

Academic Affairs Newsletter

March 2024

We are midway through the semester and Spring is just around the corner. March always carries the spirit of transition, ushering in a season of growth and renewal, mirroring our academic journey. As we embrace the changing seasons, let's also take a moment to honor and celebrate Women's History Month. This March, we pay tribute to the indomitable spirit, remarkable contributions, and enduring achievements of women throughout history, recognizing their pivotal roles in shaping our world. Here's to a March filled with blossoming of both personal and collective successes!



Office of Accessibility Resources Training Sessions

You are invited to join the Office of Accessibility Resources (OAR) for the first of a series of webinars: **Accommodations 101, Wednesday, March 13, 12:00-12:45**. This first session will cover the basics of accommodation: what exactly does OAR do? How do students connect with OAR? What are accommodations, anyway? How are accommodations determined? What are my responsibilities as faculty when it comes to accommodations? And more. Get all the details.

Please register [here](#).

The next OAR session is in April! Future topics will cover: OAR Test Proctoring; What's Up with "Flexibility Accommodations"? and more.

DEIB Community of Practice Data Sessions

The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Community of Practice (COP) is pleased to offer two upcoming training sessions about diversity and equity data available to members of the WCU community. These sessions will cover diversity data for faculty, staff, and student populations, as well as student performance data. In this session you'll learn about data resources that are available to you and how this data helps us better understand our environment and where we have opportunities to improve diversity and equity. Please plan to join either the face-to-face or virtual session:



- Thursday, March 14th from 3-4pm in Forsyth OR
- Friday, March 15th from 10-11am on Zoom

[Click here](#) to register to attend. The registration will prompt you for any specific questions you have or data you'd like to discuss, so that those questions/requests can be incorporated into the session, if possible.

Announcing the Spark Community Engagement Award Program



The Spark Community Engagement Award is now open to ALL WCU students through Engage (the online student involvement platform). Previously known as the "Lily Award", the Spark Community Engagement Award aligns with the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning's guiding phrase, "Find Your Spark. Make A Difference. Live Western" and the Live Western brand guide. Students participating in the award program will engage in direct service, civic involvement, philanthropic giving, and advocacy components. The Center is excited to continue to recognize outstanding students for their

community impact work through the Spark Award program throughout their time at the university and during commencement ceremonies. To learn more about the program and each component, please visit the [Spark website](#)! Contact the CCESL office at 828.227.2091 or communityengagement@wcu.edu with any questions about the award.

Additionally, the Center has earned ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge's Highly Established Action Plan Seal for the 2024 election cycle for developing a nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan. Only select universities receive this honor to institutionalize and increase nonpartisan democratic engagement. Thanks to Professors Todd Collins and Chris Cooper (Political Science/Public Affairs), and David De Jong (Psychology); Alyson Umberger and Theresa Cruz Paul (CCESL); and Zach Powell, Isaac Quillen, and Sam Ogden (Student Democracy

Coalition) who constructed the action plan and are instrumental in its implementation. . Please visit vote.wcu.edu for WCU early voting and Jackson County primary election summary data as well as other helpful information on voting.

Annual Budget Process – Next Steps

During February, the units within Academic Affairs have held their budget forums for recurring budget requests. Thank you for the attention you all have given to participate in this important process! Additionally, there are two upcoming forums that the campus is invited to attend:



- Academic Affairs Budget Forum: Thursday, March 14, at 8:30 a.m. in room 501 HFR
- Campus-Wide Budget Forum: Monday, April 8 at 2 p.m. in the Blue Ridge Conference Center

The requests presented at these forums move forward to the Chancellor’s Leadership Council, Budget Advisory Committee, and ultimately to Executive Council for consideration.

Office of Institutional Assessment Newsletter

The Office of Institutional Assessment will begin distributing a newsletter later this month to Academic Affairs and Student Affairs assessors. The newsletter will share information with faculty and staff about Academic and Support Services assessment, upcoming dates and projects for the office, new and exciting assessment initiatives, and so much more. If you would like to be added to the distribution list, contact Logan King, Administrative Support Specialist, at kingr@wcu.edu.

Office of the Provost Staff



We are pleased to announce that Sara Ross (sross@wcu.edu) has joined the Office of the Provost as the Executive Assistant to the Associate Provost. Sara is a long-time member of the Sylva community. She has a background in English and creative writing, has experience in marketing as well as business management, and has independently owned two businesses. We are excited to have her on board. Please reach out and make her feel welcome. (sross@wcu.edu, x2665)

U-Club Event Benefitting the Staff Senate Scholarship Fund

The U-Club event to benefit the Staff Senate Scholarship fund will take place on April 20th, 2024 at the U-Club house on campus. The event will begin at 5pm and will have the theme of *Back to the '80s Bash: Fundraising Like It's 1985!* The event will include a silent auction with open bidding ending on the night of the event.

As an energizing leadup to the U-Club event on the 20th, the U-Club is hosting a trivia night on April 8th at 7pm. The trivia night will take place at Innovation Sylva and will host a percentage night from 5pm to 9pm, which will also benefit the Staff Senate Scholarship fund.

The Staff Senate Scholarship supports currently enrolled or accepted, incoming students who are children or dependents of SHRA and EHRA non-faculty employees. The scholarship is awarded to students each year through the university scholarship application process. More information about the Staff Senate Scholarship and fundraising can be found [here](#).

Tickets for the U-Club event will go on sale around March 20th. Interested parties can contact Catherine MacCallum (cmacallum@wcu.edu) for more information.

