

IMAGINE

WCU HONORS COLLEGE MAGAZINE 2019



WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

WORD FROM THE DEAN

Collaboration. Holding Imagine magazine in my hand is collaboration made tangible, visceral, real. As we have become more digitally and socially connected, expectations for our ability to be more collaborative have increased. It is no longer enough to be accomplished at the level of the individual, but necessary in today's society to also function at a higher level as part of a team if we want to be successful. Imagine demonstrates, in a concrete way, what the power of team can create.

In higher education, there are best practices in teaching and learning that are known as High Impact Practices. These educational practices come from research by George Kuh ⁽¹⁾ and associates and have been shown to be highly effective and improve students' engagement, learning, retention, and overall success in college. Collaborative assignments and projects also called collaborative learning is one of Kuh's identified High Impact Practices. Our Imagine magazine is the students' work product that comes out of this high-level collaboration as part of the students' educational experience. Not only do the students learn from each other, but they learn about their own perspectives and understanding by listening and cooperating with diverse others. They learn to work and solve problems as members of a team pursuing a single objective. The students also collaborate with a number of professional staff at Western Carolina, increasing their applied knowledge and professional skills.

Collaboration has, at its heart, the idea of labor – as we work together, or co-labor, we learn and accomplish much more as a team than we could ever accomplish as individuals. Imagine magazine is proof positive of that team-based work, made tangible. In helping to bring this labor of love to print this year, I would like to recognize and thank Jeremy Jones, Imagine's faculty mentor and Associate Professor of English, for his enthusiasm and dedication to this collaborative effort. We are also indebted to Adrienne Applegate, University Marketing Services Manager, for guiding the magazine through to publication, and to John Balentine, Senior Art Director, who provided creative insight and expertise to the design team. In addition to our student writers, who are featured in the photo here, I'd also like to thank our student designers, Ali Kabrich, Rachel High, and Isabel Hernandez, who have brought the work to life.

Imagine magazine is one of the ways that The Honors College communicates its values around community engagement and service, learning and leadership, global perspectives, research and scholarship, and career readiness with a new audience (our prospective students and their families) and with an old audience (our alumni and special friends). These groups, too, are important collaborators in the future success of The Honors College at Western Carolina. I appreciate your important roles as members of our team and look forward to collaborating with you as the next academic year progresses. Thank you all for your contributions to our collective success.

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Best,



Jill Nelson Granger
Dean, The Honors College
April 2, 2019

(1) High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter, George D. Kuh (AAC&U, 2008)

WRITERS & DESIGNERS



Writers: Front row: Anissa Holland, Rachel McElrath, McKenzie Twine, Emily Fine, Zaiyu Liu, Morgan Winstead, Madison Snyder, Daniel Brodie, Abbey Gregory, Dr. Jill Granger
Back row: Professor Jeremy Jones, Nate Hannah, Julian Talley, Jacob Padillo, Jinhyuk Bae, William Evans, Alison Moore, Quinn Evans, Luke Ruff



Designers: Public Communications Specialist Adrienne Applegate, Senior Art Director John Balentine, Ali Kabrich, Isabel Hernandez, Rachel High, Assistant Art Director Todd Charles (Not pictured: Copywriter Sam Blanton)

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Of the Students

Quinn Evans & William Evans

It's the end of October and Halloween draws near. Students are planning what parties to attend, what costumes to wear and what candy to buy on clearance November 1st. However, instead of carving pumpkins and gorging on sweets, one group of students hands out ballots, plans meetings with local candidates and sets up stands to promote something even more terrifying: registering to vote in the upcoming midterms.

These students make up the Student Democracy Coalition, and their work has been recognized by the Wall Street Journal, The American Association of State Colleges and Universities and others. The Student Democracy Coalition is focused on political education – for the students by the students. Their work ranges from general voter education to forums on specific issues to days where students can meet the individuals involved in politics. It's difficult to imagine this was once a small band of students with a common goal of getting others involved.

"It began as multiple grassroots initiatives with students doing what they do best: engaging other students," says Dr. Lane Perry, charismatic advisor of the Coalition. These independent groups eventually fused into one group in 2015: The Student Voter

Initiative. The next year, that organization evolved into the Student Democracy Coalition.

The Coalition was founded by WCU alumna Joanna Woodson. She describes it as a "nonpartisan organization on campus which brings together people from all different demographics and ideologies to discuss ways to solve social issues." Over the years, the organization has created a network of students and Jackson county residents interested in voting, politics and social awareness.

"The youth have the power," explains Hannah Frasier - a current member of the organization. Over the years, the organization has cast a net that has gotten many people involved who wouldn't normally be politically active. It's work like this that's gotten them national recognition and why individuals like Dr. Lane Perry assert all the praise is well deserved.

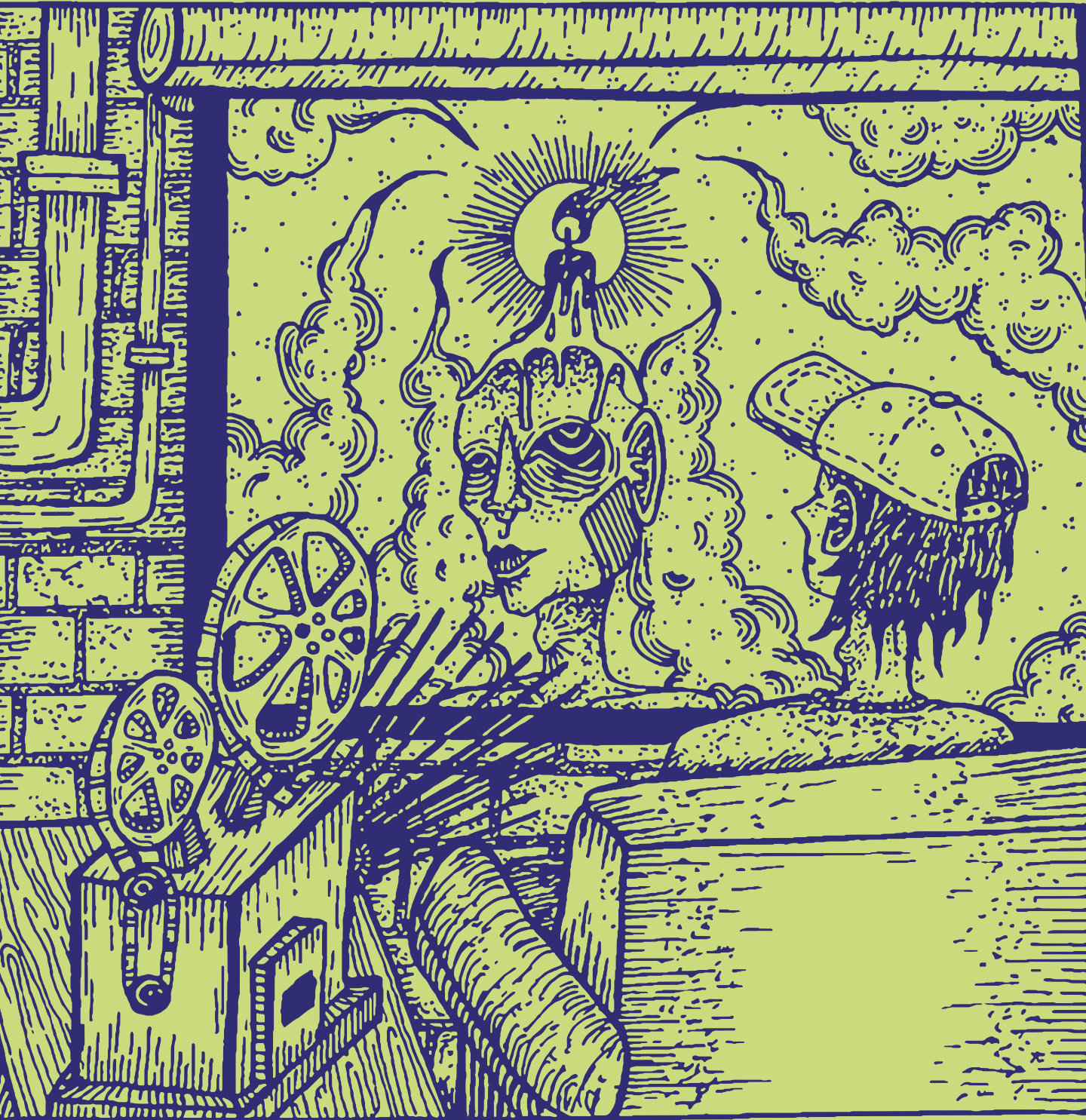
The members of the Student Democracy Coalition are fully aware that even after an election ends and the dust settles, their work is far from done. Their engagement doesn't end. They work tirelessly because they know that their generation will soon take over, and all it takes is working together to make a change.



**“The youth have
the power.”**

POETRY + BEATS

Morgan Winstead



The cover of the Bad Ties album titled "Random Home Movies"

In the corner of Hillside Grind Coffeehouse in Cullowhee sit a microphone, a bass, speakers, a guitar and a small table holding a laptop and synthesizer. Three men move around, putting the finishing touches on the equipment. One, wearing a purple-patterned tie, tunes the bass before sitting down to play chess with an audience member. Another, wearing a black and white tie, is glued to the sticker-coated laptop. The third, wearing a red tie, tests the microphone and then sits at a table. Then, at 6:00, the three men waltz onto the stage. The red-tied man steps up to the microphone and speaks: "Thanks for coming out; we're Bad Ties."

Bad Ties is an experimental, spoken-word, beat poetry group. Beat poetry, as the group's Facebook page defines it, is "Poetry + Beats." Bad Ties consists of Garland Wells, Jacob Moran and Billy Reed. On stage, Garland performs his original poems alongside Jacob's computer-generated beats and Billy's bass riffs. The group has released several albums and performed at venues in Cullowhee, Asheville and New York City.

Garland Wells, the group's poet and creator, didn't always know that he liked poetry. In middle and high school, he tried screenwriting and film, but he hated the screenwriting classes he took in college. Despite this, Garland knew he enjoyed writing, so he wrote a short story and sent it off to various publishers to see what would happen. Soon, one of his stories was published in the book *Winter Chills: An Anthology of Holiday Horrors*.

He took the publication as a sign that he could get somewhere with his writing, and he began experimenting with other types of writing, specifically poetry: "You know, I get bored in class... So I just start writing poetry."

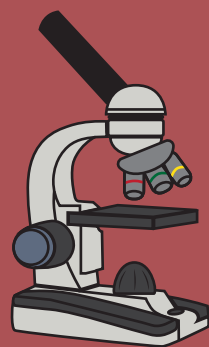
As a sophomore, Garland took a beat poetry course and found the 50's practice of poets performing alongside jazz groups interesting. Beat poetry is characterized by free verse structure, which was

unconventional for poetry during the rise of the beat movement. The free verse structure alongside jazz music piqued Garland's interest. Garland's poems caught the eye of his beat poetry professor, Dr. Paul Worley, who asked him to perform one of his poems titled "Plastic Lover" during the spring literary festival.

Garland performed the poem – a sonnet to a sex doll – in front of the entire English department and the former chancellor. The poem made a lasting impression on the faculty and gave Garland a memorable first experience with performing. From there, Garland's impressed professor took him to several open-mics to read his poems, which built up his confidence.

Garland found that he felt the most satisfied with his poetry while performing it. He liked seeing the effects of his works directly impact an audience. Reflecting on the beat poetry course he took in his sophomore year led Garland to contact Jacob Moran, a friend who had been making beats on his laptop, to discuss the formation of a beat poetry group. Jacob and Garland liked the sound of Garland's poems alongside Jacob's beats, but they felt like their performance sets could be improved with other musical accompaniment. Garland called Billy. Billy had been Garland's classmate in his freshman year, when Billy attended Western for a semester, and was a talented bassist. He joined as soon as Garland called.

The formation of Bad Ties has provided Garland, Jacob and Billy with an outlet to experiment with their creativity. When the group was originally formed, Garland was searching for "some kind of fun outlet to do some poetry." The formation of Bad Ties has not only provided Garland with an outlet to perform his poetry, but it has also given Jacob and Billy opportunities to experiment with both music production and performance. The group members are just as friendly with each other as they are creatively compatible, and this group dynamic makes their performances all the more engaging and interesting.



THE POWER OF MENTORING

EMILY FINE

Looking into a microscope, senior Matthew McDonough sees a world of ordinarily invisible specimens and jots his findings down in a notebook. Over his shoulder stands his mentor, biochemist Dr. Jamie Wallen, who looks on and offers advice. Together Matthew and Dr. Wallen are genetically modifying viruses to see how they perform.

Before coming to Western Carolina University, Matthew had no interest in viruses. In his freshman year, he was enrolled in a class called Phage Hunters that sent students across campus to look for bacteriophages, or viruses. While working with Dr. Wallen and his other professors, Matthew was able to expand his knowledge on viruses – and discover a love of research as a freshman. From that point on, he would spend the next four years in labs on campus and around the country.

Matthew's new-found interest and talent in the field sent him beyond Western. He spent one summer at the University of Maryland Baltimore County investigating HIV membrane interactions. The next summer, he researched a new way to cut the DNA in yeast at the University of Chicago. When he graduates in 2019, Matthew plans to pursue his PhD.

Matthew originally wanted to be a professor at a research university to focus on his work. But after reflecting on the ways Dr. Wallen opened his eyes to research, Matthew decided that one day he would be that kind of mentor to young students. More specifically, students who are often underrepresented in the sciences. He wants to break the stereotypical image of a white male scientist in a lab coat by being a role model for those who want to go into the research field. "I am African American," Matthew says, "and I think that it is really important that we get more diversity in the field."

Science can be a slow process, but through the microscope one can see the future. Change is coming. Matthew wants to use all the guidance and opportunities that Western has given him to change the image that people see when they hear the word researcher. Being mentored by Dr. Wallen only made him more sure of what he wanted to do after college: mentor others the way he was mentored himself.

"I AM AFRICAN AMERICAN, AND I THINK THAT IT IS REALLY IMPORTANT THAT WE GET MORE DIVERSITY IN THE FIELD."



Rachel McElrath



"Is maggots a bad word?" inquires a wide-eyed boy with a skull and crossbones earring. "Cause I'm pretty sure it's just a bug." This is only a hint of the questions and chaos that meet the reading buddies at Smokey Mountain Elementary School each week.

Thirty screaming first graders in one class scatter across the room, writing in their journals, drawing pictures of anything from demons to mermaids and gazing with curiosity at the "giant" visitors in their room: college students. These visitors have the pressure of trying to relate to the young students, sound out words like potato and keep the attention of hyperactive seven-year-old children long enough to read books about talking animals and playing sports.

Why in the world would any sane college student with a full course load drive thirty minutes through the mountains to read to children who gawk at them? "Simple," honors student and reading buddy Morgan Brown says. "I wanted to reach out into the community, and I love working with kids."

Malcolm Skinner, another reading buddy, shows up because of his bond with the kids in the classroom. It makes his day to see them. This bond seems consistent with many of the students and the reading buddies in their classrooms.

I am also a reading buddy and have become close with the kids in my classroom. The girls are eager to tell me about the makeup that they have hidden in their desks, the boys that they have crushes on and "their fifty ex-boyfriends." The boys tell me about

hunting with their daddies and show me drawings of guns and zombies. The relationships between the young learners and buddies are incredible as they move beyond the books to form mentorships. This program allows for young students to have a reliable figure within their lives to teach, laugh and learn with them.

Smokey Mountain Elementary School first invited Western Carolina Honors College students into the classrooms in 2017. When teachers in the school noticed a lack of interest in reading, as well as low academic performance by many young students, they decided to make a change. "We just want to see our students love to read and want to learn," says Gina Cherry, a first-grade teacher at the school who noticed that her second-grade class was not as eager about reading books as they should have been. So, the principal and a group of teachers opened their classrooms to stressed-out college students.

"The impact of this program is immeasurable," principal Tracie Metz says. The honors college students work with children from the ages of six to ten on reading habits because this age range represents critical developmental years for learning. Even though Reading Buddies has been a program within the school for only a short period of time, test scores and interest levels have skyrocketed. This program is an example of what college students can do for their communities when they look beyond the walls of cozy dorms. This work will shape lives of a future generation of readers who may one day walk on this same college campus.

7-year-olds might be the funniest people in the world, little adults with no regard to what's right or wrong. Here are some of the best overheard lines from these students.

"Is maggots a bad word?"

"I've had fifty boyfriends."

"Johnny, being a bathroom monitor doesn't mean that you can go into stalls with other people."

"I hunted a deer yesterday and the eyeball popped out."

"Do you know how to draw a monkey holding a gun?"

"Mr. Max, I got the crayon accidentally stuck in the pencil sharpener."

"Your hair looks so weird today."

"I tried to wear my mommy's shoes to school but she got mad at me."

"I need to call Burger King 'cause they got the best nuggets in town."

FACING THE STORM

ABBIE GREGORY

All was calm. The skies were the brightest of blues with fluffy clouds scattered across the horizon. It was just another day in Cullowhee. However, hundreds of miles to the east, a raging storm battered the coast. Lumberton, N.C. was slowly being enveloped by the second 1,000-year flood in two years, thanks to Hurricane Florence.

Enter Holly Wilson. Early that morning, Holly, an emergency medical care major (EMC), received a text from a friend asking for her and four others to leave for the coast in the evening to help with evacuations.

Holly only knew two people in that group but she still decided to go.

After packing up her things and loading up in a car full of strangers, Holly and her group started the difficult drive. Wind and rain constantly battered the car and downed trees littered the road to their destination. Where that was, they didn't really know. Fayetteville, Wilmington and Lumberton were all places the group leader knew help was needed, but he wouldn't find out where they would be most useful until they arrived.

Holly didn't let the uncertainty of her destination discourage her. In fact, it has happened to her before. Holly came into Western as an athletic training major, only to discover during a summer trip to Guatemala that her passion was to become a doctor. Helping people there only encouraged her to help people elsewhere. When she returned, she changed her major to emergency medical care.

This desire to help others is what motivated Holly to sit through the hours of driving, surrounded by strangers, endangering herself to help those that were stranded in the floodwaters.

Holly found herself in utter chaos. First the group set up camp in Fayetteville, only to move later that day to Lumberton where there was more help needed. Working there with other rescue teams and the coast guard was intimidating, especially since she wasn't sure if they were going to be helpful in the first place. But their status as emergency medical technicians (acquired through the EMC major) helped them find a purpose while they were there: going door to door, encouraging citizens to evacuate and helping them to shelters via kayaks.

Evacuating people in floodwaters is enough to make anyone nervous but it

was amplified for Holly, who isn't the strongest swimmer. Yet there she was being thrown into the water that was windshield high, expected to help others when she could barely help herself. Holly didn't give up. She kept going. The people of Lumberton needed to be led to shelters, and Holly was going to make sure that would happen.

"I feel like we were able to make a positive impact," Holly said. She was able to overcome her fears and the uncertainty of the trip, showing her that it's okay to not know what you're doing. Situations like this one seem to have a way of shaping Holly, preparing her for the road ahead. Her return to Western with everything she learned while in Lumberton drove Holly to continue her studies in emergency medical care – to be ready to make a difference the next time the phone rings.



"LUMBERTON, N.C. WAS SLOWLY BEING ENVELOPED BY THE SECOND 1,000-YEAR FLOOD IN TWO YEARS, THANKS TO HURRICANE FLORENCE."



What We Can Share

Jinhyuk Bae

“My name is Stephen, and I am also Korean.” Stephen Heekwang Um told me this the first time we met. At first, I was not sure if he was Korean. He did look like people in South Korea, my home: high cheekbones, short and thin. But he only spoke to me in English.

The more we met, the more curious things, such as his language usage and general customs, came out. He lives a double life. With his family, his life is fully Korean, but outside of it, it is fully American.

“I used to speak Korean,” he told me, “but society does not care whether I speak it or not.” Although his parents have always only used it, he replies to them in English. For him, he did not have to know about his family’s language.

I have been studying English for more than 10 years in South Korea, but coming to Western this year was my first time visiting America. I realized quickly I did not know much about its culture. When I met Stephen, I learned he wanted to know more about the Korean culture that he cannot fully experience here. So we now share: I teach him about Korea, and he teaches me about America.

When Stephen was young, he thought it was a special rule for only his family to remove their shoes in the house. Now he knows it is a Korean custom, but at college, he wears shoes in his room. I had never worn shoes in the house until I came to America. But now I wear them everywhere. In Korea, Stephen would call me “Older Brother Jhin.” Even though I am only four

years older, he would show respect to his elders by using this Korean honorific. But here at Western, he only calls me Jhin and we speak English.

Talking over coffee, we discuss beauty. In Korea, men sometimes wear makeup to be more attractive, appealing to their more androgynous features. Here in America, Stephen spends his time working out to look more muscular, more American.

From Stephen, I have learned that Americans have embraced lots of ethnicities. They tend to understand many different customs and personal traits. They want to be unique. Koreans, however, usually have tunnel vision about what it means to be Korean. We try to fit into the crowd.

I used to care too much about others’ opinions of me. To break out of this mindset, I decided to grow a beard and long hair – something that would be abnormal in Korea. “As an American, it is weird that Koreans tend to be so sensitive about themselves,” he tells me. “But that is what you are. Stay cool!”

Stephen is studying English Education, with a minor in TESOL, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. When he graduates, he wants to teach in Korea. When I talk with Stephen, I know our shared ethnicity brings us together, but so do our cultural differences. I am looking forward to meeting him again in Korea, sitting with a cup of coffee and talking about Korean culture, just like we did when I first came to America.



“With his family, his life is

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MORE THAN MUSIC

DANIEL BRODIE

It is silent. My friends and I burst into the quiet room. I flop in a chair and pull out my computer: “Why did they give us so much homework?!” Then, I get distracted. I start drumming on my computer lap desk. Before long, one friend begins tapping on a small metal tin, another friend beats on a book, a third strikes the table. That’s when the music begins.

As we begin to play John Cage’s “Living Room Music” on stage in Coulter Recital Hall, the audience’s possible confusion eases. We find music in the objects in the living room set around us and the song continues. “Living Room Music” is one of seven songs the WCU Percussion Ensemble performed in its fall concert, “Escape.” But these weren’t typical percussion performances. In “Escape,” the percussionists act, speak and move while they play, requiring us to consider all the ways we can dive deeper into the music and perform.

Later in our performance, I act as if I am uncomfortable in the chair. I slam the lap desk and storm over to the couch to find a more comfortable seat. I change the position of my hands to create different sounds from

the lap desk. The song emerges from the slaps on the books and tables. We make it look effortless.

It wasn’t effortless at first. We worked hard to rehearse and prepare for this performance. We chose the objects we used. Choosing everyday objects created more flexibility in what we play. The performance became more about what we could add to it as performers rather than how we could play the music. When we first started rehearsing “Living Room Music,” we used different sized books, but later we found other types of objects: plastic, wood, paper and metal.

After we found objects that would be good as instruments, we needed to figure out the story of the piece. We did this through our choreography. The choreographic aspect of “Living Room Music” is what makes the piece more interesting. Since there is a story we created, we needed to tell it or else it leaves the audience confused as to what is happening. Should we act happy? Should we act mad at one of the other group members? The only way to tell our story was through our body language and choreography.

Back on stage, we finish drumming and start reading our homework. One of the ensemble members asks if he can rehearse his lines for his auditions while we read. He begins, “once upon a time, a time, a time, a once upon a time.”

Then, we join in, saying, “time” or “the world was round.” I whistle while I read. Suddenly, we are creating beats and rhythms from the syllables in the words – and we find ourselves making music again.

To learn how to make music from the sounds of words, we worked with George Brown, dean of the College of Fine and Performing Arts. Before Brown worked with us, we were simply saying the words. It was correct musically, but there was no story to it. We needed to act it out. We needed to create the story.

Brown assisted us to do more with the music from a theater standpoint: by putting a story to the music. He made us think about what each of the words meant, and how we could also say these words through our actions on stage.

Performing John Cage’s “Living Room Music” made me grow as a percussionist and a performer. I thought more about creating a story within the music instead of simply playing the notes. As percussionists we had to think more creatively and to play more musically.

Back in the performance, we are reading, but everyone accidentally falls asleep except for me. I play the vibraphone behind the couch so that it becomes an alarm clock. Everyone wakes up, but we decide not to finish our homework. Instead, we drum.

“THE SONG EMERGES FROM THE SLAPS ON THE BOOKS AND TABLES. WE MAKE IT LOOK EFFORTLESS.”



MADISON SNYDER & JACOB PADILLO

Not long after she had gotten settled in at her team's cabin in Yellowstone National Park, Courtney Hartman encountered her first bison jam. While her team was gathering data near a road, traffic came to a halt and tourists hurriedly rolled down their windows, taking out phones and cameras to catch a glimpse of the event. A dozen bison meandered across the road, causing everything around them to come to a halt. All the while, four Western Carolina students who were mapping potential geothermal hazards throughout Yellowstone stood mesmerized by the bison.

Donned in their neon orange safety vests and hard-hats, Courtney and the rest of the hand-picked team of undergraduate and graduate students experienced weather from all four seasons in Yellowstone. They encountered various wildlife. They overcame the inconveniences of myriads of tourists. All of this was done to rate over two hundred hazardous sites across the western expanse of the national park within a period of only eight weeks.

None of the team had been to Yellowstone before. They honed their skills doing research on some of North Carolina's most at-risk coastal parks. These students took part in assessing various hazards, including

flooding, erosion, geothermal and seismic threat levels, landslides, rockfalls and wildfires. Their success in these excursions led to recognition from some major parties, including the National Park Service. It just so happened that the Yellowstone branch was itching to test a new system developed to detect landslide hazards.

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Under the direction and guidance of Director Robert Young, Professor Blair Tormey and Dr. Cheryl-Waters Tormey, these students trained in using a new mobile app created by the National Park and packed for the trip. Once on the ground, they not only pioneered a new technology, they also got to develop their own skills in science, teamwork and friendship – all the while experiencing natural beauty in its purest form.

These students received no direct guidance from the faculty associated with the trip. Only communicating with the professors through weekly checkups by email, the team was left to their own devices to plan and carry out their mapping adventure, “no hand-holding,” as Professor Blair Tormey put it. On their own, Courtney and company braved these obstacles. They politely persuaded tourists to move away from their research sites and reminded them the buffalo were not to be petted.

After five extensive workdays each week, the team got to unwind on the weekends. Traveling throughout the park and sightseeing, rafting on the Yellowstone River, hiking trails in Yellowstone to visit the geysers and rivers and visiting other parks, such as Grand Teton National Park, were only a few of the ways in which these students were able to bond over their two-month expedition. Through the camping expeditions on random nights, to the close-quarters living conditions, the group grew closer. They not only relied on each other to steady surveying equipment, but also to keep the long car rides to and from the different sites interesting, “It was awesome,” Courtney reminisces. “That’s the only way I know how to explain it.”

After the trip, the students ventured down their own paths, some graduating and moving onto careers and graduate school, and others gaining opportunities outside of college. Courtney, too, has found her own opportunities; she presented her findings at the National Geographic Society in October. But at the end of the last day in the park, they all said goodbye to the bison, the hardhats and the reflective vests that drew too much attention from the tourists. As they passed by the places they surveyed and laughed together, the group felt content with their time spent at Yellowstone.





ALL IT TAKES IS FIVE LITTLE STICKERS FOR THE MAGIC TO BEGIN.

Madison Surrett, an undergraduate researcher, stands in a cubby-sized room with blank, white walls like those in a doctor's office. She carefully places five EEG leads on the volunteer's head. Brain waves start to appear on the screen. Madison watches as they spike and fall. The information she is collecting could provide a breakthrough in understanding post-traumatic stress disorder.

Research comes easy to Madison now, but it hasn't always been this way. She started her journey into the world of psychology as a freshman at Berry University. During her time at Berry, Madison had a hard time connecting with her peers and professors. She was also unable to become involved in the psychology department in the way she wanted to, and she knew she needed to make a change in her life.

It was her grandmother's declining health and an inspiring conversation that sparked Madison to make this change. "You need to do what was best for you," her grandmother told her. "And not do what everyone is telling you to do." This advice ultimately brought Madison to WCU.

For Madison, WCU felt like coming home. She wasted no time finding her place within the psychology department and was able to jump into research during her first year. "It was funny," she said, "I went to ask Dr. Sigler to do research with me, but she ended up asking me if I wanted to do research with her."

It wasn't long before she and Dr. Ellen Sigler, associate professor of psychology, were working on two research projects. One project analyzed the way people with disabilities reacted in regard to their community. The other project looked at the mindset of people without disabilities in comparison to people with disabilities. Madison has also researched the imposter phenomenon: the belief that you are a fraud and its relation to attention fatigue.

Through her involvement in research, Madison has learned new techniques and grown in many ways. She was able to adjust from a place of uncertainty and doubt to a place of confidence. Research started out as a requirement she needed to apply for graduate school, but it has become something more.

In Madison's current research project focused on PTSD, she is working with Dr. Gordon and a team of four other WCU students. The students are examining the relationship between post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic growth and disordered eating. To study this relationship, a volunteer is connected to a five-lead EEG to measure the general activity in the brain. A heart monitor is also used to collect data about some of the volunteer's physical reactions.

When she graduates, Madison would like to continue conducting research. She plans to head to graduate school, where she hopes to develop new ideas to research. Afterwards, Madison wants to work at the VA and provide psychological care to soldiers.

KATAMOUNT

ALISON MOORE AND EMILY FINE

A woman kneels in front of a toilet, scrubbing it clean, tears streaming down her face. Is this really what my life has come to? she asks herself. Is this the best I can do? As she cleans, she overhears her manager talking to his daughter about where she wants to go to college. Tuition at Western Carolina University is only \$500 per semester, he points out. It hits her like lightning. She realizes in that moment that she is meant to go back to school.

Kat Tanner is a 43-year-old, free-spirited woman who lives in a modest mobile home about fifteen minutes away from WCU's campus. She commutes five days a week to sit in classes with students half her age. "I am fully an adult, and I am in classes with people who are learning to adult," she says. In everyone's eyes, including her own, she is a non-traditional student who has come to school much later in life. Despite the usual negative connotation, Kat does not let this label keep her from her dreams of teaching English to non-English speaking adults.

Kat attended college before. She received her associate of applied science degree in veterinary technology. However, she soon found an unexpected dissatisfaction in that line of work despite her love of animals. After struggling for a while to find a job that was unrelated to being a

vet tech, she started cleaning: "Anybody can do housekeeping," she says.

Kat now works at Mountaintop Golf and Lake Club in Cashiers where she witnesses her Mexican coworkers struggle frequently. "You need to speak more English; you need to learn English," she overhears managers tell them over and over. It hurts her. She knows her coworkers are working to support themselves, just like her. This experience inspired Kat to study English when she returned to school, and to focus her studies on TESOL, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

On a normal day, Kat sits in classes like TESOL methods and English grammar. She also takes Spanish and Japanese classes to better communicate with future students in their native languages. Then, after a long day, she returns to work as a housekeeper to make ends meet.

"You don't get youth and wisdom at the same time," Kat points out. Even though she has struggled, she knows her earlier studies and experiences brought her to this point. But once she found her purpose in life, the doors to greater opportunities opened. Now she cleans floors in order to help adult students like her coworkers open their own doors to opportunity.

"I AM FULLY AN ADULT, AND I AM IN CLASSES WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE LEARNING TO ADULT."

I'M LOST

Zaiyu Liu

It took me around 25 hours to fly here. Before I left home, I was in Chongqing, a mountainous but modern city in the southwest of China. I saw my family and ate hotpot with them. Then I boarded a plane and arrived in Cullowhee to start my life at Western. Everything is new to me here, and I'm always lost.

Not long after I arrived, I tried to find a bus to take me where I needed to go. Instead, I boarded a shuttle and asked the driver if he could take me to a place where I could catch the "all-campus bus" to Belk. He shook his head no. But he said he could take me to a place where I could catch it. Five minutes later, he dropped off me near the fountain and pointed straight ahead without speaking. A car full of people stopped there. I believed I had found my destination.

I got off the bus, but the car started leaving, so I chased after it, shouting, "Excuse me! Excuse me!" Through the window, I grabbed the shirt of someone sitting in the backseat. The car stopped.

"Could you please send me to Belk?" I asked.

"Sorry, honey. This is a truck. We can't get there."

It wasn't only the buses; I was confused all over campus. I did not know that I needed to press a button at the crosswalk, so I waited for a long time before someone came over and pressed it. I didn't know how to use the shower or how much to tip at dinner.

A few weeks after I moved here, people kept asking me, "Does Panda Express taste like Chinese?" No! Definitely not! The last time I ate Beijing beef there with a Korean friend of mine, he thought it tasted like Korean fried chicken.

In my home city in China, the most famous dish is the hotpot. It is one of Chongqing's three treasures. (The other two are the pretty girls and night-scene.) The hotpot is known for its chili and hot taste, scalding yet fresh and tender.

Housing is different here, too. For example, I couldn't get used to the dorm, which is mixed with boys and girls. In China, dormitories are separated. Boys cannot get into a girl's dorm and all residential assistants are full-time teachers. I prefer the Chinese way because I have no worries about boys seeing me only wrapped in a bath towel.

Of course, language differences are still obstacles for me and other international students. It's easy to make mistakes. For example, a handsome boy greeted my Chinese friend: "How are you?" It was scorching outside, but she wore a sweater! "I'm so hot!" my friend answered. Then, that handsome boy looked at her strangely.

Every day, I learn more English, as well as more about the local customs. When I meet foreigners in need, I give them details instead of gestures because I know how hard it is to start out in an entirely new environment. I have met many interesting people and am enjoying a completely different life here. It's an unforgettable and colorful experiment. Although I sometimes make mistakes here, I try not to complain because I know these are my precious memories.

OVERCOMING THE ODDS

JULIAN TALLEY



Imagine this: you wake up at 5:30 every morning for a Bible study with your breakfast; then you get an 8 and 11-year-old out of bed, take them to school and rush off to get a workout in before you first class of the day. In an attempt to keep up with your classes, while driving and exercising, you listen to lectures. Between classes you work as the volunteer coordinator for your major's club, organizing the work of over seventy other people. On weekends when you're not cleaning houses for grocery money, you're spending 8-hour days in class for the Area Health Education Centers Scholars program. At night, you make dinner and help the kids with their homework before you stay up to get yours done. Now imagine that you're 18 years old and doing this, when just a year ago you were a wild party girl who struggled with drugs and alcohol and suffered a miscarriage. Imagine caring for your siblings with no guidance and only the assistance of your slightly older brother. This is the world of Rachel Sullivan.

Rachel came from a broken home. Her single mother was addicted to meth and absent most of the time. It didn't take long before Rachel also fell into a life of drug use, alcohol abuse and partying. This lifestyle is ultimately what led to her miscarriage – and complete loss of purpose.

electricity in their house and it broke my heart to see their struggles.”

Rachel had moved on campus and wasn't sure how to help until her brother Caleb offered to let her move into his apartment at the end of the semester. She agreed, on the condition that their younger brother and sister would move in, too.

The plan was simple: keep their younger siblings during Christmas break while their mother went to rehab, and at the end of the break, they would send the kids back with her. But the break came and went, and their mother never got clean. So, at 17 years old, Rachel buckled down and prepared to become the surrogate mother of her younger siblings.

It wasn't easy. Rachel had no experience and no concept of what a good home looked like. Rachel went out of her way to surround herself with people who did, however, and started to apply their basic advice to her everyday life. Eventually, the consistent mealtimes, bedtimes, and general involvement had an impact on the kids. They went from constant tears and apprehension over meeting new people to constant smiles and tag in the park with anyone willing to play.

“People ask me if I'm still in school or if I had to drop out to take care of the kids, and my response is that I'm still in school and still kicking ass.”

Because of this loss of purpose and direction she became involved at a local church before coming to college, and at 17 became a Christian. This change gave her an entirely new sense of priorities. “It's like buttoning a shirt. When you button the first one correctly everything else just falls into place,” Rachel says. Her newfound faith helped her rebuild her relationships with her family.

This greater involvement in the lives of her younger brother and sister made Rachel realize the terrible conditions they were living in. “They weren't going to school, weren't being fed, had no

This isn't to say that her life is stress free. Her days start at 6 in the morning and run until 10 or 11 at night; Rachel's more vulnerable moments often consist of pure exhaustion and stress over her next quiz or exam. The pressure of raising the kids weighs heavily on her, but she always puts a smile back on her face and pushes through. “Honestly, having the kids has made me better at everything,” she says. “People ask me if I'm still in school or if I had to drop out to take care of the kids, and my response is that I'm still in school and still kicking ass.”

JOHN AND THE MAGIC STREAM

Luke Ruff

John Morgan has always had an interest in water, and that interest had taken him all over the country. In December 2017 it took him to the American Geophysical Union conference in New Orleans, where he presented a poster regarding research he'd done on the groundwater chemistry of streams at WCU. Sarah Godsey, a professor at Idaho State University, took an interest in his work and invited him to apply for a summer study program. He was accepted a few months later and set off for the Gem State that May.

John's research at ISU resembled detective work more than anything else. He investigated the Gibson-Jack watershed, an anomalous stream that, from time to time, dries out in its center and starts to flow in opposite directions. It has left Professor Godsey and her colleagues dumbfounded since it was discovered, and while they had come up with several potential explanations for the phenomenon, none were conclusive.

John, though, had a theory: "There were four different soil series that converged where the spring was emerging and where the stream's flow resumed," he says. He devoted his summer to investigating that further, though that would prove to be easier said than done.

Going about researching this theory was a lengthy process – the trip from his rental apartment in Pocatello, Idaho to Gibson-Jack was a two-hour hike, but for an avid outdoorsman like John, that wasn't difficult at all. The tricky part lay in getting the information he needed from the stream. The bulk of the data he got was collected by digging

holes in the ground and then sticking a compact constant head permeameter (which he calls "a glorified tape measure") into the four different soil types to analyze how quickly water from the stream was flowing through them.

All of that, when combined with hefty amounts of paper-reading and note-taking, saw him put in 40 hours a week, but he wouldn't have had it any other way. Making \$12 an hour and working in conditions he loved certainly didn't hurt either.

In spite of how grand everything had been, though, the mystery of Gibson-Jack refused to be solved. Even after an entire summer of research, John

was unable to explain why the stream's flow ceases. He found no correlation between the different soil types and stream's stoppage, but he was all smiles about it – being wrong is part of being a scientist.

"Being wrong is part of being a scientist."

His summer also received a silver lining right before he headed back to the East Coast. John was able to pinpoint the exact location at which Gibson-Jack's foundation shifts in composition, and while the phenomenon likely won't be named after him, his discovery will definitely lead to future investigations.

John's findings will be a focal point of his poster presentation at another major conference, which will be attended by some 20,000 people, this year. The chances of him meeting someone there may open new doors for him; after all, water has taken him from North Carolina to New Orleans to Idaho and back – there is no reason to believe it is done leading him around.

A man with short brown hair and a beard, wearing a dark hoodie, is performing beatboxing into a professional microphone with a pop filter. He is gesturing with his hands as he performs. The background is dark and moody.

BIGGER THAN THE BEAT

ANISSA HOLLAND

Dressed in black down to his shoes, he enters from stage right and confidently strides toward the microphone. The theater is filled with ejectives, fricatives, and hums – alien sounds to the untrained ear. It takes only seconds for the crowd to be captivated, as the man’s mouth makes sounds that mimic a drum machine, more widely recognized as beatboxing.

“Feel free to clap,” he interjects, without missing a beat. Knowing now he has the full attention of his spectators, he uses the next five minutes to impress the panel of judges. The fourth annual Western’s Got Talent competition included an array of skilled contestants. But ultimately, it was freshman Chris Cartwright’s one-of-a-kind performance that earned him a first-place finish, along with a \$250 cash prize that any penniless college student would envy.

Beatboxing isn’t the most conventional talent. However, Chris’s interest stems from his deep-rooted passion for music. Growing up, he played percussion in marching band, later picking up ukulele, guitar and bass. He also writes original compositions in his free time. He is a musical jack-of-all-trades, but Chris came to beatboxing as a form of self-expression.

In seventh grade, Chris struggled to cope with anxiety. Because of his musical background, he was familiar with the basics of beatboxing, which he used more for entertainment among his friends.

He was encouraged to explore this hobby as a healthy way to channel his pent-up emotions. After some research, Chris discovered an entire community dedicated to beatboxing online. It was a place where people from around the world could come together to learn from each other and enrich their art.

“It made me feel included,” he explained. “Once everyone in school found out I could beatbox, everyone started to talk to me. People would walk up to me and say, ‘Hey Chris, do a beat!’ It was a way for me to socialize with people. It made me feel better.”

On the surface, beatboxing looks like something anyone could easily do; however, it is extremely technical. Each sound is meticulous. Chris spent nearly three years perfecting the basic sounds. This allowed him to escape the pressures of his life, even just for a little while, and create.

What started out as a mindless hobby quickly became a creative outlet, later flourishing into a crucial aspect of his identity. Beatboxing gave Chris the confidence and social network he previously lacked. Once his friends and classmates learned of his hidden talent, he was encouraged to share it. With his newly acquired skills and higher self-esteem, he spent the next five years perfecting his craft. Chris had a few small performances under his belt prior to taking the stage at Western’s Got Talent in 2018; however, he considers that night’s performance to be his big debut. “Beatboxing isn’t usually a crowd pleaser, and I wasn’t expecting it to be at the Family Weekend Talent Show, but I guess I did something right that night.” As the audience left the performance hall, they left with a better sense of who Chris Cartwright is. His originality separated him from his fellow competitors, and his routine perfectly reflected his personality: unique. “I still have people come up to me on campus, saying ‘you’re that beatboxing guy!’ and it feels like middle school again.”

To Chris, this performance was about more than the money, trophy or bragging rights. It was a testament to the journey he has taken since that day in the seventh grade: every defeat and every triumph. While beatboxing has certainly given him a reputation that precedes him, he is much more than “just that beatboxing guy.”

ALUMNI UPDATES

AUDREY LECLAIR | *by McKenzie Twine*

Audrey LeClair graduated in December 2017 with a degree in interdisciplinary studies. Initially, she majored in communication sciences and disorders. She later made the choice to change her major to interdisciplinary studies in order to explore all of her different interests and tailor those interests to her future career. Audrey is currently working as a medical assistant at an advanced urgent care in South Carolina. She is hoping to attend medical school in the fall of 2019. Ultimately, Audrey wants to contribute to finding a cure for ALS in honor of her dad, who also suffers from ALS.

If you could have a super power, what would you choose?

“I would like to be able to read minds. It would be cool to know what people are thinking. It would also be helpful when treating patients as a doctor.”

BRIONA GENTRY | *by William Evans*

Briona Gentry graduated with a Bachelor of Social Work. A native of Canton, she currently works with Mountain Projects in Haywood County, North Carolina. Her work involves aiding poverty-struck areas, developing new ways to increase the standard of living for communities and getting people involved in programs that can help them live better lives. Part of what drew her to WCU was the social work program, which gave her the chance to work in the surrounded areas of Jackson and Haywood County. During her time at Western, she developed a desire to give back to those in Western North Carolina.

If you could have a super power, what would you choose?

“I’d probably choose teleportation because it would make it so much easier to get from place to place and it could save me some gas money too.”

BROOKE MYALL | *by Abbey Gregory*

After graduating in December of 2017 with a B.S. in psychology, Brooke Myall now attends graduate school at Appalachian State in pursuit of her master’s in industrial organizational psychology. Originally a nursing major, Brooke did not start her journey in psychology until her junior year. That’s when she began to participate in the undergraduate research that eventually landed her a spot in graduate school. After she graduates, Brooke hopes to pursue a career running a human resource department.

If you could be any mythical creature, what would you be?

“We’ll go with a unicorn because it’s simple, and I like horses.”

EMILY DORSEY | *by Anissa Holland*

Emily graduated in December of 2017 with a B.A. in English, with a concentration in professional writing and a minor in leadership. Emily was a first-generation college student, and during her time at Western, she served as the editor-in-chief of the university newspaper, The Western Carolinian, and was a member the International English Honor Society, Sigma Tau Delta. She is currently working in the hospitality and sales departments of The Dillard House in Dillard, GA. The support Emily received from peers, faculty and the Honors College community was a crucial aspect of her academic journey and something she is thankful for every day. She encourages students to take advantage of the opportunities given to them.

What would the theme song to your life be?

“ ‘Wildflowers’ by Tom Petty. It reminds me of the endless support I have received throughout my life. The ability to use my degree to do things I love is the most freeing thing of all.”

GACE MORRIS | *by Daniel Brodie*

Grace Morris graduated from Western Carolina with her B.S.Ed in elementary education in December 2017. Currently she teaches third grade at Scotts Creek Elementary School in Jackson County, NC while also pursuing a master’s degree in library sciences. Receiving this degree will not only allow her to not only teach in a classroom setting, but also to teach in a library. Throughout Grace’s life, she has wanted to become a teacher because of the great teachers she had. In the future, Grace intends to stay in Jackson County and continue giving back to the community through teaching.

If you could have a super power, what would you choose?

“To make all of my students’ problems go away so they can just be kids.”

KASEY COOKE | *by Rachel McElrath*

Kasey graduated in December of 2017 with a degree in recreational therapy. During her time at WCU, Kasey was a member of the Honors College and played for the women’s soccer team. While her coastal roots contrasted dramatically from the culture of the Smokies, Kasey enjoyed her experiences in the mountains. Currently, she is pursuing a doctorate degree in physical therapy at East Carolina University and hopes to graduate in 2021. As a physical therapist, she hopes to help others live life to the fullest.

What would the theme song to your life be?

“ ‘Simple’ by Florida Georgia Line because I like to stop and appreciate the simple things in life.”

KYLIE THORNBURG | *by Emily Fine*

Kylie Thornburg graduated in December 2017 with a bachelor’s degree in biology. Since then, she has volunteered for the American Conservation Experience and moved to Missouri for her boyfriend’s new job. She plans to find a job there in conservation work or pursue a master’s degree at the University of Missouri. In ten years, she hopes to work for the National Park Service after gaining more experience. While at Western, her most memorable moment was when Dr. Beverly Collins, her advisor, took her and a few of her classmates to a biology conference at Myrtle Beach. At the conference, she and her friend Olivia presented their research on whether the wildfires in Franklin, North Carolina affected cellular respiration in the soil.

If you could only take one thing to a deserted island, what would you take?

“I guess a survival manual for a deserted island, so I wouldn’t have to be stuck.”

LUCY SNELL | *by Madison Snyder*

Lucy Snell graduated in May 2018 with a bachelor’s degree in forensic anthropology and a minor in biology. Now, Lucy is in graduate school at George Mason University, where she studies bioarcheology, the study of human remains at archeological sites. Once Lucy completes her master’s, she plans to pursue a doctorate in either bioarcheology or forensic anthropology. She hopes to run her own field school one day, and perhaps teach at a university. Even though she has moved to George Mason University, she has lasting roots at Western Carolina University, keeping in touch with some of the professors and updating them on her current position in college. “I still feel like part of the WCU community,” she says.

If you could be any mythical creature what would you be?

“Probably a Pegasus because I have always wanted to fly. I don’t like airplanes, but that way if I fell down it would be my fault.”

MEGAN SULLIVAN | *by Morgan Winstead*

Megan Shaw Sullivan graduated in 2017 with a degree in art and theatre. Today, she is training as a doula and a birth art specialist. This career emphasizes the nurturing of a mother and her family through the art of birth along with ongoing support throughout the pregnancy and birthing process. Megan recalls her college experience as turbulent with good and bad times but gives thanks to those within the Honors College who helped to guide her through her intensive academic endeavors. Studying abroad in Northern Ireland in 2016 is her fondest memory from college. She lives in Charlotte with her husband and daughter.

If you could have a super power, what super power would you choose?

“To be able to be fluent in a language after just hearing one word of it because there are so many beautiful people in the world, and I would love to speak to them all.”



NOAH SAUTTER | *by Quinn Evans*

Noah Sautter graduated Western Carolina in December 2017 with a bachelor’s degree in communication, concentrating in broadcasting. Since then, he hasn’t gone far geographically. He is currently employed full time at Western Carolina as the director of video operations in athletics. In his time as a student, Noah served on the executive board for the event then known as Dance Marathon (now Miracle at WCU) for three years, and his senior year, he served as the executive director. He attributes much of his current success to the people he surrounded himself with at WCU: “I wouldn’t be where I am today if it wasn’t for the people at the university. The people really made a difference.”

If you were trapped on a deserted island and can only bring one thing, what would it be?

“A boat, so if I ever felt like trying to get off of the island, I could paddle my way to somewhere new. Or I can just go out and be on the water so I don’t feel as trapped.”

TREVOR FENDER | *by Jacob Padillo*

Trevor Fender graduated with degrees in Spanish and criminal justice and became police academy trainee for the Asheville Police Department. Now a graduated police officer, Trevor hopes to move up in the ranks of the police force. “I’d like to be chief someday.” Even though he’s passionate about his career, he is still a laid-back guy who takes a personal interest in people and encourages others to do the right thing for others and for themselves – a great mindset for a man who has pledged to protect and serve.

If you could be any mythical creature, what would you be?

“I would be a dragon because they can fly, they’re wise, and they can breathe fire, so that’s pretty cool.”

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

BELOW ARE THE PROJECTS ACCEPTED, TITLES, STUDENT PRESENTERS, AND THEIR SPONSORS LISTED BY DISCIPLINE AND PROJECT TITLES FOR NCUR33, THIS YEAR HOSTED BY KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY. MORE THAN 75 ABSTRACTS FROM WCU STUDENTS WERE ACCEPTED TO NCUR FOR THE APRIL 11-13, 2019 CONFERENCE IN KENNESAW, GEORGIA.

BIOCHEMISTRY

Antimicrobial Properties of Altered Zinc-Metal Based Nanoparticles and the Possible Applications to the Clinical Setting
Kaitlyn Brasecker, presenter | Channa De Silva, sponsor

BIOLOGY

The Effectiveness of Buccal Swabs in Mortuary DNA Extraction and STR Profiling
Alexandra Cruz, presenter | Frankie West, sponsor

Isolation and Exposure of Human Embryonic Kidney (HEK) cell exosomes to HEK Cells in Oxidative and Non-Oxidative Environments
Brinley Harrington, presenter | Heather Coan, sponsor

Quantifying Bos taurus Vocalizations as an Indicator of a Welfare Issue
Brooke Burns, presenter | Barbara Ballentine, sponsor

The Effects of Keratin on Human Embryonic Kidney Cell Proliferation Under Oxidized Stress
Emily Zipay, presenter | Heather Coan, sponsor

A Critical Review of Ossuary Excavation Methods
Evan Puckett, presenter | Frankie West, sponsor

Exploring a Potential Interaction Between α -amylase3 and the Catalytically Inactive β -amylase9 in Arabidopsis thaliana
Frances Lowder, presenter | Amanda Storm, sponsor

Keratin's Effect on Autophagy and Cell Proliferation in Mesenchymal Stem Cells Exposed to Oxidative Stress
*Jade Hollars, Emily Zipay, presenters
Heather Coan, sponsor*

Exploring the Unique β -amylase2 and Its Novel Potential Binding Partner
Natasha Kreiling, presenter | Amanda Storm, sponsor

Investigation of Lethal Neutralizing Toxin Factor (LNTF) Predicted Inhibitory Function on Insulin Degrading Enzyme (IDE)
Sierra Rice, presenter | Robert Youker, sponsor

Keratin Affects Autophagic Flux in Human Embryonic Kidney Cells in Vitro
Wesley Billings, presenter | Robert Youker, sponsor

CHEMISTRY & PHYSICS

Optimization of DNA Extraction Method for Forensic Chewing Gum Samples
Ashton Jones, presenter | Brittania Bintz, sponsor

Protein Expression and Purification of 2 Bacteriophage Repressor Proteins
Brandon Stamey, presenter | Maria Gainey, sponsor

Identification of Mycobacteriophage Larva Toxic Gene Products and Their Cellular Binding Partners
Caleigh Gress-Byrd, presenter | Maria Gainey, sponsor

Optimization of DNA Extraction Method for Forensic Chewing Gum Samples
Chelsea Jones, presenter | Brittania Bintz, sponsor

Identification of Mosquito Species Utilizing Infrared Spectroscopy
*Connor Larmore, Harrison Edmonds, presenters
Scott Huffman, Brian Byrd, sponsors*

The Search for a Novel Repressor Gene in Cluster M Bacteriophages
Erin Cafferty, presenter | Maria Gainey, sponsor

The Synthesis and Complexation of Boronic Acid Derivatives with N-Oxides
*Hannah Kline, Keely Thomas, presenters
Bill Kwochka, sponsor*

Determining the Structure and Function of Unique Regions Found in the DNA Polymerase Gamma of Cryptococcus Neoformans
Lindsey Farris, presenter | Jamie Wallen, sponsor

Antimicrobial Studies of Zinc Oxide Nanoparticles and their Chemical Attachment to Cotton Textile for Potential Clinical Applications
Monica Reece, presenter | Channa De Silva, sponsor

Inhibition Studies of ZnO Nanoparticles against Actinobacteria and Actinobacteriophages
Monica Reece, presenter | Maria Gainey, sponsor

Computational Photoluminescent Studies of Eu(TTA)3Phen for Potential Biomedical Imaging
Nickolas Joyner, presenter | Channa De Silva, sponsor

The Synthesis of Water Soluble Phenanthroline-Europium Complexes for Confocal Microscopy
Paul Venturo, presenter | Brian Dinkelmeier, sponsor

Investigating the Effects of Sample Age on the Raman Signal of Analytes Collected on SERS-Active Evidence Swabs
Savannah Mosteller, presenter | David Evanoff, sponsor

Synthesis of Europium Metal-Doped Calcium Fluoride Nanoparticles with Enhanced Luminescent Properties
Wan Ching Chan, presenter | Channa De Silva, sponsor

CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Hiding In Plain Sight: Non-Text Communications and Violent Crime on Social Media
Annalyssia Soonah, presenter | John Hansen, sponsor

Does Legal Counsel at a First Appearance Court Session Really Matter?
Chasey Davis, presenter | Jamie Vaske, sponsor

Perceived Stigmatization of Mental Health Issues Following Victimization
Daijah Johnson, presenter | Tasha Youstin, sponsor

Police Reactions to Social Unrest and Anti-Police Attitudes
Haley Johnson, presenter | Tasha Youstin, sponsor

Student Suggestions for Decreasing Sexual Assault on Campus: Communication, Awareness and Reporting
Samantha Griffin, presenter | Tasha Youstin, sponsor

Perceptions of Local and Campus Law Enforcement
William Towery, presenter | Tasha Youstin, sponsor

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

The Effects of Cellular Coverage on Patient Survival in the Rural Setting
Emma Hand, presenter | Jackson Deziel, sponsor

ENGLISH

Blue Streams and Grey Skies: A River Runs Through It and Home
Allena Opoku, presenter | Brian Railsback, sponsor

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Driving Force in The Great Gatsby
Elizabeth Sellers, presenter | Brian Railsback, sponsor

Daisy's Decisions or Lack Thereof: Bipolar II Disorder, Daisy, and The Great Gatsby
Emalee Money, presenter | Brian Railsback, sponsor

Reading Between Their Lines: Euphuism in Much Ado About Nothing
Helen Bowen, presenter | Mary Adams, sponsor

Closing the Gap: Roles & Responsibilities of K-12 English as a Second Language (ESL) Teachers for Service Coordination with Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs)
Kelsey Williams, presenter | Erin Callahan, sponsor

With Each Day There Is Hope, Until the Sun Sets: John Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men
Savannah Bennett, presenter | Brian Railsback, sponsor

The Great Divide: Parallels Between the Economy of The Great Gatsby and the Present Day
Zachery Shatley, presenter | Brian Railsback, sponsor

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

Consumption of Single-Use Plastics in Dining at Western Carolina University
Katherine Allison, presenter | Laura DeWald, sponsor

FORENSIC SCIENCE

Body Fluid Identification Utilizing Next Generation Sequencing
Madison Klein, presenter | Brittania Bintz, sponsor

GEOSCIENCES AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Relating Variations in Soil Composition to Concentration-Discharge Relationships in a Disturbed Headwater Catchment
Dakota Little, presenter | JP Gannon, sponsor

NCUR CONTINUED

HISTORY

When Women Build a War: Women in the Workplace During World War I and World War II
Amelia Konda, presenter | Scott Philyaw, sponsor

Empowerment Against Adversity: The Obstruction of the Identity of Lithuanian Women, 1940-1953
Emily Johnson, presenter | Scott Philyaw, sponsor

Operation Jedburgh: Playing with Heads
Jackson Bivens, presenter | Scott Philyaw, sponsor

The Untold Stories of a Western North Carolinian Couple during World War II: How They Survived
Katelynn Patterson, presenter | Scott Philyaw, sponsor

Germany's Strange Partner: Finland
William Thornton, presenter | Scott Philyaw, sponsor

HUMAN SERVICES

Researching an Immersive Poverty Experience: The Efficacy of the MCAN Poverty Simulation
Krista Patton, presenter | Krista Patton, sponsor

Why "just make it free" isn't the Only Answer: Health, PE, & Recreation Majors Gain an Understanding about the Complexity of Poverty
Matt Long, presenter | Callie Schultz, sponsor

Undergraduate Research Through the Eyes of a "Newbie": A Duoethnography Exploration into the Research Process
Taylor Carrigan, presenter | Callie Schultz, sponsor

PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION

A World Without Super-Problems: The Biomedical Ethics of Superheroes and Transhumanism
Hannah Grace Lemacks, presenter | Christopher Hoyt, sponsor

A Sartrean Analysis of Dysthymic Depression as a Byproduct of Societal Relations with the Other and Alienation
Jordan Schechter, presenter | James McLachlan, sponsor

The Nature of Hell, according to Nicolas Berdyaev and Emmanuel Levinas
Mary Brown, presenter | James McLachlan, sponsor

POLITICAL SCIENCE & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Party Agenda Setting: Does Congressional Attention to Children's Health Encourage Party Members to be more Productive on the Issue?
McKenley Webb, presenter | JoBeth Shafran, sponsor

Including Men to Solve "women's problems:" A look at Bride Kidnapping in Post-USSR States
Megan Gill, presenter | Niall Michelsen, sponsor

Transatlantic Civil Death: A Comparative Analysis of the United States and the United Kingdom
Sydney Burchfield, presenter | Ingrid Bego, sponsor

PROGRAM FOR THE STUDY OF DEVELOPED SHORELINES

Finding Lost Souls: Ground Penetrating Radar Survey of a Slave Cemetery, Freedom Cemetery Hayesville, NC
Holly Duggins, presenter | Blair Tormey, sponsor

PSYCHOLOGY

Fatigue and Frustration in Working with Individuals with Developmental Disabilities
Kaitlyn Bryant, presenter | Ellen Sigler, sponsor

Self Advocacy in College Students with Disabilities
Kenadie Metcalf, presenter | Ellen Sigler, sponsor

Inclusion, Self-Determination, and Acceptance: A Qualitative Analysis of Interviews with Adults with Disabilities
Madison Surrent, Rebecca Peterson, presenters | Ellen Sigler, sponsor

SCHOOL OF ART & DESIGN

Tar Paper Room
Annabela Cockrell, presenter | Richard Tichich, sponsor

Unmasking Identity
Connor Henderson, presenter | Karen Britt, sponsor

Our Global Trash Problem
Grace Woodard, presenter | Karen Britt, sponsor

Burlap and Beeswax: A Sculptural Exploration of Material and Multiples
Jesse Lloyd, presenter | Morgan Kennedy, sponsor

That Color Looks Good on You: A New Approach to Portrait Photography
Kayla Wright, presenter | Karen Britt, sponsor

Exploring the Connection Between the Content of a Photo and the Process of how it's Created.
Shelby Weaver, presenter | Richard Tichich, sponsor

SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY

Omnidirectional Ball Balancing Robotic Assistant
Ethan Stiles, presenter | Scott Pierce, sponsor

On the Versatility of Touchboards
James Nelson, presenter | Yanjun Yan, sponsor

Design and Construction of Heel Strike Detection Device for Post-stroke Gait Rehabilitation
Jazz Click, presenter | Martin Tanaka, sponsor

Swarm Robotics using Crazyflie 2.0 Drones
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Rheological Examination of Phenolic Resins for use within Radioisotope Power Systems
Kyle Monaghan, presenter | Glenn Romanoski, sponsor

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Investigation of Residual Stresses Present in DMLS Process Using XRD
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SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Traumatic Eye Injury in a Soccer Goalie: A Level 4 Rare Event Case Study
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SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Edward MacDowell's Contributions to American Music During the Late Romantic Period
Savannah Bennett, presenter | Christina Reitz sponsor

SOCIOLOGY

Transgender Athletes and the Media: A 2017 Discourse Analysis
Aria Ashburn, presenter | Munene Mwanki, sponsor

HONORS COLLEGE DONOR HIGHLIGHT

Thanks to the ongoing generosity of Jack and Judy Brinson. Western Carolina University is one step closer towards its goal of being able to provide scholarship assistance to every Honors College student with financial need.

The Brinsons, who previously made \$1 million in gifts and commitments to support WCU students (primarily those in the Honors College), recently doubled down on their giving through a \$1 million planned estate gift, pushing the couple's giving total to the university to the \$2 million mark.

In recognition of their legacy of giving, upon the settlement of the Brinsons' estate, the university will name its residential college for high-achieving students the Brinson Honors College as approved by the WCU Board of Trustees in 2018.

"We feel that the Honors College has been instrumental in attracting some of the best students in the state and elsewhere," said Jack Brinson. "These students will be our future leaders."





Honors
College

HC 101 Balsam Hall
1 University Drive
Cullowhee, NC 28723-9646

828.227.7383 | honors.wcu.edu