

## Academic Affairs Newsletter

### February 2024

Happy February! As we navigate through what is sometimes dubbed the "un-month," let's take a moment to appreciate the strength and resilience that define our academic community.

February may bring short days and less than desirable weather, but it also carries significant cultural importance as Black History Month.

This month, let's not simply push through in search of brighter days and warmer weather, but also take time to reflect on and appreciate the diversity that makes our community vibrant and powerful. And as we acknowledge the challenges that February may pose, may we also celebrate the strength that comes from our diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Wishing you continued focus and success!



### Faculty 3-Minute Research Registration is Open

Back by popular demand, the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Faculty 3-Minute Research Talk (3MR) returns to The Research and Scholarship Celebration, March 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. Faculty should register to participate using the following link: [Faculty 3MR Registration](#). Applications must be submitted **before February 19<sup>th</sup>**.

For a review of last year's Faculty 3MR, visit the 2023 [Research and Scholarship Conference webpage](#).

If you have any questions, contact Joy Bowers-Campbell, Associate Dean for Graduate School and Research at [jbowers@wcu.edu](mailto:jbowers@wcu.edu).

### Brinson Honors College's Faculty and Staff Excellence Award (BHCSEA)

The BHCSEA recognizes a faculty member or instructional staff member for excellence in teaching and mentorship across the Honors Path. This award recognizes those faculty and staff members' excellence in one or more of the following areas:



- mentoring honors students in areas related to the Honors Path (Undergraduate Research, Leadership, Professionalism, Study Abroad, and Service Learning),
- teaching honors courses,
- mentoring honors contract projects.

WCU faculty, instructors, and instructional staff members are eligible for nomination. Nominations are invited for candidate who demonstrate:

- Excellence in teaching and mentorship related to the Honors Path, or
- Excellence in teaching and mentorship related to Honors Courses, or
- Excellence in teaching and mentorship related to Honors Contracts.

Nominations for the BHCSEA are open and can be submitted by WCU faculty, staff, students, or alumni. Self-nominations are also encouraged. Faculty and staff members who are nominated will be contacted by the BHC. **The deadline for nominations is Friday, February 16, 2024.**

### AAUW WCU Black History Month Event

AAUW WCU will be hosting *The African American Experience in WNC – Unmarked Graves* on Thursday, February 15, 2024 from 3:30pm-4:30pm in Apodaca Science Building Room 115.

Blair Tormey, a licensed geologist with the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines at Western Carolina University, has added an important element to the study of African Americans in Western North Carolina. Over the last 15 years, his expertise using Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR) has expanded our understanding of the presence of frequently unmarked graves in what is now the Great Smokies National Park and other locations throughout Western North Carolina. To date, Tormey has located over 100 such burials. In honor of African American History Month and AAUW WCU, learn about this important legacy and the people who lived and died here over 100 years ago.

<https://www.wcu.edu/stories/posts/hallowed-ground.aspx>

Professor Tormey earned a bachelor's degree in geosciences from Pennsylvania State University and a master's degree in geological sciences from the University of North Carolina.

## Advising Day for Summer and Fall is Around the Corner

Advising Day for summer and fall registration is **Tuesday, February 20, 2024**. The Advising Center will be sharing information about departmental activities on the Advising Day website ([advisingday.wcu.edu](http://advisingday.wcu.edu)) in the coming weeks. Additionally, students can view Advising Day information on their myWCU accounts in the weeks prior to Advising Day.

If you, or a department, would like training (or refresher) on understanding the Advising Student Profile, Degree Audits, and/or Navigate (Appointment Availability, Appointment Campaigns, Issue Alerts, and Notes), please contact the [professional advisor](#) linked to your major or contact Travis Bulluck, Director of Advising, directly with questions. Faculty can find assistance in the [Faculty Advising Guide](#), the [Navigate User Guide](#), and the [Navigate Training FAQs](#) page too.

## Whee Call U Changes on the Horizon for Division of Student Success



The Division of Student Success is excited to announce that as part of our ongoing commitment to student success and well-being, the campus-wide known outreach initiative, Whee Call U! will be moving into a new phase called Whee Chat U!. Beginning this spring, the newly structured outreach campaign will further enhance our support for all newly admitted and actively enrolled students at Western Carolina University.

This new structure will leverage technology and feedback mechanisms to reach even more students and gather valuable insights into their experiences. Here's what you need to know about the changes:

### 1. Text Outreach via EAB's Navigate System:

All students, including Freshmen and Transfers, will now receive a personalized text through EAB's Navigate system, managed by the Division of Student Success. This streamlined approach ensures that every student is reached effectively.

### 2. Quick Survey for Student Feedback:

Upon receiving the text, students will be prompted to complete a quick survey. This survey aims to gather qualitative data on their experiences as new WCU students. By understanding their needs and challenges early on, we can tailor our support services more effectively.

### 3. Option for Follow-up Support:

Based on the survey responses, students will have the opportunity to request a follow-up from a faculty or staff member. This follow-up can be in the form of a phone call or email, providing personalized assistance to those who need it most.

These enhancements should not only increase the number of students reached but also deepen our understanding of the new student experience during their first month with WCU. By offering additional support where it's needed, we can ensure that every student thrives.

## Voting and Polling @ WCU

WCU serves as a polling place for students, which is an asset in providing access for students to vote, particularly since voters aged 18-24 have the lowest average voting rate nationally. It is important that we as an institution serve this population to emphasize the importance of voting to build life-long civic engagement habits among our students.

Faculty and staff serve an influential role in civic engagement. Please advertise the on-campus polling place to your students; it is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the University Center - Multipurpose Room. The dates and times of the polling place are listed below. Please visit [vote.wcu.edu](http://vote.wcu.edu) for additional information.

- ❖ **WCU Polling Place Hours: February 15<sup>th</sup>-March 2<sup>nd</sup>**
  - Monday-Friday 8:00am-7:30pm
  - Saturday Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> 8:00am-3:00pm
  - Saturday March 2<sup>nd</sup> 8:00am-3:00pm
  
- ❖ **Election Day- March 5<sup>th</sup>**
  - 8:00am-7:30pm

## Educational Outreach Offerings

Western Carolina University's Division of Educational Outreach is proud to be a leading provider of Professional Education, Customized Trainings and Certificates, and Continuing Education for Western North Carolina and beyond. We are excited to announce our wide array of programs for Spring 2024. Programs are open to WCU faculty and staff as well as our local region. Some programs also available for our online community. Check out the list of programs below.

Outside the programs below, Educational Outreach is working with local companies and employers to design customized trainings to increase their staff's skills, achieve their strategic goals while enhancing their value proposition and impact. We invite you to explore our trainings based on topics around leadership, technical writing, communication, recruiting and retaining employees, working with veterans, and more. To explore our customized training offerings please contact our office at [learn@wcu.edu](mailto:learn@wcu.edu).



Preview for Spring 2024: Several programs for Spring 2024 are [Getting the Most Out of Organic Gardening](#), [Managerial Leadership Certificate](#), [Outdoor Industry Certificate](#), and [Grant Writing Certificate](#). In addition to these certificates and programs, we will continue to assist in hosting

multiple [Cadaver Dog Trainings](#), the 2024 [Western Region 8 Science Fair](#), [the 2024 Equity in Education Summit](#), [Dulcimer Duets](#) workshop, and [Children and Youth Swimming lessons](#).

Don't forget about our wide variety of online Ed2Go courses that can be searched at any time at [www.ed2go.com/wcu](http://www.ed2go.com/wcu).

Do you have a topic you're an expert in? We are always interested in partnering with faculty and staff on teaching a professional development, certificate, or continuing education course or a youth camp! Contact us today to learn more about those options as we are always looking for new areas to add to our catalog of offerings!

For more information contact WCU Educational Outreach at [learn@wcu.edu](mailto:learn@wcu.edu) or 828-227-7397.

### WCU Passport Services – Office of Global Engagement

Apply for your US Passport at Western Carolina University! WCU's Office of Global Engagement can now accept applications for US Passports.

While convenient for WCU Students, Faculty, and Staff, the service is open to ALL community members of Western North Carolina and beyond. To schedule an appointment, please follow the link [HERE](#). Applications are only accepted with appointments.



Please note that if you have previously applied for a passport, you may be able to renew it by mail. You can review the requirements [HERE](#). If you qualify, you may complete Form DS-82 form online. If you have any questions, please contact [passports@wcu.edu](mailto:passports@wcu.edu) or call 828.227.7494.

#### Hours of Operation

Monday-Friday: 9:00am-1:00pm  
69 E. University Way  
Camp Building 109  
Cullowhee, NC 28723

Furthermore, WCU students, faculty, and staff can now have passport photos as well as professional headshots made with the Iris Photo Booth provided in the Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD) in Reid 150. Monday-Friday 8:00am-5pm.

- No appointments are needed, and photos services can be accessed via self-service during business hours (828.227.7133).

- Students can obtain 2 *FREE passport/ID/Visa photos* in the Office of Global Engagement (Camp Building 109).
- Call WCU Global at 828.227.7494 or write [passports@wcu.edu](mailto:passports@wcu.edu) with any questions.
- Other campus community members can obtain 2 passport photos for \$17.

### Funding Availability for Intentional Learning and Campus Theme Initiatives

The Office for Undergraduate Studies now has allocated all funding for Intentional Learning and for the current campus theme (Community and Belongingness) initiatives. The Qualtrics applications have been closed. We appreciate the many requests for funding innovative and experiential opportunities this academic year and know that our students, faculty, and staff benefit from these experiences. If additional funds become available this semester, we will notify the campus community.



### Interim Chief Diversity Office Appointment

Marie Billie has accepted our offer to serve as WCU's Interim Chief Diversity Officer. Marie comes to us via The Registry, a higher education executive placement agency. She will begin her post here at WCU on February 12<sup>th</sup>. She will serve in the interim CDO role up to 12 months and, per the standard protocols of The Registry, she will not be a candidate for the permanent position. Marie holds an MS in Criminology and Criminal Justice from University of Maryland Eastern Shore and a Juris Doctorate from University of Maryland Carey School of Law. She has more than 25 years of management experience in human resources and equity work. Marie will assist us in maintaining our momentum as we execute the *Lean Forward* strategic plan for inclusive excellence. She will also liaise with the Chancellor and the Executive Council on a range of policy issues and strategic initiatives. Marie will also coordinate with others across campus on matters related to inclusive excellence.

### Community Engagement and Service-Learning Impact Awards

Nominations for the CCESL 2024 Impact Awards are **NOW OPEN** through March 4th. This April, the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning (CCESL) will recognize and celebrate outstanding students, faculty, staff, and community partners for their contributions to community engagement over the 2023-2024 academic year in the following categories:

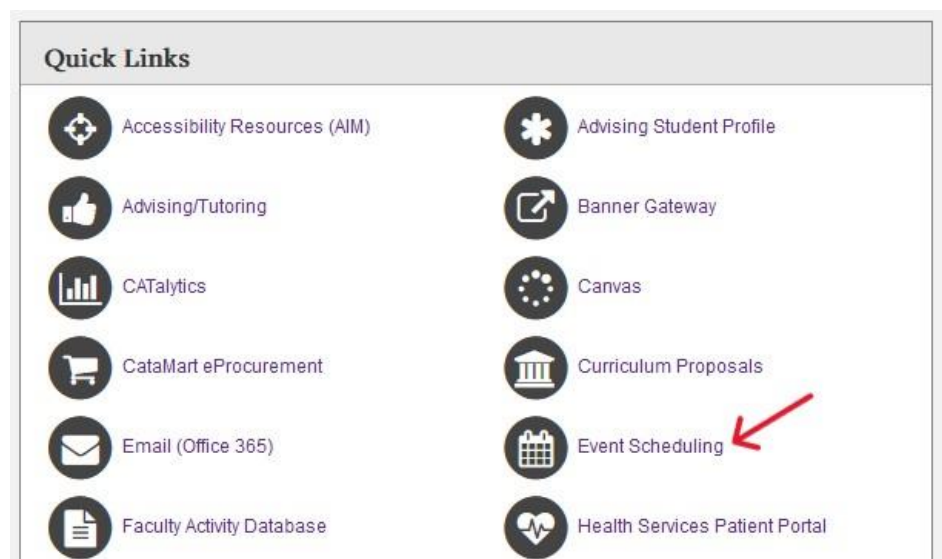
- Community-engaged Teaching & Learning
- Community-engaged Outreach
- Civic Engagement

Visit the [CCESL Impact Awards website](#) for more information about the award categories and grading criteria. Submit a nomination form [HERE](#). Nominations are being accepted now through **Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>**. Self-nominations are welcomed and encouraged!



### Scheduling University Space for Your Functions

WCU makes use of the 25Live software platform to schedule spaces for functions and to maintain space use records for internal and state reporting. It is important for space-related state budgeting for WCU to maintain accurate space use records. Please be sure that you are using 25Live to request and register space usage. 25Live is accessible via myWCU under Quick Links using the **Event Scheduling** link. If you utilized a reservable space and did not schedule it in 25Live, you can still enter it afterwards, and are encouraged to do so.



There are three WCU offices involved in space use administration. The Office of Campus Activities has an administrator to assist with event aspects in 25Live, the Registrar's Office has an

administrator to assist with functions pertaining with classrooms and the class scheduling interface into 25Live, and the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (OIPE) has an administrator to maintain the data accuracy and room details for state reporting and space inventory interfaces on campus. The Office of Campus Activities has implemented and is exploring invoicing functionality in 25Live. The Registrar's Office has created a few tutorial videos to support academic space scheduling needs. OIPE and Facilities Management are collaborating to ensure WCU's space database and use matches building blueprints.

### **FREE New York Times Subscription Provided by Hunter Library**



Did you know that students, faculty, and staff at Western Carolina University, have member access to the NYTimes.com and the NYTimes.com mobile app at no-cost? No-cost access is provided by Hunter Library in partnership with The New York Times. For more information on how to subscribe, visit Hunter Library's Research Guides page at <https://researchguides.wcu.edu/nytsub>.