**Provost Report to Faculty Senate**

**March 2021**

**Administrative Searches Update**

Campus visits for candidates for the Dean of Library Services and candidates for Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences will conclude in March. Announcements regarding these appointments is expected in April.

Dr. Lowell Davis, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Success will conclude his tenure at Western Carolina University on May 17th. Dr. Davis has accepted appointment as Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Lowell has made a significant impact on our campus in the development of myriad programs to ensure our students success in their academic careers. We wish Lowell the same success he has so tirelessly advocated for our students over his eight-year career at Western Carolina University.

**Apodaca Building Update**

Construction nears completion on the Apodaca Science Building. Classes will be held in Apodaca in the Fall 2021 term. More information about a grand opening celebration, tentatively scheduled for early in the fall term, will be announced shortly. Demolition of the current Natural Science Building will begin this summer.

**Faculty Scholarship Celebration**

The Virtual [Faculty Scholarship Celebration](https://www.wcu.edu/apply/graduate-school/resources-faculty-staff/faculty-scholarship-celebration.aspx) will be held on March 23rd from 4:30 to 5:00 PM. Please utilize the link [posted here](https://www.wcu.edu/apply/graduate-school/resources-faculty-staff/faculty-scholarship-celebration.aspx) to join the virtual livestream event. We are grateful to the faculty for their hard work and scholarship submissions. Two-hundred and eight-nine faculty will be recognized for their scholarship this year!

Winners for the Hunter Scholar Award, Provost Scholarship Development Awards, and Million Dollar Circle Award will also be celebrated at this event.

**National Institute of Health Research Grant Award**

Congratulations to Dr. Turner Goins and Dr. Elizabeth Anderson on their recently awarded $374,504 research grant from the National Institute of Health (NIH). Drs. Goins and Anderson are faculty members in the Department of Social Work in our College of Health and Human Sciences. The primary purpose of their proposed research is to culturally tailor and examine the feasibility and preliminary outcomes of the Make Your Wishes About You (MY WAY) Advanced Care Planning (ACP) curriculum and patient guide for members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Despite being twice as likely to die from type 2 diabetes and four times as likely to die from chronic liver disease than Whites (Heron, 2016), little work has been done to increase opportunities for AIANs to express their end-of-life care wishes. This disparate disease burden is also experienced among the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI), our partnering community, among whom 60% of tribal members aged 60 years and older have type 2 diabetes (EBCI, 2019). Building upon Dr. Anderson’s MY WAY intervention design and research experience and Dr. Goins’ 20-year collaborative relationship with the EBCI, they will develop a culturally tailored MY WAY with the following specific aims:

1. Culturally tailor the content of the MY WAY ACP curriculum and patient education guide for EBCI members. We hypothesize that tailoring will reflect EBCI-specific norms and preferences, greater reliance on visual images and local idioms of expression, more appropriate attention to family roles, and inclusion of spiritual elements.
2. Assess the feasibility of the culturally-tailored MY WAY with the EBCI. With a culturally-tailored MY WAY, we hypothesize that we will be able to recruit 70 participants who will express comprehension, acceptability, and satisfaction with the intervention.
3. Examine preliminary outcomes of the culturally-tailored MY WAY with 70 EBCI members. Through a quasi-experimental waitlist design, we hypothesize that the culturally-tailored MY WAY will lead to increased self-efficacy, readiness, and ACP completion, as well as increase facilitators and decreased barriers to ACP.

**Retention Efforts to reconnect with our non-registered Catamounts**

Student Success has established a retention communication group consisting of members from the Office of Accessibility Resources, Academic Advising Center, Mentoring and Persistence to Success, and the Office of Student Retention.  This group is reviewing retention outreach and is establishing a unified communication repository.  The Office of Student Retention's (OSR) primary focus in monitoring registration for continuing students is first-time, full-time freshmen (FTFTF) students that were not registered for the upcoming semester. WCU's retention rate is calculated based on this population's enrollment as of Census Day the following Fall term.  After early registration times have opened and the Advising Center has conducted initial rounds of outreach, OSR conducts outreach through emails, SMS, and phone calls to assist students with course enrollment.  Additionally, until Census Day, OSR continues to contact FTFTF students who are still not registered to encourage late registration and are at risk of having their schedules dropped due to non-payment.

Funds from the University of North Carolina System Virtual Student Service Initiative (CARES Act funding) will be allocated toward Western Carolina University's retention efforts. This funding will continue to support student success regarding enrollment during the Spring 2021 term and in the upcoming summer term. Outreach to the target population is currently being conducted via Summer Programs and the Office of Financial Aid.