

From the Provost

On January 22, more than 400 WCU students, faculty and staff, as well as members of the local community, honored Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy by providing service to others. They gathered in Sykes Student Union to make 150 fleece blankets for children at A.I. DuPont Hospital for Children, Chester County Hospital's NICU and pediatric units, and Fleece for Keeps, an organization that provides blankets to children in the foster care system.

Volunteerism by our students totaled 605,532 hours in the 2013-14 academic year — a new record. While WCU strongly promotes community service, I know that many of our students — as well as our faculty and staff — already view volunteerism as a way of life. I am very proud of our commitment to community service and encourage all of you to keep up the good work.

The MLK Day of Celebration and Service has been a WCU tradition for 22 years. The start of spring semester 2015 also brought exciting new developments, such as the launch of a minor in contemplative studies. This 18-credit minor is highly multi-disciplinary in nature, with participation from four different departments in two different colleges. Two new administrative appointments also were recently announced. Hyeojin Yoon has been named the new associate dean in support of humanities and the liberal arts for the College of Arts and Sciences and Matthew Pierlott has been named the assistant director of WCU's Honors College. Read more about these and other new developments in the pages that follow.

If you have news of interest for this newsletter, please let us know. Send your information to Marguerite de Wet, executive associate to the provost, at mdewet@wcupa.edu. I hope your spring semester is off to a great start and wish you continued success.



Dr. Linda Lamwers

WINTER COMMENCEMENTS SEEN WORLDWIDE

WCU's Digital Media Center live-streamed the 2014 Undergraduate and Graduate Winter Commencements. The ceremonies were viewed by more than 2,000 people from 18 countries across the globe, including Ireland, Spain, Italy, Israel, Iran, Mexico, Portugal, Turkey, the United Kingdom, Korea, Australia, India, Brazil, China, and Germany.

There were also many U.S. viewers, with the most coming from Pennsylvania and California. You can view the ceremonies at: <http://www.wcupa.edu/videos/videos.aspx>.



Joe Watts was part of the Digital Media Center team that live-streamed Winter Commencements

HEALTH SCIENCES DEVELOPS FALL PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR OLDER ADULTS



WCU students worked 1-1 with older adults at Coatesville Area Senior Center

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly one-third of older adults in the U.S. experience a fall each year. Falls can be devastating — about one in 10 falls among older adults result in serious injury. And falls can be deadly — they're the leading cause of injury deaths among older adults.

Scott Heinerichs, an associate professor in the department of sports medicine, says that there is a critical need for older adults to learn how to reduce their risk of falling. So he joined with colleagues from three other departments to develop a fall prevention program for older adults at the Coatesville Area Senior Center. The program was funded by a College of Health Sciences community engagement grant.

Other faculty members involved include Melissa Reed, a clinical exercise specialist and an assistant professor in the department of kinesiology; Mary Beth Gilboy from the department of nutrition, who serves as the nutrition track coordinator for the master of public health program; and Barbara Harrison, an associate professor in the department of nursing who teaches in the RN to BSN program.

There is a lot that older adults can do to reduce their chances of falling, notes Heinerichs. Research indicates that older adults should take part in regular exercise to increase leg strength and balance, review their medicines to identify side effects such as dizziness or drowsiness, become aware of tripping hazards at home, and understand nutrition risk factors related to falls.

Fourteen older adults at Coatesville Senior Center participated in the twice-a-week, 10-week program. Data collected by the WCU team showed positive outcomes in knowledge gained as well as increases in strength and balance measures. But another major beneficiary of the program was the diverse group of WCU undergrads and graduates who participated in this interprofessional education (IPE) initiative.

Interprofessional education, in which students from different disciplines work side by side on collaborative projects, is gaining a lot of traction in the health sciences.

“Interprofessional education is beneficial for healthcare majors for a number of reasons,” says Melissa Reed. “There is a large body of emerging evidence suggesting that interprofessional healthcare teams can improve patient adherence to recommendations, reduce medical errors, and increase overall patient satisfaction. Further, from a student perspective, it is good for them to gain experiential learning in a collaborative environment.”

“I often say in my classes that exercise professionals don’t exist in a bubble,” she adds. “This collaborative program gave students the opportunity to see how all of the disciplines can work together with a common purpose and goal.”

“IPE experiences are useful because in healthcare it is critical that everyone work together to improve patient outcomes,” notes Barbara Harrison.

The interprofessional collaboration also was valued by the faculty members. “I appreciated the opportunity to do scholarly work with other health professionals who work in the community,” says Mary Beth Gilboy.

That collegial spirit prevailed throughout the semester, even if Gilboy’s nutrition education may have garnered the most attention from program participants.

“Let’s face it, everyone loves food,” she says, with a chuckle.

One of the nutrition risk factors related to falls is low vitamin D levels. So Gilboy and her students discussed key food sources of calcium and vitamin D. Then they led the older adults in taste tests of foods rich in these nutrients, such as yogurt, low-fat cheeses, soy milk, broccoli, and calcium-fortified juices and cereals.

“We made yogurt parfaits layered with blueberries and calcium-fortified cereal. The seniors assembled the parfaits themselves,” says Gilboy. “They enjoyed the making – and eating – of these parfaits very much.”

The fall prevention program is being presented again this semester, at a new location, the West Chester Area Senior Center.



Strength and balance training were part of the falls prevention program

New Quarters in Mitchell Hall

Peter Loedel, interim director/assistant vice president for International Programs, speaks to WCU junior Janae Fecondo about study abroad opportunities. International Programs and the language and cultures department moved into newly renovated offices in Mitchell Hall in mid-January.



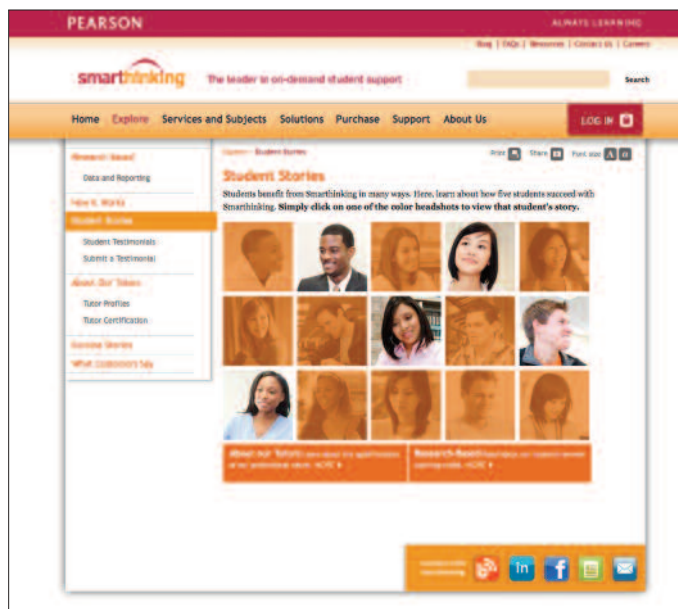
TUTORING 24/7 WITH SMARTHINKING

WCU offers students free, online tutoring service

Wouldn't it be nice to get help from a tutor at 1 a.m.?

If you're above the age of 25, the answer is probably no. But while you're deep in slumber, many WCU students are studying and could use some help with a tricky physics equation or a grammar conundrum.

And now they can get their late-night academic questions answered, thanks to Smarthinking, an online tutoring and academic support service owned by Pearson Education. Eighteen months ago, Smarthinking was introduced at WCU and it's been successful ever since, reports Gerardina Martin, director of the Learning Assistance & Resource Center (LARC).



"Smarthinking is a great complement to our onsite, in-person tutoring, which is available for most 100- and 200-level courses at WCU," says Martin. "Like our onsite tutoring, Smarthinking is free to students and offers quality instruction in a wide variety of subjects. But a big plus for our students is that, depending on the subject area, they can go online and get help any time of the day or night with Smarthinking."

Tutoring in popular subjects, like algebra and geometry, is available 24/7. Other subjects are offered on a more limited schedule but still during the late-night study hours so popular with students. For example, introductory accounting tutoring operates from noon to 2 a.m. Sunday through Thursday and noon to 6 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Students can sign up in advance for appointments, and if they like, can continue to meet with the same tutor throughout the semester. Or, they can choose the "drop in" option and see if any tutor is free.

Although Smarthinking does offer some limited video capabilities, Martin says that most instruction is provided via an online whiteboard. Smarthinking's virtual whiteboard allows for scientific and mathematical notation, symbols, geometric figures, graphing and freehand drawing to be rendered quickly and easily.

"We provide our students with blocks of tutoring time that they use how they see fit," notes Martin. "Perhaps they just need help with one difficult math problem, which takes 20 minutes of the tutor's time. Or, they may need an hour of 1-1 assistance to get all their questions answered. Smarthinking doesn't lock students into set allotments of instructional time."

Joe Mignone is a graduate assistant in clinical psychology who works with Martin on the Smarthinking initiative. Mignone wears two hats – he is instrumental in data collection and also is charged with educating students and faculty about the online tutoring service. His assistantship is sponsored by the Division of Information Services.

"Over the past year and a half, students have responded positively to the service," says Mignone. "Students who use the program, tend to use it a lot."

He likes the fact that Smarthinking tutors are trained to provide the same style of tutoring that WCU offers in person. “Smarthinking tutors share the same principles as LARC tutors—they facilitate students to solve their own questions, and strive to assist the students in becoming independent learners.”

To learn more about Smarthinking at WCU, contact LARC at larc@wcupa.edu or 610-436-2535.

YOON NAMED CAS ASSOCIATE DEAN



Hyoejin Yoon

Katherine Hyoejin Yoon has been named the new associate dean in support of humanities and the liberal arts for the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). Yoon has been a professor of English at WCU since 2002; she was tenured and moved up through the ranks, recently promoted to full professor. In 2012-2014, she served in an interim capacity as the associate dean for the entire college.

Yoon says there has never been a better time to be a humanities and liberal arts major. “The humanities and liberal arts provides a foundation for learning and critical thinking and supports the intellectual agility today’s workers need by fostering their creativity, problem-solving skills, ability to engage meaningfully in a global society and to work with people, traditions and knowledge from different times, places, and cultures.”

Lori Vermeulen, dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, calls Yoon “a wonderful asset to the college.”

“Hyoejin has an interesting array of administrative experience working with the associate provost and supporting the campus as the teaching, learning, and assessment coordinator,” says Vermeulen. “In addition, she served as interim associate dean of CAS for two years and strongly supported the college in its efforts with student learning outcomes assessment. I am particularly appreciative of the diverse perspectives that she brings to the table and her care and concern about issues of diversity and equity on campus.”

Yoon’s research interests include feminist and cultural studies and writing studies. She has been active in her professional community as co-chair of the Asian and Asian American Caucus. She also co-chairs the Committee on the Status of Women for the National Conference on College Composition and Communication. She also serves on WCU’s President’s Commission on the Status of Women.

In her free time, Yoon enjoys writing poetry. She has played the viola since elementary school and recently joined a community orchestra in Northwest Philadelphia. She is the first Asian-American senior administrator to serve the College of Arts and Sciences.

WCU LAUNCHES NEW MINOR IN CONTEMPLATIVE STUDIES



Don McCown leads a class in a contemplative exercise

West Chester University is the only university in the nation to offer a minor in contemplative studies, according to Don McCown, co-director of WCU's Center for Contemplative Studies. McCown was instrumental in establishing the minor, which launched this semester, and serves as the program's advisor.

"Brown offers a concentration in contemplative studies but WCU's program is the only minor currently available," he says.

The new 18-credit minor is designed for undergraduate students from any discipline. Students are given the opportunity to learn and apply contemplative practices; explore the scientific understanding of these practices in neuroscience, medicine, and psychology; and delve into the philosophies of India and China that underlie many contemplative practices.

Core courses include *Mind, Body and Health*, which is a writing emphasis course; and *Stress Management*, which emphasizes the personal application of stress management techniques. Two contemplative tradition courses are required out of four available — *Philosophies and Religions of India, Yoga I, Philosophies and Religions of the Far East* and *T'ai Chi Ch'uan I*. Electives include *Alternative and Complementary Medicine* as well as *Positive Psychology*.

"The minor is highly multi-disciplinary in nature, with participation from four different departments in two different colleges," says McCown. "As we grow and develop, I could see every college on campus offering courses that fulfill requirements of the contemplative studies minor."

Ray Zetts, associate dean of the College of Health Sciences, has long been interested in seeing WCU add a minor in contemplative studies and provided support throughout the process of creating the program, notes McCown.

The minor has attracted interest both in and outside of WCU. McCown made a presentation about the minor to the Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education this past fall. Later this semester, he will meet with Indiana University of Pennsylvania faculty who are interested in developing a similar program.



"I have had students contact me because the minor will help them in their clinical practice in such fields as nursing, sports medicine, public health, and social work," says McCown. "But I also have received inquiries from students from many other majors who are interested in the transformative effect that contemplative practices can have on one's way of thinking and seeing the world."

PIERLOTT NAMED ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HONORS COLLEGE



Matthew Pierlott

Matthew Pierlott has been named the assistant director of WCU's Honors College, a 1/4th time position. Pierlott is an associate professor of philosophy and has been a member of the WCU faculty since 2005. The director of the Honors College is Kevin Dean.

Pierlott has been involved in the Honors College as a faculty member since 2010 and as a member of the Honors Council since 2012. He has taught an honors class on the Idea of Freedom, another class on the Concept of God and has been an instructor for the college's capstone course.

"The Honors College is built on the motto 'to be honorable is to serve.' The focus of the college on leadership and service on top of academic excellence makes it rather unique among honors programs," notes Pierlott. "As one of the capstone instructors, I have had the privilege to witness the creativity, passion and determination of the college's students as they work to meet some unmet need on-campus or in the community."

Pierlott says his top priority as the new assistant director is to help expand opportunities for students and faculty to participate in the Honors College. Specifically, he says he would like to see more students be able to take up the core program in their first semester at WCU, broaden the Seminar Program to serve more faculty and students, and work with the Honors Council to promote more opportunities for faculty leadership in the program.

"Honors education at WCU has been a vibrant part of the culture since its inception in 1978, and prides itself on serving high academic ability students from every major on campus," says Dean. "Campus-wide budgetary cuts, over a decade ago, led to a loss of funding for an assistant; we couldn't be more pleased to have this position funded again and to have Matt Pierlott in this role."

"Dr. Pierlott brings to the position experience, energy, and a strong commitment to connecting with students both in curricular and co-curricular contexts," adds Dean. "He will be a tremendous asset to the Honors College in the years to come."

ADVISING TASK FORCE GETS TO WORK

Many current WCU faculty can think back on their education and identify an advisor who was instrumental in helping them achieve their goals. Similarly, advising at WCU is one of the best ways by which faculty and staff can help retain and graduate our students. Advising builds educational relationships that lead to smooth transitions into and through college. So what can WCU do to help support a strong advising culture? That's what WCU's Advising Task Force has been charged to figure out.

The task force consists of faculty and staff from across the University (see list on next page) and is led by Cheryl Wanko

from the department of English. Provost Lamwers charged the task force with satisfying the imperatives laid out by the Strategic Plan — to define successful advising, discuss that definition, and determine methods of assessing it. Further actions are to propose changes to institutional structures and assessment instruments.

Building on the past good work of the University Academic Advising Committee under the leadership of Joanne Conlon and data available from local and national surveys, the task force will discuss a preliminary definition of advising with the campus community in the coming months. That definition identifies roles for both faculty advisors and student advisees and links to national standards such as Council on Academic Standards, National Survey of Student Engagement, and National Academic Advising Association (NACADA):

- The relationship is mutually respectful
- Advisor and advisee share an understanding of advising duties and responsibilities
- The relationship helps clarify advisees’ life, career, and academic goals
- The relationship helps students learn about institutional policies, procedures, resources, and opportunities, from choosing classes to addressing student difficulties
- Both advisor and advisee take advantage of technological tools

Members of the task force will be speaking with campus groups about this definition: does it describe the general outlines of how WCU would like to build its advising culture? And what gets in the way of WCU creating the kind of advising culture that it wants?

Identifying obstacles to good advising is an important part of the task force’s work. To that end, the task force plans a survey to ensure that faculty voices are heard and to enable the task force to devise ways that will help make this crucial faculty job as easy as possible. Other immediate improvements include plans for an advising website – to improve the accessibility of information – and an increased presence of advising in student and faculty orientation.

The task force has asked to meet with the faculty of each college, APSCUF, and the Faculty Senate. In addition, open forums will be held this semester.

MEMBER	GROUP(S) REPRESENTED	MEMBER	GROUP(S) REPRESENTED
Linda Adams	Dean – CHS	Jackie Hodes	APSCUF – COE
Francis Atuahene	Chairs – USSSS	Sandra Kerr	CAS – 2003 task force
Reena Clay	Student member (CHS)	Patricia Powell	CVPA
Simon Condliffe	CBPA	Becky Ross	Career Center
Idna Corbett	USSSS Dean	Dawn Renta	Registrar
Frank Fry	Chairs – CHS	Eleanor Shevlin	CAS – 2003 task force
Scott Heinerichs	TLAC – CHS	Cheryl Wanko	CAS – Chair
		Student member	SGA

NEW LACTATION SPACES NOW OPEN

West Chester University has three new lactation spaces for nursing mothers, with a fourth to open soon, says Alicia Hahn-Murphy, director of the Women's Center.

Now open are Sykes 306, Commonwealth Hall-Student Health Services 06 and Main Hall's 5th Floor restroom lounge lactation spaces. Lawrence Center 259 is projected to open by mid-semester.

Up until the opening of these lactation spaces, WCU employees have worked with their supervisors to figure out an appropriate space to nurse upon their return from maternity leave, explains Hahn-Murphy. But last May, the President's Commission on the Status of Women recommended that the University create dedicated lactation spaces on campus for faculty, staff, and students.



"Each site features comfortable chairs, electrical outlets, tables and good lighting," notes Hahn-Murphy. "In addition, the Student Health Services lactation space features a refrigerator and microwave."

Information about each space is available at www.wcupa.edu/lactationspaces. If you have questions, or suggestions for additional lactation spaces on campus, contact Hahn-Murphy at ahahn@wcupa.edu.

MORE THAN 400 MAKE BLANKETS FOR MLK SERVICE PROJECT

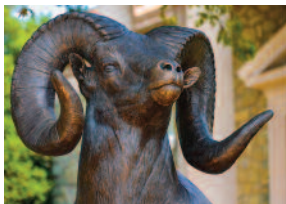


Small groups worked together to create colorful, comforting fleece blankets

Kindergartners, seniors, and every age in-between – especially WCU college students -- filled a ballroom at Sykes Student Union Jan. 22 to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy by providing service to others.

In all, more than 400 WCU students, faculty and staff, as well as members of the local community, gathered to make fleece blankets for children at A.I. DuPont Hospital for Children, Chester County Hospital's NICU and pediatric units, and Fleece for Keeps, an organization that provides blankets to children in the foster care system.

The goal for the day was to make 150 blankets, says Jamie Williams, interim assistant director of Service-Learning & Volunteer Programs. And that goal was met, it was announced after huge stacks of blankets were counted at the conclusion of two volunteer sessions. Each session kicked off with a video clip and short presentations by representatives from each organization receiving blankets.



Building on Excellence

Moving forward with the Strategic Plan

Recent, notable activities and outcomes achieved from each of the five theme areas of *Building on Excellence*.

Academics

Faculty from across the University have been engaged in re-envisioning the General Education curriculum. In November, faculty groups on the General Education Advisory Board developed three curricula based on the conceptual framework passed by the Curriculum and Academic Policies Council (CAPC). Open forums were held in December and January, giving the campus community the opportunity to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each model. One model will be selected to be presented to CAPC for approval in the spring semester.

The Curriculum and Academic Policies Council (CAPC) has worked to strengthen the academic environment by engaging in an analysis of program review reports from academic units. Reviewing previous years' findings allows CAPC to identify the extent to which there is rigor and coherence in WCU's academic offerings. This review process marks the first time that these reports have been evaluated by faculty outside of the originating department.

Enrichment

The Cottrell Center continues to engage with the greater community to provide students with quality internship opportunities. The center is working with the State System on a Business Plan Competition and, as a prerequisite, has introduced a WCU Business Idea Competition.

Students in the department of undergraduate social work can now expand their understanding of social work practices during a field experience in Mexico. The department has solidified a partnership with the Center for Global Education/Augsburg College and joined a consortium so that WCU social work students can complete their junior spring semester in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Students can participate in this program while paying the regular WCU tuition rate.

Sustainability

The College of Business and Public Affairs has formalized sustainability goals in the CBPA Strategic Plan. As part of these goals, all departments will teach and implement sustainability throughout and across all programs. Under the direction of faculty member Lisa Calvano, the management department's chapter of Net Impact is working with the Borough of West Chester to develop sustainability projects.

The Academic Development Program continues to be sustained by an Act 101 grant approved by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency for the 2014-15 academic year with a preliminary allocation of \$150,708. The program also secured an anonymous gift of \$20,000, which benefitted 17 students participating in the ADP summer session.



Diversity

The Admissions Office is working to increase enrollment of under-represented minorities (URM). Staff has attended events sponsored by community organizations and visited high schools with a significant number of URM students. Additionally, an admissions counselor was hired to focus on this population. There has been an increase in the enrollment of URM transfer students and progress in closing the accessibility gap. Of the admitted ADP students, 59% are URMs and 39% are Act 100 (low income students).



WCU's ROTC program has nine female cadets in the 2014-15 academic year, compared to six in 2013-14. ROTC also has increased its minority participants to 27 percent.

Engagement

The Center for Social and Economic Policy Research (CSEPR) staff have coauthored a successful \$3.75 million U.S. Department of Health Resources & Services Administration Healthy Start Initiative grant with Hamilton Health Center in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The project's focus is a reduction in infant mortality and improved health outcomes for women, children, and families who reside in Greater Harrisburg. The grant proposes to serve a minimum of 500 program participants per year for the next five years, with a minimum of 250 prenatal participants annually.

WCU students provide valuable outreach with their many off-campus performances. During the fall semester, all the major music ensembles (Orchestra, Choirs, Wind Ensemble, Criteria Jazz Ensemble) performed at conferences and public schools.

