convenient available resources for care.

WCU employees have taken advantage of the Employee Assistance Program for myriad concerns. See below for utilization by area during the past two years:

	2018	2017
• Trauma	0%	3%
• Stress	12%	6%
• Psychological	15%	30%
• Partner/relationship	18%	9%
• Occupational	18%	0%
• Medical	0%	6%
• Family issues	6%	15%
• Family/Child behavioral issues	3%	0%
• Family/Child	3%	0%
• Eating related issues	3%	0%
• Depression related	6%	3%
• Bereavement	9%	3%
• Anxiety related	9%	21%

Distinguished Professor Spotlight

Dr. Dave Hudson

Distinguished Professor and Department Head, Department of Physical Therapy



I came to WCU in 2007 after spending several years as a doctoral student and then faculty member at a research intensive university. The decision to do so was largely based upon wanting to find a better quality of life for my family. A little smaller school with a PT program in the southern Appalachians seemed like just what we needed. I didn't know what a regional comprehensive university was at the time, and I'm pretty sure people knew that about me.

I wasn't sure if I would fit in with the culture, but I liked my classes and colleagues, and I loved having a cabin in the mountains. Plus, the people seemed genuinely kind, so I stuck with it.

In my first year I started serving on the Faculty Senate. It was a great opportunity to meet people from across the campus and learn about the institution. Over the next few years, I learned more and more about what it meant to be at a regional comprehensive university and the incredible learning that could be accomplished through community engagement and service learning. I discovered the many faces of scholarship and that a university that fully embraces the Boyer model is one that cultivates broad thinking and creativity at its best.

As a professor in the physical therapy program, our primary focus is on preparing clinicians; however, I have always enjoyed working with students during my scholarly pursuits. Their unbridled curiosity and commitment to helping all people has inspired me to think outside of the narrowly focused research streams that are sometimes imposed upon us as scholars. Since the start of my career as a clinical researcher, I have sought a better understanding of the link between skeletal structure and the mechanics of our walking, and their role in developing common aches and pains like arthritis and joint pain with activity.

With the freedom that comes with being at WCU, I eventually broadened my thinking from walking in dysfunction, to asking why we (Homo Sapiens) walk so well? Several years ago I had an - Hmm that's interesting - moment when it struck me that the percentage of time that we spend standing and swinging our legs during the walking cycle is patterned in phi, a.k.a. the Golden Ratio or the Devine Proportion (1.618...), an irrational number with a long and fascinating history among scientists, philosophers, and artisans – possible evidence of common thread that binds us with so much more on earth and beyond. That led to a current interest in the origins of bipedalism (two-legged walking) and how that may have influenced human evolution. I am not convinced that we are born to run, and certainly not to sit, stand or bend a lot, but clearly we are born to walk. Now more than ever, I am fascinated by the incredible grace and efficiency with which we move. My plan for the future is to use the generous resources that are available to me here at WCU and develop an educational motion capture library for physical therapists and other movement scientists that showcases our movement in both its elegance and dysfunction. I consider myself incredibly fortunate to be here – Go Cats!

Updates from the Office of Undergraduate Studies

2019-20 Campus Theme – Sustainability and Environment

Campus themes constitute one example of a high impact educational practice that provides students with common and collaborative educational experiences, opportunities to connect curricular and co-curricular learning, and explorations of disciplines through a common lens. In its 10th year of establishment at WCU, the campus theme for the 2019-20 academic year will focus on *Sustainability and Environment*.

Sustainability and Environment seeks to provide on- and off-campus opportunities to investigate, discuss, and better care for our environment through myriad lenses (personal, communal, global), and to explore new ways to balance today's environmental, social, and economic positions with the needs of future generations.

The Campus Theme Committee, chaired by Dr. Jerry Miller, Blanton J. Whitmire Distinguished Professor of Environmental Science, is now accepting requests for program support for the 2019-20 academic year. Applicants can request marketing support or financial support via the Qualtrics form found at go.wcu.edu/campustheme.

For more information about campus themes visit the [website](#) or contact [Jerry Miller](#), [Lane Perry](#), or [Holli Stillman](#).

2019-20 Campus Theme Committee Members

- Adrienne Applegate, University Marketing
- Callie Schultz, Parks and Recreation Management
- Chad Hallyburton, Health and Human Sciences
- David Henderson, Philosophy and Religion
- Hannah Cothren, Undergraduate Student
- Holli Stillman (Support), Office of the Provost
- James Busbin, Sales and Marketing
- Jerry Miller (Chair), Geosciences and Natural Resources
- Kaitlin Ritchie, International Programs and Services
- Lane Perry (Oversight), Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning
- Lauren Bishop, Office for Sustainability and Energy Management
- Laurie Bryson, Campus Recreation and Wellness
- Marco Lam, Accounting
- Megan Rowan, Residential Living
- Morgan Kennedy, Art and Design
- Nicholas Passalacqua, Anthropology and Sociology
- Paige Coleman, Graduate Student
- Rachael Walker, Advancement
- Rachel York Bridgers, English
- Robert Young, Study of Developed Shorelines
- Scottie Kapel, Hunter Library
- Steve Sciara, Construction Management
- Tyler Kinnear, Music



Thank you for serving on the 2019-20 Campus Theme Committee!

Career Development College of Distinction

Colleges of Distinction recently named Western Carolina University as one of their 48 Career Development Colleges of Distinction in the nation. WCU is one of just four higher education institutions in the state to receive this honor. Schools are awarded the Career Development badge after a thorough review informed by the following criteria: integrated career exploration and preparation, accessible programs and training, and career-centered staff.

Being recognized as a Career Development College of Distinction, is a nod to the hard work of WCU's Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD). Under the direction of Theresa Cruz Paul, the CCPD strives to work collaboratively with campus and community partners and to provide quality services to undergraduate students, graduate students, and WCU alumni.

[Click here](#) to view the entire Career Development College of Distinction list.

For more information about the [Center for Career and Professional Development](#) at WCU, call 828-227-7133.



Service Learning Designated Courses

Community engagement and service learning are institutional priorities at Western Carolina University and come to life in many ways across our campus. [The Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning](#) (CCESL) seeks to engage our campus with the community and to provide a conduit for our community to directly engage with our campus, which includes students, faculty, and staff. When these points of engagement happen, something magical can occur – students learn more deeply, the community develops further, and the institution purposefully fulfills its mission and responsibility to the state of North Carolina. It is one of those rare moments of alignment where impact can be balanced, positive, and mutually beneficial.

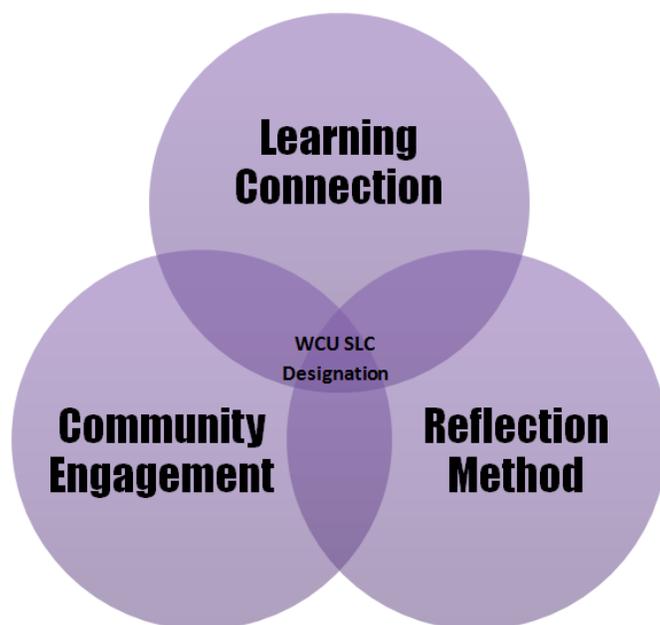
One key program managed by CCESL is our [Service-Learning Course](#) (SLC) designation process. Over the past seven years documented SLC's have grown from roughly 10 course sections to over 100 designated course sections. In 2013 a goal was set to designate 100 SLC course sections by 2020 and as of 2019, this goal has been achieved. These courses exist in every college and numerous departments across campus.

The SLC program represents some of the highest-level service-learning occurring on our campus and in our community. Honnet and Poulsen (1989) framed it this way, “service, combined with learning, adds value to each and transforms both.” In fall and spring annually, faculty apply for their course to be designated as an SLC and a sub-committee of the Academic Community Engagement Board meet to review, offer feedback, and approve each designated course. The course must directly meet three criteria:

- Learning Connection – Are the learning goals and community-based experience goals integrated in an organized and clear way?
- Community Engagement – Does the community-based experience meet a public good and if so, how? Considering the level of the course and educative purpose of the community-based experiences, is the intensity and duration appropriate?
- Reflection Method – Are students required to make connections across course content, personal values, and community/civic learning?

Officially designated courses receive the SLC attribute added to their course, access to free CCESL van and transportation services, access to specific SLC course section assessment data, special consideration for recognition at the annual Community Engagement Awards, and students receive the SLC attribute on their transcript. Above all, we believe that learning can occur while real world positive impact is made.

If you have any questions about the SLC designation process, or are interested in getting this designation added to your course, please contact Lane Perry (laneperry@wcu.edu).



Defining America World's Fair April 2, 2019

Traditionally, a world's fair is an exhibition designed to showcase a wide variety of industrial, scientific, and cultural achievements from different nations. Fairs typically have an entertainment zone as well, allowing visitors to enjoy rides, performances, and food. The Defining America World's Fair was no different.

There were over 20 different offices, departments, and student groups that displayed their ideas and achievements related to the 2018-19 Campus Theme, *Defining America*, and there was no shortage of entertainment. The 225+ visitors enjoyed performances by the Cherokee Elementary School Traditional Dancers from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian (EBCI), tasted cuisine prepared by Aramark and the EBCI Tribal Cannery, witnessed a live art demonstration by Ricky Meredith, and watched a Business Dress Fashion Show modeling historical clothing from *The Way We Worked* exhibit hosted by the Mountain Heritage Center.

The culminating event of the 2018-19 Campus Theme, *Defining America*, was a huge success and received a great deal of positive feedback. Special thanks to the World's Fair subcommittee, chaired by Dr. April Tallant, for organizing such an engaging event.



Grant Program Launched by the Engagement Scholarship Consortium

The Engagement Scholarship Consortium (ESC), of which Western Carolina University is a member, has launched its new grants program. The purpose of these grants are to increase faculty involvement in engaged scholarship, grow awareness of engaged scholarship at member universities, enhance the level and amount of engaged scholarship at member universities, and support the ability of ESC member faculty to conduct engaged interdisciplinary research/creative activities within and between member universities.

Qualified faculty at ESC member institutions are encouraged to apply for up to \$5,000 to fund a one-year project. Applications for the 2019–2020 grant cycle are due **Wednesday, May 15, 2019**.



For more information and to apply, visit the ESC website at <https://engagementscholarship.org/grants-awards/esc-grants-program>.

North Carolina Museums Council Annual Meeting

A large group of WCU museum employees, students, and alumni attended the North Carolina Museums Council Annual Meeting in Asheville on March 24 and 25, 2019. History student Becca Rhinehart won the Student Memorial Award during the event. The award is given to an outstanding student, either graduate or undergraduate, who has demonstrated excellence in professional and academic fields. Paula Keeter won the Student Scholarship Award and Pam Meister was the winner of the Professional Service Award. The Professional Service Award is presented to an individual currently employed at a North Carolina museum that has distinguished herself in the museum field and/or has professionally advanced the role of museums in the state. Pam received this award due to her role with the Mountain Heritage Center, and especially with her long term involvement with the Southeastern Museums Conference where she has been heavily involved in training and support of students and emerging professionals from across the region, including North Carolina.

Attendees included Mountain Heritage Center staff Pam Meister, Peter Koch, and Loran Berg; Bardo Arts Center staff Denise Drury-Homewood, Carolyn Grosch, and Jill Jacobs; WCU faculty and staff Jessie Swigger (History) and Sky Sampson (Cherokee Center); WCU students Becca Rhinehart, Casey Johnson, Kayla Rossier, Laja Cottrell, Paula Keeter, Ray Baccari, Tyler Martino, and William Coleman; and WCU alumni Christian Dwight Edwards (2005), Kate McGraff (2018), Lambert Wilson (1975, 1979, 1985), Michaela Howell (2016), Stephanie May (2015).



Faculty Spotlight

Megan Ballard Woody DNP, RN

Assistant Professor, School of Nursing



Dr. Megan Woody is an assistant professor in the School of Nursing.

Megan earned her Doctorate of Nursing Practice at WCU, and her Master of Science in Nursing Administration, Post-Graduate Certificate in Nursing Education, and Bachelor's of Science in Nursing degrees from UNCC. She is currently working with the School of Nursing researching best practices for creating a Nurse Preceptor Development Program.

Megan also works on the Registered Nurse in Primary Care Grant as the Faculty and Preceptor Development Coordinator and as a Behavioral Health RN at the Balsam Center in Waynesville, NC.

Megan enjoys camping, hiking, cooking, reading, and attempting to sew. She also enjoys watching movies and spending time with her family. A fun fact is that Megan's husband really likes craft beer, and she really likes food, so they are on a mission to visit all the craft breweries in the local counties.

Megan's favorite quote is by Socrates, "The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing." She likes this quote because "in life and in nursing, it is important to continually be a learner and continue to grow. I let my nursing students know that a degree is only the beginning of their educational journey, and that it is important to be open to learn from experiences and continue to study current research. All this to offer quality care while using best practices."

Advising Center takes WCU on the road to attend Western Day at Southwestern Community College



Each semester, the WCU Advising Center goes on the road to visit Southwestern Community College (SCC) for Western Day. This semester, WCU visited SCC's Macon campus on Wednesday, April 3, and visited SCC's Jackson Campus on Tuesday, April 9, to prepare future transfer Catamounts currently enrolled at SCC. Western Day is a multi-office collaboration where representatives from different WCU support or service offices provide valuable information to SCC students who are considering transferring to WCU. SCC students had the opportunity to learn about the different offices and speak to WCU representatives about their programs or services (from Academic Advising, Admissions, Center for Career and Professional Development, Educational Outreach, Financial Aid, Honors College, Math Tutoring, Military Services, Mentoring and Persistence to Success, and

Writing and Learning Commons.)

Western Day provides timely information about WCU's requirements for admission and support services that will assist new students in their transition. WCU staff educated SCC students about WCU and its programs, and cultivated a welcoming and transfer-friendly environment for prospective students. Fostering this relationship and promoting support services to potential incoming transfer students can increase use of campus services.



Updates from the Office of Student Transitions

Tau Sigma National Honor Society Induction



The Tau Sigma National Honor Society recognizes the academic excellence of transfer students during their first semester attending the four-year university to which they transferred. Students earning a GPA of 3.5 or above are invited by the national office to join the prestigious honor society. In 2018, 363 new transfer students were eligible and invited to join the WCU chapter. On March 19th, the WCU chapter of Tau Sigma National Honor Society inducted 91 new members, representing both the most students eligible and the most students inducted for one academic year since the origination of the WCU chapter in 2014.

Tau Sigma encourages student engagement and leadership, as well as strong academics, providing scholarships to members based on a competitive submission process. All university chapters may submit one student nominee each year, with WCU students successfully earning a scholarship each year since the organization was activated. This year, current Tau Sigma chapter president, Hannah Bailey, earned one of the two largest scholarships awarded to WCU students to date. The scholarship check may be used by the recipient in whatever way she determines most helpful as she works toward completion of her degree.



One Book Author, Cristina Henríquez

Cristina Henríquez, author of the 2018-19 One Book, launched the 2019 Spring Literary Festival on March 21st, captivating the hearts and imaginations of hundreds of guests in the University Center Grand Room. The common read for first-year students, *The Book of Unknown Americans*, was also aligned with the interdisciplinary campus theme, Defining America. Dr. Melissa Birkhofer, English department, served as interviewer for the on-stage conversation with Henríquez, who shared her passion for storytelling. Serving as the culminating event for this year's One Book programming, the inclusion of the author during the Literary Festival invited the greater campus to engage with the themes of a book given to new students and included in many of their first-year courses.

The efforts to intentionally align three significant Common Intellectual Experiences (CIE) proved a tremendous success for the WCU community. As one of ten High Impact Practices (HIPs), defined by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), HIPs are active learning practices that advance deep learning by promoting student engagement as measured by the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE). Faculty, staff, students, and the community were invited to grapple with the complexities inherent in conversations about culture, empathy, identity, and humanity. The outcome of three planning groups working together prior to and during the academic year, empowered collaboration and integrated learning at its best. The alignment helped students to connect the dots of their learning experiences through an expansive list of events, lectures, panels, films, exhibits, presentations, and community engagement opportunities. The advance planning and communication allowed faculty to incorporate the literature festival, campus theme, and One Book into a cohesive and holistic framework in support of student learning and experiential outcomes.



Updates from the Office of Institutional and Planning Effectiveness

from the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness, Dr. Tim Metz

Faculty Survey Update

The OIPE administered a survey to university faculty in March, with 288 responses. The purpose of the survey was to consolidate several smaller surveys targeted to faculty, and avoid repeated and overlapping survey request emails. The OIPE is working towards improved institutional compliance with Policy 51, *Institutional Survey Policy*, so that the frequency of surveying is reduced.

This recent survey addressed several areas of interest, including Student Assessment of Instruction (SAIs, also known as CoursEval), academic advising, the Writing and Learning Commons, faculty workload, instructional practice, and perspectives on single stall gender-neutral restrooms on campus. A summary report will be made available soon.

Compliance Assist expiration and Xitracs Implementation

For several years, WCU has utilized Campus Labs' Compliance Assist software to manage reporting and documentation related to our institutional accreditation with SACSCOC. Last year, an institutional effectiveness platform evaluation committee was established and reviewed use of Compliance Assist and several other comparable software platforms. The committee endorsed replacement of Compliance Assist with Xitracs. WCU's license to use Compliance Assist expires May 15, 2019. The OIPE will acquire and implement Xitracs in July, and pilot the software platform with the College of Engineering and Technology and several administrative units, during the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Economic Modeling Software for Program Evaluation

Staff in the Office of the Provost, Institutional Planning and Effectiveness and the Center for Career and Professional Development recently completed a two-week free trial of Chmura Economic's JobsEQ data platform. The JobsEQ data platform is a cloud-based data service that provides aggregated industry, occupation, wage, online job advertisements, and higher education award conferrals data, by county and zip code, from multiple public and private sources. It allows users the ability to filter, display, and download the data as needed. A range of common and customizable analyses are provided, including occupation supply and demand, and growth forecasting by region, industry, occupation, and award type.

The OIPE intends to license the JobsEQ platform to provide data for evaluation of new program proposals, and contribute to the evaluation of existing programs in support of the university's Strategic Initiative 1.1.1 (academic program prioritization). Data can also be utilized in 5-year program review, and to evaluate program curriculum for alignment with current and future market demand for specific skills. Additionally, the data can be used to better understand job market trends by location. We expect to have data available for college, department, and program use by the end of 2019.

Student Spotlight

Grace Kathryn Woodard

Undergraduate Student, Studio Art



Grace Kathryn Woodard is expected to graduate this May with a BFA in Studio Art, with a concentration in sculpture. She also works with paper making and ceramics.

Grace currently works two jobs on Western Carolina's campus: the MAPS office as a mentor for college freshman with the ASP and Gap programs; Grace also works in the Honors College as an office assistant. Upon graduation, she will be working as an Education Fellow at the Bascom Art Center in Highlands, NC.

Most of Grace's time is spent working to create art. She works mainly sculpturally, to create installations. The materials that she uses consist primarily of fibers, found materials, clay, and wood. Much of her larger works are research based and through this, she has had the opportunity to participate in undergraduate research and share her work at conferences (SURF, RASC, NCUR). Grace recently received awards (Chancellor award and Best in Show award) for her artwork in the 51st Undergraduate Exhibition.

Grace enjoys being outside whenever possible, whether that be hiking, camping, or swimming (or a combination). One of her favorite things to do is to wake up and watch a sunrise.

Grace was born and raised in Ohio, and has lived in North Carolina for the past 6 years. She loves traveling, and hopes to travel more in the future.

Grace is involved in her church and campus ministry, which has been a significant and important part of her time here at Western Carolina.

Prior to coming to college, Grace played softball for 14 years. Through several injuries and wanting to focus on school and creating art in college, she had to say goodbye to her favorite sport.

Grace's favorite quote is a scripture from 2 Corinthians 5:7, "walk by faith, not by sight." As her faith is "the most important thing in my life, this verse has been a constant reminder to focus on things above in my day to day life."



Updates on the Research and Scholarship Celebration

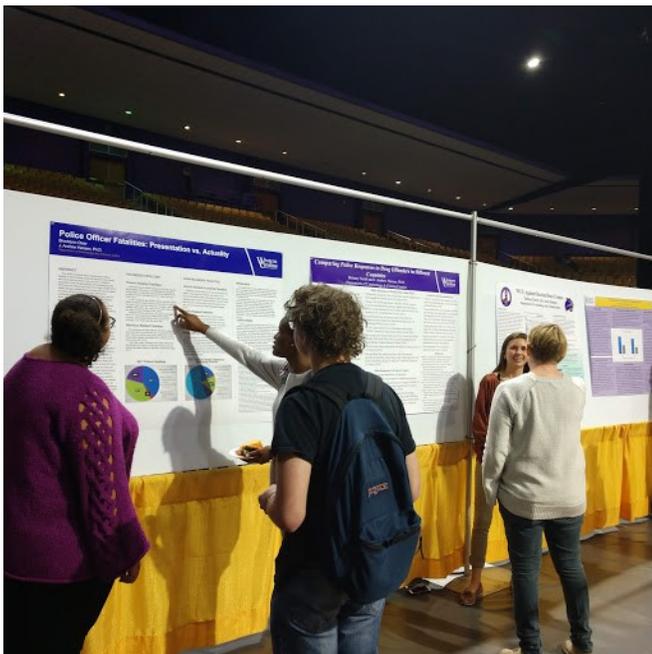
The Office of the Provost, in conjunction with the Graduate School and Research, and the Honors College, would like to extend our many thanks to the undergraduate, graduates, faculty mentors, and staff who participated in the **2019 Research and Scholarship Celebration (RASC)**.

RASC combined two WCU showcase events, the 21st Annual Undergraduate Exposition and the 27th Annual Graduate Research Symposium. This two-day event featured 200 student presentations, representing every college and over 20 departments and 75 faculty mentors at WCU. Graduate and undergraduate students celebrated their research, creative inquiry, and scholarship with an impressive line-up of poster and oral presentations, fine arts exhibits, and performances.



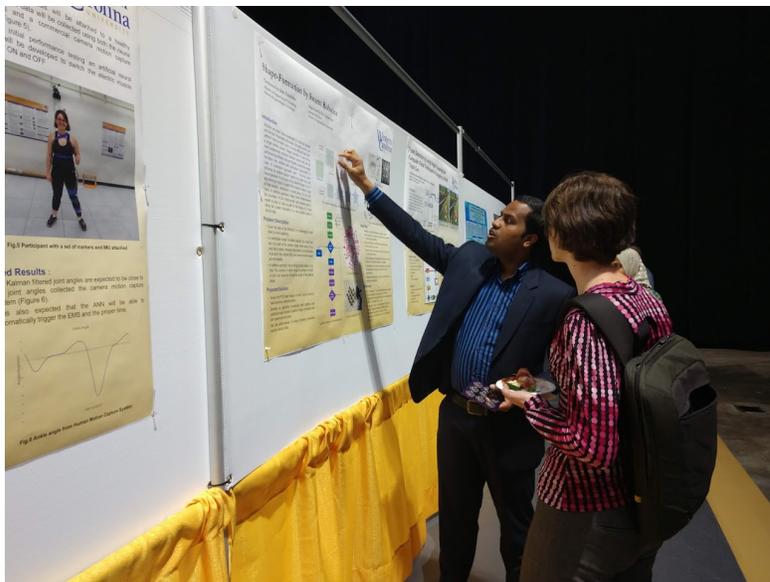
In addition to the outstanding array of student projects, the 2019 RASC event featured a host of academic events from a faculty panel discussion, two keynote addresses by Dr. Mary C. Waters, of Harvard University, and Dr. Laura Wright, of WCU. Lastly, the event featured oral presentations by undergraduates, as part of the complement *Defining America* campus theme committee, and a graduate student panel, organized and facilitated by the Graduate School in conjunction with the Graduate Student Association.

This two-day celebration of research, creative works, and scholarship would not have been possible without the many faculty and staff who made it all possible. We would like to extend our personal thanks to the following people and groups who made the 2019 RASC one of the most successful celebrations yet!



continued...

- The 2019 RASC Leadership Committee (Office of the Provost, Graduate School & Research, and the Honors College)
- The 2019 Undergraduate Exposition Committee
- The 2019 RASC Student Volunteer Leadership Committee
- The Ramsey Center Staff and Leadership
- Sigma Xi: The Research Honor Society and the WCU chapter of Sigma Xi
- Aramark Catering
- The Defining America Committee
- Graduate Student Association
- 2019 Faculty Panel: Lane Perry, Jeanne Dulworth, Dustin Whitehead, Jerry Miller, and Sean Mulholland
- Dr. Mary C. Waters of Harvard University
- Dr. Laura Wright of WCU
- Defining America Featured Presentation Moderators: Drs. Callie Schultz and Katie Zejdlik
- L.E.A.R.N. Student Volunteers
- The Honors College Student Board of Directors and Ambassadors
- Degree Plus
- The Faculty Mentors and Student Participants in the 2019 RASC



New Faculty Orientation - SAVE THE DATE

Thursday, August 8th and Friday, August 9th

Save the dates of **August 8th and 9th** for the Fall 2019 New Faculty Orientation. This event provides many opportunities for new faculty, including an introduction by campus leadership on topics including instruction, student support, assessment, liberal studies, health benefits, and many others. The Essential Information Fair is a highlight of the event where new faculty can meet representatives and become familiar with over forty units across campus. Be sure to encourage your new faculty to attend the two day event!

You may contact [Brandon Schwab](#), [Eli Collins-Brown](#), or [Annette Parris](#) in the Coulter Faculty Commons, with your questions on event time lines or preparations. Thank you to all who have participated in New Faculty Orientation in the past; we are looking forward to working with you again this year as we welcome our new cohort of faculty for the fall!

Academic Advising and Admissions host a CATS drive-in event to increase partnerships with feeder community colleges

On Tuesday, March 12, the Advising Center and the Office of Admissions hosted the third annual Catamount Advising for Transfer Success (CATS) drive-in. The CATS drive-in invites community college advisors and early college counselors to WCU for a day of collaboration and information sharing designed to help support WCU's potential transfer students.

CATS featured break-out sessions designed to give vital information about many of the challenges faced by transfer students when they come to WCU. This year's event featured a presentation reviewing WCU's Pre-registration Process. Tammy Frizzell, (Orientation Office), and Ken Pfaff, (Advising Center), demonstrated the process incoming transfer students complete during their onboarding as a new transfer Catamount. The break-out sessions included presentations from many offices across campus. These sessions included trainings from Admissions, Advising, Registrar, Educational Outreach, Military services and more. In addition, participants attended a Q/A panel discussion and a tour of campus.

Working with the advisors and counselors at feeder community colleges to prepare students for their transition to WCU is an effective way to make sure the transition to WCU is a smooth and seamless process. Community College and Early College representatives from as far away as Gaston, Stanly, and Wilkes community colleges, along with our nearby colleagues from Haywood, Southwestern, AB Tech, Blue Ridge, and Tri-County went together for an exciting event.

The CATS Drive-In retreat continues to grow in size and topics covered. Many participants have attended every event, and often encourage their colleagues to attend. This year's event grew in attendance by approximately ten participants including Deans and faculty members, advisors and student success coaches.

Updates from the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Programs

from the Chief Diversity Officer, Ricardo Nazario-Colon

Military Student Services

- April 23: *Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at the Veterans Resource Center from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm*
 - Staff from CAPS visited the VRC to answer questions on the various counseling services and resources offered to students.
- April 23: *VA at the Veterans Resource Center from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm*
 - Staff from the Charles George VA Hospital in Asheville visited the campus to provide information about and assist with healthcare enrollment, coordination of care at the hospital, mental health program offerings and support at the Asheville VA.
- April 25: *Jackson County Veterans Office staff at the Veterans Resource Center from 9:00 am to 11:00 pm*
- April 30: *Kasia Podosek, WCU Certifying Official, at the Veterans Resource Center from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm*
 - Check the status of your VA education benefits
 - Get information about the process
 - Learn about resources for military students, both on campus and in the community

National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI)

[Register Now](#) for these sessions. More Module 1 & 2 sessions will be scheduled soon. Combined Module 3 & 4 sessions will be available late Spring 2019. Visit the [Diversity SharePoint site](#) to learn more about NCBI and available training sessions. Please, direct questions to ncbi@wcu.edu.

Diversity Calendar

For more diversity-related training and events, check out the diversity calendar, which can be found in the sidebars of the [Diversity at WCU webpages](#) as well as on the [Diversity SharePoint site](#). If you would like your events to display on the calendar, you can request the calendar as a resource when reserving rooms in 25Live. Please include a detailed description and an image if possible. Private events will not be accepted as this calendar is a resource for the public. If you have any questions, please contact us at diversity@wcu.edu.

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

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 Dr. Salido's recent activities include:

- Discussing WCU's role in regional economic development with the Foundation Board, May 3
- Helping plan an Advanced Manufacturing and Aerospace Summit, April 26, 2019, with the College of Engineering and Technology (CET) and the Economic Development Partnership of NC (EDPNC)
- Planning a televised town hall event, June 18-19, 2019, on the Cullowhee campus with the UNC School of Government and NC Impact. The event is highlighting public-private partnerships that promote regional rural economic development.
- Working on an Appalachian Regional Commission funding opportunity for an advanced manufacturing co-working/innovation center along with the Corporation of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, CET, EDPNC, the Small Business and Technology Development Center, and Southwestern Community College
- Arranging and accompanying Acting Chancellor Alison Morrison-Shetlar's visit to the Council of Independent Business Owners in Asheville, April 5
- Exploring an opportunity for WCU to work with the French Broad River Partnership on an economic impact study
- Supporting ScaleUp WNC, a small business growth development program organized by Mountain BizWorks that will take place in Cullowhee and Biltmore Park throughout March, April, & May 2019
- Partnering with the Rural Center to bring the Homegrown Leaders leadership institute to campus May 29-31, 2019
- Serving on the NC Outdoor Recreation Industry Office Advisory Council as Chair of the Education and Workforce Committee
- Working with the Land of Sky Regional Council and partner higher education institutions to develop a regional consortium addressing the MyFutureNC goals
- Funding engineering students' travel and registration to the Innovate Carolina Conference
- Working with Dr. Yue Hillon and Wendy Cagle to support students through the WCU EPIC Innovation Club and April 8, Tradeshow event
- Participating in Leadership North Carolina

Staff Spotlight

Josh Thompson

Director of New Student Orientation, Orientation Programs



Josh Thompson is the Director of New Student Orientation. He earned his BS in Communication/Electronic Broadcasting, and his M.ED. in College Student Personnel from WCU.

Josh is a big Disney and WWE fan and his hobbies include wood-burning and ballroom dancing.

Josh's wife, Brittany Thompson, is the Campus Detective in WCU's University Police Department.

Josh's favorite quote is by Walt Disney, "Around here, however, we don't look backwards for very long. We keep moving forward, opening up new doors and doing new things."

This quote "defines my philosophy on work. I want to try new things and explore new options to see if they will work and can improve on an already incredible experience."

Want to include news in the next issue?
Please send information to scmelton@wcu.edu