



## **Cullowhee Community Garden: the seeds of charity**

**Catamount football** . . . . . *Page 12*  
**A place at the table for everyone** . . . . . *Page 20*

## By Marrah Ste. Marie



Kale and tomatoes. Photo by Marrah Ste. Marie.

Hidden between a wall of trees and Cullowhee Creek is the serene Cullowhee Community Garden.

The Cullowhee Community Garden houses gardening plots for adoption and walking paths for anyone to wander at any time. Adopters only have two rules to follow for their plots: everything grown must be organic and half of what is harvested must be donated.

The latter rule is what makes the garden vital to the Jackson County community. Food insecurity is a problem that heavily affects Jackson County every year. According to the Jackson County Community Health Assessment, in 2021, one-quarter of families did not know where their next meal would come from.

Through organizations like Community

Table and United Christian Ministry, the Cullowhee Community Garden has donated 676 pounds of organic food in 2023 so far, over 300 pounds of that food being donated in August alone.

The garden is managed by David Claxon, the former head of WCU's Health, PE and Recreation Department. Claxon is proud of the contribution the garden makes to the local community.

"If you wait until you can solve the whole problem, you're never going to do anything. But if you do what you can, and enough people do that, then you can solve the problem," Claxon said.

The garden is also dedicated to improving environmental health. No gasoline-powered tools are allowed. All electricity used to charge equipment and run irrigation is powered by solar batteries.



David Claxon, garden manager. Photo by Marrah Ste. Marie.

Food scraps are used to create compost piles, lowering the amount of food waste in landfills and promoting plant growth in the garden.



Compost pile at entrance. Photo by Marrah Ste. Marie.

To help with pollination, milkweeds are allowed to grow (if they don't obstruct the pathways) to provide food for monarch butterflies.

As the community relies on the garden, the garden also relies on the community. WCU's Facilities Management often brings leaves that are vacuumed off campus to donate to the garden.

The solar-powered batteries used to run electricity in the garden were provided by the engineering department of WCU, and the hoses, used to run water from the creeks to the tanks, were provided by the Jackson County Volunteer Fire Department.



"Even the weeds are pretty in Cullowhee [Community] Garden" - David Claxon. Photo by Marrah Ste. Marie.

The garden is also dependent on volunteers. Students are highly encouraged to volunteer their time at the garden on Wednesdays between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. or Saturdays between 8 a.m. and 12 p.m. with various activities including weeding, clearing trails, painting signs, and continuing previous projects. Those who want to contribute but can't volunteer are encouraged to bring their food scraps to the compost pile.

Volunteers are provided tools and encouraged to work at their own pace. Watching volunteers grow their current friendships and foster new ones with other people who have come out to help is one of Claxon's favorite parts of the garden.

Claxon also encourages all volunteers, when onsite, to participate in 15 minutes of shinrin-yoku or "forest bathing." Volunteers are told to find somewhere in the garden or near the creek and instructed to sit quietly for 15 minutes, focusing on the way the Earth interacts with their five senses. According to Claxon, it contributes greatly to mental health.

In the past 11 years, the garden has evolved by expanding to fit more plots and fruit trees.

Claxon's future goals for the garden involve all plots being adopted and a waitlist for future plots, strengthening the bond between current adopters through events like potlucks and by incorporating more

volunteers and interns.

Madeline Gruhn, an English major at WCU, is the current intern at the garden. She began August 28 and has enjoyed her time there.

For Gruhn the garden has become a place to take a break from her busy schedule. "It's very serene ... it's nice to come here to a quiet space and not be bothered. And if you're frustrated you just pull weeds, it's great."

Gruhn looks forward to developing a social media presence for the garden for students to follow. The garden can be found on Facebook and Instagram @CullowheeCommunityGarden.

If you are interested in adopting a plot you can email [gardenmanager@jacksonnc.org](mailto:gardenmanager@jacksonnc.org) and request an application and rule sheet for plot adoption.

If you are interested in volunteering, fill out the Google form on the garden's Engage page.



Cullowhee Creek. Photo by Marrah Ste. Marie.

# Live music to add excitement to Disney Pixar's "Coco"

By Cora Haste



CREDIT: AMP Worldwide.

The Bardo Arts Center stage will come to life on Monday, October 23 at 7:30 for a full screening of "Coco" in Spanish accompanied by a 20-piece Latin ensemble. There will be an English screening October 24 at 7:30.

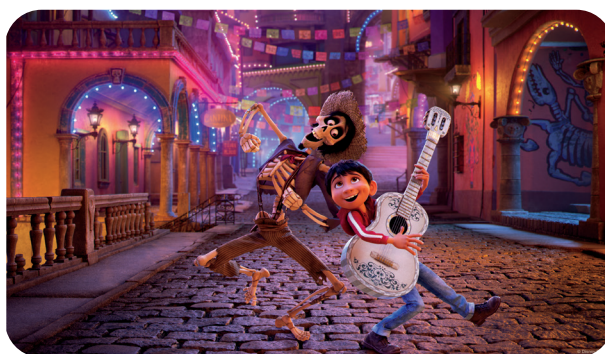
The BAC welcomes all ages to an immersive journey through Disney Pixar's hit film "Coco". The audience will be transported through the colorful Land of the Dead with a live performance of the film's score by Orquesta Folclórica Nacional de México.

The film tells the story of Miguel and his family's complex relationship with

music. Since its release in 2017 "Coco" has touched audiences young and old with dazzling animations and music by award winning composer Michael Giacchino.

Orquesta Folclórica Nacional de México uses a wide variety of instruments to combine genres and styles of Mexican folk music. Their distinctive sound tells a story of the rich culture and history of Mexico.

"We're always seeking to bring in high quality, unique arts experiences from local, national, and international artists," BAC Executive Director Denise Drury Homewood said. "Coco" Live-to-Film was an opportunity to do just this. "When we heard Coco-Live-to-Film concert was touring North America, we jumped at the chance to host it here at WCU particularly because of the Orquesta Folclórica



CREDIT: AMP Worldwide and Disney.



CREDIT: AMP Worldwide and Disney.

Nacional de México. They will transmit the energy and passion of Mexican culture and bring the film to life through their performance," Drury Homewood said.

"Coco" Live-to-Film is conducted by emerging conductor and composer Esin Aydingoz. Aydingoz works in genres ranging from music for animation to documentary scores. Her cello arrangement "Paint It Black" for Tim Burton's Netflix series "Wednesday" charted at No. 1 on Billboard Classical Charts.

The event is open to all, and tickets can be purchased at [arts.wcu.edu/tickets](https://arts.wcu.edu/tickets). The box office is open for in-person sales Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tickets are also available for purchase by calling the box office at 828.227.ARTS (2787).

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# WCU announces hall of fame inductees Ayers, Johnson & Williamson

By Liam Bridgeman



Gary Ayers, also known as the "Voice of the Catamounts" to be inducted into the athletics hall of fame after nearly 40 years of broadcasts. Photo by WCU Athletics.

Catamount Athletics announced the newest members to be conducted into the Western Carolina Athletics Hall of Fame. The 34th class of inductees are Gary Ayers, Brenda Johnson Hamilton and Danny Williamson.

The class will be officially introduced into the hall on Nov. 11 at WCU's Athletics Hall of Fame weekend. The ceremony will begin at 9 a.m. The location has not yet been announced.

The purpose of the hall of fame is "to recognize and honor those persons whose outstanding contributions have enriched

the athletic programs of Western Carolina University, and to provide an enduring memorial and preserve for posterity the memories of those persons whose endeavors brought distinction to the University."

## Gary Ayers

Ayers, commonly referred to as the "voice of Catamount football and basketball" has been providing play-by-play audio broadcasting through the Catamount Sports Network since 1985.

Following the Catamounts game versus the Arkansas Razorbacks, Ayers has been broadcasting for 37 of the last 38 seasons providing color commentary for the football team and the men's basketball team. Ayers recently added women's basketball to his resume.

Ayers, a Swain County native, began his radio career in 1975 at WBHN in Bryson City. He worked part time as a disc jockey until a job opening paved the way for Ayers to call live games.

In the 1980s, Ayers was convinced to work as the broadcaster for both Catamount football and basketball by WCU Hall of Famers Bob Waters, the all-time winningest head football coach and Steve White, former sports information director.

Ayers has broadcast over 1,077 men's and

women's basketball games, 422 football games, and 37 baseball, softball, and volleyball games across the last 38 years. Combined, Ayers has been a part of 1,536 games either broadcasting or on the public address system.



Johnson, the first African American women's basketball player at WCU, is also among the first female student-athletes of color. Photo by WCU Athletics.

## Brenda Johnson Hamilton

Johnson, originally from Iron Station, N.C., began her career at Western in 1974 where she became the first African American women's basketball player in

WCU's history. Beyond that feat, Johnson would go on to be of the most productive women's basketball players to ever don the purple and gold.

During her time at WCU, Johnson was a two-time All-State selection in the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) and was named to the US Collegiate Women's All-Star team in 1975.

She finished her collegiate career with 1,343 points scored, currently ninth in the Catamount women's basketball record books. Johnson is also the only WCU player to surpass 1,000 rebounds in a career. In the 1976-1977 season, Johnson collected 323 rebounds, averaging 14.7 rebounds per game.



Williamson coached over 700 student-athletes to All-SoCon accolades leading his way to a very successful career at WCU. Photo by WCU Athletics.

Johnson will join two teammates in the WCU Athletics Hall of Fame; Jayne Arledge, the program's all-time leading scorer, and Judy Stroud who returned to WCU as a coach in the 1980s.

### **Danny Williamson**

WCU's Track and Field program has boasted a winning culture for more than 20 years thanks to the efforts of former head coach Danny Williamson. Williamson, a Jackson County native, was hired following his graduation from WCU in 1987 as a football staffer. Soon after, Williamson moved from the football field to the track.

During his time leading both the men's and women's teams at WCU, the track and field program won 32 Southern Conference (SoCon) titles with Williamson himself earning 39 SoCon Coach of the Year honors, the second-most all-time in conference history. Williamson was also the recipient of the NCAA Division I Indoor and Outdoor Southeast Region Coach of the Year award in 2006. Additionally, 19 student athletes under Williamson were named SoCon Athletes of the Year.

Williamson retired from WCU in 2016, later returning to coaching at Cherokee High School and then back to collegiate athletics at Lenoir-Rhyne and UNC Asheville. In his only season coaching in Asheville, the team set 16 school records during the indoor season and the men's team won its first-ever team-scored event in program history.

Including Ayers, Johnson and Williamson, the WCU Athletics Hall of Fame has enshrined 133 individuals, six athletic teams, 11 Patron Award recipients recognized for career achievements since its creation.

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# WCU forgotten: Story behind the Moore building

By Austin Ross

Originally published in The Western Carolina Journalist

Western Carolina University is full of architecture both new and old. Among some of the historical buildings that are still in use are the Breeze Gymnasium, McKee, Albright-Benton, and the University Auditorium. However, the grandfather of historical buildings still standing on campus today is the Moore building. Unfortunately, Moore has sat silent for years and few know its history, where it is, or even what it is. It's time for a bit of campus history and an update on the historical site.

According to an article that showcases historical architecture of the campus, the Moore building was built in 1924 and is deemed as the oldest building on the grounds. Its neighbor, the Joyner building, was destroyed by fire in 1981. Little has changed today since Joyner burned, as shown below in a before photo provided by the Southern Appalachian Digital Collections, and an after photo.



CREDIT: Southern Appalachian Digital Collections.



Photo by Austin Ross.

Moore, which first began as a women's dormitory, was dedicated on May, 30, 1924, to Walter E. Moore, who was a Board of Trustees member.

"Moore is a three-story fireproof brick building with ninety rooms, completely furnished, to take care of 180 girls,"



CREDIT: Southern Appalachian Digital Collections.

Madison stated in a 1924 edition of the Cullowhee Yodel, a student-based paper. The paper reported that the building was

equipped with a family-style cafeteria, reading rooms and a reception hall. The building also hosted monthly public meetings in which women would receive lessons in being proper hosts for tea parties. Campus dining also found its way to the Moore building in 1930, and lasted for nearly 30 years until the current Brown Dining Hall was opened in 1957. According to a 2014 article published in the Western Carolina Journalist, Moore held an infirmary in its basement until the completion of Graham Hospital in 1939 and also harbored a morgue. This has sparked eerie stories throughout the year that suggest Moore is haunted.



Nature has begun to slowly take over, making for an eerie sight that seems to pay homage to haunted tales. Photo by Austin Ross.

## Ghostly History

There are many stories that surround Moore suggesting the building has a ghost or two. According to a website



that promotes haunted attractions in North Carolina, the Moore building has a grim legend to its past. There is much speculation, but the story suggests that two female roommates in the 1960s chose to stay in the dorm during break. One of the girls left the room to shower but was gone for an unusually long time. When the other girl went to investigate, she heard scratches and screams from the hallway. A repairman then walked by the dorm's window and yelled up to the room that everything was okay, and for the girl to stay in her room. She remained and soon found out the other girl had been murdered, perhaps by the repairman.

It is said that the spirit of the murdered girl remained in Moore and could often be heard screaming and crying. The repairman was allegedly arrested and served time in a mental ward. Years later, a WCU student who worked for the campus radio station experienced eerie happenings in the building. One night when the station signal went out, the student headed to the Moore basement to reset the equipment located on the ground floor. He claims that the basement



Moore as seen from the west side of the building. Photo by Austin Ross.

door shut behind him and also mentions he saw someone walk by a classroom door on the second floor when no one else was supposed to be in the building. Whether these stories are fact or fiction, is your choice to decide. Who doesn't love a good ghost story?



Kudzu has begun to replace brick at Moore's main entrance. Photo by Austin Ross.

Other tales that surround Moore are rather lighthearted and are better grounded. According to the WCU Mountain Heritage Center, a Little Caesar statue once stood in front of Moore on the lawn and was donated by a class in the 1930s. Apparently, the statue was stolen by WCU's rivals, the Appalachian State Teachers College, and was returned later, having been heavily vandalized.

### So, what's the scoop on Moore today?

The building hosted small meetings in the early 2000s and eventually was closed in 2012. In January last year, Jenkins Peer architects proposed a renovation of the building and highlighted some of the outstanding issues with the structure.

The report stated: "In the fall of 2021, WCU engaged Terracon to provide an updated Hazardous Materials surveys. The surveys found presence of the following items in various amounts: CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons) and PCBs

(polychlorinated biphenyls) in switches and light fixtures, lead paint in various amounts throughout the building, some small areas of mold growth in specific locations, and asbestos containing materials mostly in floor tile mastics and flashings."



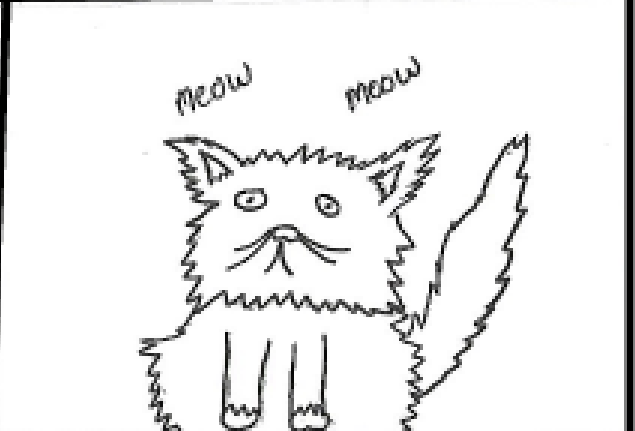
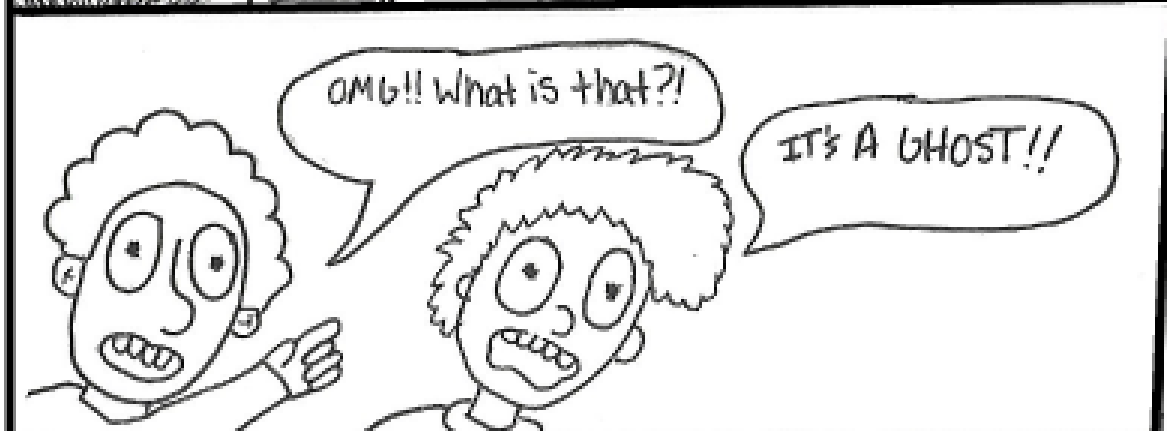
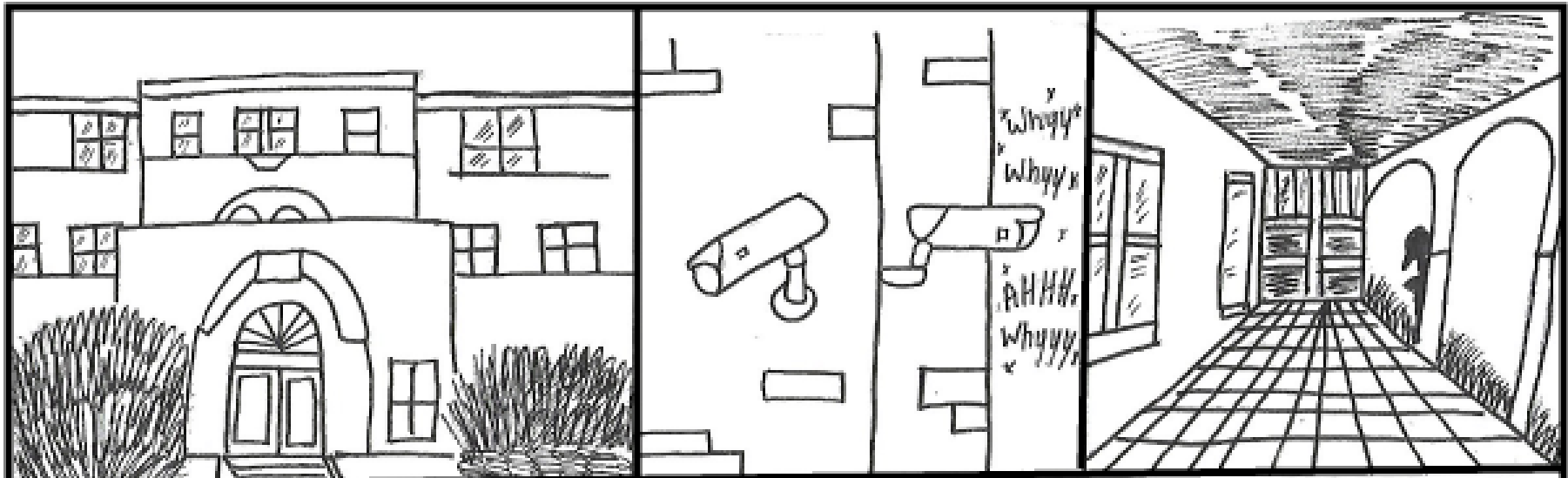
Moore is littered with security cameras to keep trespassers from illegally entering the building. Photo by Austin Ross.

Since the building's closing, students often attempt to explore the interior of Moore. This is not just illegally trespassing on university property, but also endangers the health of those who force entry. Kaitlyn Pindur, a WCU Police Officer, described what kind of issues the force deals with regarding Moore.

"We get calls about students trespassing in Moore a good bit and actually had a break-in last week. The students said they were ghost hunting," Pindur said.

"We encourage students not to trespass because you're not always going to get let go with a warning. We can and will criminally trespass anyone who breaks in."

Until renovations hopefully come to fruition, Moore remains silent, abandoned, mysterious, and awaiting its future.



# THE GIRL AT MOORE

London Farmer

# Stage and Screen ushers in Halloween season at WCU

By Marrah Ste. Marie



The School of Stage and Screen will be presenting “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”, the first play of the semester, at 7:30 p.m. October 5-7 and 3 p.m. on October 8.

The stage crew has been rehearsing and preparing since June with the cast joining rehearsals since August 29.

Director Colin Wasmund says the play will be just right for the approaching Halloween season and is suitable for all ages.

The cast is very excited about the audience reactions to the play. “I think it’s going to

be a lot different than what people coming in expect,” said Kate Mullis, a member of the ensemble.

“It’s a funny, ridiculous fever dream,” said Fisher Meadows, the sound designer.

The play has allowed lots of room for cast members to take different choices and interpretations of their roles. “It’s a very safe space for people to be silly make choices and fall on their face,” said Mullis.

Wasmund is very confident about the play’s cast for this production as well as after graduation. “I feel lucky. They’re an

amazing group and they’re all going to thrive when they leave,” said Wasmund.

The cast of the play is mostly seniors making this their last fall semester play at WCU.

Grace Hayes, who is playing Katrina Van Tassel, is incredibly proud of the play. “If this was the last thing we got to do, I’d be happy with it,” said Hayes, “It’s a really good cast and everyone works really well together. We’re just playing around and it’s so fun.”

The School of Stage and Screen is also looking forward to their production of “Ride the Cyclone” and “The Outsiders” later this semester. They are also preparing for their Five-Minute Play festival.

Tickets for Sleepy Hollow are available at [wcuarts.universitytickets.com](http://wcuarts.universitytickets.com), the Bardo Arts Center box office, or at the door the day of the show in the University Auditorium between McKee and Stillwell.



# Catamounts return to the gridiron in search of a championship

By Mackenzie Atkinson



Catamount offense breaks from huddle facing off against the Arkansas Razorbacks. Photo by Elijah Lautzenheiser.

The Catamount football team is aiming high this season with hopes that the grueling days in the Cullowhee heat will lead to a championship season.

At halftime of the spring scrimmage on April 15, Head Coach Kerwin Bell set a “championship or bust” standard for the season. For the rest of the season, Catamount fans will wait to see if Bell’s sentiment reigns true.

## Eastern Kentucky Colonels (Sept. 16)

So far this season, the Catamounts are

2-1 coming off a narrow victory against Eastern Kentucky. While the Colonels have a measly 0-3 record, their previous two losses came against FBS schools Cincinnati and Kentucky.

In the game, QB Cole Gonzales and RB Desmond Reid continued to impress fans and drive the offense. The duo combined for all four of WCU’s touchdowns, propelling the Catamount victory 27-24.

The final drive by the Catamounts solidified their victory. According to ESPN, the Catamounts only had a 44% chance of

winning with less than two minutes left in the game.

## Samford Bulldogs (Sept. 9)

On Saturday, Sept. 9 the Catamounts hosted the Samford Bulldogs for “White out Whitmire”, the first home game of the year.

Going into the game, the Bulldogs were coming off one of their best years in school history after winning the SoCon and losing in the quarterfinals to North Dakota State.

After a nearly 5-hour lightning delay, the Catamounts scored 30 unanswered points to finish the game with a victory, 30-7.

The Catamounts returned their offensive dominance from a season ago posting 546 yards during the game while the defense showed signs of improvement, especially considering the high-powered Samford offense that had 560 yards of offense just one week ago. The defense held the Bulldogs to just 361 total yards.

In controversial news, following the game, the FCS coaches poll left the Catamounts with only 5 votes, keeping them outside of the top 25 ranking. On the other hand, Samford dropped from the no. 7 team to the no. 14 team in the poll.

## Arkansas Razorbacks (Sept. 2)



Samaurie Dukes looks downfield for a hole on a kick return. Photo by Elijah Lautzenheiser.

WCU started the 2023 season traveling to Little Rock, Arkansas to face off against the Razorbacks. The Cats quickly fell into a deficit they couldn't come back from. They lost 56-13.

"We just didn't give it our best shot, you know?" Bell said. "I thought we played very hard and violent like we wanted to do. We really played hard and just wanted to have a chance to hold up against those guys."

Following WCU's first drive that resulted in a three and out, Arkansas scored a 65-yard touchdown on their second play of the game. The Catamounts first three drives were three and outs. Their fourth drive ended in an interception.

In all, the Catamounts lost 5 turnovers to the Razorbacks.

On a positive note, WCU's run defense shined. Arkansas was only able to average 2.9 yards per carry. Raheim Sanders, widely viewed as a top-five running back in the country, gained only 42 yards on the ground on 15 carries.

If WCU's defense can continue to stop the run against the opposition, it could spell

wins down the road.

### Last season and the road ahead

Last season the Catamounts boasted a winning record of 6-5 beating Charleston Southern, Presbyterian, VMI, Wofford, ETSU and Chattanooga. The team is looking for redemption against Samford, Mercer, Furman and The Citadel.

At the end of the season, WCU finished 5th in the SoCon rankings following Samford, Furman, Chattanooga and Mercer – all of which, besides Chattanooga, beat the Catamounts.

Head Coach Kerwin Bell sees improvements from last season.

"I believe we are better on defense than last year," Bell said. "[We] have more depth through the team going into this season." Last season, WCU's offense stole the show, earning 5,339 yards, 485.4 per game – 6th in the FCS. Defensively, the Catamounts finished 71st in the FCS.

In 2022, the Catamounts scored an average of 32 points per game. Peculiarly, teams that faced the Catamounts also averaged 32 points, giving WCU a zero-point differential on the season.

With a big year ahead, WCU Athletic Director Alex Gary is thrilled about the future of the football program.

"People are excited about the direction of our program," Gary said. "I think that continual progression from four wins in year one, six wins in year two and hopefully more than six wins in year three it's created excitement."

Record-breaking season-ticket sales for the second year in a row show fans' excitement for the 2023 season, leading to the largest revenue in WCU Athletics history.

The Catamounts will look to extend their win streak at Charleston Southern at home. The game is set for 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 23.



RB Desmond Reid takes the handoff from QB Cole Gonzales to cap off a spectacular game. Reid finished the game with 170 yards on 27 carries. Photo by Elijah Lautzenheiser.

# 2023 CATAMOUNT FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

at ARKANSAS LITTLE ROCK, AR	SEPT. 2 SOCON	SAMFORD CULLOWHEE	SEPT. 9 SOCON	at EASTERN KENTUCKY RICHMOND, KY	SEPT. 16 SOCON	CHARLESTON SOUTHERN CULLOWHEE (FAMILY WEEKEND)	SEPT. 23 SOCON
at THE CITADEL CHARLESTON, SC	SEPT. 30 SOCON	at CHATTANOOGA CHATTANOOGA, TN	OCT. 7 SOCON	FURMAN CULLOWHEE	OCT. 21 SOCON	MERCER CULLOWHEE (HOMECOMING)	OCT. 28 SOCON
at WOFFORD SPARTANBURG, SC	NOV. 4 SOCON	ETSU CULLOWHEE (BLUE RIDGE BORDER BATTLE)	NOV. 11 SOCON	at VMI LEXINGTON, VA	NOV. 18 SOCON	NCAA FCS PLAYOFFS FIRST ROUND	NOV. 25 SOCON

HOME
  AWAY

THIS IS CATAMOUNT COUNTRY

Credit: Catamount Athletics.

## Letter Editor

from the

By Liam Bridgeman

Happy fall semester from all of us at The Western Carolinian! We hope you had a relaxing summer, and you're ready for the year ahead!

This year, the campus theme is community and belonging. This is something we live by at The Western Carolinian. Throughout the year, we will engage with our campus and wider communities by ensuring that

they are being treated properly. We are **committed** to supporting our community by looking out for **you**, your wellbeing and your pocket. Last year we were able to use our scope to create change, but we cannot continue that tradition without your help!

To help us with this commitment, we need you. If you have a story that needs to be told or you have nowhere else to turn, call us. We are here to help. Our tipline is 828-227-2694.

Outside of maintaining that commitment, we are also devoted to improving our community outreach by volunteering with different organizations on and off

campus, and we hope you do the same. There is nothing that says "community and belonging" like providing your time for someone in need.

We hope to be a beacon for those in need this year and provide everyone with a safe and welcoming community for all. Everyone in this **community belongs**.

To keep up with happenings across campus and to keep up with what we are up to, follow our Instagram (@thewesterncarolinian) and Facebook.

As always, thank you for your continued support and thank you for reading!

# Press Release: 55th Annual North American Power Symposium to be held in Asheville

**ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA  
AUGUST 28, 2023**

The Western North Carolina Section of the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers) is a Gold Sponsor for the 55th Annual North American Power Symposium (NAPS) this fall. Western Carolina University (WCU) is hosting the event October 15-17, 2023, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Asheville-Biltmore.

The theme of the 55th North American Power Symposium is “Broadening Participation in Sustainable Power Engineering, Technology, and Education,” with technical sessions in the following areas: Power System Operation and Planning Power System Economics Analysis of Distribution Systems and Distributed Energy Resources Renewable/Clean Energy Systems and Energy Storage Power Electronics and Applications Electric Machines and Drives Emerging Topics in Modern Power Systems Power Engineering Education.

About 300 are expected to attend the NAPS conference this year, during which approximately 200 papers will be presented. In addition to the traditional technical sessions, NAPS 2023 will focus on (i) increasing undergraduate student participation by creating a separate track for undergraduate research, (ii) increasing industry and faculty participation to provide feedback to the students, and (iii) hosting a networking event and mini-career fair. This year’s sponsors for the

event include Duke Energy, Eaton, IEEE Power & Energy Society, IEEE Western North Carolina Section, Aegis Power Systems, Inc., and TRC. In addition to these industry sponsors, the IEEE PES Power Engineering Education Committee (PEEC) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) are providing support for this conference.

Arlissa Vaughn, the Chair of the IEEE Western North Carolina Section and CEO of Aegis Power Systems, states, “It is exciting that this high-caliber event is being hosted for the first time in western North Carolina. Our region offers a host of renewable energy solutions with a network of hydro dams, nuclear power plants, solar systems, and some wind

turbines. Western North Carolina has much to offer participants and we welcome the insights to be learned from the technical exchanges on the important advances in energy for our society.”

NAPS is a student-centric technical conference in the power and energy systems field. Since its inception in 1969, NAPS has been bringing together students, faculty, and industrial partners from premier institutions and organizations involved in power engineering and research. The conference is held annually at a university in the United States or Canada.

Visit the official NAPS event site for more information and to register for the event.



# First Ascent: The perfect transition from home to WCU

By Marrah Ste. Marie



Photo by Emma Mynatt.

First Ascent is a six-day wilderness orientation program offered to incoming freshmen and transfer students one week before their move in at WCU.

Students are given two different options offered through the program: wilderness or adventure.

The wilderness option is a five-day backpacking trip with one day of rock climbing incorporated.

The adventure option is five days at a local

campground with different activities offered such as white-water rafting, rock climbing, summit hiking and canoeing.

First Ascent is designed to help new students ease any potential anxieties by becoming familiar with the area and creating a group of friends before classes begin.

For Jeremiah Haas, associate director of Basecamp Cullowhee, watching students interact with the community and build friendships with each other has been one of his favorite parts of the program.

Haas has worked with Basecamp Cullowhee and First Ascent for nine years. He says participants often remain close friends after the program and come to work for Basecamp Cullowhee.

This is true for Braeden Morrow, a freshman who participated in First Ascent's adventure program this summer. When asked about the friends he made through the program Morrow said, "We all connected really well. We had a really good group and they're definitely the friend group I hang out with now."

Morrow found out about the program through a friend from high school who was one year ahead of him. Morrow's friend assumed he would enjoy it because he enjoyed the outdoors and had been kayaking for 16 years.

After the program, Morrow was inspired to apply for a job with Basecamp Cullowhee.

Prior experience with outdoor activities like kayaking, climbing or hiking is not required to participate in First Ascent. Anyone can participate no matter their experience level.

For those interested in similar programs, Basecamp Cullowhee offers multiple outdoor trips and events throughout the year. To see a schedule of these events visit [myrec.wcu.edu](http://myrec.wcu.edu).

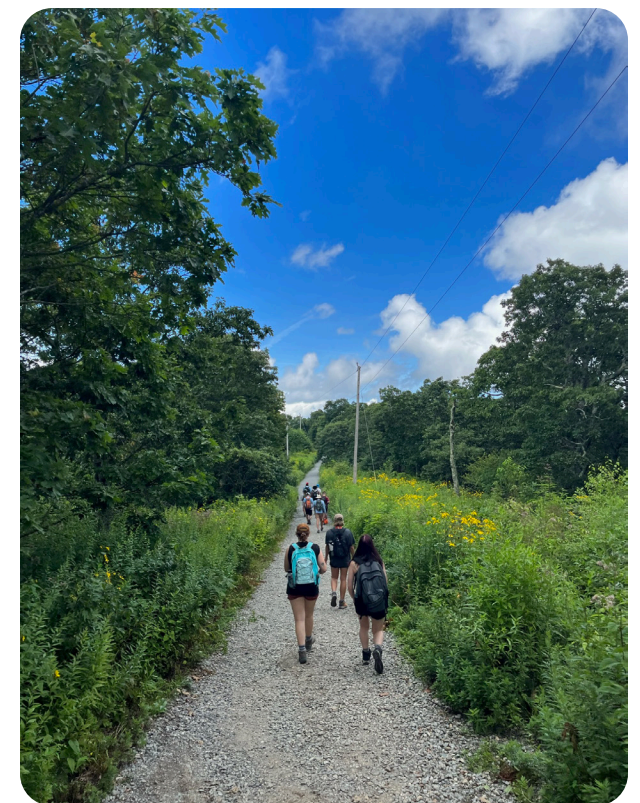


Photo by Emma Mynatt.



# September Word Search

F A V Z B S L R O G I E F L B Z F Q M D	<b>September</b>
I R C C L X U S V N T O E S G G P D L B	<b>Squirrel</b>
S J R V E W U N M A G G L L K C V P E T	<b>Hotdogs</b>
H N K N A Z A Y F G Z B K A Y T Y X V F	<b>Football</b>
I Z M L C A H P Y L H B C C S D Z V I K	<b>Sunflower</b>
N C N Q H Y Q N P C O D A L E A V E S P	<b>Leaves</b>
G J L M E W U Z I L S W T R T I N S Z T	<b>Tackle</b>
T F H A R L V G A T E A E Z B R P W A N	<b>Yellow</b>
G A O L S E J D J Y L S H R T E X J J U	<b>Barbecue</b>
O T Y O A S A Y H M G T B G O O C F L O	<b>Bleachers</b>
L S C L T B R F F M N V S G U R Q U H M	<b>Fishing</b>
C H E E R B O O H Y A T Y I C H L U E A	<b>Orange</b>
R I N F N Q A R O F J W E P H J E O Q T	<b>Kickoff</b>
T Z Y E V K B L D M O O L R D Y R R E A	<b>Apples</b>
Y H L L Y H S B L A B W L W O G R A B C	<b>Labor Day</b>
W O W N T W T L C C Y K O K W C I N Y D	<b>Classroom</b>
I C Z H V X K Z S L X O W Q N D U G N J	<b>Catamount</b>
E H O T D O G S Y T Y T Z T P V Q E G L	<b>Touchdown</b>
Z H A B Y M P S E P T E M B E R S I O C	<b>Cheer</b>
X P P W X G K I C K O F F U T Z L A Z L	<b>Bojangles</b>

# Athlete Spotlight



Richard McCollum

## What do you like most about football? How did your passion for football begin?

What I like most about football is the type of electric atmosphere it brings. I love the excitement, loud cheering, and the competitiveness that the sport brings. One thing I love the most is how it can bring a group of people together for an exciting weekend of football. Although I did not start playing football until my freshman year of high school, my passion for football started when I was 4 years old. I'm a place kicker here at WCU, but I had a lot of role models throughout the way. My dad, older cousin, and older brother were all kickers for their football teams. My older brother also kicked collegiately at Wingate University where I spent most of my weekends in high school watching his games. He was a great role model for me which led to me developing a passion for football.

## What makes football unique?

It is the ultimate team sport. One player can't win a football game for a program. It takes every single player on a team to bring success to a program. When every player plays for each other, works together, and all share a common goal, it is a great thing to see.

## What do you hope the Catamount football team accomplishes this year?

Our team all share one vision and one common goal, a championship. I hope to bring a championship to Cullowhee, as we all know it is long overdue. Our team is motivated, focused, and determined to bring a championship to Western Carolina University.

## What is next for you after WCU?

I don't really think about my plans after WCU often. Right now, I just want to enjoy this last season with my teammates and soak in every moment leading towards winning a championship.

## What is the Whee Sign ASL club?

"Whee Sign ASL" is an American Sign Language Club that helps spread awareness about Deaf culture both on and off campus! We do this by having ASL lessons every week as well as watching a documentary titled, "Through Deaf Eyes" by Lawrence Hott and Diane Garey. This documentary takes you through a journey of Deaf History and Culture and how ASL came to be. It also shines a light on the experiences of deaf people growing up in the United States. We pride ourselves in being a safe space for anyone who is interested in learning ASL! To ensure all information that we are giving out is correct we run it all by our former President Chloe DeRosa who is deaf and fluent in ASL.

## What do members of the Whee Sign ASL club do?

Members of the club will attend weekly meetings (This semester they are Tuesdays at 7pm in the Raleigh Room) where they will learn signs that are specific to a theme that week. Also, members will interact with Deaf Culture through different events and activities.

## How did you get interested in Whee Sign?

I have always been interested in learning ASL! I saw the ASL table at Valley Balleyhoo my freshman year and took the opportunity to follow that passion. From

there I attended meetings and interacted with the club. I have now been a part of this club for three years now and worked my way up to the President position.

## How can someone get involved with Whee Sign?

To get involved with Whee Sign you can search us up on Engage under "Whee Sign ASL" and request to join! Also, you can come to the weekly meetings that are held in the UC.

## What events can we look forward to in the future?

In recent years we have attended Cullowhee Pride, ASL Nights with specific Greek life organizations, assisting with the Hayden Kristal (a deaf comedian), and more. This year we are currently working towards working with other clubs on campus to spread Major specific signs! One project that we do every year is a song interpretation to put together all the skills we have learned throughout the year! Last year we interpreted the song "Could Have Been Me" by the Struts.

## Do you need to be fluent in ASL before joining?

You do not have to be fluent to join our club. In fact, you don't need to have any experience at all with ASL! Our first steps are learning the alphabet and basic introduction signs.

# Club Spotlight



ASL Club

# Faculty Spotlight



Haylee Wilkie

## What is your job and how do you do it?

I am the Associate Director of the Writing and Learning Commons! I am in charge of all of the Writing Tutors and Writing Fellows. I help teach and train both undergraduate and graduate students on how to be the best writing tutors that they can be. I also claim to be a professional cat wrangler, because navigating 20+ student schedules feels a lot like wrangling cats!

## How did you find your way to Western?

Coming from Hendersonville, North Carolina, I wanted to be close enough to my hometown to visit often, but far enough away that I felt like I could spread my wings. I am so glad I chose to go to WCU, because now I'm a two-time grad, and working here has been a dream!

## What are your personal interests?

When I'm not snuggled up by my two cats (the great Theodore Roosevelt and Miss Muffin) or out walking the greenway with my husband, then I am totally engrossed in an awesome television show or an addictive book. Sometimes you might find me doom scrolling on Tiktok, but I try to keep that to a minimum!

## What is your favorite aspect of WCU?

with mine and in high school, I had a teacher who was just someone I looked up to and he gave me the confidence as a student as well as provided a class I enjoyed. He was a member of this organization, and I always told my mom who is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc that I would never go Greek. Fast forward and that very same teacher then became a mentor for me and then became a frat brother. I love my brothers and would do anything for them and vice versa because that's how deep our bond is.

## If you had any advice for incoming freshman, what would it be?

I would say get involved with anything whether it's a club on campus, Greek Life, Club Sports, Intramurals etc. The best advice I can give is to just don't be afraid to try new things and it is okay to come out of your comfort zone. Take advantage of the countless opportunities on campus. Lastly do not measure your success with someone else's. Everyone's way of measuring success is different, you do not have to do what someone else is doing to be "successful," you get to determine your own success and you stick to that; do not live your life for someone else. You only get one undergraduate college experience!

Having an undergraduate degree, a master's degree, adjunct teaching experience, and now this position at the WaLC, I can confidently state that the faculty and staff at WCU are beyond dedicated to helping students. I feel so lucky to learn from professionals who care deeply for students. After that -- I love the stellar view of the beautiful mountains.

## What advice do you have for students?

My biggest recommendation is to take up all of the resources offered at WCU. While this could be considered a shameless WaLC plug, (which everyone should go to at some point!), I really do believe that students set themselves up for success when they reach out and grab the help offered here. Whether it's going to the WaLC or receiving counseling from CAPS, WCU offers a lot of support. Don't hesitate to utilize it!

## Anything else you would like to be included?

I want to say that this spotlight feels especially cool since I was once the Co-Editor-in-Chief of the Western Carolinian! Way back in 2019, my co-editor, Nathaniel Evan's and I worked hard to continue the Western Carolinian legacy. I am so grateful that the newspaper staff is hard at work and that the Western Carolinian is thriving!

## How has your time as student body vice president, and now student body president had an impact on your life?

My time as Student Body Vice President and Student Body President has made a significant impact on my life. I have had the opportunity to really learn a lot about myself in a multitude of ways. You get so many opportunities to better help other students as well as the university. Starting at WCU, I was someone who was completely uninvolved. My first year, I went to class and then back to my dorm, so I say that to say that being a "public figure" or in a leadership was all new to me. I consider myself to be extremely introverted so both positions have helped me open up a bit more. I also think that by being in both positions it has given me a new perspective on life - I have put a focus on myself and realized that it is extremely important to take care of yourself!

## What Greek life are you a part of and how has your fraternity impacted you?

I am a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc the GREATEST fraternity known to man. Kappa Alpha Psi is a predominantly African American social fraternity founded in 1911 at Indiana University. I chose Kappa because their principles and morals aligned directly

# Student Spotlight



CJ Mitchell

# A place at the table for everyone

By Abigail Quinn

Originally published in The Western Carolina Journalist



Beulah Land poses for a picture in front of the Sylva Pride mural in downtown Sylva. Photo by Beulah Land.

Beulah Land (she/they), a local drag queen, artist and advocate for social change, begins her day like many of us. Her daily job is working as a barista in downtown Sylva. But when the day draws to a close, Land gets to a different type of work.

She begins our interview by explaining the importance of her drag name.

“My drag name is Beulah Land, and as an

environmental health science student, I really want to drum home the importance of taking care of the environment.”

She says taking care of the environment involves much more than picking up litter. It involves caring for the planet but also the people around us in our community.

“It involves picking up your trash from the side of the road. You may not think

of that as the environment but that is in your immediate vicinity and litter and climate change and vaping and access to healthcare resources, all of this is taken care of your environment and that’s going to take care of you,” Land said.

Land got her start in October 2017 when she performed at the drag show held on WCU’s campus. From there, they started performing in Asheville before attempting to create a sustainable drag scene in Sylva and Cullowhee. The shows created from this effort include events like Mad for Drag, What the Cat Dragged In, and the Sylva Belles which has been running for over 3 years.

Being raised in Western North Carolina has shaped Land greatly and set the values that she follows in life as well as a performer.

“My family has lived in Western North Carolina for about 300 years. I grew up 20 minutes north of Asheville just shy of the Tennessee border on a 50-acre farm. My mom is a high school teacher. My dad was a farmer, a caterer, a grant worker, an advocate, a community member; like my family did it all,” Land said.

From their humble origins, they grew a love for community service. “Some of my fondest memories include food service and catering meals and bringing people together... really making that community and that’s really what I’ve been trying to

do with Sylva Belles drag, Mad for Drag and all of our activities here from a queer perspective.”

Land reminisces of their early years dedicated to doing good in the community. “Growing up in a southern Missionary Baptist household, we took service work really seriously. On Christmas Day, we would open our presents the night before Christmas Eve but then we would spend all morning Christmas day delivering food to disadvantaged individuals and families that didn’t have a warm meal,” Land said.

In high school, Land faced struggles and due to that, was no longer welcomed in the church they grew up in. They came to WCU in 2017 and found the love and support that had been missing at church and within their community.

Their service work in the Sylva and Cullowhee communities is focused on uniting people and building a better world. Land is a community health leader with the Appalachian Access Project. They promote health resources for queer individuals, with a specific interest toward access to gender affirming care for transgender individuals, STI prevention and screening services.

Land is also involved with the Jackson County Food Council.

“Food has been a central tenant in my upbringing and so it only makes sense. I’m an environmental health student here at Western and so a part of my job could be one day being the health inspector at restaurants and stuff like that. So I’m working on the Jackson County food council as sort of like a coordinator so putting together meetings [and] managing the social media.” Land also works with



Beulah Land performs at Sylva Pride in the summer of 2022. Photo by Abigail Quinn.

Cornbread And Roses and is creating change in the community by promoting a safe space for all people regardless of how they identify.

Outside of her draw to service work and community building, Land also pulls inspiration from the song Crowded Table by The Highwomen.

“[It] very much sums up my sort of attitude. So the lyrics go: ‘I want a house with a crowded table in a place by the fire for everyone.’ A lot of times as queer people we often feel like we’re not invited, like we don’t have a place, like we’re on our own. By embracing everyone and learning from everyone, by extending an olive branch and by listening that’s where I really want our drag scene to move

forward,” Land said. “I would really like to work on promoting diversity equity and inclusion in all of my work. I really do firmly believe that there is a place at the table for everyone and everyone’s welcome. I’m trying to work on making everyone feel welcomed and controlling my environment so that everyone feels welcome.”

In light of recent legislation, gender affirming care for trans individuals is now illegal in the following states: Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, West Virginia. Though no bans have been passed yet in North Carolina, the Senate Bill 560 and Senate Bill 639, titled the “Medical Treatment

for Minor’s Act” limits access to gender-affirming care to minors. Neither bill mentions gender treatment for children born intersex, which is still allowed.

Land reflects on this and admits she may get a bit emotional when talking on this topic.



Beulah Land poses for a picture after the 2023 WCU drag show. Photo by Beulah Land.

“I’m a trans woman,” says Land. “I’ve been medically transitioning for a year and a few months. I grew up 6 minutes across the border from Tennessee, my family has all moved to Tennessee and my concern is am I going to get charged with a felony when I go visit family?”

They explained that in their opinion, this legislation is not about protecting children but a way to “blame a minority of people that act in a way that’s just different.”

“Real victims of this legislation are not really drag queens because most drag queens don’t want to have anything to do with children. I love doing Drag Queen Story Hour but I’m more the exception than the rule. This is attacking trans and

non-binary people and that’s who’s really going to see a lot of the violence and a lot of the discrimination out of this legislation.” She admits that times like this make her extremely nervous for the future.

With so much of her life dedicated to service work revolving around access to health care, they are particularly concerned for the trans youth. “Hormone replacement therapy saved my life, that’s what I always say. I feel much more in tune with my body because I listened to a doctor, and they got me the medication that I needed to stay alive and to live a happier healthier life. I can’t imagine going through this journey as a teen then being told that I no longer have access to that and having to go off of my medications and then my body engaging in ways that trigger my dysphoria all over again,” Land said.

Children in Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, Mississippi and many more are having to determine where they will go to receive medication and where they can access healthcare.

“For a party to be so adamant about freedom of speech, about ‘oh we’re freedom we want to make our own decisions,’ well you’re certainly not letting an entire group of people make their own decisions. Especially decisions that do not concern you,” Land said.

They wonder what is even being protected with these bans. “I think that’s what we really need to be asking ourselves. Who are we really protecting? Are we protecting children from seeing a big scary drag queen, are we protecting the sensibilities of an upper-class white cisgender heterosexual person? The legislation is a slap in the face. But this is not the first time that drag has been illegal.”

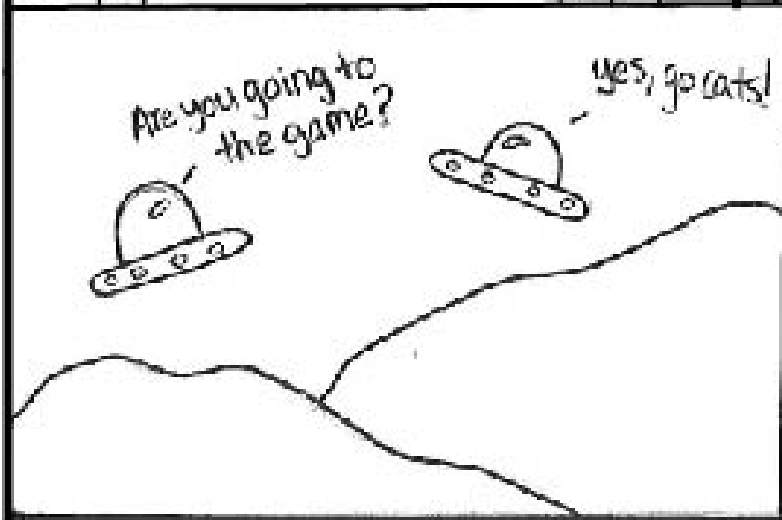
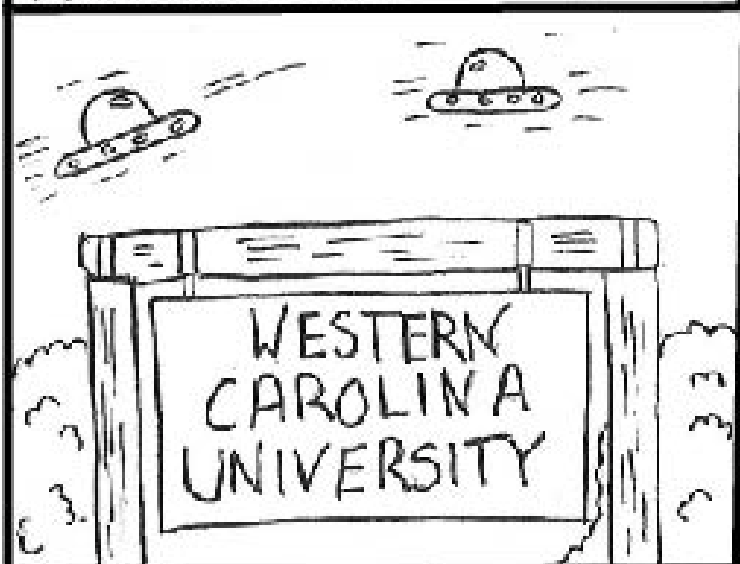
Despite the hardship, Land stays hopeful knowing that drag has prospered, despite prejudice, since the 1890s. “It’s not going to stop drag queens or trans people, but it will hurt and it’s going to be another set of challenges that we must overcome as a community.”



Beulah Land poses for a picture while performing at 2022 Sylva Pride. Photo by Abigail Quinn.

# WHEE BACK

By Landon Farmer



# How to: Career fairs

By Liam Bridgeman

Career fairs can be overwhelming for first-time attendees, but there are steps to take to not only become comfortable, but also gain the most out of the experience.

Dr. Theresa Cruz Paul, director of the Center of Career and Professional Development (CCPD), along with her team, organize six different career fairs for WCU students throughout the year.

Career fairs are events that allow employers and recruiters to meet with potential employees (students) and where job seekers receive more information about potential job postings.

Career fairs at WCU typically take place in the Ramsey center, where hundreds of employers fill the arena.

At the beginning of every year, the CCPD hosts a part-time employment fair for students to search for jobs they can work during the upcoming year.

**CAREER FAIR**  **PLUS**  
 PLUS full-time  
 PLUS part-time  
 PLUS internships  
 PLUS volunteer  
 PLUS grad schools



**SEPTEMBER 26**  
 11-2PM | RAMSEY CENTER  
 FIND YOUR PASSIONS!

The first career fair of the fall semester will take place Sept. 26. The Career Fair



CREDIT: WCU Photography Services.

Plus will host 100 to 130 employers in the Ramsey Center from across the nation and across numerous industries. The CCPD will also host a Construction Industries Fair Oct. 3 in the Ramsey Center. This fair will only feature construction companies but is open to all majors, as many companies need more than just construction management majors.

Career Fair Plus will return to the Ramsey Center Feb 13. The CCPD will also host an education fair in March – the date and time for this fair are not yet determined. To end the year, the Summer Jobs and

Internships Fest will take place April 19 at the Catafount.

Before attending a career fair, the first step is getting materials together. Cruz Paul recommends students bring upwards of 50 resumes to the fair in case recruiters want to see their previous experience. Typically, recruiters want students to fill out an online application where they submit their resumes. If this is the case, Cruz Paul says students should take the opportunity to fill it out.

“If they’re referring you to the site to fill



out the application then maybe you have a chance” Cruz Paul said.

On the day of the fair, Cruz Paul encourages students to visit the information desk and pick up a booklet. The booklet will allow you to see which employers are attending as well as a map that shows the layout of the fair.

After you make a “gameplan”, Cruz Paul encourages students to visit every table, shake hands and practice your 30-second pitch delivery. During this interaction, tell the recruiters about yourself and what you are looking for in a job/career. Cruz Paul says it’s important to set yourself apart from others in your pitch. To create your 30-second pitch, find the CCPD’s career guide – there you will find an example pitch and how to create your own.

Cruz Paul advises students to take the fair seriously and, if you’re comfortable, go on your own to the tables and interact with



CREDIT: WCU Photography Services.

the recruiters, instead of with a group of friends. This is another way to set yourself apart.

Cruz Paul says students need to be open to talking with more than just a few tables.



CREDIT: WCU Photography Services.

“The problem I see is students come in, they talk to four tables and then they leave.”

She advises that even though you may not have one company in mind, you may be surprised by what they offer.

When you’re at their table, ask recruiters what they offer. If you’re a freshman or sophomore, start thinking about internships. If you’re a senior, ask what kind of job opportunities could be available and how to go about applying.

When thinking about what to wear, Cruz Paul says business casual works best. For seniors hoping to find a job at the event, Cruz Paul advises them to dress more professional.

No matter what year you are at WCU, the career fair is an important step in your

journey to graduation. It is important to build connections with recruiters as they are typically the ones returning to the fair in the next semester or next academic year.



CREDIT: WCU Photography Services.

# What is WCU's Center for Career and Professional Development?

By Liam Bridgeman



The Center for Career and Professional Development offers students a wide range of resources both online and at their physical space behind Reid Gymnasium. Photo by Liam Bridgeman.

The Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD) is a valuable resource on campus that few recognize until it is too late. Many students hear about the CCPD during their first tours of campus or at orientation but hesitate to reap its benefits until nearing their graduation.

The CCPD's physical space is at the backside of Reid Gymnasium. Here, nearly 20 employees, both full-time counselors and peer counselors, help students with their career-related needs. The center is open Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with drop-in appointments available from noon to 4 p.m.

The career center offers a multitude of options for students based around their needs. Dr. Theresa Cruz Paul is the director of the CCPD. She knows first-hand that talking about and even thinking about life after WCU can be frightening to many.

"It's scary. Career development and your career future is a scary topic to think about," Cruz Paul said. She encourages students to go to CCPD at their earliest opportunity so they can relieve some of that stress.

The CCPD has a dedicated staff that can assist in the often-difficult process of choosing a major.

The CCPD also has virtual resources available to students for free.

For example, it may be in a student's best interest to take the "Focus 2" assessment (found on the CCPD's website). The Focus 2, tests skills, abilities and interests to match them with career paths. Cruz Paul says the test won't limit your decisions, rather it will expand your knowledge of what career or major you could be interested in. After taking the test, it's

best to meet with a counselor to discuss your next steps at deciding your major or career path.

Outside of Focus 2, the CCPD has other online resources available such as their career guide. The guide, found on their website, is a virtual book that is a fillable PDF that allows students to explore topics such as interviews, resumes, cover letters and graduate school, among other things.

JobCat is another online resource that can help students with career development. This is a portal where the CCPD places job postings, internship opportunities, fellowships and career fair information.

"Big Interview" is another service that is free for students through the CCPD. This service helps students practice and prepare for job interviews. The service uses AI technology to ask questions based on the skill set of the industry you are interested in. The system will then score your interview.

Outside of the virtual resources, staff at the CCPD can also help students with just about anything career related.

Cruz Paul encourages freshman to visit the CCPD to explore career opportunities they may not have been exposed to before WCU. Learning more about potential career avenues could change a student's time in college for the better.

According to Cruz Paul, students begin to gain valuable skills and experience during their sophomore and junior years. At this time, the CCPD can guide your learning and give you tips on how to gain those experiences. During the year, counselors can assist students looking for internships, part-time jobs and help with putting materials together to get those

opportunities such as resumes and cover letters.

Cruz Paul says her staff of professionals and trained students are eager to help support students.

"I want students to know that our team is strong [at the CCPD] and really cares about the students. They spend a lot of time making sure they're an expert in their area and make sure they connect with students in ways that work for them," Cruz Paul said.

The CCPD also hosts events on campus that help students connect with businesses and corporations. Three times per semester the CCPD hosts a career fair where organizations across the nation bring representatives to WCU to engage with students. The first career fair this fall will be held on Sept. 26 in the Ramsey Center. There, between 100-130 employers will be eager to talk with hundreds of WCU students that participate in the fair.

As the CCPD is dedicated to providing students with every resource they could possibly need to be successful, one often overlooked aspect of professionalism is professional attire. For the first time ever, the CCPD will have a "clothing closet" where students can rent clothes for free – returning them after use. On Nov. 6, using some of the clothes from the closet, students will participate in a professional attire and business casual fashion show. At the end of the show, students can keep the clothes.

For more information or to take advantage of the CCPD's resources, visit their website linked on WCU's main page.

# What Kind of Autumn Person Are You?

## What Is Your Go-to Fall Drink?

- A. Hot Chocolate
- B. Apple Cider
- C. Pumpkin Spice Latte

## What Are You Wearing to the Bonfire?

- A. Beanie
- B. Halloween Costume
- C. Sweater

## Which Dessert Would You Choose?

- A. Pumpkin Pie
- B. Candy Organs
- C. Decorated Cookies

## Pick a Fall Holiday.

- A. Thanksgiving
- B. Día de Muertos
- C. Halloween

## Which Fall Activity Are You Doing?

- A. Apple Picking
- B. Scary Movie Marathon
- C. Visiting the Pumpkin Patch

## Which Color Represents Fall?

- A. Red Like Leaves
- B. Black Like Bats
- C. Orange Like Pumpkins

## Movie Night! What Are You Playing?

- A. Coco
- B. Halloween
- C. Hocus Pocus

## You're Decorating Your Dorm With...

- A. Extra Knitted Blankets
- B. Fake Cobwebs
- C. Halloween Squishmallows

## What Is Your Halloween Costume?

- A. Something Punny
- B. Ghost Face
- C. Barbie

### Mostly A's

Soft & Snug

The second you feel that autumn breeze you grab your blankets and sweaters and curl up in bed with a nice hot drink and your favorite comfort show. Fall for you is a time for fuzzy socks and warm memories in cold weather.

### Mostly B's

Spooky & Scary

When fall comes around all you can think about is Halloween. You've waited all year to break out those spooky decorations and buy tickets to haunted houses. The fall season isn't a success if you didn't get scared.

### Mostly C's

Comfy & Classic

Some call it basic, you call it traditional. You've spent your life in pumpkin patches and corn mazes and you intend to keep it that way. There's nothing wrong with sticking to what you know, so go order that PSL!

# UNC System tuition freeze proposed for eighth consecutive year

By Andy Wallace, UNC System Director of Media Relations



University of North Carolina System President Peter Hans has recommended a tuition freeze next year for all in-state undergraduate students at the state's 16 public universities, which would extend the seven-year freeze already in place.

Hans made the recommendation Thursday at the UNC Board of Governors meeting in Raleigh. If approved by the board, it would mark the eighth straight year without a tuition increase for North Carolina residents attending UNC System universities.

"Keeping college affordable is the single most important thing we can do for the students and families of North Carolina," Hans said. "With the generous support of our citizens and their elected leaders, we are able to offer a quality education at an incredible value. Our commitment to low tuition sets North Carolina apart and helps drive growth and opportunity across our state."

Keeping tuition flat is one of several steps the UNC System and the North Carolina General Assembly have taken to lower

costs for students. Under the NC Promise tuition plan, North Carolina residents attending Elizabeth City State University, the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Fayetteville State University and Western Carolina University pay \$500 per semester in tuition.

Additionally, North Carolina's Fixed Tuition Program specifies that any North Carolina resident entering a four-year undergraduate program at a UNC system school will pay the same rate of tuition for eight consecutive semesters.

"Students graduating in 2028 will pay the same tuition that incoming freshmen paid in 2017. That's a remarkable achievement, especially when you consider rising costs in the rest of our economy," Hans said. "Our faculty, staff, and administrators have shown real discipline and dedication in keeping costs low while delivering an excellent education."

Among all states, North Carolina has the third lowest tuition-and-fee sticker price for residents who attend public four-year universities, according to 2022-23 data from the College Board. Average student debt upon graduation has dropped for UNC System students since 2019-20.

Find these stories and more on our website: [westerncarolinian.com](https://www.westerncarolinian.com)

# WCU competes internationally for the first time ever

By Stewart Butler



The Women's Golf team attended Catamount Athletics' first-ever international event last week in Kita Hiroshima, Japan. The team finished fourth overall at the Pan Pacific Collegiate Golf Super League event played at the Sapporo Regent Golf Club.

During their stay, outside of golf, the team immersed themselves in Japanese culture, visiting cultural landmarks and attending local ceremonies. The team stopped in Tokyo before the competition,

where they visited the Shibuya Crossing and traveled on the Tokyo Metro.

During play, the Catamount women finished with a three-round score of 901. Tohoku Fukushi University, a private school in Sendai, Japan, claimed first place with a total score of 881. This score is a total of the lowest four member's scores from all three rounds. Sophomore Brie Mapanao and junior Elizabeth Lohbauer tied for WCU's best individual score at 225. Lohbauer and Mapanao tied for 15th place

at 9-over par. Senior Victoria Ladd finished second for WCU with her total score just one stroke higher at 226. Juniors Kaitlyn Wingnean and Kayleigh Baker finished at 231 and 235 respectively.

Many team members said the tournament was a pleasant warmup for the season ahead.

"Although we had a tournament to play, I believe all of us were very relaxed and just soaking in the experience [of] being in a new culture and meeting new people," Mapanao wrote in an email.

Baker enjoyed the many activities the team was able to participate in while abroad.



"We attended a traditional Japanese tea ceremony where we wore ceremonial kimonos and whisked and drank matcha tea... My favorite part was the culture.



People in Japan were super friendly and very curious about us Americans.” Baker finished fourth for WCU and 27th overall.

“This trip was beneficial because it allowed us to honestly just go on vacation with a little golf at the end. It was nice to sort of relive summer break after the first week of classes. It also gave us the opportunity to explore another country and its customs,” Baker wrote.



“I think this trip is a great team bonding and learning experience to start the season. Playing in a foreign country with all different cultures gave us a different perspective on the big picture in life. Life isn’t always about how good the scores are but getting better every round and enjoying the process,” freshman Sadler Miller wrote.

Sophomore Brie Mapanao believes the trip was constructive both on and off the course. “To be able to see the level of competition of international teams was just amazing. Also, as a team, we made so many new memories together, we all had a lot of fun.”

Sadler Miller echoed Mapanao’s comments. “It was an experience we’re all going to remember for a very long time to come,” Miller wrote. “It helped us realize that we’ve all got the skill and capability to not only win individually but as a team.”

WCU Women’s Golf will return to the greens Sep. 25 and 26 for the Aggie Invitational, hosted by North Carolina A&T at the Bryan Park Players Course in Greensboro.

For more information about WCU women’s golf or other Catamount sports, visit [catamountsports.com](http://catamountsports.com).



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