

THE RESEARCH REVIEW

A Monthly Newsletter by The Office of Research Administration

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Compliance

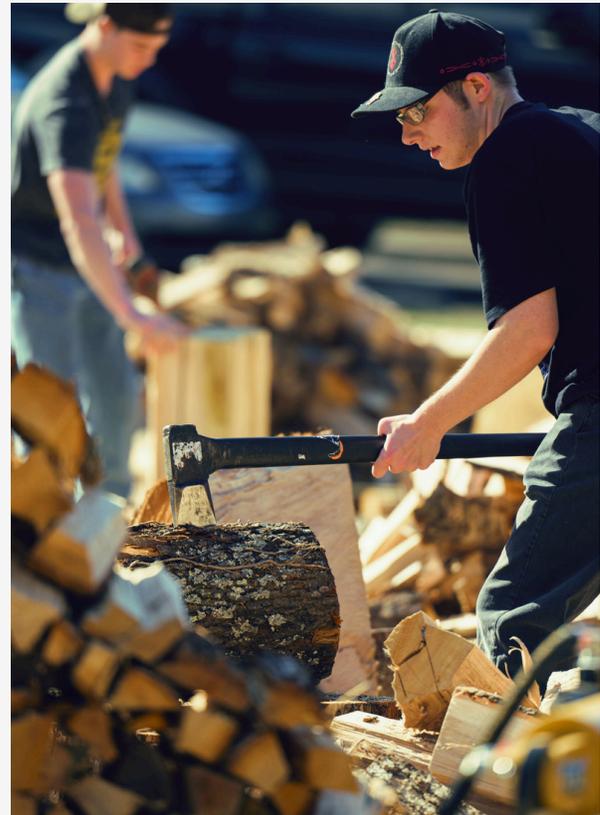
- Sponsored Project Hiring Compliance
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CCESL PUTS \$2,000 GRANT TO USE WITH MLK DAY OF SERVICE EVENTS

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, over 80 students filled Western Carolina University's UC Grand Room to spend an afternoon giving back to the community. Supplies filled a long row of tables where students could put together cold-weather care packages for low-income elderly citizens in Jackson County.

[Read More](#)

Research Data Dive

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

Western
Carolina
UNIVERSITY

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PRE-AWARD SERVICES NEWS

Getting Ready to Develop a Proposal? Start with These Essentials

Before you dive into your next funding proposal, make sure you've completed a few key setup steps.

- Connect with the Office of Research Administration to request an eRA Commons ID and to affiliate with WCU in Research.gov.
- Create your [SciENcv](#) and [ORCID](#) accounts to prepare your biographical sketch and other support documents.
- Log in to myWCU and open Research Administration (InfoEd) under My Apps to access SPIN, where you can set up funding alerts and begin exploring opportunities. If you're new to SPIN, use the [Funding Search Guide](#) to help you get started.

Funding Opportunities

American Psychological Association

[Direct Action Visionary Grants](#)

Application Deadline: April 30, 2026

FINRA Investor Education Foundation

[General Grant Program](#)

Applications Accepted Anytime

Spencer Foundation

[Research Grants on Education: Small](#)

Application Deadline: April 15, 2026

National Endowment for the Arts

Funding Dance, Design, Folk & Traditional Arts, Literary Arts, Museums, Music, Theater, Visual Arts, and more...

[Grants for Arts Projects](#)

Application Deadline: July 9, 2026

View More Opportunities Here: <https://affiliate.wcu.edu/engagedresearch/find-funding/>

Additional Funding Opportunity Databases

Expand your search for grants and fellowships with these platforms.

- [Proposal Central](#)
- [Grants.gov](#)
- [Candid](#)
- [Zintellect](#)
- [National Science Foundation](#)
- [National Institutes of Health](#)
- [Oak Ridge Associated Universities \(ORAU\)](#)

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POST-AWARD NEWS

SUMMER 2026 EXTRA COMPENSATION UPDATES

The ORA Post-Award team has sent Summer 2026 extra compensation summaries to PIs and Department Heads. Each message includes project details, personnel receiving compensation, effort months, salary amounts, and the period of performance.

For PIs:

Look for the subject line “**SMR 2026 Extra Compensation Summary for PI – [Your Name]**”.

1. Review your project details
2. Confirm effort with your personnel
3. Reply with approval or corrections

For Department Heads:

Emails appear as “**SMR 2026 Extra Compensation Summary for [Your Dept Name] Dept**” and are provided for transparency into Summer 2026 commitments.

1. Review
2. Reply with confirmation or questions
3. Coordinate directly with faculty/staff and PIs as needed

The ORA Post-Award team appreciates your support and is here to help ensure a smooth summer session.

Reminder: Reporting Deadlines & Post-Award Support

To ensure timely and accurate grant reporting, please allow the ORA Post-Award team **3–5 business days** to review financial information requests, signatures, and sponsor-portal submission assistance. This review window ensures all data is accurate, compliant, and fully vetted, helping prevent last-minute issues and missed deadlines.

Thank you for partnering with us to keep reporting on track.

Questions?

Contact: Ben Peters (bpeters@wcu.edu) or Cameron Lopez (clopez@wcu.edu)

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COMPLIANCE NEWS

Sponsored Project Hiring Compliance

As part of an upcoming improvement to our post-award onboarding process, new hires supported by externally funded projects will follow a more structured hiring workflow based on funding type.

This will include job posting templates tailored to the requirements of different funding sources (e.g., federal vs. non-federal). Compliance and Post-Award will be working together to have these templates ready for you once you reach the hiring stage of your project, so you don't have to guess what language is needed or worry about missing sponsor-specific requirements.

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

Compliance Reminder: Project-Specific Disclosures + New External Activities

As a reminder, WCU requires project-specific disclosures for externally funded activities. This means that even if you have a disclosure on file, you may still need to submit or update your disclosure when you take on a new sponsored project, especially when there are changes in your role, responsibilities, or funding source.

Additionally, if you begin any new external activity for pay (consulting, speaking engagements, paid advising, contract work, etc.), it must be disclosed through WCU's conflict of interest process. These disclosures help protect both the investigator and the institution, and they ensure we meet sponsor requirements and reporting obligations.

If you're unsure whether an activity needs to be disclosed, it's always best to disclose early or reach out for guidance.

For information, click the following link: [project-specific conflict of interest training requirements](#).

How-To Guides:

[Creating and Submitting Your Self-Disclosure](#)

[Supervisor COI Review](#)

[Responding to Additional Information Needed](#)

We will also be updating these to include clear language specific to both faculty and student scenarios. Stay tuned for updates.

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

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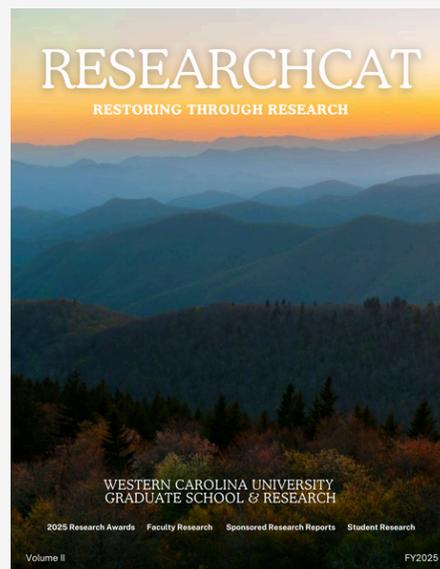
Using AI as a Research Analytics Tool (WCU Approved Options)

We have recently received questions about using AI tools for research data analysis/collection/transcription. If you are planning to use AI for your research, please ensure you are using WCU IT-approved options, outlined below:

- **Zoom AI Companion** is available for use. The only requirement is completion of a short Canvas course prior to receiving access. You may [self-register for the course](#) and complete it at your convenience, and access is typically granted a couple of days after completion.
- **Microsoft Copilot Chat** is also approved for use on campus for several data levels at no additional cost. If you have questions about what types of data are appropriate for your intended use, our Security & Privacy office can provide guidance if you share your use case. Copilot Chat can be accessed through most M365 applications and through myWCU. Users should ensure they are logged in with their WCU credentials.
- **Microsoft Copilot (licensed version)** is available as well, but it requires an annual license cost of \$360 per user. If you would like to purchase a license, you can begin the request process at: <http://go.wcu.edu/itsoftwarereview>.

Additional AI guidance and WCU resources are available here: <https://www.wcu.edu/learn/academic-services/it/ai/>

CHECK OUT OUR
RESEARCH
MAGAZINE!



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STUDENT RESEARCH NEWS

Undergraduate Academic Project Grants (APG) - Reimbursement Reminder

Undergraduate Academic Project Grants (APG) operate on a reimbursement system. Please review the following requirements to ensure proper processing.

Equipment & Supply Purchases

- Personal purchases and cash advances are not allowed.
- All equipment and supply purchases must be made through your department.
 - Departmental administrative staff should place the order using departmental funds.
 - After expenses clear Banner, the departmental admin must contact Suzanne Melton to recover awarded funds.
- All equipment and unused supplies bought with APG funds remain with the department at the conclusion of the project.

Travel Reimbursements

- Reimbursements for both faculty and students must be submitted through Emburse Enterprise, fka Chrome River.
- Pre-approval is required for faculty travel.
- Students should keep all receipts and work with their departmental admin to submit reimbursement requests.

Reimbursement Deadlines

- Reimbursement requests must be submitted within one month of: completing the project, spending awarded funds, or finishing travel dates.
 - Example
 - Travel: Nov 3–5 → due by Dec 5
 - Supplies purchased: Jan 10 → due by Feb 10

Important

- No reimbursements will be made after the last day of classes in the spring semester.
- Projects spanning the full academic year must meet this final spring deadline.
- Late submissions may result in no reimbursement.

Need Assistance?

Contact Suzanne Melton, research programs coordinator, at scmelton@email.wcu.edu.

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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.

- **2/19/2026, 3:00–4:00 pm, Apodaca 115, Grant Seeking:** designed to help faculty search and locate funding opportunities using the SPIN database and other grant-seeking resources.
- **2/26/2026, 3:30–4:30 pm, Apodaca 115, 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!
- **3/03/2026, 3:00–4:00 pm, virtually, 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.
- **3/31/2026, 3:30–4:30 pm, Apodaca 115, 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!

Register Now. Seats are limited.

RASC

RESEARCH FOR ALL

**Research and Scholarship Conference
(RASC) 2026 - Keynote Announcement
& Schedule of Events!**

Western Carolina University's annual Research and Scholarship Conference will be held on Wednesday, March 25 and Thursday, March 26.

An event that is already inclusive of all disciplines, students, faculty, and staff will expand its scope even further this year. For the first time, faculty will be included in the oral and poster presentations, performances, and fine arts exhibits.

Although all topics of research will be on display, there will be featured presentations on research done in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene and how WCU faculty and students' scholarly endeavors have benefited the community and the region.

Continued...

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Wednesday's events will begin with oral presentations and performances in the A.K. Hinds University Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., featuring undergraduate and graduate students as well as faculty presenters. The afternoon program will shift to the Liston B. Ramsey Regional Activity Center.

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP CONFERENCE

"Helene's Lessons: Interdisciplinary Research by WCU Faculty"

- Dr. Sarah Jackson, Criminology & Criminal Justice
- Dr. Andy Hansen, Criminology & Criminal Justice
- Dr. Katie Schneider, Geosciences & Natural Resources
- Dr. Diane Styers, Geosciences & Natural Resources
- Dr. Chase Harless, Social Work

KEYNOTE PANEL

At 5 p.m., the arena will host this year's keynote event, a faculty panel titled "Helene's Lessons: Interdisciplinary Research by WCU Faculty." Moderated by associate provost of academic affairs Carmen Huffman, the panel will feature five WCU professors: Katie Schneider and Diane Styers of geosciences and natural Resources, Andy Hansen and Sarah Jackson of criminology and criminal justice and Chase Harless of social work.

[Read more about the schedule of events.](#)

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