Academic Affairs Newsletter

September 2023

The Fall 2023 semester is now in full swing and if it flies by at the same rate summer did, December break will be upon us before we know it. With the fast pace everything seems to be operating at these days, it is easy to forget the importance of stopping to smell the roses. As we move through this semester, you are all encouraged to seize the opportunities of each day, embrace the challenges that may arise, and to be intentional about slowing down and engaging with the campus community.

Meet WCU's New Students

Each fall semester, the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (OIPE) produces several enrollment reports, once the Fall census is completed on the 10th day of classes. New student profile reports for both freshmen and graduate students are published here. Access to many other reports and dashboards is also available via the OIPE webpage.

Campus Theme: Community and Belongingness

COMMUNITY & BELONGINGNESS
go.wcu.edu/campustheme

This year's campus theme is Community and Belongingness. The Campus Theme Committee is determining the scope of the theme and will share it with the campus community once developed. In the meantime, we are currently accepting funding/support applications based on the broad themes of community and belongingness.

Please see the Funding Request Form here: Community & Belongingness Funding Request Form 2023-24

The Campus Theme Committee is also compiling and sharing resources on the campus theme page. If you have any resources related to community and belongingness that you believe should be included, please contact Alei Coleman at colemana@wcu.edu. Some resources already available include the following:

- Belongingness at Work
- Five Components of Student Belonging
- Student Belonging Resource Center

The 2023-24 steering committee is being co-chaired by Dr. Mariana Da Costa, Assistant Professor in the School of Nursing, and Dr. Carol Burton, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. A full committee list can be viewed here.

SURF

The Southern Conference (SoCon) Academic Exchange is proud to announce that the annual SoCon Undergraduate Research Forum (SURF) Conference will be held on Friday-Saturday, **October 13-14, 2023, at** Wofford College in Spartanburg, SC. This multidisciplinary conference will connect approximately 150 student presenters from SoCon colleges/universities for a two-day event featuring projects in the arts and humanities, as well as the STEM disciplines.

WCU has a long tradition of supporting this event and works to reduce barriers to students' participation. WCU will cover accepted students' registration fee and hotel accommodation, and SoCon will provide meals for most of the conference. This is a great opportunity for our students to showcase their research, scholarship, and creative activities.

The application link for SURF 2023 is available *here*. The deadline for students to submit their presentation abstracts to WCU committee is **Friday, September 8, 2023 (SoCon needs final list by September 15th)**. WCU will then select the top 10-15 projects to represent WCU at SURF 2023. Students selected for the conference will be notified by the middle of **September 2023**.

Provost's Faculty Relations Fellow

The Office of the Provost invites applications for the Provost's Faculty Relations Fellow. The initial appointment is for 1-2 years (negotiable) with the possibility of renewal based on annual assessment. Applicants should be tenured, and prior training or experience in mediation, conflict resolution, counseling, and/or human resource management is desirable. However, opportunities for training in faculty relations will be made available. Interested and qualified faculty should submit applications by **Friday, September 15, 2023**. *(Application details attached.)*

NCUR

NCUR, the National Conference of Undergraduate Research, will be held in-person at the Long Beach Convention Center in Long Beach, CA, April 7 – 11, 2024 (this includes travel dates). **WCU abstract submissions for the selection process are due Friday, September 22,**

2023. Students will be notified of the outcome, and if selected, must submit an abstract to NCUR by their deadline of **November 22, 2023**.

Additional information and eligibility requirements can be found on our [website](#). Please contact Suzanne Melton, Research Programs Coordinator, at [scmelton@wcu.edu,](mailto:scmelton@wcu.edu) or call 828.227.2575 for more information.

New WCU Advising Model Initiates Campus-wide Faculty Advisor Training

In preparation for Advising Day (Tuesday, October 31st), the Advising Center is offering sessions to further faculty utilization and expertise on Navigate and myWCU's Advising Student Profile. Faculty are invited to attend a topic-based session this fall for a deeper understanding of how to advise our Catamounts at main, West, and Biltmore Park sites. Faculty are asked to bring a laptop to explore the topics in real-time.

To view the scheduled training sessions, open the **Advising Model Training Sessions** pdf attached to this email. If you are not able to participate in one of the opportunities available, please contact your liaison in the Advising Center for support before Advising Day.

For any other questions or concerns, please contact the Advising Center at 828-227-7753

Collegial Review Sessions

For those serving on department, college, or university collegial review committees, we thank you for your service. This work is critical to our reappointment, tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review processes. It is important to review our policies related to this work each academic cycle. Please plan to attend one of the upcoming sessions listed below. Attendance is required for new committee members and very strongly encouraged for returning members.

- Session #1: Thursday, September 28th, 3-4 pm, UC 232 – Multipurpose Room
- Session #2: Monday, October 2nd, 3-4 pm, UC 232 – Multipurpose Room

Academic Project Grants

Academic Project Grants (APGs) support full-time undergraduate student research and creative work efforts through supplies and materials needs as well as travel to disciplinary conferences. Students who submit a proposal can be granted up to $500 in project-related support. Faculty members can submit proposals on behalf of student groups of two or more.

AY 2023-24 cycle dates as follows:
- September 28, 2023
- October 26, 2023
- January 25, 2024
- February 22, 2024

Grants are competitive and are awarded during each submission cycle. The Faculty Committee will send award notifications out within two weeks of each deadline.

Click here to discover proposal guidelines, template, and more.

This program is administered by The Office of Research Administration; please contact Suzanne Melton, Research Programs Coordinator, at scmelton@wcu.edu, or call 828.227.2575 for more information.

Support for Intentional and Engaged Learning

Each year the Office of Undergraduate Studies allocates funds to support intentional and/or experiential learning both in- and outside the classroom. These grants provide support for intentional learning activities, student travel to conferences (for presentations or general attendance), and non-conference student travel. Funding requests are processed on a rolling basis. Applicants can expect email communication from our office within five days of submission.

Please find the request form here: Intentional Learning Funding Application. If you have any questions, contact Alei Coleman, Executive Assistant to the Vice Provost, at 828.227.3012 or colemana@wcu.edu.

Funding Support for Scholarly Travel and Activities

WCU provides support for scholarly work including travel grants, the scholarly development assignment program (WCU's sabbatical program), and the visiting scholar program. Information about eligibility criteria and how to apply can be found in the Provost's SharePoint Library. Information about additional faculty support and recognition opportunities can be found at that site as well as the Coulter Faculty Commons site.

Faculty Diversity Officers

Do you have a commitment to, and significant awareness of, diversity, equity, and inclusion? Are you committed to growing an inclusive and diverse faculty to improve the student experience? If this is you, contact your department head or dean to find out more about becoming a faculty diversity officer! A faculty diversity officer (FDO) serves on search committees for faculty positions. The role of the FDO is to advocate for inclusive hiring practices and provide direction related to legal hiring practices. The intent is to provide an outside perspective for search committees, and assignments will likely fall outside of an FDO's disciplinary expertise. The initial commitment is for the current academic year with an opportunity for renewal. FDOs are expected to participate in 3-4 searches annually. Work as an FDO is recognized as significant service to the university. *Faculty interested in serving as an FDO should contact their Department Head or Dean.*
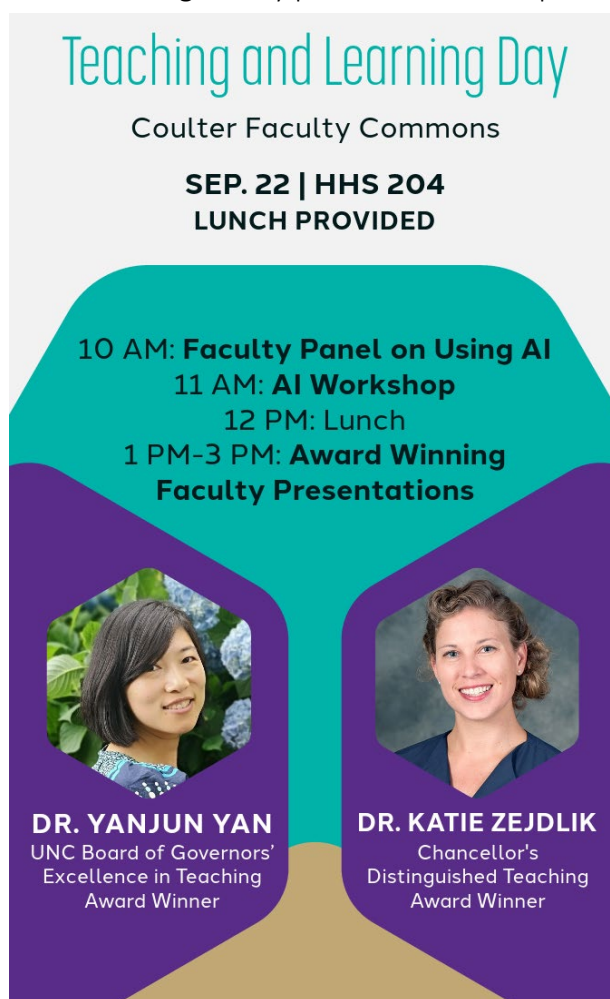
Coulter Faculty Commons (CFC) Updates

Teaching and Learning Day

Join us on Friday, **September 22, 2023** in HHS 204 for a morning faculty panel and workshop on AI/ChatGPT with Dr. Lisa Bloom (School of Teaching and Learning), Dr. Barbra Jo White (Business), Dr. Hugh Jack (Engineering), Dr. Jonathan Wade (Academic Engagement and IT Governance), and Josh Rakower (Hunter Library). The afternoon will be a celebration with presentations from Dr. Yanjun Yan (Engineering), 2023 UNC Board of Governors' Excellence in Teaching Award winner, and Dr. Katie Zejdlik (Anthropology), the 2023 Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award winner. They will discuss their passion for excellent teaching and learning and the high-impact practices they use in the classroom. Fall Teaching & Learning Day

Teaching and Learning Day
Coulter Faculty Commons
SEP. 22 | HHS 204
LUNCH PROVIDED

10 AM: **Faculty Panel on Using AI**
11 AM: **AI Workshop**
12 PM: Lunch
1 PM-3 PM: **Award Winning Faculty Presentations**

DR. YANJUN YAN
UNC Board of Governors'
Excellence in Teaching
Award Winner

DR. KATIE ZEJDLIK
Chancellor's
Distinguished Teaching
Award Winner

Generative AI FAQ

A new year provides an opportunity to update your course and syllabus to clarify your expectations. This year we recommend adding a statement on AI in your classroom. We know you have questions, so check this FAQ page with resources to help you gear up for the semester. We also have some helpful teaching tips for you in this new era of AI. Of course, you can always book a consultation with the Coulter

Faculty Commons if you would like to work through these ideas or need assistance in designing your course.

Panda Pros

Instructure is offering a free 1:1 session with a Panda Pro to answer any questions faculty may have about Canvas. A free Panda Pros session gives access to expert advice on using Instructure products. Spaces are limited! Sign up now to secure your spot.

New WCU Advising Model Initiates Campus-wide Faculty Advisor Training

In preparation for Advising Day (October 31st), the Advising Center is offering training sessions to further faculty utilization and expertise on Navigate and myWCU's Advising Student Profile. Faculty are invited to attend a topic-based training session this fall for a deeper understanding of how to advise our Catamounts. Trainings are offered on the main, west, and Biltmore Park campuses. Faculty are asked to bring a laptop to the training session to learn about and explore the topics in real-time.

As part of retention research, assessment, and a refreshed retention strategic plan, WCU has modified its previously used advising model:

0-45 Completed Credit Hours
Professional advisors will be tasked with supporting students as their primary advisors during the critical transition period (0-45 completed hours) in many majors at WCU. Professional advisors will guide students through the process of making informed decisions that consider the student's academic strengths, prior coursework, academic interests, and areas for growth. Dedicated professional advisors will support students in developing critical skills such as interpreting their degree evaluation, engaging in strategic academic planning, and utilizing campus support offices such as tutoring, accessibility resources, and career services.

46-60 Completed Credit Hours
After students in these identified majors complete 45 hours, these students will transition to a faculty advisor who will serve as the primary advisor. Increased faculty availability on and around Advising Day will create more time to have in-depth conversations with students who are steadfast in their majors. The professional advisor will serve as a secondary advisor to their assigned major/programs and will assist with issue alerts raised in the Navigate system.

60+ Completed Credit Hours
Once the student has completed 60 total credit hours, the professional advisor (secondary advisor) will be removed from the student's account, and the faculty advisor will become the sole advisor connected with the student.

Under the new advising model, faculty will need to increase their knowledge and utilization of WCU's Navigate platform and myWCU's Advising Student Profile. Aside from providing direction regarding upcoming registration, primary faculty advisors will be responsible for facilitating outreach and closing Issue Alerts. Issue Alerts are WCU's referral system that allows faculty and staff to initiate outreach to a student's advisor so they can check in with a student who might be struggling. The referral is FERPA-protected and triggers the advisor to reach out to the student and offer support for their academic success at WCU. It is beneficial to refer any student who is struggling academically or has low attendance as it helps establish a pattern of behavior that can be used to track and support the student

throughout their academic career. Academic issue alerts (attendance concerns, getting bad grades, student should seek tutoring, etc.) will lead advisors to communicate with the student and connect them with campus support offices; non-academic alerts will be sent to the Student Crisis Response Team (SCRT) within Student Affairs. The strong relationship between primary faculty advisors and their advisees will allow impactful outreach that supports student retention and persistence in their academic programs. Training opportunities are listed below:

Navigate:
- o Issue alerts for your students
- o Post availability for students to electronically schedule appointments with you
- o Create appointment summaries for your students to view at a later date
- o Quickly obtain Alt-PINs for registration/advising
- o View notes about student interactions
- o Review previous meetings with representatives from across campus

Advising Student Profile and Degree Audits:
- o Student Advising Profile Overview
- o Perform and interpret a degree evaluation
- o Perform a "what if" analysis for students changing their major or minor
- o Evaluate remaining requirements for major/minor programs and liberal studies
- o Search for classes
- o Submitting major/minor changes
- o Submitting advisor changes
- o Fostering Undergraduate Student Success
- o Academic policies relating to grade replacements, academic standing, and transient permissions

DATE	LOCATION	TIME	Topic
9/18/23	AP 201	1:00pm-2:00pm	Navigate (Appointment Availability, Appointment Campaigns, Issue Alerts, and Notes)
9/20/23	UC 215	3:00pm-4:00pm	Advising Student Profile and Degree Audits
9/20/23	BP 342	1:00pm-2:00pm	Navigate (Appointment Availability, Appointment Campaigns, Issue Alerts, and Notes)
9/20/23	BP 342	3:00pm-4:00pm	Advising Student Profile and Degree Audits

9/26/23	UC 215	10:00am-11:00am	Navigate (Appointment Availability, Appointment Campaigns, Issue Alerts, and Notes)
9/26/23	UC 215	9:00am-10:00am	Advising Student Profile and Degree Audits
9/28/23	HHSB 187	1:00pm-2:00pm	Navigate (Appointment Availability, Appointment Campaigns, Issue Alerts, and Notes)
9/28/23	HHSB 187	3:00pm-4:00pm	Advising Student Profile and Degree Audits
10/10/23	UC 215	2:00pm-3:00pm	Navigate (Appointment Availability, Appointment Campaigns, Issue Alerts, and Notes)
10/10/23	UC 215	4:00pm-5:00pm	Advising Student Profile and Degree Audits
10/11/23	UC 215	9:00am-10:00am	Navigate (Appointment Availability, Appointment Campaigns, Issue Alerts, and Notes)
10/11/23	UC 215	12:00pm-1:00pm	Advising Student Profile and Degree Audits
10/12/23	BP 342	9:00am-10:00am	Navigate (Appointment Availability, Appointment Campaigns, Issue Alerts, and Notes)
10/12/23	BP 342	11:00am-12:00pm	Advising Student Profile and Degree Audits
10/17/23	HHSB 187	10:00am-11:00am	Navigate (Appointment Availability, Appointment Campaigns, Issue Alerts, and Notes)
10/17/23	HHSB 187	3:00pm-4:00pm	Advising Student Profile and Degree Audits
10/18/23	BP 345	10:00am-11:00am	Navigate (Appointment Availability, Appointment Campaigns, Issue Alerts, and Notes)
10/18/23	BP 342	1:00pm-2:00pm	Advising Student Profile and Degree Audits
10/19/23	UC 215	11:00am-12:00pm	Navigate (Appointment Availability, Appointment Campaigns, Issue Alerts, and Notes)
10/19/23	UC 215	2:00pm-3:00pm	Advising Student Profile and Degree Audits

These topics are vital to the retention and persistence of our Catamounts. These electronic tools can help you to identify potential issues, refer students to appropriate resources, and give them the best assistance in achieving their educational and career goals. Reference guides are available on the Advising Center's faculty resource page. Contact your liaison in the Advising Center for support/training before Advising Day if you are not able to participate in one of the training opportunities.

Please contact the Advising Center with any questions or concerns (828-227-7753).

Thanks, and **Achieve More**!

Travis Bulluck
Director of Academic Advising
Western Carolina University
107 Killian Annex
828.227.7753
tlbulluck@wcu.edu
(he/him/his)

WCU students can click here to schedule an appointment.

The Office of the Provost invites applications for the Faculty Relations Fellow position. The initial appointment is for 1-2 years (negotiable) with the possibility of renewal based on annual assessment. Applicants should be tenured, and prior training or experience in mediation, conflict resolution, counseling, and/or human resource management is desirable. However, opportunities for training in faculty relations will be made available. Interested and qualified faculty should submit applications by Friday, September 15, 2023.

Responsibilities

The Faculty Relations Fellow (FRF) is an independent resource for problem resolution who works to ensure that members of the university community are treated equitably and fairly. The FRF can provide informal assistance to help resolve workplace issues or discuss faculty concerns without committing to further disclosure or any formal resolution. The FRF can also provide upward feedback for the institution in a confidential, independent, and neutral manner. The FRF reports to the Associate Provost, meeting regularly for ongoing support in the role.

The FRF can help faculty to

- develop strategies and weigh options
- clarify interests and goals
- strategize about a conversation with a manager or colleague

The FRF can also

- facilitate difficult conversations or negotiations
- facilitate contact with human resources or an administrative/academic manager's office
- identify resources at the university
- clarify policies and practices

The FRF connects with appropriate campus authorities on matters pertaining to violations of law or university policy, or campus safety issues, including bullying, intimidation, and other threatening behaviors. Lastly, the FRF conducts exit interviews with separating faculty, and creates an aggregated report on findings that is shared with the Provost and Faculty Senate. An annual summary of all FRF activity is also required.

To Apply

Please send the following electronically to Kent DeLaet (kbdelaet@wcu.edu, x2665).

- Vita (that reflects relevant experience/training)

- Statement of interest that includes applicant's preliminary plan to address responsibilities (three page maximum)
- Brief statements of endorsement from applicant's department head and dean

Compensation

- One course release per regular semester (or stipend in lieu of course release for first semester)
- Funding for relevant professional development

For additional information about this opportunity, please contact Carmen Huffman, Interim Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (chuffman@wcu.edu), x7495.