

Academic Affairs

News & Reflections

From the Acting Provost's Desk

Colleagues:

I am reminded of the strength of our community daily and today is no exception. I extend a special appreciation to our Staff Senate, members of whom recently passed a resolution supporting salary increases for faculty and non-faculty EHRA (Exempt from the Human Resources Act) employees—an extraordinary act of support for colleagues. Our Student Government Association recently acted on three resolutions, one of which was in support of Hunter Library to host student study areas 24 hours/day, seven days a week.

WCU annually submits legislative priorities based on our needs and this year's include a) faculty/staff compensation, b) funding for summer session, c) repair and renovation funds, and d) our steam plant.

Finally, many of us worked directly or indirectly with John W. Bardo, who served as WCU's tenth Chancellor between 1995 and 2011. Recently we learned of Dr. Bardo's passing in Wichita, Kansas, where he was President of his alma mater, Wichita State University, for the past seven years. Deborah and Christopher Bardo are in our thoughts.

Warm regards,

Carol Burton

Acting Provost



Update Regarding Summer Session 2019

This will be WCU's first summer session since NC Promise came into effect, and we are anticipating lower enrollments across the board (except for those programs that run on a 12-month schedule). Based on a recent conversation with UNC System representatives on the future of summer funding, we anticipate that WCU is unlikely to receive a legislative buy-down to the NC Promise rates students receive during the traditional academic year. This possibility has been a major concern for all three NC Promise institutions and conversations are ongoing. Nonetheless, it is important that we remain prepared for a decline in our summer enrollment.

Considering this forecast and other developments at the system level regarding summer, WCU Summer Session and Academic Affairs leadership will review enrollment by course section closely this year, and ask that you do so as well.

Starting around April 1, 2019, after advising and early registration, WCU leadership will begin regular reviews of enrollment by course section. Beginning around April 15, we will discuss with department heads the possibility of cancelling class sections based on low enrollments.

If you have any questions regarding summer section enrollment, please contact your department head. If you have any other questions regarding summer session, please contact Lowell K. Davis, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Success, at lkdavis@wcu.edu, or (828) 227-2670.

Finish Line Program Experiences Record Graduation Numbers

The Finish Line program is part of the NC System's "Part-way Home" initiative and targets students that have completed credit toward a Bachelor's degree, but for some reason did not finish their degree. The program at WCU is designed for students that have earned at least 90 credit hours, been out of school for at least one year, and have a cumulative GPA of at least a 2.0. This program caters to students wanting to return and complete their first Bachelor's degree, this includes residential, distance, and new transfer students.

The Finish Line program began at WCU in Fall 2015. To date, the program has assisted 55 students in achieving their goal of earning their Bachelor's degree. The time away from WCU has ranged from one year to thirty-nine years since their last enrollment. The Finish Line Program set a new record when 14 students graduated at the conclusion of the Fall 2018 semester. These students varied in time away from one to eighteen years, spanning residential and distance, in programs from Anthropology to Spanish.

If you have any questions about the program or know any students that may qualify, please visit finishline.wcu.edu and/or contact Richard Gamble at rgamble@wcu.edu and 828-227-2133.

Updates from the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Programs

from the Chief Diversity Officer, Ricardo Nazario-Colon

Spring Literary Festival

Cristina Henríquez will be speaking on **Thursday, March 21st, 7:30 pm-9:00 pm in the A.K Hinds University Center Grand Room** as part of the [Distinguished Speaker Series](#) and the [Spring Literary Festival](#). Cristina Henríquez is the author of this year's One Book, *The Book of Unknown Americans*, which was a New York Times Notable Book of 2014 and one of Amazon's 10 Best Books of the Year. It was the Daily Beast Novel of the Year, a Washington Post Notable Book, an NPR Great Read, a Target Book of the Month selection, and was chosen one of the best books of the year by BookPage, [Oprah.com](#), and School Library Journal. It was also longlisted for the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction and was a finalist for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize.

Ricardo Nazario-Colon will also be presenting his poetry along with his mentees from the Gilbert-Chappell Distinguished Poets Series on **Monday, March 25, 12:00 pm-1:00 pm in the University Center Theater**.

National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI)

Three NCBI training sessions are currently available for sign-up in March 2019:

Module 1

- Tuesday, March 19, 1:00 pm-3:00 pm
 - Location: Camp 143
 - Facilitators: Rachel Adams, Anne Aldrich, & Becky Lindsay
- Tuesday, March 26, 3:00 pm-5:00 pm
 - Location: UC Multipurpose Room
 - Facilitators: Rachel Adams, Anne Aldrich, & Becky Lindsay

Module 2

- Thursday, March 28, 1:00 pm-4:00 pm
 - Location: UC Multipurpose Room
 - Facilitators: Brandon Lokey & Jenny Stewart

[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.

Southeastern LatinX Student Leadership Conference (SL-SLC)

The [Inaugural Southeastern LatinX Student Leadership Conference \(SL-SLC\)](#) will take place on **April 12-14, 2019**, primarily in the University Center. Presented by the Latino Appreciation Student Organization (LASO) with support from the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Programs, this year's theme is *Maximizing Nosotros: Empowering LatinX Students for Success* with three tracks: *Owning Our Values, Challenging Ourselves and Claiming our Roots*. [Dr. Jose Hernandez](#), independent consultant and managing partner of Inclusive Planet 4 All, LLC, will be the conference keynote, as well as lead several workshops.



SOUTHEASTERN LATINX
STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

If you or your department is interested in sponsoring the conference or sponsoring WCU students to attend the conference, please contact us at sllsc@wcu.edu.

Women's History Month - Sharing Our Stories

This is the culminating event of a series honoring Women's History Month, sponsored by both the WCU English and Music Departments. A screening of "Charting a New Course," the third episode of the PBS documentary, *Makers: Women Who Make America* will begin the event on **Tuesday, March 26, 4:00 pm-5:00 pm in the Coulter Recital Hall**. Afterward, a panel of faculty from both departments will share personal stories of their experiences as professional women, from 5:30 pm-6:30 pm. This event is free and open to the public.

Women's Awareness Workshop

Intercultural Affairs is hosting an interactive workshop to bring awareness to women's rights and empowerment on **Wednesday, March 27, 5:00 pm-6:00 pm in the UC Raleigh Room**. Contact Ronda Wright at rwright@wcu.edu for more information.

We Walk Together Intercultural Dialogue Group

There will be a culture presentation about Bangladesh on **Thursday, March 28, 7:00 pm in Cordelia Camp Room 134** as part of the [Intercultural Dialogue Group](#) meeting. Faculty, staff, students, and their families are welcome to attend and share a meal. Many participants share a traditional dish from their cultural backgrounds, but attendees are not required to bring food. Upcoming intercultural events and next month's service project will also be discussed at the meeting. This is a drop-in event; however, to receive a DegreePlus point, students must remain for the culture presentation on Bangladesh. Contact Amy McKenzie at amckenzie@wcu.edu or 828-227-3852 if you have any questions.

Black Awareness Week

Black Awareness Week is scheduled for **March 31, 2019-April 7, 2019**. Upcoming details will be available on the Diversity Calendar.

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.



GLUE: CELEBRATING THE UNSEEN WOMEN OF APPALACHIA

In partnership with the Appalachian Women's Museum, the Jackson County Library, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Western Carolina University's LIVLAB will host a regional panel discussion about the Appalachian women who have impacted this region and the importance of community storytelling.

Following the panel, audience members will be invited to share their own stories in interactive ways. These stories will be incorporated into the making of a new public artwork in Dillsboro, NC at the Appalachian Women's Museum.

Bring your stories and a friend and join us for a very special night celebrating the women of this region.

Food and childcare will be provided!

March 28, 2019 – 5-7pm
Museum of the Cherokee Indian
Education and Research Wing

PANELISTS

Kimberly Smith
Eastern Band of
Cherokee Indians

Marjorie Eyre
Appalachian Women's
Museum Board Member

Barbara McRae
Assistant Mayor of Franklin
& Womens History
Trail founder

TJ Smith
Executive Director of
The Foxfire Fund

Faculty Spotlight

Yancey Gulley

Assistant Professor, Higher Education Student Affairs



Needham (Yancey) Gulley is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education Student Affairs, and the Faculty Coordinator of the Leadership Minor.

Yancey earned his A.A. from Louisburg College, his B.A. in Communication Studies from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, his M.Ed. in Higher Education Administration from North Carolina State University, and his Ph.D. in College Student Affairs Administration from the University of Georgia.

Yancey enjoys reading, writing poetry, traveling, and theatre. He also enjoys spending time with his husband, Corey, and their french bulldog, Sedgwick.

Yancey lives in Kitchener/Waterloo, Ontario for part of the year. His husband is a faculty member in Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, and they split their time between Asheville and Kitchener/Waterloo.

Yancey is being honored as a Diamond Honoree by his international professional organization's foundation board this spring.

Yancey's favorite quote is from his great-grandfather, Dr. Needham Yancey Gulley, "Making a great life is more important than making a good living."

This is one of the philosophies that Yancey's great-grandfather imparted on his students as the founding faculty and Dean of the Wake Forest University School of Law. "I never knew his words until after I had my own doctorate and stumbled upon an exhibit at Wake Forest about him. If you look at our philosophies of education, they are incredibly closely matched."

Yancey recently earned tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, effective in July.

Research and Scholarship Celebration (RASC)

Join us for the 2019 Research and Scholarship Celebration!

A combined event that brings together the
21st Annual Undergraduate Exposition
and the
27th Annual Graduate Research Symposium

Mark your calendars and join us for the 2019 Research and Scholarship Celebration!

[The Research and Scholarship Celebration \(RASC\)](#) combines the Undergraduate Exposition and Graduate Research Symposium over a two-day event in April. On April 3, 2019, the RASC will host a Faculty Panel, Keynote Speaker, Dr. Mary C. Waters of Harvard University, and a combined Poster and Fine Arts Exhibition in the Ramsey Arena. Graduate and undergraduate students will be presenting. Undergraduate oral presentations will be held at locations across campus from April 3 - 4, 2019.

The Graduate Research Symposium will be held on April 4, 2019 in the A.K. Hinds University Center, and will feature presentations by graduate and exemplary undergraduate students. In addition, the Graduate Research Symposium will host Keynote Speaker, Dr. Laura Wright of WCU, a special Graduate Student Panel, and an awards ceremony for graduate students.

RASC is WCU's showcase of student research and creative works from across a diverse array of disciplines. The Poster and Fine Arts Exhibition on Wednesday April 3rd includes 84 posters from undergrads, 34 posters from graduate students, and 5 fine arts exhibits.

On April 3rd, 33 undergraduate oral presentations will be given by students at various locations on campus. At the Graduate Research Symposium on April 4th, 8 Exemplary Undergraduate Presentations will be given alongside 43 graduate student oral presentations.

This is a free and open event to the university and broader community.

The 2019 RASC Showcase Event Schedule:

See the list of Defining America and Degree Plus tagged events for the 2019 Research and Scholarship Celebration below, and check out the more detailed schedule on our [website](#).

April 3: The Undergraduate Exposition at Various Locations Across Campus & the Ramsey Arena

- Defining America Featured Oral Presentations from Parks & Recreation Management and Anthropology & Sociology; Blue Ridge Conference Room; 11:00 am – 2:00 pm
- The 2019 Undergraduate Exposition Faculty Panel and Keynote Address by [Dr. Mary C. Waters of Harvard University](#); Ramsey Arena; 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
- The 2019 Undergraduate Exposition Poster Celebration, featuring both undergraduate and graduate student poster presentations and fine art exhibit, Ramsey Arena; 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

April 4: The Graduate Research Symposium at the A.K. Hinds University Center

- The Graduate student oral presentations and 2019 Exemplary Undergraduate Oral Presentations in the A.K. Hinds University Center; various locations in the UC; various times
- The 2019 Graduate Student Panel in the UC Theater; UC Theater; 11:00 am – 11:45 am
- The 2019 Graduate Research Symposium Keynote Address by [Dr. Laura Wright](#); UC Theater; 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

2019 Exemplary Undergraduate Oral Presentations at the Graduate Research Symposium

Each year for RASC, the Graduate School invites a select group of undergraduate students to present during the Graduate Research Symposium (April 4, 2019). This year, eight undergraduates have been selected from across diverse disciplines to present their research and scholarly activities at the 27th Annual Graduate Research Symposium. For these selected students, it is considered a high honor to be included among the Exemplary Undergraduate Oral Presentations.

Undergraduate students have already been invited to present, and will be included in the diverse lineup of graduate presentations scheduled for April 4th. Be on the lookout for the Undergraduate Expo and Graduate Research Symposium Program Booklets, which will be available online closer to the event.

Poster Presentation Workshop Being Offered!

Join Hunter Library's Scottie Kapel for a poster writing workshop in Hunter Library Room 186 to learn best practices in constructing formal posters for presentation.

One spring semester date remains:

- Thursday, March 21, from 12:00 – 1:00 pm, for a poster critique session; bring your poster to the session for a review and constructive feedback on how to improve.

Please Note: In addition, Scottie Kapel will teach students more about the NC Docks permanent repository for academic work. NC Docks is a great way to archive professional presentations and academic work for future reference, resume building, and portfolios.

To register for your workshop, please email Scottie Kapel at skapel@email.wcu.edu

Updates from the Office of Institutional and Planning Effectiveness

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

New Planning Management Software identified

Over the past 15 months, a 14-member committee, with institution-wide representation has been evaluating software platforms for management of assessment, accreditation and planning needs. The contract on WCU's current platform, Campus Lab's Compliance Assist, expires May 15, 2019. After reviewing several software platforms, the committee endorsed adoption of Xitracs. The software will be implemented over the summer, and piloted by the College of Engineering and Technology and several administrative and service units during the Fall 2019 semester. Campus-wide implementation will occur in August 2020.

Strategic Plan progress reporting underway

March is the month for strategic plan progress reporting. Each year, the assigned coordinator for each of the initiatives in the university 2020 Vision Strategic Plan, works with initiative contributors to compile a summary of work completed towards achievement of each initiative. A summary of accomplishments is presented at the annual university-wide open forum in April (April 29th, this year), and a full report is compiled by the OIPE, and published on OIPE's Strategic Planning site, <https://www.wcu.edu/learn/office-of-the-provost/oipe/strategic-planning.aspx>.

Faculty Survey initiative

The OIPE deployed a survey to university faculty on March 4th via email, using Qualtrics. The 35 question survey will remain open through March 22nd. The survey addresses several areas of interest, including Student Assessment of Instruction (SAIs, also known as CoursEval), academic advising, the Writing and Learning Commons, faculty workload, and perspectives on single stall gender-neutral restrooms on campus.

While there is a university policy governing surveys (Policy 51), it is outdated, and has not, in recent years, been enforced. The OIPE is working towards improved institutional compliance with Policy 51, so that the frequency of surveying is reduced. The long-term goal is to deploy fewer and longer surveys covering a range of topics, rather than frequent single-topic surveys.

Student Spotlight

Dakota Little

Undergraduate Student, Geology



Dakota M. Little is an undergraduate student majoring in Geology, with a concentration in Hydrology. Dakota is currently a L.E.A.R.N. Peer Mentor and works as an intern in the Office of Sustainability and Energy Management.

Dakota is the Vice-Chair for the Sustainable Energy Initiative, participates in undergraduate research with Dr. JP Gannon, and is part of the RASC Student Volunteer Leadership Committee.

Dakota's current research includes relating variations in soil composition to concentration-discharge relationships in a disturbed headwater catchment.

Dakota enjoys hiking, collecting minerals, and cooking. She has a cat named Leia who walks on a leash and knows how to sit!

Dakota's favorite quote is from Benjamin Franklin, "Well done is better than well said." This is one of her favorite quotes because she believes in doing good and taking action to make things happen.



Center for Career and Professional Development

Catamount Career and Networking Day



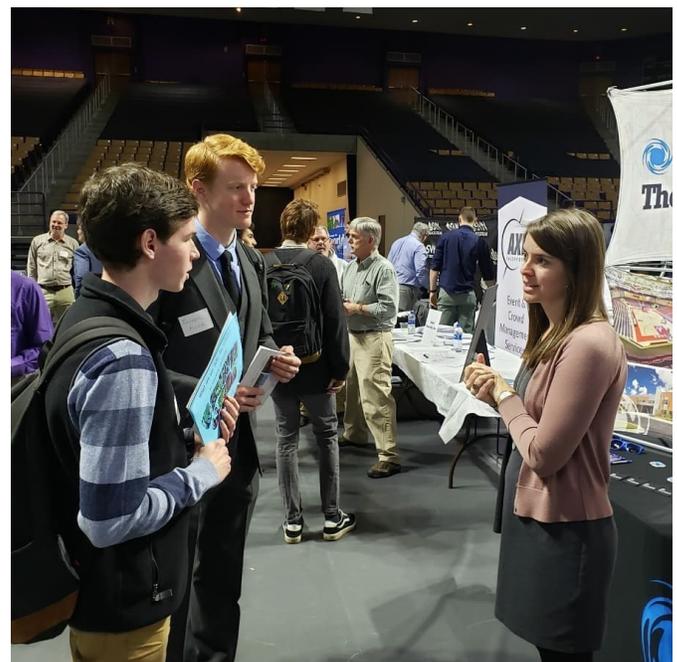
On Wednesday, February 27th, the Center for Career and Professional Development and the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning hosted the semi-annual Catamount Career and Networking Day in the Ramsey Center. Over the course of the day, 585 students had the opportunity to network with over 130 employers, community partners, and graduate schools to discuss full-time jobs, seasonal job openings, internships, graduate degrees, and volunteer and service opportunities.

“We were very happy with the diversity of organizations at our spring career fair,” said Theresa Cruz Paul, Director of the Center for Career and Professional Development. “We had recruiters in attendance from across North Carolina, as well as Virginia, Florida, South Carolina, and Georgia.” In addition to students, many faculty members also visited the career fair to talk with employers about their majors and the career opportunities available for their students. Building on the success of a partnership formed last year, the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning again partnered

with CCPD to invite community non-profit partners to the event.

Students were prepared for this year’s career fair as many took advantage of CCPD’s pre-event workshops entitled “Maximizing your Catamount Career & Networking Day.” Presented as DegreePlus ‘Professionalism’ sessions, students learned how to prepare for their time at the career fair and how to effectively interact with the recruiters. Students were also able to research the employers participating in the career fair using new features in JobCat. In addition to reviewing the roster of employers before the event, students could read what types of positions and what majors they were recruiting for.

The Catamount Career and Networking Day is held twice during the school year, once in the fall and once in the spring. The next session will be held on Wednesday, October 9, 2019.



Voter Friendly Campus

Earlier this month, the Campus Vote Project in partnership with National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), designated 123 "Voter Friendly Campuses." The program requires campuses to engage their campus community and promote voter registration and voting as part of their institutional mission. The goal of the Voter Friendly Campus designation program is to bolster efforts that help students overcome barriers to participating in the political process and to develop a culture of democratic engagement on campus.

Western Carolina University, thanks to the efforts of the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning and the Student Democracy Coalition, has been designated as a Voter Friendly Campus. The designation is valid through December 2020. To learn more about the Campus Vote Project visit voterfriendlycampus.org.



CCESL Upcoming Events:

Cleaning Up the Mountains

March 31, 2019 – April 6, 2019

National Volunteer Week

April 8, 2019 – April 12, 2019

Tuck River Clean-up

April 13, 2019

For more information about these events and/or additional community engagement and service activities click [here](#) or contact the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning at 828-227-7148.

Mountain Heritage Center

With the remodeling of the first floor of the HF Robinson building, came a restructuring to the Mountain Heritage Center's *First Thursday Concert Series*. This long-standing program which allows WCU students, faculty, staff and community members to interact with tradition-bearing musicians, was previously held in the HFR Auditorium. These free concerts, followed by jam sessions, are now being hosted at HomeBase and Madstone Café.

In addition to the change in location, the *First Thursday Concert Series* has also been re-envisioned to promote cultural exploration and discussion through the lens of traditional music. This focus allows for these events to be designated as DegreePlus events.

Recent *First Thursday* guests include Cullowheezer (below right), featuring husband-and-wife duo Pan and Brett Riggs, the Berea College Bluegrass Ensemble (below left), and Lee Knight. The next *First Thursday* concert will host Ol' Dirty Bathhtub on April 4, 2019 at 7:00 pm at HomeBase. For more information visit mhc.wcu.edu or call 828-227-7129.



WCU Fine Art Museum

Open year-round, the WCU Fine Art Museum at John W. Bardo Arts Center features four galleries, a growing permanent collection, and exhibitions highlighting regional, national, and international artists. On a ten year journey to accreditation, the WCU Fine Art Museum has recently reached a major milestone. The museum's five core documents (Mission Statement, Code of Ethics, Strategic Plan, Collections Management Policy, and Disaster Response Plan) that are required for accreditation with the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), were approved by the WCU Board of Trustees on February 28, 2019.

With AAM accreditation, the WCU Fine Art Museum will join the company of other prominent organizations like the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Smithsonian Institutions, as well as other UNC system museums like the Ackland Art Museum in Chapel Hill.

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

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.

The Outdoor Gear Design and Manufacturing Summit took place on Thursday, February 21, 2019. More than twenty companies were present, as well as representatives from regional community and economic development organizations, WCU faculty, and students. Andy Coburn, Dr. Wes Stone, and Dr. Salido planned this summit as part of the Growing Outdoor WNC partnership and ARC POWER Initiative grant. They are grateful to the students, faculty, and leadership in the College of Engineering and Technology for making this happen and for Van Winkle Law Firm's and Wildwater Adventures' sponsorship. Gear design and manufacturing businesses learned more about WCU's students, faculty, and resources that help catalyze the outdoor industry. The day kicked off with tours of the Rapid Center followed by a Hackathon. For the Hackathon, companies submitted product or design issues to teams of engineering students, who had two days to develop a "hack" or solution and present their findings. Winning teams were awarded over \$1000 in prizes for their ideas and presentations. The Summit concluded with a networking lunch and time for guests to interact with faculty and students. The Summit received high praise, and attendees expressed interest in future outdoor industry events.

Some of Dr. Salido's other recent activities include:

- 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
- Helping plan an Advanced Manufacturing and Aerospace Summit, April 26, 2019, with the College of Engineering and Technology and the Economic Development Partnership of NC
- 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 summit addressing the MyFutureNC goals
- Updated the Board of Trustees on February 28, 2019, about WCU's economic engagement activities, focusing on our role in the regional outdoor recreation industry. Dr. Wes Stone and student, Kyle Monaghan, were part of the presentation team
- Partnering with Growing Outdoors WNC, the Asheville Chamber, Riverlink, and the Town of Woodfin to recruit the International Whitewater Hall of Fame and World Rafting Center Museum
- Working with Dr. Yue Hillon and Wendy Cagle to support students through the WCU EPIC Innovation Club
- Meeting with WCU leaders to discuss external funding and engagement opportunities
- Updating the Faculty and Staff Senates and department heads about economic and community engagement activities
- Participating in Leadership North Carolina

Staff Spotlight

Kathy Orr

Business Officer, College of Arts & Sciences



Kathy Orr is the Business Officer for the College of Arts and Sciences. Kathy worked in telephony for many years before beginning her work at WCU as a staff employee for the Department of Biology. She then moved on to Facilities Management for a while, and ultimately returned to the academic side of the house for the Department of History. “I’ve met a lot of incredible people here and I enjoy the opportunity to interact with them throughout the campus. I also couldn’t ask for a better group of coworkers here in the Office of the Dean.”

Well into Kathy's career at WCU, she continued taking courses towards earning her BSBA in Accounting. “It was tough being a first-generation college student, but it helped immensely that I worked here. The academic environment I was immersed in defined the terminology, and it’s pretty cool being surrounded by a lot of intelligence. There was support from my faculty supervisors and family members. I guess you can say I am the epitome of lifelong learning, but I finally graduated in December of 2014. I found it ironic that I graduated at the E.J. Whitmire Stadium on the Bob Waters Football Field, since I graduated high school with one of E.J.’s sons, and I actually attended a Bob Waters football game back in the day! My son recorded a video clip as I walked across the field when Dr. Don Connelly announced my name, and I was congratulated by Dr. Belcher and Dr. Starnes, who I might add believes in the capabilities of WCU’s alum. I replay the video every so

often. My immediate family and I have always considered ourselves a team especially when it comes to education. Not only am I a product of WCU, but we are a family of WCU alumni; my husband Bob is a three-time WCU alum and he enjoyed a successful career here, our son Harrison is a two-time WCU alum and his fiancée Kaitlyn is also WCU alum!”

“Did I mention I once attended an Aerosmith concert here at WCU? However, I’m sorry Steven Tyler et al., but being a Georgia native, that doesn’t top hearing Gladys Knight sing, “Midnight Train to Georgia” last year in the UC. I was lucky enough to run into my friend, Dr. Mary Ella Engel, who by the way, was raised in Georgia, and we still marvel at sharing that experience.”

Kathy lives in Franklin and has always been a full-time year-round commuting employee. “Crossing a range of mountains each day can be challenging, expensive, and yet rewarding. Mountains can be as tough as the people who live among them. Once during a gas shortage when there was rationing, not to mention the high pricing, I had to use our supply of lawn mower gas in order to get to work. More than once, I left my house only to have to turn around due to a snowstorm on the mountain.

continued...

I'd swap vehicles and attempt to ascend again in a four-wheel drive. I also remember the blizzard of '93 when we were without power at home for a week. After a couple of days, the University regained power and reopened, so my family and I stayed in a Sylva motel for the rest of the week so that we could continue to work at WCU. Commuting can be an educational experience as well. After a while and by utilizing your senses, you can determine by smell, a blown head gasket from burning brakes. Vapor and smoke colors are determining factors also. A change in altitude does have advantages. Each day brings incredible different scenery. When our valleys on both sides are socked in by thick fog, it might be blue skies and sunshine at the top. Being above the clouds is a bit like looking into the future. I can report to my coworkers that it is going to be a sunny day because I've already seen it! I've lived in many places throughout my lifetime, however nothing compares to the beautiful mountains of Western North Carolina!"

Kathy enjoys reading non-fiction, especially biographies, RV camping at the beach, flower gardening, preparing meals for small family gatherings, working outside, and the satisfaction of a job well done. She also enjoys dreaming of riding her Harley, "there's not enough time!", and having pets again.

A favorite motto is one she wrote herself, "The more I learn, the more I learn there is to learn."

Another favorite is from T.D. Jakes, "The world is a university and everyone in it is a teacher. Make sure when you wake up in the morning, you go to school."

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