



Academic Affairs is a community of educators that supports the university's mission by enrolling, teaching, retaining, graduating, and inspiring diverse, lifelong learners prepared to contribute to the common good.

**Issue No. 12**

**November 2023**

*This monthly newsletter features stories about events and programs within the Division of Academic Affairs. It is intended to inform, engage, and recognize members of our esteemed Community of Educators, all the faculty and staff who are committed to student success.*

***Please share your stories with us by clicking the yellow box below.***

***If you have an event coming up, please upload it to the university's [Campus Calendar](#). Click "SUBMIT AN EVENT" button. For more information about how to submit an event, see the story below in "Resource Corner."***

***To share information about an upcoming event, click [here](#) for submission to the [Ram Report](#).***

**Submit Provost's Post Stories  
Here**

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Dear colleagues,

Last week, we gathered with our loved ones to celebrate Thanksgiving. Over the break I found myself reflecting on the strength and resilience of our community during these challenging times. The past weeks have given me an opportunity to reflect quite a bit on the values that our institution holds dear, and the ways that we hope to provide an education for our students that helps them participate in the world of ideas in respectful ways, listening and learning from one another as they work to contribute to the common good.

In the aftermath of recent events in the Middle East, I am filled with gratitude for the ability of many in our community of educators to have these difficult conversations in a respectful manner and willingness to listen to the voices of those with whom they may disagree. At several different events on campus, we heard from faculty members, community members, and students who had a variety of different perspectives on the current conflict in the Middle East.

Our ability to engage in difficult conversations with respect and a genuine desire to understand perspectives that may differ from our own is a testament to the core values that define us as educators. Each of you plays a crucial role in fostering an environment where diverse voices are not only heard but valued. The commitment to open dialogue and the exchange of ideas, even when they may be uncomfortable, is a hallmark of our commitment to academic freedom. It is through these conversations that we not only broaden our own perspectives but also contribute to the growth and development of our students. As a political scientist who specializes in public policy, I have wrestled with these choices repeatedly throughout my career, but I have always emerged stronger, and always more committed to a world where we must allow this free exchange of ideas if we want a shared future in a democratic society.

So, I'm particularly grateful this season to work at a place like West Chester University, where

ideas, even unpopular ones, can be tested through civil debate, and where I can learn and grow alongside this community of educators as we seek a better tomorrow.

As we express gratitude for the blessings in our lives, let us also appreciate the richness that comes from embracing diversity and engaging in respectful dialogue. Our collective strength lies in our ability to learn from one another, and I am proud to be part of a community that upholds these principles even in the face of challenging circumstances.

Thank you for all you do to strengthen our community and bring humanity to the free exchange of ideas. As we come to the end of another semester, I wish you and your loved ones a joyful and reflective holiday season.

With gratitude,

*Jeff Osgood*

## BEING STUDENT READY

### RamPortal Update

We continue our implementation of RamPortal, WCU's new Student Information System replacing myWCU. During the fall 2023 semester the implementation team successfully moved admissions applications for fall 2024, the course catalog, and fall 2024 class schedule to RamPortal.



This November we worked with departments across campus to complete our student end-to-end simulation which allowed us to experience a student lifecycle from application to graduation.

We are currently planning for Fall 2024 class registration in RamPortal. Registration for Fall 24 will begin in March. Training will be available to faculty, staff, and students beginning in January 2024.

## STUDENT SUCCESS



### WCU Nursing Program Ranks #1

*(story courtesy of WCU Communications & Marketing)*

The website **allnurses.com** has ranked West Chester University's nursing program as the #1 top RN to BSN program in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

"Impressively, the program ranks first among 1,922 comparable programs for NCLEX\* pass rates, cementing its reputation for cultivating skilled nursing professionals," the allnurses.com website states.

Nancy Barker, associate professor and chair of WCU's Nursing Department, confirms, "WCU nursing has been able to maintain an NCLEX pass rate above 94 percent prior to, during, and following the COVID pandemic. Our nursing program has exceeded both the state and national average NCLEX pass rates consistently over the last seven years."

She notes several factors that set WCU's program apart from others. "WCU's nursing program allows registered nurses to complete their BSN while working with the support of our tremendous faculty to make that transition as easy as possible while maintaining academic rigor."

She also reports that WCU nursing students are "in high demand with the University's clinical partners due to their impressive clinical and academic expertise."

Affordability, program duration, flexibility, and academic reputation are among the evaluating factors in allnurses.com's methodology. Allnurses.com, which supports the nursing community around the world, surveys its reader base to determine rankings.

\*NCLEX is the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX), the Premier Nurse Licensure Exam.

[Explore WCU's Nursing Programs](#)

## ACCESS

### WCU Welcomes High School Girls at Super Science Saturday

*(Story courtesy of WCU Communications & Marketing)*

More than 40 WCU women STEM undergrads spent Saturday, November 4, inspiring younger versions of themselves at the University's annual Super Science Saturday. Geared for girls in grades 6-12, this free event is designed to boost the girls' confidence in their ability to be scientists, to provide inspiration and nurture career aspirations through role models, and to engage them in interactive projects and experiments.

This year, coordinator Karen Schwarz, professor of Earth and space sciences and director of the WCU Planetarium, reported that 17 WCU female STEM faculty participated in addition to the WCU undergraduates. She also recruited women from Dow Chemical to lead an experiment and another group of women from the American Association of University Women to host a science station.

In small groups, the girls were guided by a WCU student leader through various science stations where they participated in hands-on activities led by WCU STEM faculty and other women scientists. There was also time for talking directly with the scientists, plus a Q&A session and raffle prizes.

This free event is limited to 160 girls. Super Science Saturday is a program of WCU's Center for



STEM Inclusion (CSI) in the **College of Science and Mathematics**. Established in 2021, CSI actively works to increase access to STEM careers for a diverse body of students, with programming conducted by a large and enthusiastic faculty committee. CSI has four pillars: Outreach, Access, Persistence, and Career Readiness. Each pillar represents a range of activities to support diverse STEM students and strengthen the STEM pipeline. CSI has been recognized with a 2023 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education.

Learn more about the Center for STEM Inclusion

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



### RamTHON raises \$41,015 for Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

(Story courtesy of WCU Communication & Marketing)

West Chester University students' 6-hour, no-sitting RamTHON Event raised \$41,014.25 on Saturday, November 4, to help children who are

sick and receiving treatment at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. The donation total is a 35% increase over last year's donation total! A *ramtastic* time was had by all as RamTHON featured lots of line-dancing, zany party games, musical/dance performances, Zumba workouts, free custom t-shirts, delicious food donated on-the-hour every hour by area vendors, traveling boutiques, and much more. Making a special appearance to share their impactful stories were CHOP Miracle Network children and their families. Constant motion, movement and "miracle" celebrations took place throughout the dance party. More than 300 members of the community participated in RamTHON. *The no sitting requirement reminded all participants that nothing compares to the discomfort experienced by children who are being treated in the hospital.* 100% of RamTHON proceeds will be donated to CHOP's Child Life Department.

Now in its third successful year, RamTHON was organized by West Chester University's Dance Marathon students, a nonprofit student-run organization on campus that was founded in 2020 by students who wanted to support the children of CHOP. The student organization fundraises throughout the year to help children who are sick and receiving treatment at CHOP.

In 2021, West Chester University Dance Marathon raised more than \$21,000 to support CHOP. In 2022, RamTHON raised \$30,273. This year's donation total of \$41,014.25, tops all RamTHON donation years. Sammi Rudner, a West Chester University junior and early grades preparation major who led RamTHON this year, credits the success of RamTHON to the involvement and commitment of many. "Dance Marathon is a movement involving 250,000 students from 400 colleges across the nation supporting and raising money for the sick and injured children treated at local Children's Miracle Network Hospitals," Rudner shared. "Each year our student executive board chooses where the funds will go at CHOP; 100% of what is raised at RamTHON goes directly to that department. This year, RamTHON 2023 is donating to the Child Life Department and we are hopeful that the funds raised will make a difference in the lives of many, many children."



## WCU's Opera Theatre Stages Beauty and the Beast

West Chester University's Opera Theatre presented BEAUTY AND THE BEAST on November 17-18 in the Emilie K. Asplundh Concert Hall. This operatic version of the familiar BEAUTY AND THE BEAST fairy tale featured lush, romantic music by Vittorio Giannini.

Assistant Professor and Director of Opera Nicholas Provenzale said of the production, "It is the perfect introduction to opera for every age. It follows the familiar and popular classic fairytale, the music is beautiful and accessible, it is performed in English, and it is just under an hour long."

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST was also performed at the Free Library of Philadelphia, the Kennett Library, and for the Boys and Girls Clubs in the Philadelphia region.

Provenzale adds, "I chose this shorter opera with a familiar story for our outreach tour, which is a terrific way to bring opera to new audiences while providing an opportunity for our students to hone their craft."

WCU Opera's production of BEAUTY AND THE BEAST included a cast of 11 with accompaniment by one onstage pianist. The show was double cast. Vocal Performance major Zoe Bennett (Malvern, PA) performed in the title role as BEAUTY on November 18. Flute major Elizabeth Jones (Willow Grove, PA) played the role on November 17, 2023.

## DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

### WCU Celebrates International Education Week

*(Story courtesy of WCU Communications & Marketing)*

One of the highlights of **International Education Week**, celebrated this year from November 13 to 18, was a ribbon-cutting for a new space within the Global Engagement Office: a new Global Engagement Center on the fourth floor of Mitchell Hall. The official opening took place on Tuesday, November 14.

The Global Engagement Center includes a multipurpose room, a multi-faith room, study space, offices for visiting scholars and the Global Ambassadors, and the campus passport office. International students are decorating the new space. For Angela Howard, Associate Provost for Global Engagement, it represents the culmination of a long-held goal of a place at WCU dedicated to international students and initiatives.

At WCU, International Education Week shines the spotlight on opportunities through the Global



Engagement Office for study and research abroad, international internships and student teaching, field study, and exchange agreements with institutions abroad. The Global Engagement Office also helps to arrange for sports teams to play in other countries and for performing arts students to perform internationally, plus supports international students and visiting scholars who come to study and teach at WCU.

“There was this myth that only certain majors can study abroad,” Howard says. “We try to dispel that myth by offering all of these different opportunities, especially the performance, research, student teaching, and internship opportunities.”

To streamline processes for studying abroad, the office became a passport acceptance facility approved by the U.S. Department of State – the only one at a university in Pennsylvania. Office staff can accept passport applications, administer the required oath, sign forms, collect fees, and send in the paperwork. Since opening in February 2023, more than 250 passport applications have been processed. “We wanted to remove barriers for students who want to travel,” Howard says.

## SCHOLARSHIP & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### 6ABC Action News & CBS News Philadelphia Feature John Kennedy as Election Analyst

*(Courtesy of WCU Communications and Marketing)*



[Click to watch CBS Philadelphia](#)

[Click to Watch 6ABC](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Volunteers Needed for Fall Commencement

*(Sent on behalf of Mary Beth Kurimay, Director of Conference Services)*

We are seeking your help with our Fall commencement weekend recognizing the December 2023 graduating class. Ceremonies are college based and will take place in Hollinger Fieldhouse on Friday, December 15 and Saturday, December 16. There will be no ceremonies on Sunday this year! We know it is a very busy time of year; however, the graduates and their families are so appreciative of the assistance we provide when they are on campus for this very special day.

If you're interested in volunteering, please sign up for shifts from the Sign Up Genius link below. The shifts are available on a first come, first serve basis. Basic duties will be scanning tickets, handing out programs and seating guests.

If you have any questions, please contact Mary Beth Kurimay at [mkurimay@wcupa.edu](mailto:mkurimay@wcupa.edu).

[Sign Up  
Genius](#)

[Click Here for  
Schedule](#)

## RESOURCE CORNER



### How to Submit Your Event to Online Campus Calendar

The WCU Calendar is populated by events submitted in **25Live**, WCU's room reservation and calendaring program. Faculty/Staff may submit events to the calendar by selecting "WCU Featured Events Calendar" in the "Resources" section of the 25Live Event Form.

[WCU Event  
Calendar](#)

[How to submit your event to WCU  
Calendar](#)

### FAST Schedule & Offerings



Check out what IS&T has on tap for the semester! The Faculty and Staff Training (FAST) unit supports WCU faculty and staff in becoming proficient in various applications, in addition to providing best practices in trending platforms (e.g., OneDrive, D2L,

RamCloud). Courses are designed to accommodate all levels of learning and allow users to build on acquired skills. Click below for the full schedule or take **self-paced options**.

[Click for  
Schedule](#)

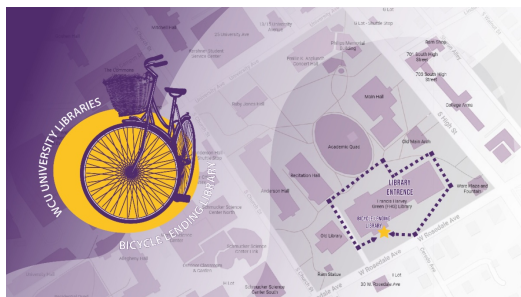


## ODLI On Air Podcast

ODLI on Air is a podcast on digital learning & innovation at WCU that expands teaching and learning perspectives by connecting theory and practice through conversations with expert WCU faculty. Check out episodes on a variety of topics including sustainable study abroad, using H5P interactions, inclusive learning, and e-portfolios.



[Listen to ODLI On Air](#)



## WCU's Bike Lending Library

Can't find a parking space? Need to get to class faster? With the opening of the Bicycle Lending Library (BLL), you're in luck!

The BLL offers 28 Trek bicycles available in sizes XXS-XL. WCU students and employees can

borrow a bicycle for two-week increments or full semesters. Riders should submit an **online request** for a bicycle and wait to be contacted by the library staff. From here, the lending process will begin. After scheduling a pick-up time, riders will present their WCU ID and receive their bicycle, as well as a helmet and a combination lock.

[More Info on BLL](#)



## Want to learn more about Navigate?

Visit our **webpage**. You'll find an overview, information about **Progress Reports**, and our **training site**.

[Navigate Homepage](#)

You can also check out the **FAST training site** and search "navigate" to find all of the Navigate-specific offerings. Here's a **quick guide** to the offerings.

# FREE LinkedIn Learning Content Available to WCU Faculty, Staff and Students

LinkedIn Learning with Lynda.com content is an industry leader in online training, with a digital library of over 180,000 videos, covering a wide range of technical, business, software, and creative topics. West Chester University faculty, staff and currently enrolled students have unlimited access.

[Access LinkedIn Learning](#)



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