I have had a wonderful experience at Western Carolina so far. The atmosphere here is very warm and inviting. It’s like home. I can tell that the professors and other faculty really care.

–Jasmine Wilson

We are so excited that you are interested in the Teaching Fellows Program at Western Carolina University! We know that you will want to be a part of our family once you visit our campus, meet our Teaching Fellows, and learn about our program! We offer an encouraging and supportive environment that we believe you will find refreshing. A wide array of educational, cultural, and social activities, coupled with good friends and extraordinary surroundings, promises to make your time with WCU’s Teaching Fellows Program a rich and valuable life experience. Please contact me to discuss your future teaching career!

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Smith, Director
The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program offers a unique opportunity for students interested in education careers. The program awards $16,500 ($26,000 a year) for four years to high-achieving North Carolina students. Western Carolina University provides an additional $4,000 for a total package of $30,000.* That almost covers the “full ride” at WCU – tuition and fees, on-campus residence, meal plan, and more.

At WCU, you’ll find nearly 190 Teaching Fellows who, in addition to their studies, are involved in such extracurricular activities as writing for the school newspaper, performing in Western’s renowned 300-member Pride of the Mountains marching band, playing intramural sports, participating in plays and concerts, serving in student government, tutoring in local schools, conducting research on campus in professional-caliber laboratories, and much more.

Right from the start, you’ll jump into the teaching profession – observing, assisting, and interning with master educators in local elementary and high schools. For example, freshmen pair elementary children to help increase writing scores, and sophomores tutor in first education classes. You’ll have the option of interning in, or near, your own hometown.

For a broader perspective, you may choose to take part in exchange programs with other U.S. and international colleges while paying tuition at WCU’s rates. Or you can go to Europe with other Teaching Fellows from Western Carolina to study educational methods, philosophies, and curricula abroad. WCU offers a $1,000 scholarship to help cover trip expenses. In the event you do not choose to participate in the Europe trip, this $1,000 can be used to purchase a computer or help in meeting financial expenses while in school.

As a Teaching Fellow at Western Carolina, you’ll enjoy the advantage of accelerated studies, cultural events, field trips, and volunteer and leadership opportunities. You may be eligible for WCU’s Honors College if your qualifications warrant. Furthermore, you’re always welcome in the Teaching Fellows office where students gather to study or hang out together, discuss similar topics, or plan social events like the annual fall retreat, winter outing and the spring formal. All of these experiences help to create a sense of belonging to a special community of friends with similar interests. You’ll fit right in!

GETTING INVOLVED

TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES

DISCOVERY TRIP Ride with us on the Discovery Trip! This seven-day trip takes place each May and offers freshmen a special bird’s eye view of North Carolina through visits to industries, farms, high-tech businesses, corporations, public schools, and opportunities to try the arts.

EUROPE TRIP Today’s educators need to have a broad range of experiences. To meet this need, Western’s Teaching Fellows have the opportunity to participate in our Europe trip, where you will have the chance to study history, culture, art, and world knowledge. This optional summer trip is made available to each freshman class. Additionally, Western Carolina offers a special $1,000 scholarship to assist in covering the cost of travel.

RON CLARK ACADEMY Seniors will take a trip prior to student teaching/intern to metro Atlanta to visit the renowned Ron Clark Academy. Ron Clark is a Teaching Fellow who has successfully opened his own academy. He is well known for his best-selling book, The Essential 55. His school is also featured in the movie, “The Ron Clark Story.”

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

JUNIOR/SENIOR CONFERENCE Each July, juniors and seniors participate in conferences designed to promote discussion and awareness about social and cultural diversity as well as issues specific to the classroom. These conferences also serve as a fantastic networking opportunity when Fellows meet with their counterparts from across the state, along with legislators, distinguished speakers, and members of the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission.

JUNIOR ENRICHMENT These activities are designed as opportunities for you to gain knowledge in areas not usually addressed by your course work and to expand your range of experiences.

SENIOR ORIENTATION WEEK The week is designed to give you a first-hand look at the total school community. Your time will be spent in a central office with the Superintendent and other management staff, as well as in schools in the district. You will get the feel for the day-to-day operations of a school system from the level of the superintendent to the custodial staff. You will gain an understanding of how the puzzle fits together.

SEMINARS (WEEKLY) WCU Teaching Fellows are exposed to a wide range of topics through weekly seminars developed specifically for them. These seminars include information on school violence, technology and education, inclusion, classroom management, child abuse, lesson planning, meeting needs of diverse learners, and cultural diversity.

NCCAT A wonderful resource that is readily accessible to Fellows is the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching (NCCAT). Established by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1985, NCCAT has operated on the campus of Western Carolina University since fall of 1986. The brainchild of former NC Teacher of the Year, Jean Powell, NCCAT’s mission is to provide a dynamic environment in an atmosphere of respect and dignity where North Carolina teachers engage in scholarly activities structured to stimulate intellectual curiosity; to think, question, examine, and discuss; and examine and challenge ideas; have time for reflection, inspiration, and professional networking; and develop renewed enthusiasm for teaching.

UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

SOCIALS Teaching Fellows at WCU are offered opportunities throughout the year to visit regional landmarks, such as the Biltmore Estates in Asheville. Other events include area attractions, dances (formal), movie nights, pizza/games socials, and group hikes.

BALSAM HALL Home to Teaching Fellows and Honors College students, Balsam Hall is air conditioned and consists of both single and double rooms with private bath and shared kitchen. Occupants of private rooms share a bath with one other private room resident, while each double room has its own bath. Residents of each floor can take advantage of a common living area and kitchen.

MOUNTAIN BEAUTY, SCENERY & RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES Inspiring, majestic—spiritual—these frequently used words describe the scenic valley between the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains that is home to WCU. Here you will find the outdoor activities you crave, including mountain biking, backpacking, whitewater rafting, fishing, and skiing at nearby Cataloochee.

GUEST SPEAKERS One of the highlights of WCU’s Teaching Fellows Program is the wide variety of guest speakers that you will hear and meet, including North Carolina’s Teacher of the Year, legislators, and other professionals who share your interest and passion for education.

LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE As a WCU Teaching Fellow, you will have the opportunity to serve as a member of the leadership committee, including the newsletter, social, hospitality, scrapbook, recruitment, and service sub-committees. Sharpen your leadership skills through hands-on experiences, such as planning of social events, charity functions, recruitment, and other activities. Fellows also make important contacts with individuals throughout the university and the community—an important step in career building.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS Teaching Fellows will make visits to area schools and meet with student clubs, such as the Teacher Cadets and Future Teachers of America. Fellows will experience teaching methods/lessons alongside director, Dr. Mary Smith, and serve as a big brother/big sister to elementary students through a pen pal program. Students will also be provided tutoring opportunities and opportunities to attend state conferences through Project STAR—a partnership with GEAR-UP programs in the region.
The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program is reserved for well-qualified North Carolina high school college seniors who agree to teach in the state’s public schools for at least four years in exchange for a full college scholarship.

WHAT’S CONSIDERED: The criteria includes your North Carolina residency, grade point average, SAT/writing scores, service experience, references and leadership potential.

HOW TO APPLY: Get an application from your guidance counselor, or go to teachingfellows.wcu.edu or, the State website at www.teachingfellows.org

DEADLINE & AWARDS: The application deadline is the last week in October. Awards are announced at the end of March.

SCOLARSHIP OPTIONS: Your application automatically entitles you to consideration for other scholarships through WCU’s College of Education and Allied Professions.

MOTIVATED TO TEACH?

My experience at Western Carolina has been wonderful! WCU is just the right size, and the location is superb. All of my teachers have been very helpful.

–Kerri Bernhardt

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