

Academic Affairs Newsletter

November 2023

The vibrant hues of autumn are now fading into the crisp embrace of November, with just a little over five weeks left in the Fall 2023 semester. As we step into the final stretch of the semester, we encourage you to focus on finishing strong – together. Utilize your connections, networks, and communities to navigate challenges and celebrate successes. Your collective knowledge and support are invaluable resources during this hectic period. Lean on one another for inspiration and motivation and let's continue to foster an environment of collaboration, encouragement, and belongingness. [Lean In. Achieve Together. Live Western.](#)



Request for White Paper: UNC System Research Opportunities Initiative (ROI)

The [UNC System Office Research Opportunities Initiative \(ROI\)](#) provides strategic funding for ground-breaking and innovative research in priority areas, through support from the North Carolina General Assembly.

The Office of Research Administration is asking that anyone interested in the program submit a 1- page abstract/description and preliminary budget by **November 15, 2023**, to the [submission portal](#). The UNC System Office highly encourages cross-institutional collaborations/submissions, so please consider submitting if you are currently or planning to develop fundable ideas with other UNC system schools.

The 1-page description should be drafted with the following guidelines in mind:

- Provide an abstract and brief description of your project that aligns with the RFP criteria

- An additional page should include a preliminary or short version of a budget, including a brief justification

Key Dates:

- 11/15/2023 1-Page Submission Portal Closes at midnight
- 12/08/2023 Notification of Selected University Representative
- December 2023 – February 2024 Development of Proposal with the Office of Research Administration
- March 1-10, 2024, Submission to UNC SO by the Office of Research Administration

Please coordinate submissions with Kloo Hansen, Director, Office of Research Administration (kchansen@wcu.edu).

2024-2025 Academic Calendar

The 2024-2025 Academic Calendar has been approved by Executive Council and is now posted [online](#). Note that Advising Day during the Fall 2024 semester was changed from the proposed version of the calendar and will now be held on Tuesday, October 29, 2024.



Two New Faculty Relations Fellows

The Office of the Provost is pleased to announce the appointment of two new Faculty Relations Fellows. Dr. Candy Noltensmeyer, Associate Professor of Communications, and Dr. Siham Lekchiri, Associate Professor and Director of the MS program in Human Resources, will serve as independent and neutral resources for problem resolution. They can also provide informal assistance to help resolve workplace issues or discuss faculty concerns without committing to pursuit of a formal resolution. If you would like to discuss an issue with one of these fellows, you can reach out to them directly.

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(828) 227-2281



Siham Lekchiri
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CCPD Career Closet Ribbon Cutting

The Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD) is excited to announce our brand new Career Closet! A ribbon cutting event is planned for **10 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 7** with light refreshments following. All faculty and staff are invited to attend, so drop by Reid 150 any time to check it out! We are located on the back of Reid Gym; please use our direct entrance, which faces the paid parking lot by Reid (lot #30).

For questions, please call the main CCPD line at 828-227-7133 or careerservices@wcu.edu.

Paws For a Cause: Whee Beat Hunger 2023

This fall semester the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning (CCESL) is hosting Paws for a Cause: Whee Beat Hunger (event flyer attached). The goals of this campus-wide initiative are to raise awareness about the realities of food insecurity on campus and in our local community as well as facilitate events that help support food security efforts. CCESL hosted events in September and October and will be sponsoring additional events in November during Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week (**November 11-18, 2023**). For more information visit CCESL's [webpage](#) or contact them at 828-227-2091.



Test your knowledge with this **Hunger Awareness Quiz**. (Answers at the bottom)

1. What percentage of US college students face food insecurity?
2. How many meals did HOMEBASE serve WCU students in 2022?
3. What percentage of Jackson County residents are food insecure?
4. What percentage of Jackson County residents live below the poverty level?
5. What percentage of Jackson County children live below the poverty level?
6. What is the most requested item at Biltmore Park's pantry?
7. How many millions of people face food insecurity in the US?
8. How many millions of people face food insecurity globally?
9. What is the top reason people are food insecure globally?
10. What is a food desert?
11. What is the estimated percentage of inflation on food costs in 2023?
12. Where does US rank on global food security index?

WCU National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) Training Sessions

WCU NCBI Training Sessions will be held on Wednesday, November 8th and Wednesday, November 15th from 12pm-4:30pm in Killian 102 with a focus on coalition building and leadership skills development. Participants must attend both sessions to receive a certificate and must register in advance. To register click [here](#). For more information about NCBI visit ncbi.org. If you have any questions, please contact Amy McKenzie at amckenzie@wcu.edu.



Senior Leadership Fellows Program

Chancellor Brown and Provost Starnes are pleased to announce the 2024 Senior Leadership Fellows. The third cohort of this program will commence in January with 16 new participants representing divisions at WCU. A grow-your-own program led by Chief of Staff Dr. Melissa Wargo and Vice Provost Dr. Carol Burton, it aims to build a cohort of campus leaders who are ready for the challenges and opportunities of senior leadership roles. It is also designed to provide practical and applicable content in becoming a senior academic or administrative leader in higher education.

Typical topics include budgeting and funding, enrollment, institutional governance and structure, crisis leadership and conflict management, faculty roles and institutional identity, and executive leadership perspectives, to name a few. Fellows are also provided opportunities to attend the regional leadership tour, board of trustees and governors' meetings and other special sessions and events.

➤ Administrative Participants

Alison Joseph, IT
Theresa Cruz-Paul, Center for Career and Professional Development
Jenny Stewart, College of Education and Allied Professions
Morgan Burnett, Administration and Finance
Karen Price, Institutional Assessment
Trisha Ray, Human Resources and Payroll
Brandon MacCallum, Campus Recreation and Wellness
Heather Baker, Legal Counsel and Institutional Integrity

➤ Academic Participants

Terri Durbin, School of Nursing
Paul Yanik, School of Engineering and Technology
Heidi Buchanan, Hunter Library
Charmion Rush, School of Teaching and Learning
Drew Virtue, Department of English Studies
Yue Hillon, School of Accounting, Finance, Info Systems, and Business Law

Charlie Parrish, School of Entertainment, Hospitality, Tourism, Marketing, Sport
Management
Scott Huffman, Department of Chemistry and Physics

Summer Session Working Group

As previously mentioned, a Summer Session Working group is being formed to review, revise, and update APR 19: Guidelines for Summer Session to account for the changes in enrollment patterns, student needs, financial aid availability and the funding model as well as increase enrollment, foster innovation, and identify ways to incentivize faculty, colleges, and departments. The focus on this effort will include:

- Develop strategies for using summer session to improve retention and 4-year graduation rates.
- Revisit minimum course enrollments to verify their viability under the new funding model.
- Develop policy to address 12-month faculty teaching load.
- Make recommendations for summer pay and teaching load.
- Identify incentives and strategies to increase enrollment and foster innovative offerings.

The Committee is co-chaired by Dr. Carolyn Callaghan (Ed Outreach) and Linda Davis (Provost's Office) and consists of:

David Kinner – Arts & Sciences

Wes Stone - Engineering

April Perry – Human Services

Charlie Parrish – Business

David Ford – Summer School/Ed Outreach

Jane Hughes – Fine and Performing Arts

Annette Debo – English

April Messer – Nursing

Larry Hammer/ Cara LeCureux - Registrar

2024-2025 Campus Theme Announced

Each year the Office of Undergraduate Studies invites campus community members to complete a survey to assist in determining the next year's campus theme. This Fall's survey yielded over 900 responses. Among the submissions, three prominent themes emerged: WCU and WNC Mountain Life; Music; and Social Responsibility. We are pleased to announce that the 2024-2025 campus theme will be WNC/Mountain Life.

For additional information on our current campus theme, community and belongingness, please visit our [website](#).



Intentional Learning and Campus Theme Highlights

The Office of Undergraduate Studies is pleased to award funding in support of our campus theme (community and belongingness), and Intentional Learning grants. Here are a couple of examples of recently funded projects.

➤ Whee Belong

Event: Monday, November 13, 2023 through Friday, November 17, 2023

Description: LEAD 344 - Advanced Leadership Practices students are hosting a week-long "Whee Belong" campaign supporting WCU's campus theme of community and belongingness. The students will promote the spirit of belongingness at WCU including a campus-wide positive post-it notes campaign, tabling at the Catafount, and signage/marketing to promote campus resources and positive affirmations. There will be stations located around campus (e.g., the UC, Hunter Library, Courtyard Food Court, Brown Hall, etc.) The aim is connectivity to one another and to the overall WCU community. The "central" hub of the campaign will be at the Catafount and will invite students to write affirmation notes on a pre-printed banner that will be hung on campus after the event to show how WCU is one community made up of people from all different experiences.



➤ Students in Engineering Help Stroke Survivors Recovery



An estimated 2.7 million American stroke survivors continue to experience challenges in achieving full functional recovery within their fingers, arms, and shoulder muscle groups. The stroke survivors' rehabilitation is also hindered by the time allowance from therapists and their insurance coverages. After recognizing these challenges, students in this project developed a specialized one-handed exercise equipment with a gamification feedback mechanism that is tailored to the specific needs of stroke survivors.

The team consists of senior students with different backgrounds in the School of Engineering and Technology (Catherine Johnson in Mechanical Engineering, Joaquin Rodriquez in Engineering and Technology, and Josh Khamphengphet in Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology). The faculty lead for this experience is Yang Zhang.

The Office of Undergraduate Studies funded the students to present at the AOTA (American Occupational Therapy Association) INSPIRE 2024 Annual Conference and Expo, to exhibit the device they developed and share it with nationwide companies and professionals that seek occupational therapy products and solutions for their clients or themselves.

Cherokee Center Director Search and Interim

After 7 years as the Director for the Cherokee Center, Sky Sampson has departed WCU to begin a new journey with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian. A search for a new Director will commence shortly. Dr. Burton, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, will be providing general supervision of the Center until the new Director is named.

Office of the Provost Major Event Requests

The Office of the Provost has updated our Major Event Request process for the Spring 2024 semester and beyond. Replacing the former Excel spreadsheet, we will now be utilizing a Microsoft Form to collect requests. It is our hope that this process will prove to be much more user friendly and efficient for all parties involved. The form can be found [here](#) as well as on our Office of the Provost [website](#).

Office of the Provost Major Event
Request Form



Reminder, this form is to be utilized to request the attendance of Office of the Provost Leadership at all major events. This includes the Provost, Vice Provost, Associate Vice Provost, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Success, and the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Institutional Effectiveness. Please do not send Outlook calendar invites or emails requesting attendance. Forms must be completed in their entirety to be considered and should be submitted at least 3 weeks prior to the event. Contact Holli Stillman, Assistant to the Provost, with any questions (hbstillman@wcu.edu).

Dogwood Health Trust Annual Meeting

During Fall Break, the [Dogwood Health Trust](#) held its annual partner convening at WCU in Cullowhee. Welcoming over 370 participants, the event was open to individuals and organizations that have been funded by the Trust since its inception in 2018; it allocates over \$75M in grant funds annually. Its strategic priorities are *health and wellness, education, housing, and economic opportunity* with an equity diversity, and inclusion commitment. Dogwood's mission is to "dramatically improve the health and well-being of all people and communities in the 18 counties and Qualla Boundary of Western North Carolina...where every generation can live, learn, earn and thrive..."

For information on DHT and its grants please visit the website at dogwoodhealthtrust.org.

Hunger Awareness Quiz Answers

1. 33%
2. Over 4,800
3. 25%
4. 18%
5. 25%
6. Packs of chicken
7. 13.5 million
8. 345 million
9. War/Conflict
10. Area with limited access to nutritious and affordable food
11. 5.8%
12. 13th