

THE RESEARCH REVIEW

A Monthly Newsletter by The Office of Research Administration

NEWS

Pre-Award Services

- Thinking About Developing a Proposal?
- Looking for Funding Opportunities?

Post-Award Services

- Year End Roll Up Guidance for Sponsored Projects
- Summer 2026 Extra Compensation PAFs Rollout

Compliance

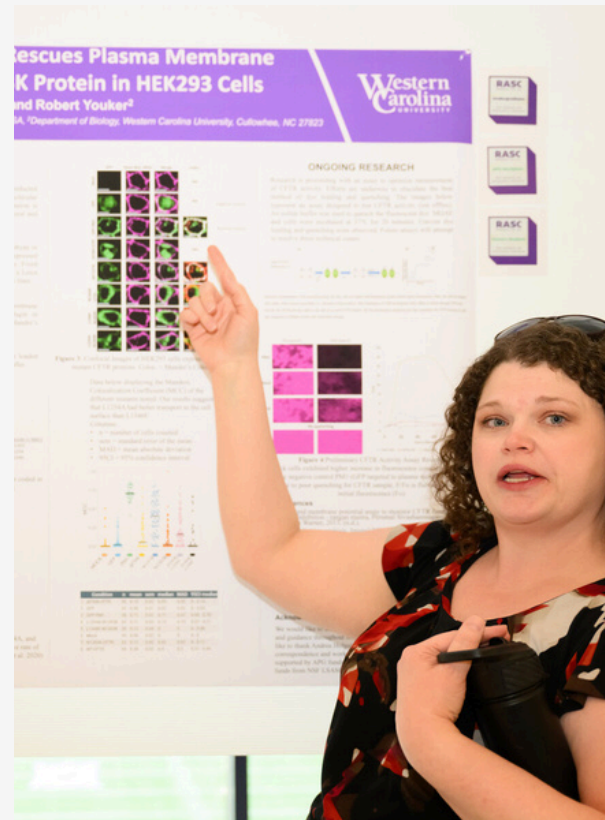
- Improving Our Webpages to Better Support You
- Avoid Common InfoEd Submission Delays: Quick Tips for Researchers
- Compliance Reminder: Project-Specific Disclosures + New External Activities

Student Research

- Graduate Student Competes in Regional 3MT Research Talk Finals

Programs & More

- Events, workshops, and special program opportunities



2026 WCU RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP CONFERENCE

2026 WCU Research and Scholarship Conference introduces new faculty involvement, highlights Hurricane Helene research

Western Carolina University's annual Research and Scholarship Conference is fast approaching. [Read More](#)

Research Data Dive

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



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PRE-AWARD SERVICES NEWS

Thinking About Developing a Proposal?

If you're gearing up to submit a grant proposal, here are a few quick steps to set yourself up for success:

- **Create or Update Your SciENcv Account:** Required for NIH and NSF biosketches and other support documents. Get started with [SciENcv](#).
- **Create or Update Your ORCID Account:** ORCID provides a persistent digital identifier that links all your scholarly work. [Register](#) or [log in](#) to ORCID.
- **Update Your Research.gov Affiliation:** Make sure your profile lists Western Carolina University as your current institution for NSF submissions. Access [Research.gov](#).
- **Find a Funding Opportunity:** Explore opportunities that align with your research interests.
- **Complete Your College Grants Checklist:** Each college provides tailored guidance to help you prepare competitive proposals:
 - [College of Arts and Sciences](#)
 - [College of Education and Allied Professions](#)
 - [David Orr Belcher College of Fine and Performing Arts](#)

Looking for Funding Opportunities?

WCU offers several easy ways to discover grants, fellowships, and other research funding:

- **SPIN Funding Database:** Access thousands of opportunities tailored to your discipline. Just log into MyWCU, open Research Administration under My Apps, and click SPIN to start searching.
- **Research Cat:** Find Funding Hub: Explore curated opportunities, internal programs, and guidance for getting started: <https://affiliate.wcu.edu/engagedresearch/find-funding/>
- **Join Our Faculty Research Interest Database:** Help us connect you with relevant opportunities by completing the quick [RASCA Form](#).

Whether you're new to seeking external funding or looking to expand your portfolio, these tools make it easier to find the right fit for your research.

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POST-AWARD NEWS

YEAR END ROLL UP GUIDANCE FOR SPONSORED PROJECTS

As we enter the final 90 days of **FY 2025–2026**, which ends on **June 30, 2026**, please be mindful of upcoming purchasing deadlines. These requirements apply to all sponsored projects, regardless of project end date, and align with university fiscal procedures and spending restrictions.

Per guidance issued by **David Steinbicker on March 13, 2026**, the following **purchase requisition deadlines** have been established to allow time for required inspections of equipment purchases over \$10,000. For questions, contact **Purchasing at Ext. 7203**.

Requisitions Required:

- **April 10, 2026:** State Term Contract purchases over \$29,000
- **April 15, 2026:** Remaining requisitions using a **4XXXXX** account code
- **April 24, 2026:** All other requisitions

All vehicle purchases require approval from the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance.

Requisitions Not Required:

No immediate deadline; standard processing applies. Please allow **3–5 business days** for Post Award review.

Summer 2026 Extra Compensation PAFs Rollout

As the spring semester ends, the ORA Post-Award Team will begin routing **Summer 2026 Extra Compensation PAFs**. Thank you to all PIs for confirming anticipated summer effort.

- **Early April 2026:** ORA Post-Award will notify budget officers and key stakeholders of summer extra compensation details.
- **April 20, 2026:** All Summer PAFs will be routed via **Adobe Sign**, grouped by lead PI and following the standard approval chain (*Lead PI → Dept Head → Dean/Vice Chancellor*).
- **May 4, 2026:** Deadline for all signatures to ensure timely processing before May payroll.

Questions? Contact **Ben Peters** (bpeters@email.wcu.edu) or **Cameron Lopez** (clopez@email.wcu.edu).

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COMPLIANCE NEWS

Improving Our Webpages to Better Support You

We are currently working to enhance the usability and accessibility of our webpages to better support your research and compliance needs. These updates are focused on making it easier to find key information, navigate processes, and access the resources you need when you need them.

As part of this effort, we've expanded and organized helpful materials, including step-by-step guides, process overviews, and practical "how-to" documents designed to support you throughout the research lifecycle.

We encourage you to explore the following pages to take advantage of these resources:

- [Human Subject Research](#)
- [Research Integrity](#)
- [Animal Research](#)
- [Export Control](#)
- [Conflict of Interest](#)
- [Institutional Biosafety](#)

Your feedback is always welcome as we continue to improve.

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

Avoid Common InfoEd Submission Delays: Quick Tips for Researchers

To help streamline review times and reduce back-and-forth during the submission process, we want to highlight a few common issues we frequently see:

- Missing or incomplete consent documentation
- Inconsistent information across study documents
- Incomplete data security/confidentiality descriptions
- Use of outdated templates or forms

Taking a few extra minutes to review your materials before submission can significantly speed up processing time.

If you're unsure about any part of your submission, we're happy to help before you submit.

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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](#).

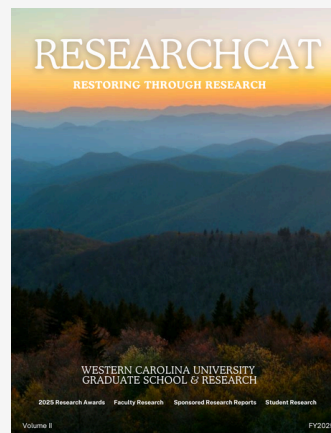
We also have helpful How-To Guides shown below:

- [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

**CHECK OUT OUR
RESEARCH
MAGAZINE!**



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STUDENT RESEARCH NEWS

Graduate Student Competes in Regional 3MT Research Talk Finals



The Graduate School would like to give special recognition to Kristina Gray (Chemistry M.S.), winner of our Fall 2025 3MT competition, for representing WCU in February at the annual gathering of the Council of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) held this year in Baton Rouge, LA. 3MT contestants from 65 graduate institutions competed across two days – each was the winner from their respective institution. Kristina was at the top of her heat on Day 1 and advanced to the finals on Day 2 with eleven others! She did an amazing job representing WCU and the research being done by graduate students in Western North Carolina. Staff from the Graduate School, including Dean Jeff Lawson and Associate Dean Joy Bowers-Campbell, were there to support her!

Kristina's research, "Flooded with Microplastics," focused on Hurricane Helene's impact on microplastics in local waterways and was even mentioned briefly in the [local coverage of the event!](#)

Check out the [Graduate School's Instagram](#) for a video recap of Kristina's experience!

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PROGRAMS & MORE

ORA Workshop Series

Don't miss our final workshop series session of the academic year! Build your grants knowledge and connect with peers in Grants 101.

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.

New Seed Funding Opportunity for Early-Stage Research & Innovation

WCU is launching the **NC Innovation Pipeline Development Program**, a new grant opportunity to support faculty and staff in moving early-stage research or creative activity toward real-world impact. The program provides \$10,000–\$25,000 in seed funding, along with structured support and entrepreneurial guidance, to help advance projects to TRL 3 or higher over one summer and one semester.

Projects may (but are not required to) align with priority areas such as advanced manufacturing, biohealth, computing, agriculture, defense innovation, or energy transition. Applications are expected to open later this spring, with funded projects beginning **May 15**. Faculty interested in discussing an idea are encouraged to reach out to John Hildreth at jhildreth@email.wcu.edu.

RASC

RESEARCH FOR ALL

Be sure to join us for the **2026 Research and Scholarship Conference (RASC)!**

On **Wednesday, March 25th**, experience a full day of scholarly engagement, including oral and poster presentations, and fine arts exhibits.

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The day concludes with a keynote address from a panel of WCU faculty, poster exhibits, and a celebratory reception sponsored by the Office of the Provost.

- **9:00 am – 3:00 pm** Undergraduate, Graduate, and Faculty Oral Presentations: A.K. Hinds University Center; Performances: Coulter Recital Hall
- **5:00 pm – 6:00 pm** Keynote Address, Ramsey Center Arena
- **6:00 pm – 7:30 pm** Undergraduate, Graduate, and Faculty Poster Presentations, Fine Arts Exhibits, and the Celebration Reception: Ramsey Center Concourse

This year's keynote event is 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. Their discussion will cover a broad range of post-Helene research, including flood mapping, law enforcement practices, community response, and the storm's long-term mental health effects on families in Western North Carolina.

On **Thursday, March 26th**, the annual Faculty Scholarship Celebration will highlight faculty research and scholarship accomplishments, including the Faculty 3MR Competition and recognition of major award recipients.

- **11:00 am – 1:30 pm**, A.K. Hinds University Center Grand Room
 - The 5th Annual Faculty 3-Minute Research (3MR) Competition
 - Faculty Scholarship Celebration Luncheon (reservation-only event)
 - Awards Presentation (Million Dollar Circle, Hunter Scholar, Provost's Scholarship Development Award)

Visit go.wcu.edu/rasc for a complete schedule of events, including presentation and program details.

Please help us spread the word and encourage students and colleagues to attend the scheduled events in support of WCU's incredible research community.