From left, professors Karen Mason, Cynthia Brown and Lisa Briggs of the applied criminology department join Larry Blythe, vice chief of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, at the grant announcement.

FCC Awards $3.6 Million To ‘Telehealth’ Project

WCU, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and the Jackson County Department of Public Health are partners in the first project in the nation funded through a $417 million federal effort to expand health care access to rural America through the creation of broadband “telehealth” networks in 42 states and three U.S. territories.

Derek Poarch, chief of the Federal Communications Commission’s Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, recently announced the awarding of $3.6 million in Rural Health Care Pilot Program grant funding to WCU, which will oversee construction of a broadband network linking health care agencies in Cherokee and across several Western North Carolina counties.

“It is our vision that every health care facility in the nation will be connected with one another through broadband tele-health networks for the benefit of patients everywhere,” Poarch said.

The project is part of a national effort to use broadband Internet capacity to support the efficient delivery of health care through “telemedicine,” reducing costs and travel time for consumers, helping decrease medical errors, and streamlining the process for sharing critical patient-care information electronically, he said.

When complete, the project will enable 225 health care facilities in Jackson, Macon, Graham and Swain counties and on the Qualla Boundary to connect to an existing regional fiber ring, allowing them to quickly share health care records about patients in remote sites across the mountains. The network will provide for more rapid and coordinated responses to public health emergencies – such as bioterrorism attacks, pandemics or disease-related outbreaks – and will facilitate coordination with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other public health agencies.

The grant funding, to be issued in annual installments of $1.2 million over three years, is made possible by an application written by professors Cynthia Brown, Lisa Briggs and Karen Mason of WCU’s department of applied criminology, which houses programs in emergency and disaster management studies.

Linda Seestedt-Stanford, dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences, called the project an outstanding example of the university’s increasing efforts to engage with the community and to apply faculty expertise to help solve regional problems.

“This grant provides resources to create an Internet infrastructure, but it also represents an unprecedented opportunity for both the Cherokee people and Western Carolina University to develop an infrastructure of confidence and support that can benefit all of us in learning, service to our communities, and the achievement of quality health care,” said Seestedt-Stanford.

–By BILL STUDENC
As we prepare for the new year at Western Carolina University, there is much to celebrate and much to look forward to. With fall enrollment exceeding 9,000 for the first time, we are serving more students than ever before, and serving them with excellence.

Your achievements in 2007 attracted a great deal of attention, from a USA Today story that highlighted student engagement at WCU to national honors, including the Christa McAuliffe Excellence in Teacher Education Award, a No. 1 ranking in affordability from GetEducated.com for our online bachelor’s degree program in criminal justice, and a top five ranking from Fortune Small Business magazine for our online master’s degree program in entrepreneurship.

On campus, a complete academic reorganization took place. We welcomed new colleges and university leaders. The building boom continued with the start of construction on a dining hall and renovations at Forsyth Building. The momentum soon will move to our Millennial Campus, with the state funding $43.8 million for construction of a health sciences building.

This year we also unveiled The Campaign for Western, the first comprehensive fund-raising effort of its kind in the university’s history. I am proud to report that we are well on our way to reaching our $40 million goal.

In 2008, several significant initiatives will move forward. Through the Quality Enhancement Plan, we will enhance learning experiences for students. Our new tenure and promotion plan will reward faculty who apply their expertise to “real world” needs. Through both, we will become a more fully engaged regional university. Thank you for being part of these extraordinary efforts.

Deborah and I both appreciate the warmth and caring that you share year-round as part of the Western family. You are the heartbeat of this special place we call Cullowhee. We wish each of you a safe and wonderful holiday season.

Sincerely,

John and Deborah Bardo
Regional Drought Compels Campus To Implement Water Conservation Plan

Western stepped up measures this fall to conserve water through implementing the university's drought plan.

“At Western, we have a favorable water situation with our water supply from the Tuckaseigee River experiencing no shortages to date,” said Lauren Bishop, energy manager with Facilities Management. “We are aware, however, that our conservation efforts can positively impact areas of greater need in lower elevations, and have implemented additional water-saving initiatives.”

Efforts include distributing conservation information; eliminating vehicle washing; delaying outside pressure washing of buildings, windows and sidewalks; and not installing landscaping and floral beds that would require weekly watering.

Virginia Fowler, assistant director of facilities for Residential Living, posted signs in all residence hall bathrooms about water conservation. Bishop said weekly water consumption decreased about 15 percent or 500,000 gallons during the week of Oct. 22-28 and another 250,000 gallons the following week. “We encourage everyone on campus to conserve water, because every drop counts,” said Bishop.

The university is still irrigating athletic and intramural fields, but at a reduced frequency. Colder weather will enable the university to reduce or cease irrigation in some areas. Additional measures could include shutting down pools on campus and ceasing irrigation.

The watershed that supplies Western is largely maintained by Duke Energy hydroelectric system and consists of several dam-controlled lakes, said Bishop. Currently, all lake levels meet or exceed target levels, and Duke Energy reported in mid-October that these levels would be maintained for recreation and for providing a “safety net” water supply for the drought forecasted to continue through the winter, she said.

On a routine basis, Western manages water by replacing shower heads, faucet aerators and flush valves with low-flow fixtures. In addition, programs such as WHEE Save raise awareness of water conservation.

“Our grounds department uses planting soil supplements and mulches designed to make water use efficient,” said Bishop. “When possible we practice xeriscaping, which is planting native, drought-resistant plants that do not require large amounts of water to thrive.”

Facilities Management also is testing in several locations on campus such devices as a low-flow showerhead and waterless urinal. For more information, contact Lauren Bishop at 227-3562 or lbishop@email.wcu.edu, or click on the Web at admfm.wcu.edu/plant/energy.html.

Graduate School Names Gastle Associate Dean

Brian Gastle, associate professor of English, will become associate dean of the Graduate School, effective Jan. 1. Gastle will take an administrative position currently held by Gibbs Knotts, associate professor of political science and public affairs, who will step down to return to the classroom.

“Brian has the skill set needed to move the Graduate School forward in the coming years,” said Scott Higgins, dean of the Graduate School and Research. “The knowledge and insight he gained from working closely with important campus initiatives will be invaluable.”

A member of the English department faculty at WCU since 1998, Gastle has served as director of the department’s professional writing and undergraduate studies programs. He recently was editor of the university’s compliance certification reaccreditation report for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Gastle earned his bachelor’s degree in English from the State University of New York at Buffalo, and his master’s and doctoral degrees in medieval literature from the University of Delaware. In addition to teaching courses in early British literature, and professional and Web writing, he has been an editor for the N.C. Department of Public Instruction and script editor for a PBS educational series on medieval and fantasy literature.

When Gastle moves to the Graduate School, he will be able to build upon a strong foundation left behind by Knotts, said Higgins.

“Much of the success that the Graduate School has experienced since June 2005 is a reflection of Gibbs’ tireless work and commitment to graduate education,” he said. “While he will be missed by all who worked with him in his capacity as associate dean, his career goals and aspirations are paramount. He is destined to be successful in whatever he chooses to do.”

Relay Teams Combat Cancer

Five teams arrived in Haywood County to compete in a 20-mile Relay for Pink cancer screening fundraiser last month and discovered what they had in common was not pink, but purple and gold. WCU staff, faculty, alumni and students recognized each other on teams called the Dynamic Decades, Kellie’s Heroes, the Rosado Runners, Pinkalicious and the Whee Runners.

“Two teams of WCU students also participated. Runners in Pinkalicious, which placed second, were Jenna Hester, Brittany Beeker and Frances Tate; and members of the Whee Runners were Courtney Devlin, Nan Reeves and Meredith Morgan.

Stolenburg, director of the WCU Women’s Center, and other women of Haywood County. “We wore matching pink fleece gloves to symbolize the ‘power’ of self-exam,” said Monteith.

Debby Singleton, visiting instructor of health, physical education and recreation, was part of team Rosado Runners. “Rosado” means “pink” in Spanish. Two of her teammates are WCU alumni.

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A PBS educational series on medieval and fantasy literature.

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Monday, Dec. 3
Concert—Brass ensembles. 8 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

Monday, Dec. 3-Thursday, Dec. 6
The AIDS Memorial Quilt display—72 panels. 12-7 p.m. Dec. 3; 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Dec. 4-6. Opening ceremony at noon Dec. 3; musical theatre student performance at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 5; Quilt founder Cleve Jones to speak at closing ceremony/reception at 6 p.m. Dec. 6. Grandroom, UC. (227-7206)

Tuesday, Dec. 4
Catamount Concert Series—WCU Wind Ensemble. 8 p.m. FAPAC. (227-7242)
Living with the Land Folklife Series—Betty Smith, "Coming of the Road: Songs and Stories." 5:30 p.m. Auditorium, MHC. (227-7129)

Tuesday, Dec. 4-Thursday, Dec. 6
American Red Cross blood drive—All blood types needed. Donors will receive a 2007 Red Cross holiday ornament. Appointments available. Multipurpose Room, UC. (227-7206)

Wednesday, Dec. 5
Reading Day—No classes meet. (227-7216)
Catamount basketball—vs. North Carolina Central. 7:03 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Thursday, Dec. 6
Concert—Old-time music and bluegrass. Don Pedi and Bruce Greene, 7-8 p.m. Open jam, 8-9 p.m. Auditorium, MHC. (227-7129)

Friday, Dec. 7
Last day of regular class meetings. (227-7216)
Saturday, Dec. 8
Lady Catamount basketball—vs. Wake Forest. 4 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Sunday, Dec. 9
Concert—School of Music faculty recital. 8 p.m. RH. (227-7242)

Wednesday, Dec. 12
Late-night exam breakfast—free to students with student ID. Faculty and staff volunteers arrive 7:45 p.m. 8-10 p.m. Dodson Cafeteria. (227-7242)

Thursday, Dec. 13
Fall commencement—2 p.m. RRAC. (227-7495)

Friday, Dec. 14
Galaxy of Stars / Something for Everyone Series—"A Holiday Spectacular," the Asheville Symphony. 7:30 p.m. FAPAC. (227-2479)

Thursday, Dec. 20
Lady Catamount basketball—vs. Chattanooga. Southern Conference game. 7 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Concert—Old-time music and bluegrass. Open jam, 7-9 p.m. Auditorium, MHC. (227-7129)

Thursday, Dec. 27
Catamount basketball—vs. Presbyterian. 7:03 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Thursday, Jan. 10
Catamount basketball—vs. Furman. Southern Conference game. 7:03 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Friday, Jan. 11
Residence halls open. (227-7303)

Saturday, Jan. 12
Lady Catamount basketball—vs. UNC Greensboro. Southern Conference game. 4 p.m. RRAC. (227-7338)

Mountain Heritage Center
SLIDESHOW SPOTLIGHT FOR DECEMBER:
"Mountain Trout"

SLIDESHOW SPOTLIGHT FOR JANUARY:
"Irons in the Fire"

Gallery A:
"Migration of the Scottish-Irish People." Includes text panels, illustrations, artifacts and vibrant murals that trace the Scottish-Irish Appalachian settlers from Ulster to Pennsylvania, through the Shenandoah Valley, and into Western North Carolina. Permanent exhibit.

Gallery B:
"Southern Stews: Traditions of One-Pot Cooking," a national, traveling exhibition organized by the McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina. Through March.

Gallery C:
"After the War: Conflict and Domestic Change in the North Carolina Mountains." Portrays how wars and their aftermath have shaped the lives of people and communities in Western North Carolina. Through December.

Online Exhibits (http://www.wcu.edu/2397.asp)
Mountain Heritage Center hours: 8 a.m.–7 p.m. Monday–Friday. (227-7219 or http://www.wcu.edu/2389.asp)

Fine Art Museum, Fine and Performing Arts Center
ONGOING EXHIBIT: "Worldviews." Selections from Western Carolina University’s permanent collection in all media by local, regional, national and international artists.

Fine Art Museum hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays 10 a.m.–4 p.m., Thursdays 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Saturdays 1–4 p.m. Donations appreciated. (227-3591 or http://fapac.wcu.edu)

Faire Connects WCU to Canton

The Canton Connection Faire to be held Monday, Dec. 10, has been organized so WCU faculty and staff can hear what the needs are in the town of Canton and identify ways WCU can help. The town was especially hit hard in 2004 by the remnants of hurricanes Frances and Ivan.

The event will be held in the Colonial Theater Annex at 53 Park St. in Canton from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. For more information, contact Bill Richmond, associate professor of computer information systems, by e-mail at brichmond@wcu.edu or phone at 227-7192.

Newsfile

• Carol Burton, assistant vice chancellor for undergraduate studies; David Butcher, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Sean O’Connell, associate professor of biology; and Jill Manners, associate professor of health sciences; were selected to participate in a regional Council on Undergraduate Research workshop sponsored by the National Science Foundation to promote institutionalization of undergraduate research.

• Anna Fariello, curator of the craft revival digital collection and visiting associate professor, recently named museology specialist peer reviewer for the United States Fulbright Commission. Fariello is a former Fulbright Senior Scholar to Latin America, where she taught courses in collections and administration, and conducted a study of government-run museums in Panama.

• Terry Curtis Fox, associate professor of stage and screen, and Jack Sholder, professor of stage and screen, and director of the Motion Picture and Television Production Program, participated in a series of educational events developed as part of the Asheville Film Festival in November. Fox led a session titled "Great Beginnings: Starting the Screenplay," and Sholder co-led "Success in Writing and Directing" and led a session titled "The Art of Editing."