Academic Affairs Newsletter

October 2023

Temperatures are cooling and leaves are beginning to change colors as autumn settles into the Cullowhee Valley. We sincerely hope that you are settling in too! It is hard to believe that it is October already. This month promises to be a fun and exciting one for the Catamount community with events like the 6th annual Indigenous Peoples Day Festival and myriad WCU Homecoming festivities. We hope that if you are able, you will also take full advantage of fall break and make it a time for rest, rejuvenation, connection, travel, or whatever else you need it to be.

Liberal Studies Workshop

The Advising Center is offering workshops on Liberal Studies for new and continuing faculty advisors to gain a better understanding of Liberal Studies at WCU before Advising Day (Tuesday, October 31, 2023). Advisors who are unable to attend are encouraged to contact Mary Fischer, Associate Director of Advising, at liberalstudies@wcu.edu regarding their liberal studies advising questions.

These workshops will take place at the days/times listed below (please attend one):

- Tuesday, October 10th, 1-2 PM in Killian Annex 136
- Wednesday, October 11th, 12-1 PM in Killian Annex 136
- Thursday, October 12th, 11 AM-12 PM in Killian Annex 136

Information on our Liberal Studies Program is available at liberalstudies.wcu.edu. The list of Liberal Studies course offerings for Spring 2024 will be posted to the Liberal Studies website prior to Advising Day. Students and faculty advisors will also be able to search for Liberal Studies

course offerings in the Schedule of Classes located on myWCU, using the Advanced Search option and filtering by the "Attribute" field.

Advising Day

Advising Day is Tuesday, October 31, 2023. The Advising Center continues to publish an Advising Day calendar listing all departmental activities for that day. The calendar will be displayed on the Advising Day website (advisingday.wcu.edu), and a link will be posted on the student-facing myWCU site.

 Reminders about assigning advisees:

> • Please update your advisee lists and send those to the Registrar's Office as soon as possible. Your professional advisor in the Advising Center sent departments a list of students who need faculty advisors in early September. Contact the advisor who is a liaison with your department if you need your list again.

> • Updating your advisee lists will ensure your assigned students will receive timely communication regarding 5th-week grades, Issue Alerts, and Advising Day activities.

> • Students enrolled at WCU prior to summer/fall 2023 with less than 45 completed hours will remain assigned to the faculty advisor and meet with you for advising and registration.

To be included on the Advising Day website, Travis Bulluck, Director of Academic Advising, is requesting your department's Advising Day plans. This page will reflect departmental activities; if no activities/instructions are shared, the department's contact information will be displayed. Please provide Travis with the time, location, and modality for the Advising Day session(s) and other beneficial information.

Examples of information students will need to know include:

- When and where are students required to meet on Advising Day?

- Is your meeting virtual? If so, what is the URL for the meeting?
- Will your department require specific materials or technology for your student appointments?
    - Example: laptop, degree audit, or tentative class schedule.
- Do you have other related programs scheduled on Advising Day? What, when, and where?

Scholarship and Research Strategic Planning Committee

As an outgrowth of discussions last year about sponsored research, we will be initiating a strategic planning process on scholarship and research – broadly defined – at WCU. The purpose of this process is to:

- Set goals and approaches to enhance the campus culture for scholarship and research.
- Set goals for scholarship and research support.
- Assess current research incentives (institutional grants, etc.) and suggest revisions.
- Identity processes for selecting potential institutional scholarship and research themes.
- Assess current support of undergraduate research and seek ways to deepen our institutional commitment.
- Provide a roadmap for institutional efforts for the next 5-10 years.

The committee will develop a strategic plan with metrics that guide/measure progress towards broad institutional goals. An interim report will be due in April 2024 with a final report with recommendations due in the Fall 2024 term. The Committee will present its findings to Faculty Senate.

Dr. John Hildreth (Graduate School & Research/Construction Management) and Dr. Vicki Szabo (CAS, History) have agreed to co-chair this committee. The other members are:

Kloo Hansen | *Graduate School & Research*

Heidi Buchanan | *Hunter Library*

Jess Weiler | *CEAP*

Yue Hillon | *COB*

Andy Ritenour | *CET*

David Hudson | *CHHS*

Brian Gastle | *CAS*

Heather Mae Erickson | *BCFPA*

Sara Duncan | *CHHS*

Kelly Kelley | *CEAP*

Jim Costa | *CAS & Highlands Biological Station*

AI Working Group

Academic Affairs and Faculty Senate recognize the implications of artificial intelligence (AI) for higher education. AI is a topic that is evolving rapidly and will shape issues including pedagogy, curriculum, academic integrity, research and scholarship practices, and many more aspects of our work at WCU. AI will also shape our students' futures in a myriad of ways. To further discussions of the far-reaching implications AI has for WCU, higher education, and our students, Academic Affairs and Faculty Senate have formed an AI Working Group. This group will:

- Develop resources for faculty and staff to become better acquainted with AI.

- Develop, with campus partners and institutional resources, professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and students.
- Facilitate broad campus conversations on the role of AI in the curriculum, pedagogy, and practice.
- Identify opportunities for research and collaboration related to AI.
- Recommend policy revisions and quality practices related to AI to academic leadership and Faculty Senate.

Chair: Kenn Sanney, *Accounting, Finance, Information Systems, and Business Law*	
Faculty	Staff
Scott Barlowe, *Math & Computer Science*	Ian Selig, *Coulter Faculty Commons*
Meredith Saba, *Hunter Library*	Nathan Hodges, *OIPE*
Yanjun Yan, *Engineering*	Haylee Wilkie, *WaLC*
Jonathan Bradshaw, *English*	
Nancy Luke, *Teaching & Learning*	
Jaclyn Bandell, *Nursing*	
Tory Depew, *Stage & Screen*	
Scott Huffman, *Chemistry & Physics*	

JED Campus – Focus on Student Mental Health

WCU has joined JED Campus in support of student well-being and mental health. The program is a nationwide initiative of The Jed Foundation (JED) and is designed to help schools evaluate and strengthen their mental health, substance use, and suicide prevention programs and systems to ensure that we have the strongest possible mental health safety nets.

There are currently over 450 campuses participating in the JED Campus program, including several other UNC institutions.

WCU's four-year membership in JED Campus begins with 1) establishing an interdisciplinary, campus-wide team to assess, support and implement program, policy, and system improvements and 2) completing a confidential, self-assessment survey on its mental health promotion, substance use, and suicide prevention efforts. Upon completion of the assessment, JED subject matter experts provide schools with a confidential, comprehensive feedback report identifying successes and opportunities for enhancements. Our participation in JED aligns with multiple efforts already underway institutionally to provide support in mental health and

wellness for our students, including the Healthy Minds Survey, deployed October 2nd to 30th. Please encourage students to complete the 15-20 minutes survey so that we can continue to refine support for students' mental health and wellness needs. Invitations for all students to participate are sent to their Catamount email.

WCU's JED Campus team will be co-led by Dr. Carol Burton, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Dr. Sam Miller, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

Summer Session Working Group

Summer session at WCU has evolved significantly over the last several years. Changes in enrollment patterns, student needs, financial aid availability, and role of summer in the university funding model have all altered summer session activities in significant ways. The purpose of this working group is to review, revise, and update APR 19: Guidelines for Summer Session to account for these changes, increase enrollment, foster innovation, and identify ways to incentivize faculty, colleges, and departments. The focus of 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.

Invitations have been sent to potential committee members.

Phased Retirement

An email communication about WCU's phased retirement program was recently sent to all faculty along with a separate email for those perceived to be eligible. The application window is open from October 2nd through November 13th. If you have any questions about the program, eligibility requirements, or application process, please contact Carmen Huffman, Interim Associate Provost for Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost (chuffman@wcu.edu).

WCU Jamaica Teacher Program

WCU has been providing education and training programs for Jamaican teachers since the early 1970's. In the 50+ years since WCU's first involvement in Jamaica, the WCU Jamaica Teacher Program proved to be a mutually beneficial and effective partnership, often being viewed as a benchmark of success in educational instruction in the Caribbean country. The program has enabled thousands of Jamaican educators to improve their teaching and leadership skills and, in turn, positively affect the lives of thousands. Since the program's inception, more than 4,000 Jamaican teachers earned degrees in education from WCU.

Unfortunately, after much deliberation and consideration, the Jamaica teacher program will be discontinued. WCU will not seek reaccreditation with the University Council of Jamaica and will begin to teach out the two remaining cohorts in-country. The landscape in Jamaican tertiary education has changed swiftly since the beginning of the COVID 19 pandemic, making it difficult, if not impossible, to operate the programs in-country as we once had. WCU is no longer able to offer programming that meets the needs of the teachers and leaders in Jamaica and the demands of accreditation.

The plan is to pursue the expansion of professional development opportunities for Jamaican and other teachers abroad through virtual experiences, where appropriate, and shorter-term, in-country workshops where a need has been expressed and it is feasible to offer programming. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Kim Winter, Dean, College of Education and Allied Professions (kkruebel@wcu.edu), Dr. Carolyn Callaghan, Executive Director, Educational Outreach (ccallaghan@wcu.edu), or Dr. Dan Grube, Assistant to the Dean for International Programs (dgrube@wcu.edu).

Office of National and International Awards (ONIA)

After serving in the interim for a year, Dr. Ingrid Bego, Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of the International Studies Program, has been appointed the Director of the Office of National and International Awards (ONIA) at WCU. Over the past year, she has worked diligently to include students, create external partnerships, and collaborate with numerous faculty and staff to advance ONIA and its mission. Dr. Bego stands ready to assist any and all students who are interested in major national and international scholarship and fellowship opportunities such as the Schwarzman, Rhodes, and Fulbright. Congratulations Ingrid!

For more information about ONIA visit their website or contact Dr. Bego at ibego@wcu.edu or 227-3899.

Civic Engagement Opportunities Underway

The Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning is continuing to lead efforts in student civic engagement.
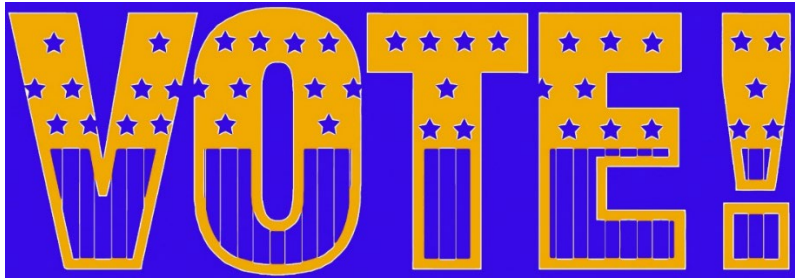
- **Democracy Day was Friday, September 15th** and our Student Democracy Coalition placed dozens of American flags on the UC lawn, rolled out a civic trivia questionnaire to new student transition courses (USI 101 and 130) through Canvas, and promoted a social media campaign.
- **On Sunday, September 17th, Constitution Day,** the Student Democracy Coalition facilitated an information table and provided Constitution booklets for students at the Catafount.
- **Tuesday, September 19th was National Voter Registration Day,** and the Center hosted an information table at the Catafount with Jackson County Board of elections, the Jackson County NAACP, and Indivisible Common Cause participating with the Student Democracy Coalition from 10a-3p.

Additional events and activities are being scheduled.

Mountain Heritage Center Exhibition

Our Mountain Heritage Center presents "A Century of Cherokee Mask Making," a birds-eye view of an iconic art form and enduring tradition. Opening October 18, 2023 and on view until March 1, 2024 - mark your calendars for November 16 carving demonstration and opening reception. Multiple university partners contributed to the exhibition's curation including, the Cherokee Center, faculty partners in biology and anthropology, alongside student interns. This installation complements the WCU Fine Arts Museum current exhibition "Spark of the Eagle Dancer: The Collecting Legacy of Lambert Wilson" and Anna Fariello's "Behind the Mask: Cherokee Mask Makers and Their Legacy" recently on display at Cherokee Middle School.

Photo Credit: Joshua Adams, Slant-Eyed Giant, 2009, buckeye wood and buffalo fur, 18.5 x 8.75 x 5.5 inches, Collection of the WCU Fine Art Museum, Gift of John Glasser, 2018.006. Image taken by WCU Photography Services.

University Policy 100 – International Travel and International Visitors

Faculty and staff must have the University's Policy 100 forms completed PRIOR to all international travel. The policy, as written, suggests completing forms at least 3 months prior to travel. Completion of these forms is required by Federal law. The required paperwork ensures our compliance with Federal export control regulations and non-compliance may result in fines for the institution and even criminal prosecution for those involved. Please do not put our people and our institution at risk by failing to complete these documents. It is important that you ensure that, when you travel internationally and take WCU owned technology, you comply with [University Policy 100](#).

Once completed and Dean's signatures have been collected, [International Travel Approval Forms](#) should be submitted to Holli Stillman, Assistant to the Provost, at hbstillman@wcu.edu. Forms will then be routed to the Office of Global Engagement for compliance review before being returned to the Office of the Provost for final approval.

Chief Inclusive Excellence Officer (CIEO) Search

Chancellor Brown met with the search committee for WCU's next Chief Inclusive Excellence Officer for the first time on Friday September 15th. The Chancellor provided her charge to the committee, and the group worked on formulating a draft of the position description. Ideally, the position will be posted by the second week of October. Once the position is posted folks are encouraged to share it with colleagues.

> ### CIEO Search Committee Members
> Dr. Scott Eldredge, College of Arts and Sciences (Chair)
> Dr. Mariana Da Costa, College of Health and Human Sciences
> Ms. Tory Depew, Belcher College of Fine and Performing Arts
> Ms. Nancy Ford, Human Resources and Payroll
> Dr. Mariana Garrido-Lopez, College of Business
> Dr. Yancey Gulley, College of Education and Allied Professions (Faculty Senate)
> Dr. Bora Karayaka, College of Engineering and Technology
> Mr. CJ Mitchell, Student Government Association
> Ms. Evelyn Rucker, Intercultural Affairs
> Dr. Charmion Rush, College of Education and Allied Professions
> Ms. Holli Stillman, Office of the Provost (Staff Senate)
> Dr. Melissa Canady Wargo, Office of the Chancellor

Office of the Provost Personnel Update

The Office of the Provost is pleased to announce that Ms. Lindsey Brown has been hired to serve as our new administrative support specialist. Among other duties, this position primarily supports faculty in curriculum management, the faculty activities database (FAD), and provides administrative support to Faculty Senate. Lindsey holds bachelor's degrees in psychology and criminal justice from the University of Mississippi as well as a master's degree in public

administration from the University of Oklahoma. She worked for the US Air Force as both a personnel officer as well as a civilian, supporting dispute resolution, community readiness, and equal employment opportunity counseling. Her various roles have helped her develop strong skills in relationship building, organization, data management, communication, and training development. Lindsey's first day will be October 9th. Until then, questions about curriculum or the FAD can be directed to Carmen Huffman, Interim Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (chuffman@wcu.edu).

Important Changes for Requesting IT Support

The Division of IT has removed the email ithelp@wcu.edu as an official channel for IT Support. Effective immediately, please visit ithelp.wcu.edu, where you can find a list of articles curated to help you with your technology questions. You can also submit a ticket for a variety of requests, such as Canvas, phone services, PawPrint, equipment checkout, and general support. You can also call for IT support at 828-227-7487 or visit the Technology Commons, located on the ground floor of Hunter Library, for in-person IT support.

Distribution List Email Etiquette

We've all been there – a message comes into our Inbox, where the sender used a group list to reach many people at once. Then, the nightmare starts... If someone on that list clicks "Reply-All" instead of "Reply," everyone's mailbox starts to fill up. When the distribution list has many recipients, it becomes more than a minor inconvenience.

We can avoid this easily using the BCC: field instead. When sending to a distribution list, simply type that list's name on the BCC: line instead of the To: line. BCC: should always be used for sending a message to a large email list to prevent the use of "reply all" to spam all recipients – whether that happens inadvertently or deliberately. By doing this, if someone tries to "Reply-All," the message will go only to the original sender and not the entire distribution list.

Note that while utilizing the BCC: field is helpful for avoiding the "Reply All" nightmare, it does pose some challenges. It is often beneficial to include who the audience is in the email greeting. This allows recipients to know who else is receiving the email so they can respond/act accordingly. For instance, if you're sending an email to Deans and Associate Deans and have entered those distribution lists in the BCC: field, recipients of the email will not know whom the other recipients are. Deans may then forward the email to their Associate Deans to share pertinent information, creating a duplicate email for the Associate Deans. To avoid this, simply include who the email is being sent to in the greeting (e.g., "Dear College of Business Faculty,").

Information Technology Endpoint Device Lifecycle

The Division of IT would like to remind campus users that endpoint devices have a specified lifecycle, which can be reviewed in [Policy 67](). The highlights from the policy are

- One-in-one-out for new purchases
- In-service date of five years
- Exception approval and End-of-Life fee ($30/device) required for devices beyond five years
- Devices not approved for exception must be [surplussed]() or logins will be disabled.

You may wish to review your department's IT Assets via the new [CATalytics dashboard]() for IT Asset Management.