

# THE RESEARCH REVIEW

A Monthly Newsletter by The Office of Research Administration

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**WORLD'S END AT WORLD'S END: WCU PROFESSOR SPEAKS ON ANTARCTIC EXTINCTION RESEARCH**

Do you want to know how the world ends? Visit Antarctica.

Travel to the southern tip of South America to the port city of Punta Arenas, Chile. Then board a small research vessel with 20 other scientists from a dozen universities across the United States and cross the perilous seas of the Drake Passage.

Go three days south through towering waves to the ice-choked waters surrounding the Antarctic Peninsula and wait there – until the wind's finally blowing right and slowly enough. [Read more.](#)

## Research Data Dive

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

**Western  
Carolina**  
UNIVERSITY

Office of Research  
Administration

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## PRE-AWARD SERVICES NEWS

### AI-Focused Funding Opportunities

A new wave of federal programs is opening doors for researchers exploring the transformative potential of artificial intelligence. Below is a curated selection of current opportunities spanning criminal justice, education, health, and foundational AI research.

- National Institute of Justice – Research and Evaluation of Artificial Intelligence for Criminal Justice Purposes
  - LOI Due June 15, 2026
  - Supports research that advances the responsible use of AI across criminal justice systems, including evaluation of tools, impacts, and ethical considerations.
- National Science Foundation – Empowering and Educating Children to Thrive in a Digital Era
  - Deadline: November 18, 2026
  - Funding projects that help children navigate digital environments safely and effectively, with an emphasis on AI-enabled learning and well-being.
- National Science Foundation – Mathematical Foundations of Artificial Intelligence
  - Rolling until October 9, 2026
  - Seeks proposals advancing the theoretical and mathematical underpinnings of AI, including optimization, learning theory, and algorithmic foundations.
- National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation – Policy Research Grants
  - LOI Due June 8, 2026
  - Supporting research on the impacts of artificial intelligence in health care, including opportunities for cost savings, reduced administrative burden, increased access to care, and improved health outcomes, as well as the potential challenges around spending, increased coding intensity, and quality control.

A broader selection of AI-focused funding opportunities, along with additional programs organized by research area, including Arts and Humanities, STEM Fields, International Studies, Philosophy and Religion, Business, Public Policy, Public Safety, Teaching and Education, and more, is available on our Find Funding page: <https://affiliate.wcu.edu/engagedresearch/find-funding/>

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## POST-AWARD NEWS

### YEAR END ROLL UP GUIDANCE FOR SPONSORED PROJECTS

As Fiscal Year 2025–2026 (FY 26) comes to an end, we want to remind you of some important processes and deadlines. These processes & deadlines apply to all sponsored projects **regardless of the end date**. ORA must work in conjunction with rollup procedures and spending restrictions announced by the University.

#### Timeline and Processes

##### June 2026:

- Review bi-weekly fund reviews provided in email.
- **June 9th, 2026:** Payroll deadline for processing payrolls requests, or PAFs.
- **June 10th, 2026:** Post Award deadline to submit FY 26 recodes, invoices, check requests, & travel reimbursements for approval
- **June 10th, 2026:** WCU Purchasing deadlines for PCards and Catamart.
- **June 12, 2026:** Interdepartmental Transactions.
- **June 19th, 2026:** All invoices, check requests, and travel reimbursements are submitted and paid
- Submit any needed requests to the Post-Award Action Form (includes budget revisions, recodes, check requests, etc.) to be processed in this FY.

For questions, please contact Benjamin Peters ([bpeters@wcu.edu](mailto:bpeters@wcu.edu)) and Cameron Lopez ([clopez@wcu.edu](mailto:clopez@wcu.edu)).

### SUMMER 2026 EXTRA COMPENSATION

ORA Post-Award has submitted all summer extra compensation PAFs to Payroll for all sponsored projects with a start date **before 6/1/2026**.

We will process summer extra compensation PAFs for new projects as they are awarded this summer.

The next payroll deadline for a **6/30/2026** pay date is **6/5/2026**.

If you have any questions about either year end guidance or Summer 2026 Extra Compensation PAFs, please contact Benjamin Peters ([bpeters@wcu.edu](mailto:bpeters@wcu.edu)) and Cameron Lopez ([clopez@wcu.edu](mailto:clopez@wcu.edu)).

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## COMPLIANCE NEWS

### Compliance Personnel Change

The Office of Research Administration (ORA) shares that Mallory Ball will be departing Western Carolina University. Since joining WCU in October 2022, Mallory has contributed meaningfully to Research Compliance initiatives and has supported the advancement of the university's research mission. We are grateful for her dedication and the impact of her work during her time with ORA.

ORA remains fully committed to ensuring the continuity of Research Compliance services and support. Our team is in place and prepared to assist faculty, staff, and students without interruption.

**Effective immediately, all Research Compliance communications may be directed to [Billy Hutchings](#), Research Compliance Officer, or [Kloo Hansen](#), Director of ORA.**

### IRB Quick Links: Managing Your Study in InfoEd

Navigating next steps in the IRB process? Use the guidance below to ensure your submissions are completed correctly:

#### Responding to requested revisions:

Use this guide when the IRB has asked for changes to your submission

→ [Respond to Changes Requested by the IRB Reviewer](#)

#### Making changes to an approved study:

Use this process to request updates after approval

→ [Submit a Modification to an Approved Protocol](#)

#### Renewing or closing your study:

For full board studies requiring continuing review, or when your study is complete

→ [Complete a Continuing Review or Study Closure](#)

If you're unsure which pathway applies, reach out to our office—we're happy to help ensure your submission is routed correctly.

For questions, contact: Billy Hutchings – Research Compliance Officer, at [wshutchings@wcu.edu](mailto:wshutchings@wcu.edu)

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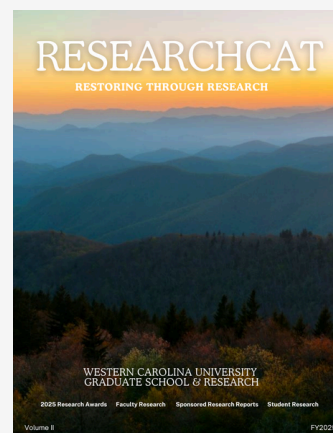
## COMPLIANCE NEWS

### Summer Travel – Export Control

- As summer international travel increases, faculty and staff are reminded to consider export control and research security requirements prior to departure.
  - University-owned laptops, research data, proprietary information, encrypted software, and certain research materials may be subject to federal export control regulations.
- Most WCU personnel only encounter export control when traveling internationally. If you are planning to travel internationally, please review [University Policy 100](#), complete the [Policy 100 form](#) with approval from your Department, and include your detailed itinerary.
- Faculty and staff who plan to invite international visitors/scholars to visit our campus must obtain the Provost's approval prior to the visit using the [International Visitor Approval Form](#), which asks for a copy of the visitor's itinerary and any technical data or university-owned equipment being shared with the visitor.
- Travelers are encouraged to contact ORA before travel to discuss any potential export control considerations and ensure compliance with applicable regulations.

For questions, contact: ORA Director Kloo Hansen, at [kchansen@wcu.edu](mailto:kchansen@wcu.edu)

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[RESEARCH  
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## STUDENT RESEARCH NEWS

On May 19 the North Carolina Council of Graduate Schools (NCCGS) sponsored **Graduate Education Day** at the State Legislature in Raleigh with the goal of highlighting graduate student research across the state. Sixteen graduate schools in North Carolina sent representatives. Dean Lawson attended with two WCU graduate students, Luke and Caleb, to present their research and meet with legislators. Luke and Caleb both presented oral presentations at RASC earlier this Spring. A brief overview of their experience is highlighted in a reel on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

- Dr. Luke Gillespie (just graduated on May 8!)
  - Program: Family Nurse Practitioner D.N.P.
  - Research Project: "Confidence for Screening for Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in Men."
- Caleb Cole
  - Program: Engineering Technology M.S.E.T.
  - Research Project: "Exploring Sustainable Practices for Managing 3D Printing Waste"

Special gratitude to Christy Agner, Director of External Relations, and her team for their effort in coordinating meetings for our students with a number of senators and representatives throughout the day.



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## STUDENT RESEARCH NEWS

Mark your calendars for the **SoCon Undergraduate Research Forum (SURF) 2026**, happening **October 9 – 10** at Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina!

Hosted by the Southern Conference (SoCon) Academic Exchange, SURF is a dynamic, multidisciplinary conference that brings together around 150 student presenters from all ten SoCon institutions. From the arts and humanities to STEM, students showcase their research and creative work in engaging, supportive environments.

Why participate?

- Share your research or creative projects
- Connect with peers across the SoCon
- Gain presentation experience in welcoming, small-group settings
- No registration fee
- Most expenses covered upon acceptance
- Meals provided during much of the conference
- This is a fantastic opportunity—especially for students involved in summer research—to highlight your work and represent your institution.

Be on the lookout for the application this fall!

For questions, contact Suzanne Melton, Research Programs Coordinator, at [scmelton@wcu.edu](mailto:scmelton@wcu.edu)

