

THE RESEARCH REVIEW

A Monthly Newsletter by The Office of Research Administration

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WCU'S ECHT PROJECT RECEIVES \$450K GRANT FROM NEH

Unearthing history is nothing new to Cherokee Language Program director and associate professor Sara Snyder Hopkins. Thanks to a federal grant, she and a group of colleagues will continue to do so.

[READ MORE...](#)

Research Data Dive

[View the Data of WCU's Research Pursuits](#)



Office of Research
Administration

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PRE-AWARD SERVICES NEWS

Understanding University Policy 55: Solicitation of External Funds

The Office of Research Administration oversees all externally sponsored grants and contracts at WCU, whether for research, education, or service. In alignment with University Policy 55, any solicitation of external funds must be coordinated through this office to ensure compliance and proper oversight. Sponsored programs, as defined by the UNC General Administration, require formal agreements and must be reviewed and approved by appropriate University officials before submitting proposals. Faculty and staff are encouraged to contact the ORA early in the proposal development process to ensure smooth coordination and approval.

[Read University Policy 55](#)

Does your college have a grant approval form?

Faculty interested in pursuing external funding must first communicate their intent with their department head and complete the necessary college-level Grant Approval Form. This form must be fully completed and signed before the Office of Research Administration can route the proposal for internal review and approval. Please note that not all colleges require this form, so faculty should check with their department head and dean to confirm this requirement.

To Route or Not to Route, That Is the Question

Some sponsors require a pre-proposal, letter of intent, or pre-application as the first step in their review process. These early-stage submissions help sponsors screen potential applicants, but they can also have implications for WCU. To avoid exceeding submission limits or unintentionally committing resources, faculty must notify the ORA of all pre-proposals and letters of intent. The ORA will determine whether routing is required and guide you through the appropriate steps. Faculty should notify ORA as early as possible to ensure there is sufficient time to route pre-proposals and letters of intent for internal review and approval if needed.

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POST-AWARD NEWS

New Purchasing Procedures That Affect Grant Expenses

Non-Travel Reimbursement Requests

Accounts Payable recently announced a transition to the non-travel reimbursements process. All non-travel reimbursements must now be submitted through Emburse Enterprise. This change applies to all faculty, staff, students, and external parties, and officially replaces the previous check request form. This new process is designed to enhance tracking, simplify submission, and ensure more timely payments.

To help you navigate the new system, Accounts Payable developed a training guide in Canvas, which includes a step-by-step instructional video and helpful resources and tips for submitting requests. If you would like access to the training materials through the Canvas course or have any questions, please contact accountspayable@wcu.edu.

The Post Award team appreciates your cooperation and commitment to making this transition smooth and successful for our Accounts Payable partners.

Food Purchases Using Grant Funds

The procedures for non-Aramark food purchase requests have been changed as well. Effective immediately, any requisition involving the purchase of food using grant funds must receive prior approval.

Before initiating a requisition, stakeholders are asked to email Bruce Barker, bbarker@wcu.edu, and Morgan Burnett, mburnett@wcu.edu to request approval. This email should include a brief justification for the food purchase, the fund number associated with the expense, and the purpose of the purchase.

Procedures for Hiring Students on Sponsored Projects

To ensure a smooth student hiring process, please keep the following things in mind.

- Students must receive HR confirmation before starting work.
- All hires go through WCU's HR department, and onboarding must be completed first.
- Delays in accepting proposals or completing tasks can push back start dates.
- Hiring paperwork takes time.

It's unrealistic to expect a new position to be created and onboarded within a week. After your Kick-off Meeting with ORA, you can begin working with HR to develop the position. Planning ahead helps avoid delays. *continued...*

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POST-AWARD NEWS

Align student roles with your sponsor-approved budget. Matching the position title and justification to your budget speeds up ORA's approval and simplifies expense tracking. The closer the match, the faster the process.

Be accurate with hours and dates. Estimate weekly hours, pay rate, and employment duration realistically. Avoid defaulting to 20 hours unless accurate, and ensure dates align with your project period and budget.

During employment, please monitor hours and funding. Encourage timely timesheet submissions. ORA provides bi-weekly fund reviews to help you track payroll and plan ahead.

We hope these tips help streamline your student hiring. To start drafting a position or ask questions, contact Allison Castro at atacastro@email.wcu.edu, and CC Harrison Martin, hsmartin@email.wcu.edu, and Ben Peters, bpeters@email.wcu.edu, for support.

FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM!



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COMPLIANCE NEWS

Post-Approval Monitoring (PAM) Visit

The Office of Research Administration's Research Compliance may be selecting you for a random Post-Approval Monitoring (PAM) visit.

- The audits will be conducted on a random selection of non-exempt studies that have not been closed.
- To find protocols on which you are listed as PI, you can log into InfoEd (wcu.infoedglobal.com) and click the "Locate my records" tab at the top of the screen. If you would like to find any protocols on which you are listed as personnel but not necessarily PI, you will need to click "Locate Records" then search by "Record Personnel" and enter your name. See below:

The screenshot displays the Western Carolina University InfoEd interface. A modal window titled "Select 'Locate' Criteria" is open, allowing users to choose search modules and fields. The "Modules available for searching across:" section includes checkboxes for "Account", "Grant Proposals", "Award", "Compliance Protocols" (which is checked), and "Conflict of Interest". Below this, the "Available fields to search by" section lists various fields with checkboxes, including "Record Personnel" (checked), "Record Personnel Department", "Record Primary Department", "Record Primary Sponsor", "Record Primary Sponsor Type", "Record Status", "Record Title", and "Record Type". A "Selected fields" section on the right shows "Record Personnel" selected with an adjacent text input field. The background of the interface shows a sidebar with navigation links like "Grant Proposals", "Award Tracking", "Financial Tracking", "Compliance Protocols", "Conflict of Interest", and "SPIN", along with a "Messages" section and a "SPIN™ Search" box.

For questions, contact: IRB@wcu.edu

continued...

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COMPLIANCE NEWS

Compliance Presentations

The Research Compliance Office is available to give presentations for classes or faculty groups upon request.

- Sessions can be customized to address specific compliance topics, including but not limited to:
 - IRB (Institutional Review Board)
 - IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee)
 - Export Control
 - Responsible Conduct of Research
- Presentations can be scheduled to support instructional goals or departmental training needs.

To arrange a session, contact: Mallory Ball, at mball@wcu.edu

RCR/RST/Export Control Training

Effective **Oct. 10, 2025**, NSF requires Research Security Training (RST) covering: cybersecurity, international collaboration, foreign interference, proper use of funds, disclosure, conflicts of interest/commitment, export control, and reporting.

- As a result, investigators must complete: RCR, RST, and Export Control training for NSF proposals.

This is based on the recent notice from NSF (Important Notice No. 149: Updates to NSF Research Security Policies | NSF – National Science Foundation)

- Training Provider: citiprogram.org

For questions, contact: Mallory Ball, at mball@wcu.edu

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STUDENT RESEARCH NEWS

SoCon Undergraduate Research Forum (SURF) Application Open!

The Southern Conference (SoCon) Academic Exchange is proud to announce that the annual SoCon Undergraduate Research Forum (SURF) Conference will be held on **October 24-25, 2025**, on the campus of Wofford College in Spartanburg, SC. This multidisciplinary conference will bring together approximately 150 student presenters from all ten colleges/universities of the SoCon for a two-day event that features projects in the arts and humanities, as well as the STEM disciplines.

- **Key Dates:**
 - Info Session: August 27, 2025 | 12:30–1:00 PM | <https://wcu.zoom.us/j/89704596046>
 - Application Deadline: September 15, 2025
 - Acceptance Notification: September 24, 2025
 - Pre-Travel Meeting: September 25, 2025 | 2:30 – 3:30 PM
- **Apply Now!**
- Questions? Contact: Suzanne Melton, Research Programs Coordinator, scmelton@wcu.edu

Undergraduate Academic Project Grants (APG) Fall Cycle Open!

Academic Project Grants (APGs) support undergraduate research and creative work efforts at Western Carolina University. Any student or group of students working with a faculty sponsor is eligible to apply for a grant.

- **Funding Uses:**
 - Equipment, materials, and supplies
 - Individual or group travel to present at conferences
 - Support for travel to NCUR

**Awards are competitive, with limited funds awarded*

- **Important Dates:**
 - Submission Portal Opens: August 18, 2025
- **Cycle Deadlines:**
 - Cycle 1: September 25, 2025
 - Cycle 2: October 23, 2025
 - Cycle 3: January 22, 2026
 - Cycle 4: February 19, 2026

Visit the **APG webpage** for guidelines, templates, and the submission portal.

Questions? Contact: Suzanne Melton, Research Programs Coordinator, scmelton@wcu.edu

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PROGRAMS & MORE

Office of Research Administration Workshop Series

The Office of Research Administration (ORA) is excited to announce our workshop series for academic year 2025–26. Our sessions include:

- **Grants 101:** designed for the entry-level knowledge-based faculty who want exposure to the world of grants. It covers the who, what, and how...a great place to start! (Wednesday, 9/17/2025, 3:30–4:30 pm)
- **Financial Management:** designed for our more experienced faculty who want to learn more about shadow budgets, personnel costs, and purchasing rules and guidelines to help manage their grant. (Wednesday, 10/29/2025, 3:30–4:30 pm)
- **Grant Seeking:** designed to help faculty search and locate funding opportunities using the SPIN database and other grant-seeking resources. (Wednesday, 11/05/2025, 8:30–9:30 am)

[Register Now.](#) Seats are limited.

Fall Proposal Opportunities: PSDA & FaRM Programs

The Office of Research Administration (ORA) is pleased to announce we are accepting proposals for two key funding opportunities: the **Provost's Scholarship Development Awards (PSDA)** and the **Faculty Research Mentoring (FaRM) Program**. Proposals will be accepted until **October 22, 2025, at 11:59 PM**.

[Learn more](#) about the guidelines and application process.

ResearchCAT Magazine: Volume II

The Graduate School & Research has released its annual research magazine. The second volume summarizes the fiscal year 2025 annual report of the Office of Research Administration (ORA), showcasing the pursuit of research, scholarship, and creative activities, as well as extramural sponsorship and initiatives.

[Explore the magazine.](#)

Special Programs & More on ResearchCAT

This past spring, the Office of Research Administration (ORA) launched its support site, **Research CAT** (go.wcu.edu/research), to increase ORA's support and impact across campus. We are excited to announce a new addition to the site: **Special Programs & More**. This page is your go-to for upcoming events, workshops, presentations, and special programming opportunities. Explore what's new and stay connected. Check it out today!