



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. 4

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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.

*Our next issue comes out on **February 23**. Should you wish to submit a story for the January issue, please click the button below. Submissions must be received by **Friday, February 19**.*

[Submit Story Here](#)

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Dear Colleagues,

As with the start of a new year, the start of a new semester is an opportunity to reflect on the past and look ahead to the future. We reflect on both our accomplishments and the challenges we have overcome to get us to where we are today, and look forward to the exciting opportunities ahead. It is therefore appropriate that January is **National Mentorship Awareness Month**. Mentorship, by definition, is the guidance provided by those with knowledge garnered over years of past experiences to benefit those beginning a new career or stage in their lives. January is also the month when we pause to recognize the importance of service in our communities. Service is one of three core responsibilities, along with teaching and research, to which WCU faculty members are held accountable. Service is woven into everything we do as a public institution of higher education.

WCU is fortunate to attract some of the best educators in the nation, but not everyone who comes here is familiar with the teacher-scholar-service model central to our culture and key to success at this institution. Mentors steeped in this tradition help guide new faculty to understand our culture and shape the next generation of master educators and leaders critical to WCU's excellence.

Mentorship is not limited to new faculty. We also recognize the tremendous value mentors offer adjuncts looking to connect with the WCU community, learn about our culture and identify pathways for success, and for faculty members looking to advance their careers. Our **Faculty Mentorship Program** celebrates its 15th anniversary this year and continues to be a resource supporting our commitment to excellence in teaching. For our women-identifying employees, the Provost Office is proud to have championed the creation of the **Women's Leadership Development Forum**, which builds on the lessons learned from the **HERS Institute** to benefit more than 70 WCU women every two years. This year's cohort is pictured above.

Both of us have relied on mentors throughout our careers and attribute mentorship as central to our success as educators and administrators. At WCU, we promote lifelong learning, not only for our students, but for our faculty and staff as well. Whether you wish to be a mentor or mentee, we encourage all of you to take advantage of some of the many mentoring opportunities available.

Sincerely,

Laurie and Jeff

BEING STUDENT READY

Our **Moon Shot for Equity mission** at WCU will only succeed in eliminating institutional equity gaps in



student success with broad participation by our campus community. We refer to Moon Shot as a *mission* rather than an initiative because it is different from WCU's earlier equity work. The primary distinction is our understanding of the necessity to include the voices of our entire community of students, staff, and faculty in eliminating institutional inequity. We are committed to engaging everyone at

WCU in Moon Shot.

Our goal teams have completed an initial assessment of institutional equity gaps in student success on campus. Based on their analyses of student success data, we will first focus on breaking down institutional barriers to equity for our Black and Latinx students. Examination of our institutional data on student success across each of the goal teams revealed profound equity gaps for our Black and Latinx students. It is our work to understand and change institutional policies and practices that maintain equity gaps by identifying institutional barriers that are obstacles to success for our Black and Latinx students.

In addition, this spring we will continue to share out information about how our campus constituents can connect with our Moon Shot mission. We ask you to invite our team to faculty/department/college meetings, staff meetings, or student groups to talk about the role each unit can play in our Moon Shot for Equity mission. We will also continue to offer professional development opportunities to learn more about equity mindedness and how to use one's equity mindedness to focus on changing institutional practices at WCU. Save the dates, February 28 and March 1, and stay tuned for more information.

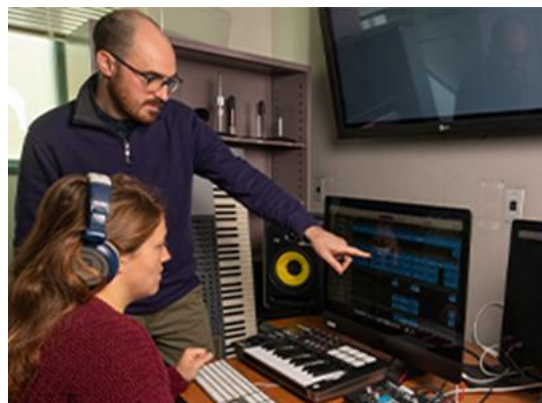
We know many of our colleagues on campus are designing new projects with equity in mind – or continuing to work on existing projects with an increased attention to equity. We invite you to reach out and share your work with our Moon Shot team. We are excited to collaborate with you in this work – or just to know about it so we can share more of the DEIJ/student success work on our campus with one another.

[Read More](#)

STUDENT SUCCESS

Wells School of Music Launches New Bachelor's in Studio Composition

WCU's Wells School of Music announces a new Bachelor of Music in Studio Composition program. It is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music and is open to students to audition for the Fall 2023 semester.



The degree integrates technology and music production with creative media applications to equip students with skills for composing for film, video games, and other recorded

mediums, as well as for live performance.

Adam Silverman, chair of the Wells School's Department of Music Theory, History, and Composition says, "We have expanded our educational portfolio for students who want to compose commercial music and engage in the art of music recording and media production. It opens a new and vital avenue that impacts the music our students create, the students we might attract, and the sounds that fill our halls."

WCU is the only PASSHE school to offer a Bachelor of Music degree centered on commercial music composition. Acceptance requires an audition, and students will participate in ensembles and take the full complement of music courses common to music majors including music theory, history, performance, and conducting classes. In addition to this musical core curriculum, Studio Composition majors take courses in recording techniques, songwriting, film, video game and media scoring, career preparation, and more.

For more information on the Bachelor of Music in Studio Composition, contact Kaysey Davis at the Wells School of Music: kdavis@wcupa.edu.

ACCESS

Veterans Center & WCU Honored with Bronze Patrick Henry Award for Service to Veterans

WCU and the **Greg and Sandra Weisenstein Veterans Center** were presented with the Bronze Patrick Henry award. This award recognizes the University's status as a Gold Designated Military Friendly University 2021-2022 and honors our service to veterans.

Colonel Joseph Kirlin (at right in photo), Pennsylvania Department Commander of the Philadelphia Chapter of the **Military Order of World Wars (MOWW)**, presented the award to Vince DeMarro '90, M'99 (at left in photo), the University's Veterans Administration's School Certifying Official and a retired U.S. Marine Corps veteran.

The Greg and Sandra Weisenstein Veterans Center at WCU strives to create an intentional culture of understanding, acceptance, and success for veterans, active military, and those whose support them. The Center is committed to facilitating communication among our campus offices to serve student veterans, military service members, reservists, and their families with a coordinated system of service to provide a meaningful transition from the military to WCU.



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More

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WCU Theatre Group Presents



23rd Annual Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS Benefit Concert

In December, the student-led University Theatre group at West Chester University presented the **23rd annual Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS Benefit Concert and Silent Auction**.

Broadway Cares/Equity Fights Aids is a New York-based nonprofit providing services to those living with AIDS and HIV. The 23rd Annual Broadway Cares Equity Fights AIDS Benefit Concert and Silent Auction is a student directed and produced event featuring variety show-style acts starring WCU students.

This year's event featured more than 50 students from the **Department of Theatre & Dance** who performed musical theatre and dance numbers, in addition to students from other campus performance groups including the Deep Dish Pizazz Improv Team, High Street Harmonix, The Suspensions, Top Drawer Swing Dance, and WCU's Irish Dance Team. WCU alumni from all over the world also joined in via a produced video.

The event is one of the largest outside sources of funding for **Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS**. This year the WCU's Theatre Group raised more than \$16,000 from the auction, ticket sales, and donations.

DIVERSITY



Top Colleges for Diversity

WCU Earns Third Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award and Presents at PASSHE DEI Summit

For the third year in a row, West Chester University (WCU) received the **2022 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award** from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education. The HEED Award is a national honor recognizing U.S. colleges and universities that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion.

“The HEED Award demonstrates engagement in an array of best practices, in addition to innovation and a collective commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion,” said West Chester University Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Tracey Ray Robinson. “We are so proud to receive this national recognition for the first time. Diversity is broadly defined and this award recognizes how the University goes the extra-mile.”

In November, WCU was a major contributor to this year's **PASSHE Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Summit**. More than 1100 participants from across the Commonwealth heard from 12 members of WCU's faculty, staff, and students who participated as presenters. This year's theme was *“What does it mean to belong? Cultivating relationships and centering equity in our communities.”* To create diverse communities that are inclusive and equitable to all, we must explore the questions: What does it mean to belong? How can we individually and as a collective, nurture diversity, equity, and inclusion as foundational to building a robust State System?

This year's Summit aimed to serve as a platform for dialogue, reflection, communal learning, and community building, centered on exploring the praxis of belonging. The DEI Summit supports the State System's **five mission-driven DEI priorities**, which were

affirmed by the Board of Governors in April 2021. This annual Summit reflects the State System's commitment to building and maintaining a diverse, equitable, and inclusive space for faculty, staff, and students to thrive.



CSM Faculty Awarded \$716,000 Grant to Support Diversity in STEM Program

Representative Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA) and Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) successfully advanced and secured an FY23 Community

Project Funding (CPF) grant in the amount of \$716,000 to support an important project entitled **West Chester University Moon Shot: I Want to STEM** (sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics)! The "I Want to STEM!" initiative is linked directly to West Chester University's high-profile **Moon Shot for Equity mission**, which is dedicated to closing equity gaps in student success and defying systemic barriers by 2030 so all WCU students can excel.

During spring 2022, a non-partisan panel of 14 community leaders in Pennsylvania's Sixth Congressional District reviewed 42 applications and recommended select projects to Representative Houlahan for funding through CPF. The West Chester University Moon Shot: I Want to STEM! project emerged as one of 15 offered to the House Committee on Appropriations for funding consideration. The House Committee on Appropriations approved all 15 projects submitted by Representative Houlahan's office and full funding was secured on December 23 following a vote in the House.

Led by WCU Associate Professor of Physics and Engineering Brandon J. Mitchell and designed by the University's College of the Sciences and Mathematics Center for STEM Inclusion and the Center for Nanomaterials, the I Want to STEM! initiative is a comprehensive outreach, research, and mentorship program that will guide students successfully from elementary school to a bachelor's degree in STEM. The program will establish a chain of mentorship between grade 3-12 students, undergraduates, and faculty/industry partners. The project, which has the potential to serve as a dynamic model for addressing achievement gaps, has been intentionally designed to expand K-12 STEM engagement for students in grades 3-12 who are of color and low income, as well as to improve college STEM retention by increasing financial assistance and building a sense of community for college students at WCU who are of color and low income.

[Learn More](#)

SCHOLARSHIP & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Women's Leadership Development Series and HERS

For the past thirty-eight years, **HERS** (Higher Education Resource Services) has provided professional development opportunities to more than 4,000 women in higher education administration to develop leadership and management skills. Every year, West Chester University sponsors a woman from our campus to attend this event. This year, we are sending three candidates: Rachel Komlos, Senior Associate Registrar for Student Services; Kerry Walton, Electronic Resources Librarian, Assistant Professor; and Maria Urrutia, Interim Director, Honors College.

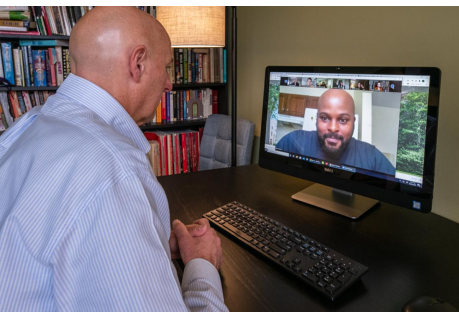
As a supplement to this opportunity, every other year, the Provost's Office and the President's Commission on the Status of Women invites faculty, staff and managers who identify as women to participate in a **WCU Women's Leadership Development Series**. This series, which shares lessons learned from the HERS Conference with a broader group of WCU women, includes a kick-off event, followed by three workshops designed to support and inspire faculty, staff and managers at WCU to take their leadership to the next level.

For the past two cohorts, Dr. Cheryl Neale-McFall, Interim Associate Provost for Research and Creative Activities, has led this initiative, with the support of dynamic women leadership across WCU's campus. Women leaders and experts across divisions were tapped to work together to facilitate the selected workshops, forming the **2022-23 Women's Leadership Team**. The leadership team specifically and intentionally chose workshop topics based on current issues and best practices regarding women in leadership.

Topics for this year's workshop include:

- **Mental Health, Burnout, and Self-care** (Workshop #1 team members: Dr. Judy Bijoux-Leist – Counseling and Psychological Services; Dr. Karen Dickinson- Counselor Education; Dr. Emily Duckett- Sports Medicine; Dr. Stevie Grassetti – Psychology);
- **Anti-Racist Leadership** (Workshop #2 team members: Dr. Sendy Alcidonis – Center for Women and Gender Equity; Dr. Katie Solic – Literacy; Dr. Tracey Robinson – Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer; Dr. Julie Tennille – Graduate Social Work) and
- **Exploring your Next Steps: Networking and Beyond** (Workshop #3 team members: Dr. Lisa Calvano – Dean, The Graduate School; Dr. Jackie Hodes – Educational Leadership/Higher Education Administration; Dr. Radha Pyati – Dean, College of Sciences and Mathematics; Dr. Chiwo Tinago – Health).

For more information about the Women's Development Leadership Forum, contact **Cheryl Neale-McFall**.



Faculty Mentoring Program Celebrates 15th Anniversary

This year, WCU's **Faculty Mentoring Program** celebrates its 15th anniversary. Established in 2008, the program recognizes the critical role mentoring plays in both faculty retention and student success. WCU's program is open to all part-time and full-time teaching and non-teaching faculty. Led by an elected committee of 16 members and two co-chairs, the Faculty Mentoring Committee (FMC)'s mission is to foster mentoring partnerships among faculty to enhance lifelong professional learning in teaching, scholarship and service.

The Committee oversees three programs that run throughout the academic year:

- **New Faculty Orientation:** Each year new faculty members are paired one-to-one with faculty mentors who typically meet with them monthly and touch base on a variety of topics suggested by the committee.
- **Adjunct Professor Mentoring:** WCU stands out when it comes to the support it offers adjunct faculty which includes monthly mentoring sessions and other supports and benefits to help acclimate them to WCU and its culture.
- **Associate Professor to Full Professor Mentoring:** WCU pairs associate professors interested in becoming full professor one-on-one mentoring as well as events and panel discussions designed to support them in their professional journey.

The importance of faculty mentoring is recognized and supported at the highest levels at WCU. "I encourage all faculty, whether you are new to the institution or an associate looking to become a full professor, or an adjunct looking to acclimate to the culture and community of WCU, to identify mentors throughout your career," says Dr. Jeff Osgood, interim provost and senior vice president. For the good of the institution and its commitment to student success, "it is critically important to connect new faculty with master teachers across the campus. WCU is fortunate to have many excellent faculty members experienced with WCU's teacher-scholar model. Those who understand how to integrate the three core responsibilities of teaching, research and service into a holistic approach to teaching will be most successful."

To sign up to be a mentor or a mentee, contact tlac@wcupa.edu or one of the two chairs of the Faculty Mentoring Program, Michelle Kensey (mkensey@wcupa.edu) or Michelle Blake (mblake@wcupa.edu).

FEATURED FACULTY

WCU welcomes new Associate Provost for Learning and Teaching Innovation

Hlezphi (Naomie) Nyanungo recently joined WCU as the inaugural Associate Provost for Learning and Teaching Innovation (APLTI). As the APLTI, Naomie will work collaboratively with faculty, students, and staff to advance

and champion evidence-based approaches for effective teaching and learning success. She oversees the **Office of Digital Learning and Innovation (ODLI)** and the **Teaching, Learning and Assessment Center (TLAC)** as she leads the development of a coordinated infrastructure to support learning and teaching innovation at WCU. A central aspect of this role is to contribute to WCU's efforts to promote equitable learning experiences and outcomes and cultivate learning environments that foster a sense of belonging for all students. Promoting teaching excellence is also a key aspect and is supported by the **Faculty Mentoring Program** which also falls under TLAC and Naomi's leadership as well.



Prior to coming to West Chester University, Naomi was the Director of Educational Technology in the Center for the Advancement of Teaching at Temple University where she was responsible for leading the advancement of technology-rich teaching and learning experiences in all modalities (face to face, hybrid, online) to support student success. Naomi received her Ph.D. in Adult Education from the Pennsylvania State University and holds a Master's Degree in Business Administration and a Bachelor's Degree in Organizational Communication and International Business from North Central College in Illinois.

RESOURCE CORNER

AI in Higher Education: Strategies for Teaching & Assessment

The Office of Digital Learning & Innovation (ODLI) and the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Center (TLAC) will host two informational sessions on artificial intelligence in higher education, specifically the use of **ChatGPT**, a chatbot powered by a large language model trained by OpenAI that is able to understand and generate human-like text in response to prompts and questions. With AI tools currently surging in popularity, ODLI and TLAC will host a discussion exploring the capabilities of these tools and their potential uses in the classroom.

There will be two offerings of this discussion, both held via Zoom:

- **Tuesday, February 14 at 2:00pm**
- **Wednesday, February 15 at 11:00am**

To register for one of these sessions, please click on the link below. If you have any questions, please contact distanceed@wcupa.edu.

[Click to Register](#)



Want to learn more about Navigate?

Visit our [webpage](#). You'll find an overview, information about **Add/Drop Attendance How-to**, and our [training](#)

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site.

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.

SSET: Student Success and Engagement Team

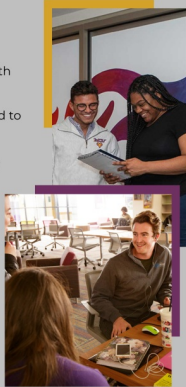
Relaunching Spring 2023

-> Monitors Navigate cases to foster student engagement with support services.

-> SSET intervention is designed to ensure more Navigate case outcomes involve connecting students with the support they need.



Scan above or click below for more info
WCU SSET



Relaunch of Student Success & Engagement Team (SSET)

The Student Success and Engagement Team (SSET) is charged with supporting students academic well-being, academic engagement, and student belonging. The SSET aims to encourage a help-seeking culture among students to develop resilience, support achievement, and self-advocacy among students and helps develop and execute support plans for students. Faculty and staff will utilize the same form used to report to **CARE Team**.

For more information, visit our **webpage**.

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.

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