

Program Highlight: Project Discovery

By Todd Murdock, Project Discovery Director

“The world is an adventure waiting to be discovered.”

“If you’re trying to reach a goal you can take breaks and you can reflect, and you can look at what you need to do, you can back up and you can look at it, but you can’t quit, you can’t give up.”

“Adventure, to me, makes my world more colorful and it makes me feel alive and it just colors my world in a different way.”

“Things only change when you’re out of your comfort zone...you learn how to take care of yourself, you learn how to take care of others.”

These are quotes from a few participants in a Project Discovery summer enrichment program after traveling 800 miles under their own power by bicycle, and camping for 3 weeks, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River. I could probably just stop right here. John Dewey would be proud. But I have about 400 more words that I can use...

WCU’s Project Discovery is a “college connection” program for low-income, first-generation college bound students; helping them make it through middle and high school and enroll in college. We are a Talent Search TRIO Grant that is fully funded from the U.S. Department of Education that is targeted to students in seven area high schools and middle schools here in western North Carolina. WCU has been a recipient of the Talent Search Grant since 1979, and have served thousands of students since.



We begin enrolling students in the 6th or 7th grade and work with them through their high school graduation providing a wide range of access services: tutorial services, career exploration and interest assessment, study skills, financial literacy, decision making strategies, assistance with financial aid forms like the FAFSA, college applications, ACT/SAT test preparation, and information on post-secondary institutions. We are in schools every day meeting students individually and in classrooms conducting workshops with these services.

We know all these services are vital yet there is more...we have found that it takes more than the nuts and bolts of “information” and “how-to-do’s for low-income students to make the leap of faith to college. The practical, experiential opportunities that we provide are focused on the development of character, leadership, personal responsibility, perseverance, relationship skills, and inner strength. We do this with experiential learning opportunities like outdoor classroom programs for middle school students, high and

low element challenge course experiences, rock climbing, caving, mountain biking, and even longer expeditionary outings. These activities also provide great opportunities for students to explore, learn, and grow.

We want students to “know their name” by the time they leave for college. It is not enough just to go to college; we help make sure they have what it takes to graduate with degrees! Project Discovery is an investment with a high return! More than 98% of our students graduate from high school. Nearly 80% of them enroll in college, compared to 38% of their demographic peers. More than 52% of these will graduate from college with degrees. A Project Discovery student who gets a college degree will repay, in taxes, what it costs for that student’s 7-year enrollment in the Project Discovery Program in just 4 months.

For more information about WCU’s Project Discovery, contact your school counselor or see the Project Discovery counselor at your school. Project Discovery Talent Search WCU, 828-227-7137.

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TAMMY BARRON
FACULTY/ SPECIAL EDUCATION

I am enjoying my third year of full-time work and my first year on a tenure track at WCU as an assistant professor and special education administrator of The Catamount School operated by WCU. I am a native of North Carolina and have taught in a variety of settings in preschool, elementary, secondary, and higher education in the areas of general and special education. There are many things I enjoy about the mountains of North Carolina but working at The Catamount School with students in various ways through service activities, course work, and supervision of internship is perhaps my greatest joy!

We are implementing inclusive practices in The Catamount School and it is exciting to see the research come to life in this setting with experienced professionals and pre-service teachers all working towards the same goal. I believe strongly in the blending of expertise of general educators and special educators to serve all students. Working with such knowledgeable staff and innovative young professionals shapes not only my teaching and research practice but encourages me to advocate for students with disabilities and their families. I continued to explore policies and practices that support inclusive practice. I have gained a sense of urgency of continuing research and advocacy to continue moving the field forward towards use of co-teaching and the art of collaboration to benefit all students. It is important to keep up with current events in educational policy through

a strong network of professors, peers, and key professional organizations. I look for opportunities to challenge the process and believe that by generating knowledge, sharing information, and providing choices through research and service we can improve educational environments and outcomes of people with disabilities.



KYLE DOUGLAS
UNIVERSITY PARTICIPANT
ALUMNUS '18

Kyle Douglas graduated from the WCU University Participant program in May, 2018. Kyle has stayed busy since his graduation, balancing two jobs in Sylva, NC. Kyle has been employed as a host at Bogarts restaurant since January, 2018, and took on a second job at Lowe's Home Improvement in October, 2018. Kyle enjoys serving his community and the many friendships he has made along the way. During the summer of 2018, Kyle moved into an apartment with a roommate, learning how to become even more independent and growing in ways he did not think possible. Some of Kyle's favorite aspects of having a roommate are that they can hang out like brothers, and that they will always have each other's back. He also has an excellent group of natural supports that spend time with him daily to continue to work on different goals.

Kyle is doing a great job balancing his two jobs, while still remembering to have fun. In his free time, he enjoys bowling, golf, movies, spending time with friends, and singing. Kyle is an active member at Bridge Church of Cullowhee, and has made long lasting

relationships with many of the members there. He often visits the WCU campus to mentor the current UP students, and to help them reach their goals while being a role-model they look up to. One of Kyle's favorite hobbies is spending time at Full Spectrum Farms, volunteering with the individuals there, and making pottery to sell to raise money for the farm. He is currently diligently studying to get his drivers permit, as a goal of Kyle's is to one day own his own car.

Kyle has participated in several speaking engagements including Council for Exceptional Children's state conferences, NC Department of Public Instruction conferences, and various WCU events. When asked if Kyle has a good life, his response is, "I have a great life that I love surrounded by all my friends."



CARRIE CARTER
ALUMNA/BIRTH-KINDERGARTEN
EDUCATION

My name is Carrie Carter and I graduated from Western Carolina University in December, 2018 with a Bachelor's Degree in Birth-Kindergarten Education. I returned to school with the intention of seeking an elementary education degree. While obtaining my associates degree and substitute teaching in my local school system, I discovered a love for working with both younger children and special needs children. A birth-kindergarten degree encompasses both. I spoke with many universities before deciding on WCU to complete my degree. Most were unwilling or

lacked the knowledge to answer my questions. I knew WCU was the place for me after my first phone call with Rachel Wike, in Suite 201. I found this to be especially true as I faced major health issues and surgeries during my program. Even taking a year off before my last semester to recover, my instructors, especially Myra Watson, checked on me and made sure I felt confident in returning successfully. WCU really is a fantastic, caring school.

After completing my student teaching in December, the district created a position for me to provide support for my cooperating teacher for the remainder of the school year. I work with amazing teachers and was so excited for the opportunity! I plan to seek employment as a N.C. Pre-K or kindergarten teacher for the 19-20 school year. In addition, I currently teach English as a second language online to children across the world. It has been a great cultural experience. I plan to continue teaching online and use the extra income to travel with my family. I'm looking forward to summers off to spend by the pool, reading, and seeing new places.



TODD MURDOCK
STAFF/ DIRECTOR, PROJECT
DISCOVERY

My wife, Therese, and I have called Cullowhee home since the fall of 1979 when we arrived on campus as freshmen. We actually just

moved to Waynesville last year, but I'm not going to count that. I took a chance on a grant funded job here at Western in 1987, when it had only three months of funding remaining. It's easy to do things like that when you are young. That began a career of working with low income and first-generation youth, helping them finish high school and enroll in college. It also forced me to become a grant writer. At this point, I've been awarded over \$9 million dollars, mostly in federal dollars through Trio grants in the U.S. Department of Education for Talent Search, now Project Discovery. What began as a job evolved into my life's mission.

I am a Licensed Professional Counselor in North Carolina with a M.A. Ed. in Counseling, from Western Carolina University (1993). I also work as an adjunct faculty in the Parks and Recreation Management Program. I have always enjoyed outdoor pursuits and spent an unforgivable amount of time outside whitewater rafting, hiking, backpacking, and rock climbing. I suppose I have about 55,000 miles in the saddle – the bike saddle.

Suite 201 Highlight: Dean Martin

In our inaugural Suite Spotlight, we are excited to introduce Mr. Dean Martin. Dean is a Master of Education candidate in the Higher Education Student Affairs (HESA) program and is working with the Suite 201 team as a Graduate Assistant for the 2018-2019 academic year. His primary function area over the last year has been recruitment and he has certainly made his mark.

Dean is passionate about access to higher education and saw a need in his home region to remove barriers for students. In the Suite, our primary goals with respect to recruitment are to encourage teaching as a profession, promote diversity in our teacher education programs, and to eliminate barriers to access to higher education through intentional partnerships with B-12 education and community college partners. Dean elevated our engagement with key partners in our region through a series of workshops that provided support to students and their families for completing Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and college applications. Over the course of three months leading up to the FAFSA deadline, we engaged with over 450 high school seniors, many of whom completed applications to WCU as part of this workshop.

Dean's passion does not stop with high school seniors. He has also worked tirelessly to make our Teachers of Tomorrow conferences for middle grades and high school students meaningful and engaging through experiences with diversity, STEM, and teaching in the real world. Dean has become an invaluable part of the Suite 201 team in the short time he has been with us. He will complete the HESA program and join

the ranks of WCU alumni once again in May, but the impact he has made will continue to ripple through our unit and throughout the WNC region for years to come.



Not horses...horses scare me because I can't steer them at all. I paddled a lot as a younger man, winning 2 U.S. White Water National Championships, and I raced in the U.S. Olympic trials twice, and U.S. Olympic Festival twice, and even won a couple festival medals. I still enjoy getting out on a good climb. I love rivers and was so blessed to row through the beautiful and awesome rapids of the Grand Canyon several years ago.

Sharing the outdoors with groups of students in Project Discovery still thrills me. Outdoor leadership provides a fantastic training ground for real life skills, and nature is an unequaled metaphor to students when planning their own route in this great adventure we call life.



WENDY YORK GRADUATE STUDENT/MASTER OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

My name is Wendy York and I will finish the Masters of School Administration (MSA) graduate program in May, 2019. I am from Siler City, North Carolina, and received my Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from High Point University in May, 2005. I chose to attend WCU because two of my colleagues attended this program and I was extremely impressed with the realistic and meaningful expectations the program provided, as well as its willingness to include and learn about all of the staff. In order to run a successful building, it is critical to include all staff not just the administration and certified

staff. The flexibility of the WCU program has allowed me to continue to work full time, pursue my education and focus on obtaining my administration degree.

The faculty at WCU have been amazing. They are flexible, easy to work with, understanding, and go out of their way to create pathways for individual success while holding true to the integrity of the MSA program. They are true experts and veterans in the field of school administration. I was happy to see how the program design was intertwined with all the work I have done with Restorative Practices. In addition to my academic pursuits, I am also a certified trainer for the International Institute of Restorative Practices.

In the future, it is my goal to become an administrator who can lead a school using the principles of community building and student voice. This is done by building social capital and teaching that repairing harm rather than punishment builds an investment for all stake holders. Choosing WCU has been the best decision I could have made as they have provided me with a wonderful opportunity to grow as an educational leader.



MADISON SURRETT UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT/ PSYCHOLOGY

My name is Madison and I am a senior undergraduate psychology student. Since I was very young, I knew that I wanted to make

a difference in a way that would help others, and in high school I became fascinated with psychology. I found that this career path not only allowed me to understand those around me, but also understand myself.

This fascination has not ceased since then. Through research and higher education, I have realized that there is so much left in the world to learn, and I want to take every opportunity possible to maximize my education. I transferred to Western Carolina University as a sophomore, realizing I missed the mountains where I grew up.

I am grateful for the one-on-one connections I have with my professors and the incredible opportunities I have been given to fulfill my passion for research. I am heavily involved with the Psychology Department and College of Education and Allied Professions; serving as a psychology ambassador, member of the undergraduate advisory board, and CEAP Dean's Advisory Council. I have also repeatedly been on the Dean's and Chancellor's list.

My first research project, which I have worked with for two years, has given insight as to how individuals with disabilities feel they are treated within their community. I presented this research at the 2018 South Eastern Psychological Association and will be presenting a new assessment of it at the 2019 National Undergraduate Research Convention.

My other research deals with EEG analysis of relaxation in individuals with high-trauma history, along with a study focused around the idea of the imposter phenomena. I will be presenting both of these studies at the 2019 Rocky Mountain Psychological Association, in Denver, Colorado.

My future research plans are to delve further into the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder in conjunction with substance use disorder. Inevitably, my goal is to achieve my Doctorate in Clinical Psychology and work for a Veterans Association Hospital.

Scholarship Highlight: Friend of WCU Endows Second Scholarship

By Zara Shick, newsletter editor, and Caitlin Lambert, elementary education student

William A. Ledford, "Al"—of Versailles, Kentucky, has recently endowed his second scholarship that will provide financial support to College of Education and Allied Professions students. In 2006, Al and his late wife Christine Biles Ledford endowed the William A. and Patricia L. Ledford Scholarship in honor of Al's parents, who both served as teachers and school principals in North Carolina schools for forty years. The William A. and Patricia L. Ledford Scholarship is awarded to a student within the College of Education and Allied Professions who is seeking their teacher certification. William A. Ledford Sr.—"Bill"—was a 1955 graduate of Western Carolina University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education. He retired from Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System, after serving as a teacher and principal for 27 years. Mr. Ledford's second endowed scholarship, the Christine Biles Ledford Scholarship, honors his late wife Christine, a graduate of the University of Kentucky who received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Social Work and a Master of Social Work. Christine was a champion of the public health system and worked tirelessly to ensure women and their children received timely and effective access to physical and mental health services. The Christine Biles Ledford Scholarship is awarded to a student in the Doctor of Psychology in Health Services Psychology Program (Psy.D). The Christine Biles Ledford Scholarship is only the fourth scholarship designated specifically for psychology students, and the first that will be awarded explicitly to psychology doctoral students.

The University of North Carolina Board of Governors approved WCU's Doctor of Psychology in Health Services Psychology Program (Psy.D), the university's fourth doctoral-level academic program, in January, 2017. The program's first cohort will begin in Fall, 2019. The WCU doctorate in psychology, with an emphasis on training students to serve rural populations—a traditionally underserved group in mental health—will consist of formal course work, supervised clinical experiences and research requirements with a goal of preparing graduates for licensure. Dr. Jon Campbell, who been hired as program director, said his long-term goal is to see WCU's doctoral program develop into a model for professional psychology preparation to serve rural populations—particularly in rural Appalachia. This scholarship will help accomplish this goal. Dr. Campbell said this about the recent scholarship endowment, "I had the honor of meeting Mr. Ledford in Lexington, KY a few weeks ago and learned about his connections with Western Carolina University and Chris's dedication to serving individuals with mental health needs. Mr. Ledford's endowment will support a doctoral psychology student who is committed to serving individuals in the Western North Carolina region upon graduation. The endowment will be awarded through a competitive basis and represent a key financial cornerstone for building a psychology program of excellence; graduate student financial support is critical for recruiting and training excellent psychologists."



Mr. Al Ledford, the William A. and Patricia L. Ledford Scholarship, and Christine Biles Ledford Scholarship donor

"Being a recipient of the William A. & Patricia L. Ledford Endowed Scholarship undoubtedly had a major impact on my college career at Western. By helping to fund my education, this scholarship allowed me to pursue my degree in middle grades mathematics education and the incredible experiences that came along with it. After graduation in May, 2018, I was then hired at Murphy Middle School teaching 7th grade math, with Western's top-quality program being an influential factor. I love teaching here in the mountains and helping rural youth, like I was once, work towards accomplishing their dreams."

—Brian Gatti, 18-19 William A. & Patricia L. Ledford Endowed Scholarship Recipient



Transformative Rural Urban Exchange

By Drs. Adrienne Stuckey, Pam Buskey, and Darrius Stanley

Since 2002, WCU has engaged in a week-long rural-urban exchange program with North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University (NC A&T SU), a historically Black university in Greensboro, NC. Now called the Transformative Rural-Urban Exchange (TRUE), the program is a collaborative undertaking between the College of Education and Allied Professions at WCU and our partner, the School of Education at NC A&T SU. Both universities were founded in the 1890's and are similar in size. However, NC A&T SU is urban, located in a city with a population density of 2,258 people per square mile, and WCU is rural, located in a county with a population density of 82 people per square mile.

Every spring, a small group of teacher education students from WCU and NC A&T

SU are selected to spend a week at their partner university and, in turn, host their peers at their home university. The program is free to students thanks to the generous sponsorship of the Deans of the education programs at each university.

During their week at NC A&T SU, students from WCU live near campus and spend time in local public schools, learning how to work with diverse P-12 children in urban school settings, visiting classes and engaging in campus activities with the host students at NC A&T SU. During an alternate week, students from NC A&T SU live near WCU's campus and visit schools in the western counties to gain exposure to rural P-12 schools. TRUE provides teacher-education students with an experience in working with diverse higher education/public school

faculty, pre-service teachers, and P-12 students.

Recent additions to the program include an increased focus on building community among the participants and engaging in deliberate and challenging group discussions about race, ethnicity, and culture. One method of facilitating these goals has been the addition of a one-night, one-day pre-exchange retreat attended by the participants from both campuses, at a conference center approximately halfway between the two campuses. During the retreat, the participants build community through student-led ice breaker games, build trust through sharing artifacts about their lives and culture, and discuss culture and race in a culminating conversation about perceptions of race and stereotypes.

Following the TRUE 2018 program, participants expressed their increased awareness of race and culture in the following quotes:

"I have been impacted because it made me aware that there is more than just white v. black."

"This program has impacted me and made me realize that there are white people willing to learn."

"This program...shows me how appreciative others are when you dive into understanding their culture."

Another recent addition has been a focus on how the participating students can influence their home campuses as leaders in cultural awareness. To accomplish this, the participants now plan and host a student-led, public event on each campus, designed to engage the attendees in conversations about race and culture. Following the TRUE 2018 program, participants expressed their intent to lead on campus:

"I will return to my campus...sharing my experiences with other students, spreading information, and breaking down stereotypes regarding rural communities."

"I will return to campus as a cultural leader by helping other students feel comfortable with difference."

"I would like to host events on campus that help fight stereotypes about cultures."

The 2019 TRUE program is now complete. The pre-exchange retreat was held in Hickory on February 14-15, with 16 students and five faculty members in attendance. Moving moments from this trip included when Damean, a NC A&T SU secondary social studies education student, asked the group to share why they want to be teachers. Dr. Kellee Watkins, a Reading professor at NC A&T SU, shared about her struggles as a child learning to read and her passion to change that outcome for other children. Karrington, a NC A&T SU secondary art education student, shared how his perspective on education changed when he met his first Black male teacher in middle school. Abi, a WCU elementary education student, shared how she has fought to become a scholar and a teacher in order to disprove her first-grade teacher's belief that Abi would "never be good enough."

North Carolina New Teacher Support Program: Western Carolina University Region




By Myra Watson, Associate Director, School of Teaching and Learning & WCU Regional Director, NC New Teacher Support Program

The North Carolina New Teacher Support Program (NC NTSP) is a comprehensive, university-based induction program that offers a research-based curriculum and additional services designed to increase teacher effectiveness, enhance skills, and reduce attrition among beginning teachers. NC NTSP provides each teacher: (1) conference-style professional Institute; (2) intensive, individualized classroom coaching; and (3) aligned professional development sessions. The coaching framework used by NC NTSP is designed to support and scaffold beginning teachers in the first three years in the classroom.

This year, NC NTSP serves over 1,000 teachers in more than 40 districts across North Carolina (see map). The Western Carolina University Region of NC NTSP currently serves teachers in Cherokee County Schools, Cherokee Central Schools, McDowell County Schools, Asheville City Schools, and The Catamount School. Independent assessment of NC NTSP has indicated that teachers served by the program show positive effects for beginning teachers, both lateral entry and traditionally prepared. The data shows that 93% of teachers served by the NC NTSP felt their Instructional Coach helped them with confidence, knowledge, and skills in teaching compared to district/school support alone (84%). When asked about how NC NTSP supports Cherokee Central Schools and its beginning teachers, Dr. Beverly Payne, Associate Superintendent, stated, "While districts may offer new teachers great internal support through a solid onboarding process, mentors, and instructional support staff, it is good to have external support, too, which the NC New Teacher Support Program provides." Dr. Payne also highlighted the benefits of the conference-style Institute in helping new teachers build professional networks and the important role of the Instructional Coach in providing teachers with an outside perspective, resources, feedback, and support.

The Western Carolina University Region of NC NTSP is motivated to continue to establish new partnerships with schools and systems across the region to support the work of promoting student achievement, teacher effectiveness, and teacher retention. If you would like more information about the program, please contact Myra Watson, Regional Director of the Western Carolina University Region of NC NTSP at mkwatson@wcu.edu.



 NC New Teacher Support Program University Regions
 NC New Teacher Support Program Districts & Charter Schools by Region
 NC INSPIRE Participating Districts

Faculty Lead Students To Kenya

By Dr. Pam Buskey and Melissa Faetz



The WCU Study Abroad brochure states, “Education outside your comfort zone is where real learning begins.” Students who traveled to Kenya during Fall, 2018 found this to be true as Amber Whitaker, one of the participants so aptly stated, “This experience has changed me for the better. Kenya is not a place you just travel to and leave unchanged.”

In the fall of 2018, nine students from the College of Education and Allied Professions spent two weeks in Kenya learning about education, culture, humanity, and themselves. These students, accompanied by faculty members Rus Binkley, Pam Buskey, and Melissa Faetz, spent one week in Nairobi, visiting several different schools including a University of Nairobi Lab School, private elementary schools, and a public school located outside of Nairobi adjacent to one of the city’s landfills. The students were able to experience first-hand the inequalities between schools, instruction, supplies, and amenities. WCU student Ariel Glosson shared, “A preconception I think I had before going into this trip was that Kenya and other countries are behind educationally and probably need assistance. However, after being in Nairobi for just a few days, it has become apparent that the education in the Kenyan private

schools is actually very well developed. The teachers are phenomenal, and the students are usually very engaged. Also, many of the students are learning things before students of the same age in the U.S. would.” In each of these schools, WCU students were able to observe lessons, work with students, read aloud to classes, and teach full lessons.

The second week, the group traveled three hours by train to a remote mountain community, Wongonyi where they worked in classrooms and helped to refurbish the K-8 school library. Prior to the fall departure, the group had collected and shipped over 3000 books, along with classroom and medical supplies. The shipment, waiting in the village for the students to get to work, went from boxes in crates and stacked shelves, to an organized and bright, welcoming library. The renovation work would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of local painters, builders, carpenters, and volunteers. Our team also included Nadine Abrahams, recently retired librarian from Denver, CO, her husband, Norman Epp, and Kathy Bartel of Waynesville, NC. Their leadership made the renovation work possible.

Aside from the time spent in schools, students and faculty also had an opportunity to visit and explore Kenya. They had an opportunity to have lengthy conversations with the elders and past teachers in the village, enjoy arts and crafts created by local artists, visit elephant and giraffe sanctuaries, inquire about local products and businesses at the Kenyan Trade Expo, tour the Kiambetha Tea Farm, and end the two weeks in Kenya with a safari experience in Tsavo National Park.

Through these experiences and opportunities to develop relationships with so many educators, students, and community members, students began to develop a complex narrative of what it means to be Kenyan. “Since coming to Africa, I have found out that it is almost nothing like what I was told growing up,” said Brittany Elliott.

Referring to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s discussion of A Single Story, a student traveler, Amber Henry, so beautifully shared, “A single story is dangerous because our lives and our cultures are comprised of many different stories. A single story shows people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again. And that is what they become. What I quickly realized on this trip is that I am not one thing. And Kenya is not one thing. If I were to share a single story about Kenya, then you would miss out on an incredible experience.” What the group realized on this trip was that they learned so much from Kenya’s many stories, and they are all different today as a result.





Inaugural Utah Ski & Snowboard Travel Course

By Dr. Callie Schultz & Debby Singleton

The Parks and Recreation Management (PRM) Program took thirteen students to Salt Lake City, Utah on January 6th-11th for the first annual Utah Ski & Snowboard Travel Course, developed and taught by Dr. Callie Schultz and Debby Singleton. Focused on ski and snow sports management in one of the most popular winter sports destinations in the US, this course featured ski resorts in the Salt Lake City, Utah region with a focus on economic, social, and environmental impact of the resorts and resulting area management techniques. Students had the opportunity to develop an understanding and appreciation of the snow sport industry through site visits, interviews with prominent industry leaders, skiing/riding at different resorts, and guided reflections on those experiences.

Our adventure began in Salt Lake City (SLC) where we picked up rental gear and headed downtown for dinner. Students shared

their research presentations over slices of pizza; topics ranged from the history of Brighton Ski Resort, to crowd control in Little and Big Cottonwood Canyons, to the controversy surrounding Vail Resort's purchase of Park City Mountain Resort, to the impact of the winter Olympic games on the ski/snowboard tourism industry in SLC. With our new knowledge of the area, we were psyched to get up at 6:30am and head up to Brighton Ski Resort the next morning with over 30 inches of fresh powder falling overnight. The course followed a packed schedule, as we played hard and worked hard. We arrived for first chair on the mountain each morning for two days at Brighton (Big Cottonwood Canyon), one at Snowbird (Little Cottonwood Canyon), and one at Canyons/Park City Mountain Resort (Parley's Canyon). We skied until 2:00pm most days and then

had afternoon and evening meetings with prominent industry professionals. We met with Kelly Robbins, owner and instructor of the Splitboard Education Collective, Raelene Davis, Vice President of Marketing for SkiUtah (major marketing company for all Utah ski resorts), Dr. Kelly Bricker and Dr. Jeff Rose, University of Utah professors who research sustainability and tourism, and finally with Mayor Andy Beerman, Park City's mayor. Meeting with members of Mayor Beerman's council, particularly the Director of Housing and Director of Sustainability, was an added bonus. With Park City a potential host city for the 2030 Winter Olympic Games, our eyes were opened to some of the considerations in taking on the Games.

We aim to return next January with another great class of students! For more information please contact: Callie Schultz at csschultz@wcu.edu.

David Westling Receives UNC System's Holshouser Award for Excellence in Public Service

Article originally published by the Office of Communications and Public Relations

Dr. David L. Westling, Western Carolina University's Adelaide Worth Daniels Distinguished Professor of Special Education, was honored as recipient of one of the top honors presented by the University of North Carolina System – the Gov. James E. Holshouser Jr. Award for Excellence in Public Service. Westling accepted the honor from Harry L. Smith Jr., chair of the Board of Governors, during its meeting in Chapel Hill on Friday, November 9, 2018. Named for a former North Carolina governor, the award was created in 2007 to recognize and reward public service by UNC System faculty.

Westling has been a nationally and internationally recognized leader in the field of special education for nearly 50 years, particularly as it involves individuals with severe and profound disabilities. He came to Cullowhee in 1997 to accept the first endowed distinguished professorship in WCU's history.

Over the past 21 years, Westling has received more than \$7.5 million in grant funding for projects ranging from implementation of a support program to help special education teachers avoid rapid career burnout, to an effort to address a shortage of educators and school support staff qualified to work with students with severe physical and developmental disabilities. His work with many WCU undergraduate and graduate students has prepared them with the skill set they need to meet the educational needs of society's often-forgotten children, and he has been a mentor to many colleagues in WCU's College of Education and Allied Professions and around the nation and world. "His actions, research and service have fundamentally shaped the field of special and inclusive education," Alison Morrison-Shetlar wrote in a nomination letter for the award.

One of the most visible examples of Westling's work at WCU is the University Participant Program, which he co-directs with Dr. Kelly Kelley, Associate Professor of Inclusive and Special Education. The program brings individuals with intellectual disabilities to campus for a two-year living and learning experience, which helps them transition from secondary school to adult life with education, employment, and independent living. About 200 WCU students volunteer with the program annually to not only assist program participants but also to gain insight into the struggles faced by young people with intellectual disabilities. WCU's UP Program is recognized as a model initiative both nationally and internationally.

"The University of North Carolina is fortunate to have you as a distinguished member of its faculty," Smith said as he presented the award. "You've demonstrated sustained and superb achievement in university public service and in contributing to the quality of life of the citizens of North Carolina and beyond."

Westling thanked Smith, the Board of Governors, and UNC System President Margaret Spellings for the honor, and also expressed appreciation to his family members for their support, and to his colleagues in the College of Education and Allied Professions – particularly Kelley, his partner in overseeing the UP Program. "Anything



that is said about the UP Program at Western Carolina University just couldn't be said without her work," Westling said.

He also thanked WCU's administration, Board of Trustees, and all the faculty for their support. "One of the best things about the university is, if you say, 'I think I have a good idea; what do you think of this?,' the doors are wide open, and that's really important," Westling said.

"In the final analysis, it's all about people," he said. "I really feel that what we should do, if we're doing anything at all, is we should help people achieve their maximum potential, because that's what's really important. If people are able to do that, I think the world is really a much better place, and that's what I've tried to do over the years."

More information about the University Participant Program is available online at up.wcu.edu. Details about WCU's Special Education Program are available at special.wcu.edu.

Kofi Lomotey Receives Honor for Educational Leadership

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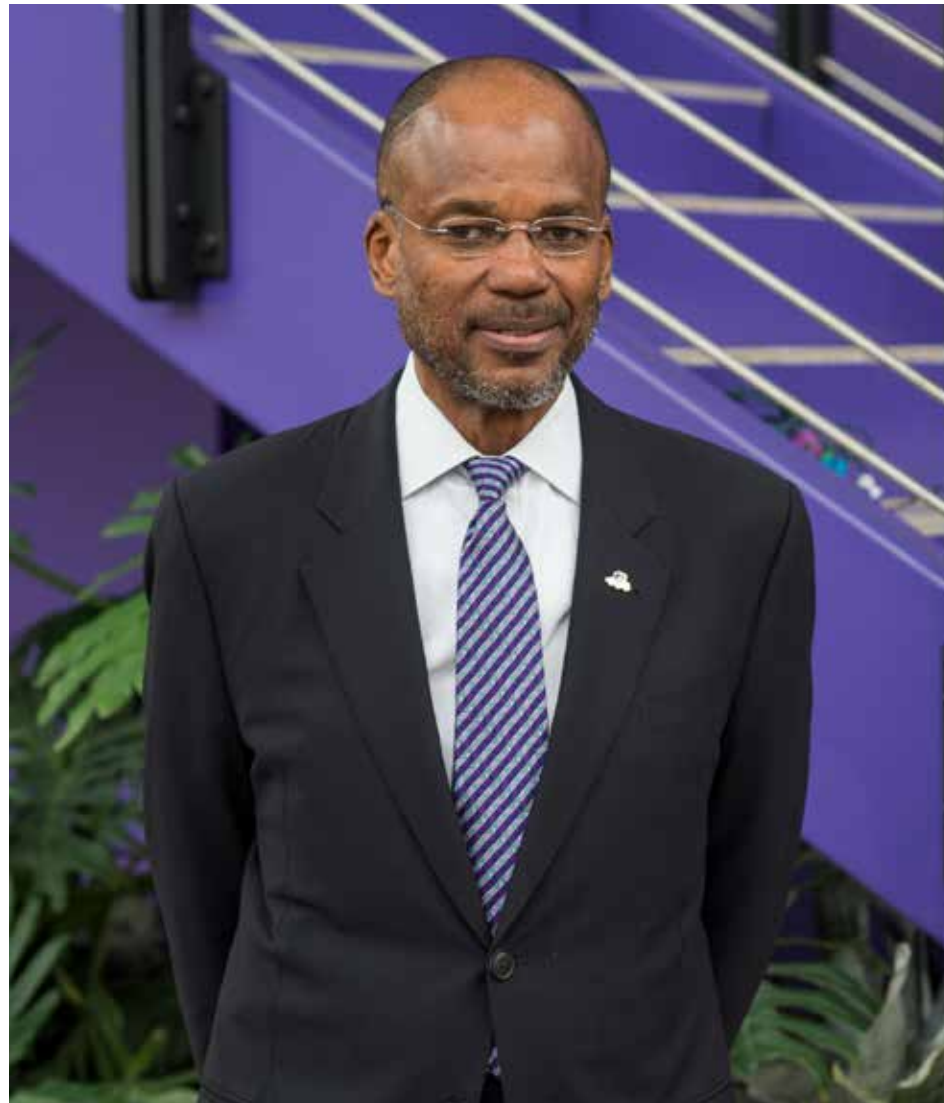
Dr. Kofi Lomotey, the Bardo Distinguished Professor of Educational Leadership at Western Carolina University, has been presented a “Hidden Figures” award for 2018 by the University Council for Educational Administration. To be nominated, an educator must be considered a foundational scholar and trailblazer who has broken barriers, disrupted the status quo and opened doors on educational leadership and policy.

The University Council for Educational Administration is a higher education institutions consortium dedicated to improving the profession of educational administration and leadership. The award was given to Lomotey during the nonprofit organization’s 32nd annual convention, held Nov. 14-18, 2018 in Houston, Texas.

“This award was established to identify behind-the-scenes giants in the field whose work we cannot ignore,” said Terah Venzant Chambers, UCEA president-elect, in making the presentation. “You are viewed as one of our council of elders who provide wisdom, guiding strength and love, and serve with joy, enthusiasm and excellence, expecting nothing in return. Your influence in today’s rising scholars is evident and your research embraces key aspects of UCEA’s mission to promote rigorous research, improve professional development of educational leaders and influence educational policy. Simply put, you are the embodiment of what it means to be revolutionary.”

Lomotey was named WCU’s Chancellor John Bardo and Deborah Bardo Distinguished Professor of Educational Leadership in 2013 to work with the executive doctoral program, developed to prepare senior-level educational leaders to address complex problems. In accepting the award, he noted that social justice and equity issues provide a major framework for all components of the program.

“Our current faculty all who arrived with or following me is committed to preparing leaders who are oriented toward scholarship, collaboration, continuous improvement and social justice in order for them to be



ready to lead educational organizations in meeting 21st-century needs of students, their communities and society,” Lomotey said. “While we have made significant progress, we understand that we have a way to go. Each of us has a responsibility to recognize inequalities and to work to change them. We can either support inequities in society or participate in dismantling them. At WCU, in 2018, we are convinced that a high quality, rigorous program with a social justice orientation is critical for equitable leadership, research and practice.”

“I can’t think of anyone more deserving of this award than Kofi Lomotey,” said Dr. Jess

Weiler, Assistant Professor and Director of WCU’s Educational Leadership Program. “Although most people know of the depth and breadth of his accomplishments in the field of educational leadership, fewer know about his steadfast commitment to mentoring and supporting rising scholars. He understands firsthand the challenges placed upon faculty and uses his years of institutional, experiential and academic knowledge to help them navigate the difficult terrain so that their work elevates research, student-learning and service to society. He is an invaluable asset to our program, our college and the university at large.”

Future Teachers of North Carolina

By Drs. Sarah Meltzer and Tammy Barron

Future Teachers of North Carolina (FTNC) was established by The North Carolina General Statutes, Session Law 2017-57, Section 10.9.(a), in 2017. This legislature established a collaborative partnership between the NC Agricultural & Technical State University, University of NC Wilmington, Western Carolina University, and the NC Department of Public Instruction to help develop high quality teaching and learning across the state. This initiative establishes an opportunity for high school students to be introduced to the teaching profession through a year-long high school class, Teaching as a Profession I and II. Students follow a college-based curriculum developed by the partnership universities which includes the foundation of teacher education in a diverse society and special education. Students participate in an intensive field experience throughout the class. Satisfactory completion of this course and experience allows students to receive 6 credits from one of the three partnering universities.

Having the ability to identify and support prospective pre-service teachers at the high school level is a great opportunity for recruiting strong NC teachers. Many students who enter college considering the teaching profession must wait until their sophomore year before they take a foundation class and can participate in a field experience. By participating in the FTNC classes in high school, students can focus on their chosen career at an early age, allowing them to be better prepared.

The FTNC program accepted their first high school students in the fall of 2018 at 16 high schools across the state of North Carolina. Four of these schools are in our western region: Smoky Mountain High School, East Gaston High School, Ashe County High School, and McDowell High School. The FTNC teachers at each high school must meet college-level requirements in order to teach these classes. They have attended multiple trainings on the curriculum and received

continuous support from the participating universities. Two faculty from each institution have been working diligently to train and support these teachers. Here at WCU, the FTNC faculty are Drs. Tammy Barron and Sarah Meltzer.

Please reach out and welcome our newest FTNC students to WCU this fall. At least three local FTNC students committed to join us in Cullowhee, and we hope more will choose our award-winning teacher education program. High schools choosing to participate in the FTNC program for fall 2019 have doubled. Therefore, we look forward to having many new strong candidates choose to attend WCU in the near future.



Break by the Lake Retreat and Scholarship

The annual Break by the Lake Conference for Student Support Personnel was held October, 2018 at Lake Logan Retreat Center with Kevin “Doc” Klein accompanied by James Rumbaugh as main presenters. Doc Klein’s topic was An Amazing Year, An Amazing Life with insights and strategies to help students and school personnel foster their best year yet. Nine break-out sessions delivered by regional counselors covered various topics central to the work of school and mental health professionals:

- Helping Kids Thrive in Schools Through Social Skills Group Play*
- How to Talk to Kids About Race*
- Increasing Resiliency and Social Emotional Growth in Middle Schoolers*
- Treating Adolescents Who Seek Counseling from a Christian Perspective*
- Introduction to the Embodied Enneagram*
- Using Magic Tricks as Metaphors in Classroom Guidance Lessons*
- Giving Students GPS: Guidance & Protection Through Substances*
- Issues Facing Military/Veteran Families*
- Expressive Arts Practices with Children and Adolescents*

The conference attendees represented 9 school districts, 2 charter schools, 4 mental health agencies, and 3 institutions of higher education. Funds from the conference are used to support the Mary Deck Break by the Lake Scholarship Fund, awarded annually to a WCU



graduate counseling student, and the Haywood County Schools Foundation. Next year’s conference is being planned by representatives from regional school districts and faculty with WCU’s Counseling Program.



The Poverty Simulation at WCU

By Dr. Callie Schultz & Krista Patton

As part of a UNC System Undergraduate Research Award Program (URAP) grant, Western Carolina University and Elizabeth City State University partnered together to purchase the Missouri Community Action Network (MCAN) Poverty Simulation and, with a team of undergraduate researchers, research its efficacy. The inter-disciplinary, inter-university research team is made up of the following WCU members: Co-PIs: Dr. Callie Schultz (PRM), Dr. Gayle Wells (HPE), & Tacquice Davis (ICA). Undergraduate team: Krista Patton (lead-PRM), Taylor Carrigan (PRM), Ashley Johnson (PRM), Matt Long (HPE), & Madison Armstrong (HPE).

The Poverty Simulation is a 3-hour simulation where 50-88 participants must navigate a simulated month in poverty. It is an experiential, visceral, and at times emotional experience of some of the real struggles of life in poverty. It is run by a team of trained facilitators (undergraduate students and faculty) and 20 oriented volunteers. WCU and ECSU are recipients of NC Promise (making college more affordable for students); it is important to acknowledge the poverty level and diversity present in both regions served by the universities. Jackson County (WCU) has a 20.9% poverty rate and Elizabeth City (ECSU) has a 24.3% poverty rate. The average percentage of people living in poverty in the US is 12.7%. So, WCU and ECSU serve regions with close to double the national poverty rate. Therefore, the purpose of our research was to identify the efficacy of the simulation for increasing empathy in undergraduate participants. The main research questions

our research proposed were: How might the simulation experience alter one's perspective on those living in poverty, Does the simulation increase empathy in participants, and How were stereotypes about poverty challenged? The simulation was implemented three times at WCU for over 170 students. We gathered data on lessons learned by participants (specifically centered around increases in empathy and efficacy for challenging stereotypes) through a mix-methods retrospective pre-post survey and guided focus group interviews during the simulation debrief sessions. We transcribed audio-recorded focus group data and analyzed our data using qualitative coding to reveal themes indicating commonalities between participant feelings and understandings that related to the simulation experience.

As we send the simulation kit to ECSU for them to run it in April, our WCU research team will be presenting their findings on three separate papers at WCU's Research and Scholarship Celebration as well as the National Conference on Undergraduate Research. They are also working on a manuscript that will be completed early summer for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. The kit will return to WCU in the fall. We plan on running two iterations of the simulation through ICA next year. If you/your students would like to be involved in 1) running the simulation 2) participating in the simulation or 3) doing research on some aspect of the simulation next year, please contact Callie Schultz at csschultz@wcu.edu.

CEAP Snippets

- **Dr. Charmion Rush**, Assistant Professor in the School of Teaching and Learning, has been selected to participate in WCU's Women's Leadership in Action Program. The program is an intensive, yearlong experience in which participants develop and implement a personal leadership plan, work with a mentor to refine leadership skills, and attend an immersive professional development conference.
- **Dr. Ellie Blair**, faculty member in the School of Teaching and Learning, has published the chapter, "Transformative Teacher Leadership is Inclusive Education: A Cross-Cultural Consideration of Teachers' Work in Jamaica and The United States" in the book, *Responding to Learner Diversity and Learning Difficulties*, D. Conrad and S. Blackman (Editors), in the series, Caribbean Discourse in Inclusive Education, Volume II. The book provides critical reflections and recommendations on the way educational communities respond to student diversity and learning difficulties.
- **Dr. Bob Beudet**, Health and Physical Education faculty member, was honored with the College/University Adapted Physical Education Teacher of the Year Award at the annual NCAAHPERD-SM State Convention in Winston-Salem.
- **Dr. Yancey Gulley**, Assistant Professor in the Higher Education Students Affairs Program, has been named one of the 2019 American College Personnel Associate (ACPA) Diamond Honorees. The Diamond Honoree Program, established in 1999, is a way for those that care about students – and the research, scholarship, and programs that promote student development and success – to help advance efforts of the ACAP.
- Parks and Recreation Management faculty members **Dr. Andrew Bobilya** and Professor Emeritus **Dr. Maurice Phipps** presented workshops at the Association for Outdoor Recreation and Education (AORE) and Wilderness Education Association (WEA) joint conference in Snowbird, Utah October 23-27, 2018. Dr. Bobilya was also honored by the WEA as the Outdoor Educator of the Year.
- **Amanda Clapp**, Science Teacher at the Catamount School, received notification that her National Board Certification has been renewed for another ten years. National Board Certification (NBC) is a voluntary, advanced teaching credential that goes beyond state licensure. NBC has national standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. The National Board certifies teachers who successfully complete its rigorous certification process.
- Congratulations! Parks and Recreation Management received permission from the UNC system to plan their Master's program in Experiential and Outdoor Education. Next step: Request to Establish, due in June 2019.
- **Dr. April Perry** and two colleagues published a new manuscript in the *Journal of the Professoriate*, entitled "New Faculty Transitions and Obstacles: An Auto-Ethnographic Exploration."



- Several Health and Physical Education Professors and undergraduates went to SPEAK OUT DAY in Washington DC recently to advocate for increasing the funding available for Health and Physical Education teachers throughout the country.
- **Heather McGuire**, Suite 201 advisor, received an Apple Polishing Award from the Theta Pi Chapter of the National Order of Omega Greek Leadership Honor Society. The award recognizes members of the community who have been selected by students for meritorious service.
- **Suite 201**, the student support center for CEAP, received the 2019 Graddy Award, presented by the WCU Graduate School. The award recognizes outstanding service or scholarship to the Graduate School.
- **Dr. Roya Scales** and colleagues received the Review of Research Award at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) annual meeting. Their work entitled "Teachers' Instructional Adaptations: A Research Synthesis" was published last academic year. This award is given in recognition of an outstanding review of research article appearing in the *Review of Educational Research*.
- **Drs. Robert Crow** and **Brandi Hinnant-Crawford**, faculty of educational research, and Dean Spaulding, publish a new text on improvement science, titled, *The Educational Leader's Guide to Improvement Science*.
- **Dr. Ellie Blair** has been awarded the Society of Education Professor's 2019 Book Award for her 2018 publication of "By the light of the silvery moon: Teacher moonlighting and the dark side of teachers' work."
- **Dr. Alvin Malesky**, Department Head of the Department of Psychology, has received the 2019 Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award, presented by Acting Chancellor Morrison-Shetlar at the Faculty and Staff Excellence Awards on April 26, 2019. This award is the most prestigious on-campus award, and recognizes superior teaching and meritorious performance.



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204 Killian
1 University Drive
Cullowhee, NC 28723

CEAP News

CONTACT US:
91 Killian Building Lane / Cullowhee, NC 28723 / 828.227.7311

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CONTACT OUR ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS

HUMAN SERVICES

91 Killian Building Lane
Killian, Room 208
Cullowhee, NC 28723
828.227.7310

SCHOOL OF TEACHING & LEARNING

1 University Drive
Reid Gym, Room 100
Cullowhee, NC 28723
828.227.7108

PSYCHOLOGY

91 Killian Building Lane
Killian, Room 302B
Cullowhee, NC 28723
828.227.7361