

THE RESEARCH REVIEW

A Monthly Newsletter by The Office of Research Administration

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**HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND BEST WISHES
FOR A BRIGHT NEW YEAR!**

Thank you for your dedication and collaboration throughout the year. Your efforts drive innovation and impact across our community. Wishing you joy, peace, and a well-deserved break. We look forward to supporting your research in the new year!

— The Office of Research Administration

Research Data Dive

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



Office of Research
Administration

THE RESEARCH REVIEW

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PRE-AWARD SERVICES NEWS

Data Management & Sharing Plans: A Key to Successful Proposals

Data management and sharing plans are now an essential component of proposals to Federal sponsors. Federal sponsors require researchers to outline how their data will be managed, preserved, and shared. To simplify the process, the [DMPTool](#) offers funder-specific templates that ensure your plan meets all requirements.

Common Forms Implementation

Federal agencies are moving toward standardized proposal requirements. The Common Form for Current and Pending (Other) Support and the Common Form for Biographical Sketch are now required for proposals submitted to NSF, NIH, and USDA.

To make compliance easier, researchers can use SciENCv, which automatically generates the required Common Forms. Setting up an ORCID ID and a SciENCv account ensures you are ready to meet these requirements. Step-by-step guidance is available [here](#) and on our research support site at go.wcu.edu/research.

Letters of Intent

When working with foundation sponsors, investigators may encounter varying submission requirements. Some sponsors request a Letter of Intent (LOI) before inviting a full proposal. LOIs are typically short, include limited project details, and do not require a detailed budget. Because of their brevity, LOIs generally do not need routing in InfoEd for review.

Full proposals, however, do require institutional review and approval. To ensure compliance, all submissions, whether an LOI or a full proposal, must be reviewed by the Office of Research Administration (ORA) to confirm the appropriate requirements.

Happy Holidays from the Pre-Award Office

On behalf of all of us in the Pre-Award Office, we wanted to wish everyone a very happy holiday season! It is an honor to support our wonderful investigators in advancing the research and scholarly activities in their respective fields, and we look forward to a productive 2026 with all our collaborators.

Whether you are working on a full proposal or have questions about any aspect of the proposal development and submission process, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. Our office is dedicated to helping you achieve your research and programmatic goals and maximizing the potential of your submission(s).

Contact: sellithorpe@wcu.edu and msalerno@wcu.edu

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POST-AWARD NEWS

Calendar Year End Reminder for Grant Required Reporting

Before the calendar turns to a new year, the Post Award Team is working diligently to submit financial reports required by various grant sponsors. To ensure compliance and maintain good standing with sponsors we want to remind you of the importance of meeting progress or final reports deadlines due from the PI.

You can find this information in the award contract or agreement, as well as in the Kickoff Meeting Form located in the Microsoft Teams folder set up by ORA.

If you need assistance or would like to confirm upcoming reporting deadlines, please reach out to Ben Peters or Cameron Lopez.

Processing Subaward Invoices on Your Project

To support grant staff in managing subaward invoices effectively, we want to share best practices for processing payments. Please note that CataMart can no longer process invoices through direct pay. The recommended approach is to use Standing Purchase Orders (POs) in CataMart.

Why use a Standing PO?

1. **Streamlined process:** Create one requisition and PO for each subaward project period. Instead of submitting multiple requisitions, simply attach invoices and create receipts for each payment. This reduces administrative burden and ensures timely reimbursement to subawardees.
2. **Centralized documentation:** CataMart stores the fully executed subaward agreement and all related invoices in one accessible location. This makes it easy for anyone with CataMart access to reference agreements and payment history.
3. **Accurate accounting:** Standing POs encumber subaward amounts and use established account codes, reducing errors and preventing overpayment.

What to include in your Standing PO:

- A copy of the signed subaward agreement in internal attachments
- The correct grant fund number and account code **219924**
- Separate line items for costs ≤ \$25,000 and costs > \$25,000
- *Example: For a \$45,000 subaward (7/1/25–6/30/26):*
 - Line 1: \$25,000
 - Line 2: \$20,000 (account code **219925**)

For detailed instructions, please refer to these hyperlinks.

- [Subawards less than or equal to \\$25,000](#)
- [Subawards greater than \\$25,000](#)

As always, the Post Award team is here to help. Reach out with any questions about setting up your subaward Standing PO.

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COMPLIANCE NEWS

IRB Study Closures

Remember to close IRB records when ALL are true:

- All data collection is complete
- Access to identifiable or coded data (where a key exists) is no longer needed
- You are only working with de-identified data or all analysis is completed
- All study interventions and participant contact have been completed.

Study closures are created by completing a Continuing Review submission and including in the submission that you wish to close the study.

You can use the following instructions to complete this process: [IRB Study Closure How To](#)

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

FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM!



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COMPLIANCE NEWS

Student Access To InfoEd

Faculty, if your students have never used InfoEd before, it is likely that they may need to request student access to InfoEd. Students, unlike faculty or staff, have to request InfoEd access to be added into the system. On our main [Human Subject Research page](#), there should be a button labeled, "Request InfoEd Student Access – STUDENT ACCESS." Students will need to click this button and fill out the form to be added as a user. A screenshot is included below:

Research at WCU

🏠 > Academic Programs & Support > Office of the Provost > Research at WCU > Sponsored Research > Research Compliance > Human Subjects Research

Human Subject Research



Western Carolina University recognizes the need to utilize human subjects in research. Using human subjects in research is a privilege, therefore all research using human subjects as participants must be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board. The primary goal of the WCU IRB is to protect the rights and welfare of individuals who participate as subjects while promoting and facilitating the research enterprise, and maintaining an open and cooperative relationship with the research community.

The IRB is registered with the Department of Health and Human Services – Office for Human Research Protections with the

Go to the
TRAINING PAGE

Go to the
INFOED LOGIN

Go to the
FORMS/TEMPLATES

Go to the
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Go to the
QUALTRICS LOGIN

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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 background shows the main navigation menu with options like Home, My Profile, Locate My Records, and Locate Records. The left sidebar lists various tracking categories such as Grant Proposals, Award Tracking, Financial Tracking, Compliance Protocols, Conflict of Interest, and SPIN. The central area shows a "Messages" section with "ACTION REQUIRED" items and a "SPIN™ Search" box. The bottom of the screen shows a table with columns for "Record" and "Assignment".

Select 'Locate' Criteria

Modules available for searching across:

- ☐ Account
- ☐ Award
- ☒ Compliance Protocols
- ☐ Conflict of Interest
- ☐ Grant Proposals

Available fields to search by:

- ☐ Current Project Status
- ☐ Record Associated Department
- ☐ Record Classification Codes
- ☐ Record Creation Date
- ☐ Record Key Words
- ☐ Record Number
- ☐ Record Owner
- ☐ Record Owner Primary Department
- ☒ Record Personnel
- ☐ Record Personnel Department
- ☐ Record Primary Department
- ☐ Record Primary Sponsor
- ☐ Record Primary Sponsor Type
- ☐ Record Status
- ☐ Record Title
- ☐ Record Type

Selected fields: Record Personnel

Search

For questions, contact: IRB@wcu.edu

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STUDENT RESEARCH NEWS

Celebrating Fall Academic Project Grant Awardees

Academic Project Grants (APGs) empower undergraduate students to pursue research and creative projects in collaboration with faculty mentors. These grants provide funding for equipment, materials to conduct research, and travel to present research at local, regional, and national conferences.

Congratulations to Our Fall 2025 Awardees!

Biology: Davion Murray, Hannah Caruso, Alana Eargle, Olive Whitesides, Faith Dolin, Ben Ryan, Mary Ann Garren, Aster Ayer, and Alaina Goins

Chemistry & Physics: Kyra Everette, Brian Duke, Jacob Given, Logan Martin, Nicole Mushinski, Madelyn Gregory, and Andrew Brown

Communication Sciences & Disorders: Jada Wong

Criminology & Criminal Justice: Isabella Barger, Jessica Davis, and Anna Kerner

Geosciences & Natural Resources: Brenden Swanson

Mathematics & Computer Science: Gregory Ecklund and Clay Morton

Philosophy & Religion: Chloe Davis, Hailey Fonda, Emily Fleming, and Maddie Norwood

Psychology: Cielo Vera, Corinthia Elorza-Reyes, Bella Fresquez-Clifton, Creed Bone, Gabriella Loredó Marquez, Natalie Stepp, Rachel Trantham, and Joseph Vernelson

School of Art & Design: Daniel Velazquez Perez, Judith Elerick, and Casey Earnhardt

School of Engineering + Technology: Sommer Allen, Chloe Davis, Allison Thackery, Shaneil Lysight, Peyton Skoglund, Joshua Adams, Mason Martin, Cooper Myers, Trent Devlin, Hamza Boujemaoui, Bakang Phutietsile, John Crain, Michael Synoracki, and Jordan Fox

School of Health Sciences: Gabby Cox, Ali Maynard, Addison Ambrose, Savannah Kennedy, Gabby Cox, Ali Maynard, Isabella Erskine, Erica Thaggard, and Riley Graves

School of Stage & Screen: Davin Broadhurst and Virginia Hlebak

Upcoming Cycle Deadlines:

Cycle 3: January 22, 2026

Cycle 4: February 19, 2026

Want to learn more or apply for an APG?

Visit the [APG Program Page](#)



Undergraduate
Research

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STUDENT RESEARCH NEWS

Congratulations to Our SURF Presenters!

We are proud to announce the students who represented WCU at the Southern Conference Undergraduate Research Forum (SURF), hosted by Wofford College in Spartanburg, SC, on October 24–25, 2025.

About SURF

The SoCon Academic Exchange brought together approximately 150 student presenters from all ten SoCon institutions for a two-day multidisciplinary conference. Students showcased projects in arts, humanities, and STEM disciplines in an engaging, supportive environment.

This event was an incredible opportunity for students involved in research and creative activities to share their accomplishments and network with peers and faculty across the region.

Student Presenters

Biology: Allison Thackery, Davion Murray, Kaylan Hamilton, and Vega Faust

School of Engineering +

Technology: Amber Robbins and Sommer Allen

Kimmel School of Construction Management: Ana Orozco-Vasquez

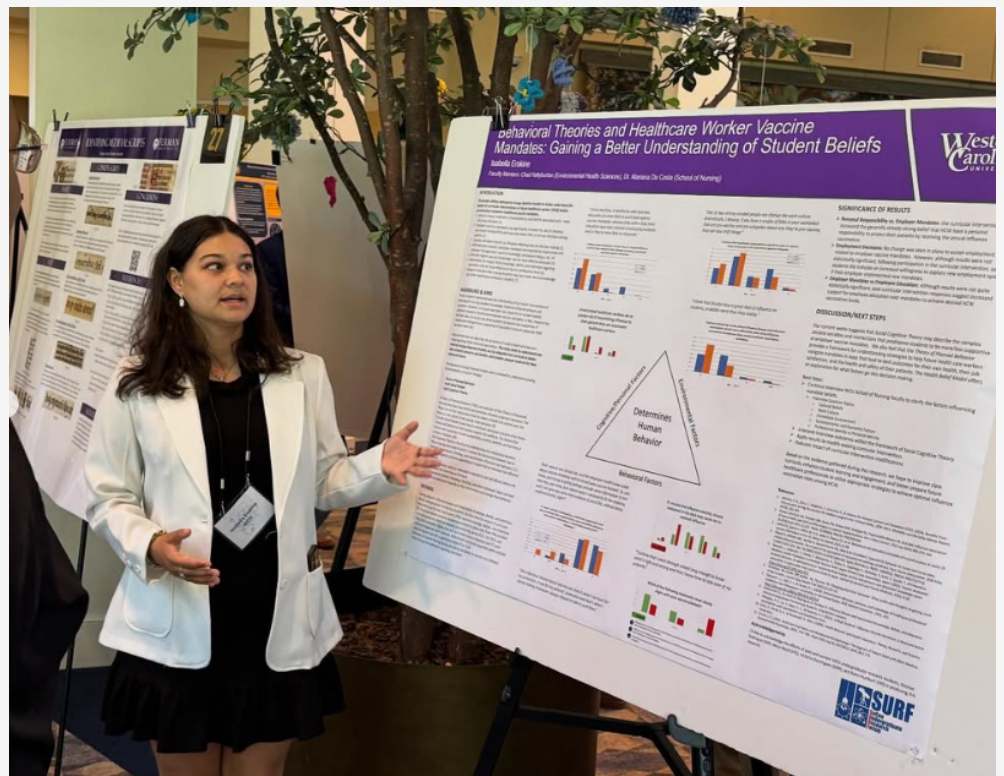
Chemistry & Physics: Cole Swade, Daniel Metz, Jacob Given, and Lexie Klatt

School of Health Sciences: Erica Thaggard

School of Teaching & Learning: Isabella Erskine

History: Kiki Shepherd, Samantha Greene, and Zechariah Hoppes

Mathematics & Computer Science: Prashreet Poudel



Undergraduate student Isabella Erskine from the School of Teaching & Learning, presenting their research *Behavioral Theories and Healthcare Worker Vaccine Mandates: Gaining a Better Understanding of Student Beliefs*.

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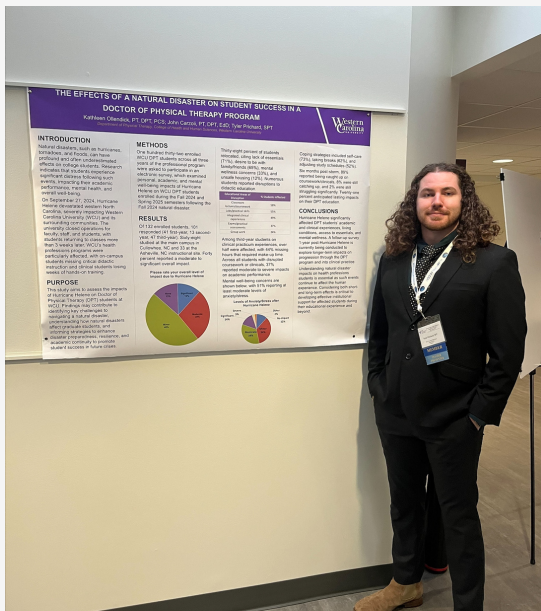
STUDENT RESEARCH NEWS

Graduate Student Association (GSA) Travel Awards

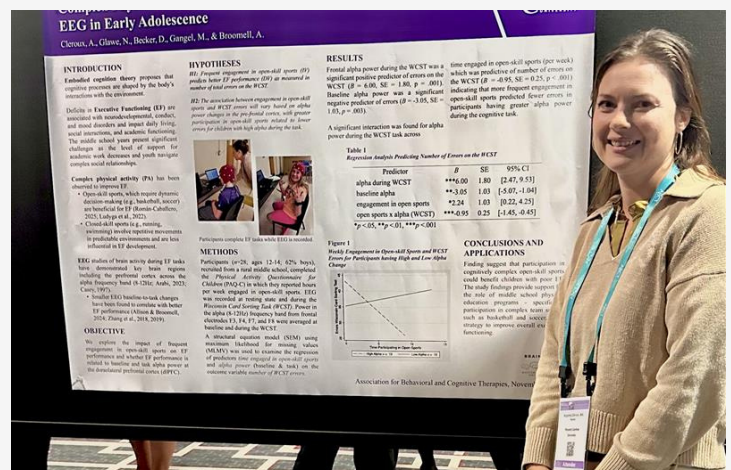
This semester, the Graduate Student Association (GSA) sponsored 21 **travel awards** across 12 graduate programs. GSA travel awards support WCU graduate students' scholarly/artistic/professional development by assisting with costs related to travel to regional and national/international events each semester. The Spring application will open for students in January.



(left) Sayumi De Silva, Biology M.S. *"Optimization of Protein Purification and Sortase-A Medicated Conjugation of Nanobodies and Invertase"* (Southeastern Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society, Orlando, Florida)



(left) Tyler Prichard, Physical Therapy D.P.T. *"The Effects of a Natural Disaster on Student Success in a Doctor of Physical Therapy Program"* (North Carolina American Physical Therapy Association Annual Conference, Elon, North Carolina)



(above) Angelina Cleroux, Psychology (Health Service) PSY.D. *"Complex Physical Activity, Executive Functioning, and Frontal Lobe EEG in Early Adolescence"* (Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, New Orleans, LA)

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PROGRAMS & MORE

ORA Workshop Series

To meet growing interest, the ORA has scheduled more workshop sessions for the spring! Don't miss these opportunities to build your grants knowledge and connect with peers.

- **Grant Seeking, 2/19/2026, 3:00–4:00 pm, Apodaca 115:** designed to help faculty search and locate funding opportunities using the SPIN database and other grant-seeking resources.
- **Grants 101, 2/12/2026, 3:30–4:30 pm or 3/31/2026, 3:30–4:30 pm, Apodaca 115:** 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!
- **Financial Management, 3/03/2026, 3:00–4:00 pm, virtually:** 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.

Register Now. Seats are limited.

Spring Proposal Opportunities: PSDA & FaRM Programs

The Office of Research Administration (ORA) is accepting proposals this spring for two key funding opportunities: the Provost's Scholarship Development Awards (PSDA) and the Faculty Research Mentoring (FaRM) Program. Proposals will be accepted until February 9, 2026, 11:59pm.

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

CHECK OUT OUR
[RESEARCH](#)
[MAGAZINE!](#)



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PROGRAMS & MORE

RASC

RESEARCH FOR ALL

**Research and Scholarship Conference
(RASC) 2026 – Registration Now Open!**

The Research and Scholarship Conference returns March 25–26, 2026 with in-person showcases of student and faculty research, scholarship, and creative inquiry. Join us for a full day of engagement featuring:

- Oral and Poster Presentations
- Fine Arts Exhibits and Performances
- Keynote Address
- Faculty 3-Minute Research Talk (3MR) Competition
- Celebration Receptions and Awards

New This Year: Faculty are invited to present alongside students on March 25. Plus, we'll feature research related to Hurricane Helene in dedicated sessions.

Important Deadlines:

- Student & Faculty Presentation Registration: Feb. 16, 2026
- Faculty Scholarship Celebration Submissions: Feb. 1, 2026
- Hunter Scholar Award Applications: Jan. 25, 2026
- Luncheon RSVP: Mar. 1, 2026

Event Highlights:

- March 25: Full day of presentations, keynote, and reception
- March 26: Faculty Scholarship Celebration & 3MR Finals

Visit research.wcu.edu/rasc for details and registration links or contact Suzanne Melton at scmelton@wcu.edu for more information.