



**CHANCELLOR'S DIVISION**  
**ANNUAL REPORT [2022-23]**

# CHANCELLOR DIVISION AT A GLANCE [2022-23]

A new brand campaign, new partnerships and MOUs with regional community colleges, a new virtual campus tour, student spotlight videos, dozens of special events, 11 national Hermes awards and a prestigious Gold CASE award for photography – these are just a few of the MANY achievements that marked an incredibly successful year for the Chancellor's Division. The 2022-23 academic year was the first truly regular year since Chancellor Kelli Brown's arrival at Western Carolina University in 2019 and the robust, dynamic campus environment reflected the excitement and enthusiasm people felt for that return to normalcy. Over the course of the year, the division leveraged unique opportunities to spearhead initiatives regarding marketing opportunities, social media and photo/video/design showcases, leadership development, external engagement, internal risk mitigation, economic development and legislative advocacy.



# Office of the Chief of Staff

The Chief of Staff serves as the principal aide and adviser to the Chancellor on important university operational matters as well as providing coordination of division strategic directions, goals and initiatives and its success.



## Highlights from FY 2022-2023

- Led a comprehensive review of senior leadership preparation for campus crises. The review included an in-depth tabletop exercise for the executive team, the communications team and the emergency operations team. The review led to creation of refined protocols and checklists for all team members and a consolidated repository of team resources.
- Successfully led the appointment and reappointment of five members of the Board of Trustees with the UNC Board of the Governors, the Office of the President Pro Tempore of the NC Senate and the Office of the Speaker of the House of the Representatives of the NC General Assembly.
- Co-led with the Vice Provost a successful completion of the first cohort and launch of the second cohort of the Senior Leadership

Fellows Program. The program has resulted in advancement of several participants to positions of leadership on campus and has been recognized as a strategic response to staffing challenges.

## Upcoming for FY 2023-2024

- With maturity of the leadership team, fully integrate the strategic priorities of marketing, economic development and government relations to advance the mission of institution.
- Assist the Chancellor in a successful completion of a search for WCU's next Chief Diversity Officer.
- Successfully orient and integrate the new trustees into the culture and priorities of Western Carolina University.
- Assist the Board and the UNC System Office to complete the Chancellor's 360 evaluation.

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# Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff and External Relations

The Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff and External Relations supports the Office of the Chancellor and the Chief of Staff. The office has primary oversight of all Chancellor-level special events, the Chancellor's Residence, as well as serves as the university's primary contact with elected officials at the local, state and federal level. The office pursues state funding through the UNC System's established budget priorities process and the NC legislature.

## Highlights from FY 2022-2023

- In support of institutional priorities, executed enhanced legislative and state official advocacy strategy, led by the Chancellor and Academic Dean including monthly visits to Raleigh as well as hosting state elected officials in Cullowhee.
- Successfully saw the inclusion of a WCU engineering facility in House and Senate budgets. We're awaiting final conference budgets for the final outcome. Also, saw favorable inclusion of WCU in online gaming bill which will benefit WCU Athletics and secured grant funding from Golden Leaf and Dogwood Health Trust for engineering.
- The Special Events team executed multiple campuswide events that add to WCU's student, faculty and staff sense of campus community, in addition to support for WCU Commencement, Convocation and Chancellor's Football hospitality. The team also served as operational leadership for the 48th Mountain Heritage Day Festival.
- WCU Chancellor's Ambassadors program utilized an 1889 impact grant for leadership and public speaking training for student leaders who assist the Chancellor at selected university events.





## Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff and External Relations – continued



- The Office successfully implemented a strategic reorganization to meet the growing external relations goals of the Chancellor's Division and WCU's Signature Special Events.

### Upcoming for FY 2023-2024

- Advocate for WCU's strategic goals with the NC General Assembly and US Congress with focus on staff and faculty salaries, resources for the College of Engineering and Technology and other campus facility and academic priorities.
- Host high value external partner visits to WCU campuses, facility openings, state and regional commission meetings and community partner facility tours to increase awareness of WCU's role in meeting regional industry workforce needs.
- Identify partnership opportunities for Chancellor Brown and Trustee leadership in the region, state and country on topics of college affordability, academic excellence and student-athlete experience.
- Continue to provide engaging special events on campus while preparing for the 50th anniversary of Mountain Heritage Day Festival in 2024.



## Office of Legal Counsel and Institutional Integrity

The Office of Legal Counsel and Institutional Integrity is the primary adviser to the Board of Trustees, Chancellor and other university decision-makers on all legal, audit, compliance, enterprise risk management, discrimination and Title IX matters.

### Highlights from FY 2022-2023

- The Office of Internal Audit was reorganized and placed within the newly named Office of Legal Counsel and Institutional Integrity. Day-to-day operations of the Office of Internal Audit now report to the General Counsel; however, a supervisory relationship with the Chancellor has been maintained.
- Deidre Hopkins was named the university's Title IX Coordinator and Equity Officer. Deidre has spent the last year expanding the footprint of the university's Title IX and nondiscrimination activities.
- Kelly Tornow moved into the role of Associate General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer. Kelly oversees the university's compliance and enterprise risk management efforts, and supervises the Title IX Office and the University Investigator.
- Zachary Williams joined the office as the University Investigator. Zack comes to us from the Department of Student Community Ethics in the Division of Student Affairs and has been integral to several investigations in the short amount of time that he has been with us.
- After a national search, Heather Baker joined the Office of Institutional Integrity and Legal Counsel as Associate General Counsel. Prior to joining WCU, Heather was the Jackson County attorney and prior to that was in private practice for many years.

### Upcoming for FY 2023-2024

- With a set team in the office, we plan to continue our focus on policy revision and development.
- Pursue a contract database with the Division of Administration and Finance.



# Office of Internal Audit

The Office of Internal Audit provides independent, objective assurance and consulting services designed to add value and improve WCU's operations. The mission of internal audit is to enhance and protect organizational value by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice and insight.

## Highlights from FY 2022-2023

- The previous chief auditor retired as of June 30, 2022, and a new chief auditor was hired Oct. 1, 2022.
- The new chief auditor conducted an audit of travel reimbursements and Travel Cards.
- A consultative engagement was conducted with Athletics.
- The chief auditor also served as a member of the Strategic Planning Committee addressing Honoring our Promise Goal 6.1 – Funding Models.

- The chief auditor also served on the Information Security and Privacy Committee (ISPC) and the Health and Safety Committee.

## Upcoming for FY 2023-2024

- Efforts are underway to hire an Internal Auditor to fill the vacancy in the Office of Internal Audit.
- The Office will be undergoing an external Quality Assurance Review (QAR), which is required to be conducted by the Auditing Standards once every five years.





# Office of Economic Development and Regional Partnerships

The Office of Economic Development and Regional Partnerships is dedicated to the growth and sustainability of economic conditions throughout Western North Carolina, and beyond. The office is dedicated to developing and strengthening productive and impactful relationships between WCU and our partners in business and industry, government, nonprofit and economic and community development sectors.

## Highlights from FY 2022-2023

- Joined area workforce development practitioners in the inaugural Talent First Cohort and the Institute for Emerging Issues.
- Executed MOU with NC Innovation to become one of four hubs to engage and foster innovation, product development and commercialization.
- Executed the first summer mentorship program between the North Carolina School of Science and Math's Morganton campus and WCU.
- Accelerated WCU and the region's efforts to focus on multi-income housing availability.
- Served as a convener for numerous economic and educational related matters, to include community college alignment and curricular needs, health care and ongoing economic concerns, small business summits and the outdoor recreation economy.



- Expand efforts in partnership with WCU's research division to create a tactical approach for leveraging external funding in support of new and existing applied learning opportunities.
- Partnering with WNC's workforce development professionals to bolster career pathways for high-growth, high-demand jobs across the region.
- Continued identification of critical industry partners to create positive impact on students and faculty, with mutually beneficial impacts to economic condition across the region and state.

## Upcoming for FY 2023-2024

- Leverage NC Innovation to promote faculty research, new idea and product development, development of intellectual property and product commercialization.



# University Communications and Marketing

Our goal is to increase the WCU brand value by highlighting its academic rigor, collaborative research, vibrant student life, contributions to our community, commitment to service, athletic prowess, diversity and inclusion, and the overall achievements of the broad university community, including students, faculty, staff, alumni and others.

## Highlights from FY 2022-2023

- Launched the new “Live Western” brand campaign across the state of North Carolina. Internally, we also hosted a brand training for more than 100 faculty and staff as well as a hugely successful launch party for more than 600 students with music, games, free food, giveaways and more.
- Selected a new advertising partner to assist in a broader approach to statewide and regional advertising. Introduced several new tactics such as bus wraps, cinema advertising, DMV advertising among others.
- In partnership with Admissions, created a new virtual tour that ties directly into our student funnel.
- Introduced Carnegie Clarity, a website personalization tool; ExpertFile, a place to showcase our faculty experts and create connections; and Merit Pages, an AI tool used to generate positive news coverage about our students.
- For the second consecutive year, the team received 11 awards from the Hermes Creative Awards, one of the oldest and largest creative competitions in the world.
- Gold Case award for the photography series: “We Will Not Be Silenced.”



## University Communications and Marketing – continued



Zoe | A Day in the Life



Picadito de Carne with Raiza Morales



Olivia Ramos | Theatre Production



Garison DeJarnette | Day in the Life

### Upcoming for FY 2023-2024

- Student Spotlight Videos: Continue to develop 2–3 minute student documentaries that are cinematic and impactful for the viewer to enhance awareness and reputation for prospective students.
- Elevate campus branding: Increase our brand presence on campus by way of developing new wall wraps, environmental graphics and more.
- Expand our Day in Life series to include features of alumni to showcase careers post-graduation.
- Begin the research and planning process for a website update and refresh.
- Develop a series of stories on groups and organizations like Project Care, Digali'i, LASO and learning communities to show their importance in giving students a place of belonging.
- Live Western Visual Stories: Create dynamic photo essays that tell student stories through photography and design, utilizing the Live Western branding.
- Increase WCU's local brand presence in Sylva and Dillsboro.

# Chancellor's Communication

The Chancellor's Communication Specialist supports the Office of the Chancellor and the Chief of Staff. This position has primary oversight of all the Chancellor's communication efforts and social media presence. The position was created in late fall 2021 and started in January 2022.

## Highlights from FY 2022-2023

- Enhanced partnerships with the University Communications and Marketing's writing and social media teams.
- Continued developing the Chancellor's voice in all communication efforts.
- Expanded the Chancellor's reach on social media, including Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.
- Worked to align the Chancellor's messaging across all platforms.

## Upcoming for FY 2023-2024

- Ensure that Chancellor's priorities are appropriately featured.
- Continue to grow the Chancellor's social media pages and their reach.
- Expand the Chancellor's voice in remarks to make them more engaging and entertaining.
- Continue to align the Chancellor's messaging across all platforms.







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# New Employees



**Heather Baker**  
Associate General  
Counsel



**Holly Keffer**  
Residence and Events  
Coordinator



**Brooklyn Brown**  
Public Communication  
Specialist



**Gary Malloy**  
Director of Internal  
Audit



**Julia Duvall**  
Public Communication  
Specialist



**Brandon Rice**  
Program and Events  
Specialist



**Camryn Eaton**  
Public Communication  
Specialist



**Brett Szczepanski**  
Videographer



**Emily Giarette**  
Public Communication  
Specialist



**Zachary Williams**  
University Investigator

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## Awards



### **Alei Coleman**

Chancellor's Division Emerging Professional Award

Although she has been with the Division for less than three years, Alei Coleman takes initiative and goes above and beyond to make herself indispensable. Her bubbly personality and can-do attitude has made her a Division favorite, well known for her tremendous work ethic and attention to detail.



### **Ashley Evans**

Chancellor's Division Employee of the Year Award

For more than 15 years, Ashley Evans has displayed exceptional professionalism and care, delivering high-quality, award-winning photojournalism. Some of her most extraordinary work is her recent documentation of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls crisis in our communities, receiving the international CASE award.

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## Promotions



**Brent Baldwin**  
Senior Designer



**Kelly Tornow**  
Associate General  
Counsel and Chief  
Compliance Officer



**Benny Smith**  
Executive Director of  
Communications and  
Marketing

