

Chancellor's Update: Faculty Senate Meeting, February 24, 2021

COVID Activity on Campus

COVID activity on campus continues to remain relatively low. In the past week, we had 13 total confirmed cases of COVID-19. On-campus, we had 7 positive cases out of 552 administered tests. This is a positivity rate of 1.3%. We currently have 7 students in isolation on-campus and 52 in self-isolation off-campus. We are expecting these numbers will increase some with the resumption of face-to-face and hybrid classes, but we will continue testing and monitoring throughout the spring.

WCU Regional Clinic Update and Vaccination Prioritization

Although we had planned to open our regional vaccination clinic this past week, shipment delays from the severe winter weather across the country caused us not to receive our vaccine allocation for the week. Pending vaccine shipments, we will begin to offer vaccinations to those in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the prioritization groups by the end of the week.

Gov. Roy Cooper and NCDHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen recently announced that the State's transition into COVID vaccination Group 3 will be multi-phased, with those working in child care or PreK-12 education being eligible starting this week on Feb. 24. More information can be found [here](#).

According to the Governor's announced timeline, the state plans to expand vaccine eligibility to additional Group 3 workers, including most frontline workers on university campuses, **March 10**. The following UNC System employees do qualify in the PreK-12 school category:

- Student Teachers – For those who have student teachers actively teaching in PreK-12 schools, student teachers are listed under “PreK-12 Roles” in the Deeper Dive guidance linked above, and thus are eligible for the vaccine starting Feb 24.

A “frontline essential worker” is defined by NCDHHS as a worker in one of eight designated essential industries (including education) who must be in-person at his or her place of work. Guidance outlining this definition can be found [here](#).

Board of Governors Meeting

At their meeting on February 18, I was so pleased that the Board of Governors announced WCU Professor Dr. Billy Ogletree as winner of the 2021 Governor James E. Holshouser, Jr. Award for Excellence in Public Service. The award honors faculty who exemplify the University's commitment to service and community engagement. Dr. Ogletree will receive a \$7,500 stipend and a bronze medallion in honor of his work. The full announcement can be seen at <https://www.wcu.edu/stories/posts/News/2021/02/holshouser-award-2021.aspx>.

In other business, the Board of Governors approved our request to increase the Health Services Fee by \$36. The Board also increased the Campus Security Fee at all UNC campuses. WCU's fee was increased by \$30 and we will begin charging this campus security fee in Fall 2021.

Finally, the Board announced that Darrell Allison, a longtime education advocate and champion of North Carolina's historically minority-serving institutions, was named the 12th chancellor of Fayetteville State University on Thursday. He was elected by the University of North Carolina Board of Governors, following his nomination by University of North Carolina System President Peter Hans.

February 2021 Consensus General Fund Revenue Forecast

On Thursday, February 11, the February 2021 Consensus General Fund Revenue Forecast was officially released. [OSBM's one-pager is found here](#) and [Fiscal Research Division's full report is found here](#). The revenue forecast was better than expected, which was welcome news.

University Accolades

- Ben Francis-Fallon, an associate professor of history, was named the winner of The Huntington Library's inaugural Shapiro Book Prize for his "The Rise of the Latino Vote: A History," published by Harvard University Press. Francis-Fallon was formally presented the prize, given for an outstanding first book on American history and culture, on Wednesday, Feb. 3, during a webinar. The Huntington is one of the largest repositories of American historical materials in the nation and includes expansive and diverse holdings in history, literature and high and popular culture.
- Sarah Carpenter, a graduate student in WCU's nurse practitioner program, recently learned she was the recipient of the Fullerton Medical Scholarship Award. The Fullerton Medical Scholarship Program was established by The Fullerton Foundation in 1985 to support the development of primary care providers in the Carolinas. The program seeks to improve the availability of primary care providers in upstate South Carolina and Western North Carolina by providing substantial tuition assistance to medical students and student nurse practitioners who intend to practice some form of primary care. Carpenter is the second WCU family nurse practitioner student to receive the \$20,000 award in the last three years.
- Western Carolina University has been ranked among the top providers of online programs by U.S. News & World Report in numerous categories for 2021.
- In its evaluation of undergraduate and graduate online programs offered by higher education institutions across the country, the magazine placed WCU at 27th for online bachelor's degree business programs and 32nd for veterans seeking online graduate degrees in business.
- Other rankings included 164th for online bachelor's degree programs overall, 76th for online graduate business programs.

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