



Faculty Forum

From The Faculty Commons for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

Vol. 23, No. 6

February 1, 2011

Climb Higher! See Beyond our Borders

Strategies for Internationalizing WCU

By Lois Petrovich-Mwaniki

Our world is changing dramatically. Increasingly we are being challenged by our academic organizations, administrators, UNC-Tomorrow and other international organizations to make our students more globally aware, to provide opportunities for students to learn how other cultures think and reason, and to introduce our students to people different from themselves. If we don't, our students will not be ready for the new types of jobs and opportunities that await them in this new interconnected society. And they will not be prepared to be the peace-making citizens the world so desperately needs, as technology shrinks our geographic divisions as never before.

Our borders can be philosophical and practical, sociological and personal, real and imagined. They should not prevent us from engaging in activities that take us beyond these borders. An international experience for faculty and students can be challenging and daunting, but truly worth the effort. There are many ways that these experiences can be woven into the current curriculum fabric at WCU, and have been, by a number of departments over the last five years. However, it is important that these experiences are integral, sustainable and owned by all faculty members in the department or program.

In these difficult economic times, the office of International Programs and Services has funding that can assist departments and programs in initiating meaningful international efforts, such as those developed by some WCU departments and colleges:

- Developing dual degree programs, like those by the College of Business with university partners in the Netherlands and Ireland;
- Creating international internships for TESOL (Teaching English as a Second Language), geology, and sport management students;
- Creating internships, like those in the forensic science program for Dutch students from AVANS University of Science and Technology;
- Establishing specific study abroad programs for students in Stage and Screen, Japanese, business, heritage studies, Honors College, and outdoor education;
- Encouraging students to study abroad at over 250 partner universities;

- Leading WCU students overseas on a faculty-led travel course during the semester or summer (18 courses in 2010-11);
- Developing collaborative research projects with international colleagues, like those by Jack Sholder (Stage & Screen), Mark Wilson (Chemistry & Physics), and Cheryl Johnston (Anthropology and Sociology);
- Initiating faculty teaching exchanges, such as Sociology's efforts with a university in Ireland;
- Inviting international faculty to teach or research for a semester or year, as Math, Sociology, Modern Foreign Language, and College of Business have done;
- Participating in WCU's international campus programs, such as the annual International Festival and International Education Week;
- Recruiting international students to your program, like James Zhang (Kimmel), Brian Dinkelmeyer (Chemistry), and Steve Ha (MBA);
- Recruiting international students to the new WCU Intensive English Program, which develops students' listening, writing, and speaking skills to the level that they can succeed in a variety of WCU bachelor programs.

The Office of International Programs and Services has been in existence since 1996. In that time, we have seen remarkable changes in the way WCU faculty participate in internationalizing their curriculums and providing international opportunities for their students at WCU.

If you want to *Climb High and See Beyond the Borders*, International Programs and Services (227-7494) can assist you with study abroad opportunities (**John Schweikart and Josie Bewsey**), faculty-led travel courses (**Claudia Bryant**), recruiting international students (**Christopher Pedro and Kevin Childers**), intensive English students (**Connie Hanna**), faculty exchange/teaching opportunities (**Claudia Bryant or Lois Petrovich-Mwaniki**), and hiring or inviting international scholars (**Lois Petrovich-Mwaniki**).

Lois Petrovich-Mwaniki is the Director of International Programs and Services. She came to WCU in 1990 as the Art Educator for the Art Department. Prior to coming to WCU, she taught at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (laboratory school and art education, and at the Ohio State University. After receiving her bachelor degree in Painting from Carnegie-Mellon University, she taught in the German public schools for 5 years in Rotenburg (north Germany) and in Ehingen/Donau (south Germany). She returned home to earn her Masters Degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and her Ph.D. from Purdue University in art education.

In 1998 she acted as interim Director of the International Programs and Services Department while continuing to teach part-time, and in 2001 became the Director. She continues to serve as Associate Professor in the Art Department. Petrovich-Mwaniki speaks German and some Spanish and was instrumental in getting the Japanese and Chinese language programs started at WCU.

Coulter Faculty Commons for Teaching and Learning

We did not receive any comments or feedback on Erin McNelis' January Faculty Forum article entitled *2011: A Year of Tremendous Change*, despite a follow-up prompt. We were so sorry not to get your feedback, as her summary and insights about the search process for a new chancellor from the Faculty Senate were enlightening and informative. You may still add your comments to her article when you send your feedback to this month's column by Dr. Lois Petrovich-Mwaniki. Please do so; your articulated insights and thoughts about the feature articles in the **Faculty Forum** are crucial to the dialogue.

Editorial Notes

We urge you to add your comments to **Faculty Forum** articles. It enriches the faculty dialogue about these many issues that concern us all. This is a particularly poignant time for faculty at WCU, as we contemplate a new Chancellor. Please take this opportunity to add to this important discussion. You may comment to this article by clicking on this link, then select the article under **What's Hot** on the top right: <https://media.wcu.edu/groups/facultyforum/>. The command requires you to use your email username and password to access the article. The Faculty Forum is a publication by and for WCU faculty, but we do invite comments from staff, who are equally important in the pursuit of excellence here at WCU.

To access the article as a PDF, please select the article link at the following URL:
<http://www.wcu.edu/27638.asp>.

The direct link to the main Faculty Forum Webpage is: <http://www.wcu.edu/7480.asp>.

Disclaimer

The opinions printed here belong solely to the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the editorial staff or of the Faculty Commons. If you would like to respond, you may input your comments directly through the wiki on the Faculty Forum webpage, or e-mail your comments to vguise@wcu.edu and we will post them to the Responses to the article.