Perhaps more now than at any other time in its history, Western Carolina University is reaching out to help military members realize their educational dreams and goals. Western currently serves scores of military students from all branches, many of whom are stationed abroad in places like Korea and Iraq, and others who reside locally and attend classes on Western’s campus.

In addition to assisting military students while they are on active duty, Western’s Division for Educational Outreach also supports students who have retired or separated from active service. Since many of these students remain driven by their desire to serve others, teaching in public schools becomes a very attractive new career option.

NC TEACH is a lateral-entry teacher-training opportunity available to anyone with a bachelor’s degree, military or civilian, who is interested in becoming a North Carolina public school teacher. NC TEACH recruits qualified mid-career adults and recent college graduates as teachers while they take education courses leading to full licensure.

Ben Garner is a Western Carolina student and military member who has reaped maximum benefits from the NC TEACH program, and who has subsequently given back to students in North Carolina. After two prior attempts to apply for NC TEACH had been interrupted by deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq, Ben again applied in the summer of 2004. That fall, he was hired at Waynesville Middle School, where he now teaches special education.

NC TEACH allowed Ben to be immediately employed as a teacher, even though his undergraduate degree was not in the field of education. Without NC TEACH, Ben would have had to return to college for at least another year before he would be eligible to even apply for a teaching position.

“NC TEACH is aimed for people like Garner and his colleagues,” says Janice Holt, coordinator of NC TEACH at Western. “The program helps professionals who want to make a career change and who want to make a difference in society.”

Employers of NC TEACH participants benefit tremendously by having people like Ben at their schools. “Ben Garner is one of the finest teachers I have ever seen,” said Bill Nolte, former Waynesville Middle School principal. “His military experience is a wonderful asset to the school, and he has a number of leadership skills that make him and the school more effective.”

See Military Education, page 6
We Are Not the University of Phoenix!
by PAT BROWN

Over the past few years, we have extended our resources to serve adult learners through online courses and programs. We are quite different from the University of Phoenix, a classic for-profit adult-centered university. Since there is a tendency to reference the University of Phoenix when talking about online programs, I thought it might be helpful to look at some key differences.

For-profit adult-centered universities differ significantly from public traditional higher education institutions like WCU. They are tuition driven with the expectation of generating a return on investment for the benefit of their shareholders. Consequently, tuition is significantly higher than that of public institutions. Tuition rates for the University of Phoenix are currently $494/credit hour undergraduate and $612/credit hour graduate for their online courses. WCU’s distance-learning tuition is $76.29/credit undergraduate and $123.55/credit graduate for in-state students.

The instructional model at WCU is mission-driven and course supported. Faculty credentials are key indicators in the quality of the institution. Quality factors are articulated through the institution’s governance structure and supported by administration. Faculty engagement in course and program development is encouraged and supported. The Coulter Faculty Center provides a rich array of options for faculty to explore and integrate technology and various learning models and strategies into their courses. The result is that each course is unique to the style and expertise of the faculty member.

The Coulter Faculty Center provides a rich array of options for faculty to explore and integrate technology and various learning models and strategies into their courses. The result is that each course is unique to the style and expertise of the faculty member.

Standards are in place, and a “best practices” approach is used to benchmark quality; yet each faculty member has the freedom and latitude to create a robust virtual learning environment for students. The result is a peer-influenced approach to online course development. Online teaching and learning continues to expand and grow in quality. The structure of the course is central to the instructional process.

The instructional model at for-profit institutions like the University of Phoenix is standardized. In a standardized model, the course structure and content is consistent for all sections of the course. An administrative team with input from content experts develops courses following a standard-course template. All faculty are part-time. They are contracted to facilitate courses and serve as course administrators. The faculty role in student interaction is limited. In standardized courses, the level and types of student experience are the greatest variables.

The standardized model allows the University of Phoenix to offer the same course to a large population of students with a high level of consistency. The metrics for quality are very different from those of traditional higher education institutions, where more emphasis is on inputs to course development than outputs. The structure of the course is, in essence, the key building block of the product line of a for-profit institution.
Western Offers
Nurse Educator Modules
by SUSAN FOUTS

Is it important for nurse educators to understand how to teach adults?

The North Carolina Board of Nursing thinks so, and so do boards of nursing across the nation. So where do nurses go to learn about teaching and learning? Western offers two alternatives to nurses who need to meet the new 45-contact-hour requirement and to nurses either currently working as community college or university faculty or who want to be faculty in nursing programs.

The first path to meet these requirements is to take three credit courses in the Master’s in Nursing Education program. These courses are online and available to learners wherever they may live. The second path to meet these requirements is a series of three nursing continuing education online modules. These modules are a part of the nursing continuing education courses that WCU can provide through its North Carolina Nursing Association Approved Provider Unit.

The Department of Nursing and the Division of Educational Outreach partnered to create the approved provider unit. The other university-based approved provider units are at UNC–Chapel Hill and Duke University.

Dr. Judy Mallory, director of the Nurse Educator program, developed a 15-contact-hour course in each of the required areas: Teaching and Learning, Curriculum Development, and Testing and Measurement. Judy was assisted by Helen Freeman, Nursing Educator at Mission Hospital.

According to Helen and Judy, these courses will give any nurse educator an overview of the area of adult learning needed to become a nurse educator or to improve the skills of a nurse educator.

Nurses in this region who were surveyed show a great interest in online education because of the geographic distance to live classes and because of the difficulty of attending classes during the day.

Nursing continuing education is important in achieving and maintaining a high level of health care in the region. These courses are a part of the university’s commitment to providing high-quality professional development to meet the needs of the region.

Judy Mallory (center) is the director of the Nurse Educator program.
On Friday, August 18, 2006, Western Carolina University, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and Wake Forest University celebrated the official beginning of the Culturally Based Native Health Program (CBNHP). The day started with a gathering at the Kituwah Mound, the sacred site and Mother Town of the Cherokee. Representatives from the cooperating institutions were led in prayer by Cherokee elder and councilwoman, Marie Junaluska. Tom Belt, a Cherokee elder from Oklahoma, and Billy Rogers, a pioneer of Native Wellness and Kiowa elder, each spoke of the commitment and dedication that is needed to serve American Indian communities.

The CBNHP’s collaborative effort was formalized with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on the Wake Forest University campus November 17, 2006. The CBNHP was created to target strategies to overcome the growing health disparities that exist between Native peoples and other U.S. populations. The CBNHP embraces three components:

• Graduate Curriculum
• Native Youth to Health Careers Initiative
• Applied Research at the Request of Tribes.

Cultural expertise would be provided by tribal members who will pair with a faculty member in developing the course for online or computer access.

Graduate Curriculum and Master’s-Level Certificate

With more than two years in planning, Western Carolina University worked with health professionals and community members of the Eastern Band to identify and develop a curriculum that would prepare health professionals to be more culturally appropriate in their practice among Native peoples of the South and East. It was decided that a graduate-level certificate program would be developed in full collaboration with tribal communities. Tribal members, who will pair with a faculty member in developing the course for online or computer access, will provide important cultural expertise. The purpose of the courses is to:

• Educate health professionals of the long and complicated relationship between American Indians and the federal government;
• Inform health-care providers of the unique nature of tribal health policy and related issues;
• Provide cultural awareness of tribal protocol involving patients of various ages, gender, degrees of acculturation, geographical upbringing, and expectations.

Four courses in each of four different tracks will be developed over the next three years. Tracks in American Indian Health Administration, Native Culture and History, American Indian Behavioral Health, and Native Primary Clinical Care will be offered.

Native Youth to Health Careers Initiative

Another identified need for American Indian communities is Native health professionals to work in their communities. An initiative is being developed with Wake Forest University to create a program in which Native children in high school will self-identify as interested in furthering their education in a health-related field. This program will work with students to provide academic, financial, and preparatory support. A summer camp, which includes high-tech diagnostics and activities to encourage these young people to discover new options in the health fields, is planned.

Applied Research at the Request of Tribes

Anyone familiar with American Indian history is all too aware of the exploitation of Native people. In their own words, “We have been researched to death.” Consequently, as health demands grow and new challenges arise, the partnering academic institutions will provide research only at the request of the tribe.
The mission of Qualla Financial Freedom is to help the Cherokee community achieve financial balance and harmony through education and counseling. The community is served by youth programs, a resource library, individual financial counseling, training and classes. Studies indicate that money attitudes and habits begin at an early age. QFF offers programs to pre-school age children in:

- Community clubs
- After-school programs
- In-class instruction
- 4-H financial groups

Developed in 2002 and initially funded by the Cherokee Preservation Foundation, the Qualla Financial Freedom program is housed at the WCU–Cherokee Center at 1594 Acquoni Road, Cherokee, NC 28719. QFF is a collaboration between Western Carolina University, Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Western North Carolina, and the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service in Cherokee.

The resource library is located at the Cherokee Center. Some of the resources available include:

- Pre K–12th grade leisure reading
- Printed lessons and games for families about allowance, budgeting and parenting
- Teacher resource materials
- Information about credit, saving, retirement and investing
- Internet access and research.

QFF offers a vast array of classes and training for individuals and groups. Certified financial counseling is also available to individuals:

- Manage Your Money workshop
- Debt-resolution planning
- How to Raise a Money-Smart Child workshop
- Building Native Communities: Financial Skills for Families workshop
- One-on-one confidential financial counseling.
Ben is careful to remind prospective NC TEACH participants that licensure courses apply toward a master's degree. Many students, like Ben, continue to work toward a master of arts in teaching degree at Western after they have completed the required teacher licensure courses, a commitment that will earn them a 12% increase in salary.

Alpha Sigma Lambda National Honor Society was established in 1945 as a means of recognizing academic excellence for nontraditional students. The society seeks to motivate and recognize adult students who, while managing work, family and other life responsibilities, achieve and maintain high scholastic standards. The name of the society frames its motto “First in Scholarship and Leadership.”

Dr. Pat Brown, dean of Educational Outreach is currently the society president.

Western Carolina University was accepted as the 300th chapter of Alpha Sigma Lambda National Honor Society at the society’s 2004 annual meeting. The Mu Epsilon Chapter is housed in the Division of Educational Outreach. Dr. Regis Gilman, associate dean, serves as the national counselor for the chapter.

For induction into the society, Western Carolina University’s adult students must meet the following requirements:

- Complete a minimum of 60 semester hours of graded credit, of which 30 semester hours are completed with Western Carolina University and 15 semester hours are in the liberal arts;
- Have an overall grade-point average of 3.5 or higher that includes graded courses taken at other institutions as well as Western Carolina University.

The induction will be conducted Thursday, April 19. Eligible seniors will be presented the society’s burgundy and gold honor cords, which they may wear at commencement in recognition of their honor status. Eligible juniors will be able to participate in the Malcolm J. Loughlin Scholarship program that requires a written petition for recognition based upon their attributes and achievements as outlined in the application. The scholarship was established in memory of Malcolm J. Loughlin, former associate dean of the division.

Students are notified in advance and provided an invitation to participate in the induction ceremony and/or scholarship program.

For more information:

Troops to Teachers and Spouses to Teachers
Douglas M. Taggart
(888) 878-1600
dtaggart@dpi.state.nc.us

Military Education at WCU
Chuck Gross
(800) 928-4723
cgross@email.wcu.edu

NC TEACH
Janice Holt
(828) 227-3310
www.ceap.wcu.edu/ncteach

Military Education
Continued from page 1

While stationed in Iraq, Ben Garner, an alumnus of WCU’s NC TEACH program, also helped children.

For more information:

Troops to Teachers and Spouses to Teachers
Douglas M. Taggart
(888) 878-1600
dtaggart@dpi.state.nc.us

Military Education at WCU
Chuck Gross
(800) 928-4723
cgross@email.wcu.edu

NC TEACH
Janice Holt
(828) 227-3310
www.ceap.wcu.edu/ncteach

Military Education
Continued from page 1

Ben is careful to remind prospective NC TEACH participants that licensure courses apply toward a master’s degree. Many students, like Ben, continue to work toward a master of arts in teaching degree at Western after they have completed the required teacher licensure courses, a commitment that will earn them a 12% increase in salary.

Alpha Sigma Lambda National Honor Society was established in 1945 as a means of recognizing academic excellence for nontraditional students. The society seeks to motivate and recognize adult students who, while managing work, family and other life responsibilities, achieve and maintain high scholastic standards. The name of the society frames its motto “First in Scholarship and Leadership.”

Dr. Pat Brown, dean of Educational Outreach is currently the society president.

Western Carolina University was accepted as the 300th chapter of Alpha Sigma Lambda National Honor Society at the society’s 2004 annual meeting. The Mu Epsilon Chapter is housed in the Division of Educational Outreach. Dr. Regis Gilman, associate dean, serves as the national counselor for the chapter.

For induction into the society, Western Carolina University’s adult students must meet the following requirements:

- Complete a minimum of 60 semester hours of graded credit, of which 30 semester hours are completed with Western Carolina University and 15 semester hours are in the liberal arts;
- Have an overall grade-point average of 3.5 or higher that includes graded courses taken at other institutions as well as Western Carolina University.

The induction will be conducted Thursday, April 19. Eligible seniors will be presented the society’s burgundy and gold honor cords, which they may wear at commencement in recognition of their honor status. Eligible juniors will be able to participate in the Malcolm J. Loughlin Scholarship program that requires a written petition for recognition based upon their attributes and achievements as outlined in the application. The scholarship was established in memory of Malcolm J. Loughlin, former associate dean of the division.

Students are notified in advance and provided an invitation to participate in the induction ceremony and/or scholarship program.

For more information:

Troops to Teachers and Spouses to Teachers
Douglas M. Taggart
(888) 878-1600
dtaggart@dpi.state.nc.us

Military Education at WCU
Chuck Gross
(800) 928-4723
cgross@email.wcu.edu

NC TEACH
Janice Holt
(828) 227-3310
www.ceap.wcu.edu/ncteach

Military Education
Continued from page 1

Ben is careful to remind prospective NC TEACH participants that licensure courses apply toward a master’s degree. Many students, like Ben, continue to work toward a master of arts in teaching degree at Western after they have completed the required teacher licensure courses, a commitment that will earn them a 12% increase in salary.

Alpha Sigma Lambda National Honor Society was established in 1945 as a means of recognizing academic excellence for nontraditional students. The society seeks to motivate and recognize adult students who, while managing work, family and other life responsibilities, achieve and maintain high scholastic standards. The name of the society frames its motto “First in Scholarship and Leadership.”

Dr. Pat Brown, dean of Educational Outreach is currently the society president.

Western Carolina University was accepted as the 300th chapter of Alpha Sigma Lambda National Honor Society at the society’s 2004 annual meeting. The Mu Epsilon Chapter is housed in the Division of Educational Outreach. Dr. Regis Gilman, associate dean, serves as the national counselor for the chapter.

For induction into the society, Western Carolina University’s adult students must meet the following requirements:

- Complete a minimum of 60 semester hours of graded credit, of which 30 semester hours are completed with Western Carolina University and 15 semester hours are in the liberal arts;
- Have an overall grade-point average of 3.5 or higher that includes graded courses taken at other institutions as well as Western Carolina University.

The induction will be conducted Thursday, April 19. Eligible seniors will be presented the society’s burgundy and gold honor cords, which they may wear at commencement in recognition of their honor status. Eligible juniors will be able to participate in the Malcolm J. Loughlin Scholarship program that requires a written petition for recognition based upon their attributes and achievements as outlined in the application. The scholarship was established in memory of Malcolm J. Loughlin, former associate dean of the division.

Students are notified in advance and provided an invitation to participate in the induction ceremony and/or scholarship program.

For more information:

Troops to Teachers and Spouses to Teachers
Douglas M. Taggart
(888) 878-1600
dtaggart@dpi.state.nc.us

Military Education at WCU
Chuck Gross
(800) 928-4723
cgross@email.wcu.edu

NC TEACH
Janice Holt
(828) 227-3310
www.ceap.wcu.edu/ncteach
Western’s Gerontology Research Project Focuses on “No More Falls”
by MARCIA CASERIO

Have you fallen in the last three months? Do you feel falling is a normal part of aging?

These are some questions that Western’s Distance Education graduate students in gerontology studies are asking older adults as part of a unique study in Henderson County. Funded via a grant from the North Carolina Center for Healthy Aging, they are conducting fall-prevention research through a project, “No More Falls,” sponsored by the Western Carolina University Partnership for Aging and Pardee Hospital.

Led by Western graduate students and Pardee care managers Jean Sitton and Jeanne Rathburn, in conjunction with Western staff member Marcia Caserio MAEd, the project is identifying older adults at five community sites in the Henderson County area who are at risk of falling. Through a combination of screenings, focus groups, surveys, education and home-safety assessments, the group hopes to gain information that will aid in establishing a community-wide fall-prevention program.

Avoiding falls is also a focus within Pardee Hospital, according to Sally Davenport, the hospital’s Interim CEO. She says, “Because of the research endeavors of our nursing and case management associates with Western, we see a positive spillover effect on quality of care within our hospital. This is timely, given that one of the National Patient Safety Goals is fall prevention in the hospital setting.”

Beyond the hospital, other community partners in the “No More Falls” research project include Carolina Village, a continuing care retirement community; the Sammy Williams and Edneyville Senior Centers; Pardee’s Health Education Center; and Kenmure, a retirement community.

Through a combination of screenings, focus groups, surveys, education and home-safety assessments, the group hopes to gain information that will aid in establishing a community-wide fall-prevention program.

Medical center administrator at Carolina Village, Kevin Parries knows how dangerous falls are to more than 500 older adults living there. As a student in Western’s gerontology program, Parries orchestrated the screenings and education sessions for over 100 residents of Carolina Village with an average age of 85. He says, “Through my participation in the “No More Falls” project, I see a great opportunity for our physical therapy and exercise programs to intervene in fall risk for our residents. The screening process has identified that many residents are at risk.”

At the Village and at other community sites, Pardee Hospital’s licensed physical therapist Chloe Egan works with the research team teaching older adults that they can do simple exercises to help themselves. She says, “By strengthening lower body muscles, we can preserve the ability to get in and out of a chair safely. Many falls happen during that process.”

Western alumnus and senior center case manager Suzanne Sherrill finds Egan’s advice useful, too. “Through my observation during the research,” she says, “I can demonstrate and reinforce these exercises with our seniors and improve their confidence about avoiding falls.”

Educational Outreach staff member Marcia Caserio says, “The “No More Falls” education sessions help older adults stay on their feet, not the floor, but it is exciting to see that through applied gerontology research projects, our students and staff are learning as much about risk factors and fall prevention as our seniors.”

Note: Western alumnus and current students in the graduate gerontology program who have volunteered their time in the “No More Falls” research project include the following: Mary Lehman, Jean Sitton, Jeanne Rathburn, Sara Leatham, Suzanne Sherrill, and Kevin Parries.
Mountain Dulcimer Week

June 24–29

Western will host the Eighth Annual Mountain Dulcimer Week. This nationwide gathering of dulcimer enthusiasts has been called the “Harvard” of dulcimer workshops. From beginners to advanced players, participants will be able to hone their playing skills in one of nine different skill-level morning programs and explore the versatility of this Appalachian instrument in over 40 afternoon electives.

The award-winning instructors are patient and dedicated teachers who take advantage of the relaxed atmosphere to show students how to pick out and memorize melodies and how music works, and to help widen the musical horizons of both the young and old.

Our week specializes in the mountain dulcimer, a lovely stringed instrument sometimes called the Appalachian, lap or fretted dulcimer. It was first developed in the early 1800s by pioneers who settled in the Southern Appalachians. Today the mountain dulcimer has a widespread following throughout the country. It should not be confused with the hammered dulcimer, which is an entirely different instrument with different playing techniques. To find out more information, please visit http://edoutreach.wcu.edu/dulcimer or call 828-227-7397.

NC Teacher Academy

Western is once again proud to be a host site for the North Carolina Teacher Academy, NCTA is a professional-development program established for teachers and funded by the North Carolina General Assembly. The mission of the academy is to support continuous learning for the growth of a career teacher by providing quality professional development in the areas of school leadership, instructional methodology, core content, and use of modern technology in order to enrich instruction and enhance student achievement. For summer 2007, Western will host seven weeks of NCTA training and over 700 teachers and administrators from across the state as a part of this important partnership. For information, see http://teacheracademy.org.

Native Plants in the Landscape

(a.k.a. The Cullowhee Conference)

July 18–21

Western will again host the Cullowhee Conference, the purpose of which is to increase interest in and knowledge of propagating and preserving native southeastern plant species in the landscape. Past participants of the conference have included landscape architects; commercial nursery operators; garden-club members; botanists; and horticulturists from state highway departments, universities, native plant societies, botanical gardens, and arboretums. Both professionals and laypersons will gain valuable knowledge from the informative field trips, lectures and workshops.

Along with the informative conference presentations, a number of exciting field trips, during which participants can literally get their hands on the subject matter, are planned. Typical trip destinations include Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest, the Blue Ridge Parkway, Shining Rock Wilderness Area, and many other scenic locations. Registration will open in May. To learn more, visit http://nativeplants.wcu.edu.