

THE RESEARCH REVIEW

A Monthly Newsletter by The Office of Research Administration

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**CATALYST 2026 IGNITES LEADERSHIP,
RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT**

The third annual CATALYST: Summer Research and Leadership Program welcomed 18 incoming WCU students representing a variety of academic majors and interests. A collaborative initiative between the Office of Research Administration and the Brinson Honors College, CATALYST introduces students to the transformative power of undergraduate research and leadership, two touchstones of the Honors College experience.

Created three years ago through the vision and leadership of Suzanne Melton, program director, and Jill Granger, dean of the Brinson Honors College, CATALYST was designed to help students discover opportunities for academic exploration while building confidence, leadership skills, and meaningful connections before their first semester begins. [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

NSF Updates Data Management and Sharing Plan (DMSP)

The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) has updated the format for submitting the required Data Management and Sharing Plan (DMSP). Beginning in 2026, DMSPs will no longer be uploaded as PDF attachments. Instead, they will be completed and submitted through a dedicated webform within Research.gov. This change aligns with NSF Supplemental Policy Notice NSF 26-202, issued on January 22, 2026, and subsequent guidance released by NSF through a Research.gov advisory.

What you need to know:

- All NSF proposals must include a DMSP completed through the Research.gov webform rather than a PDF upload.
- The webform will be tailored to the proposal and generated based on the primary NSF Directorate selected during proposal creation.
- Completion of the DMSP webform is required for proposal submission unless an approved justification for exemption is provided.
- NSF has published additional guidance and instructions for each section of the new webform to assist proposers. [Click here](#) for additional information on the webform.

Spotlight: Early Career Grant Opportunities

Are you an early-stage investigator looking to launch your research career? Numerous funding agencies offer grant programs specifically designed to support emerging researchers as they establish independent research programs, build preliminary data, and develop competitive research portfolios.

Early Career Grant opportunities are available across a wide range of disciplines from federal agencies, foundations, and professional societies. Programs such as the NSF CAREER Award, Department of Energy Early Career Research Program, and many foundation-sponsored young investigator awards provide critical support for innovative research and career development.

[Explore our curated list of Early Career Grant Opportunities](#)

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POST-AWARD NEWS

PROCESS FOR HONORARIUMS

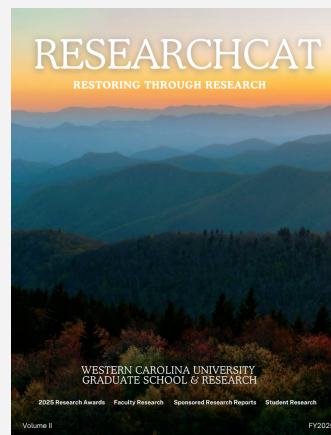
An honorarium is a voluntary payment to present to someone to express gratitude or admiration for receipt of their time and effort with a contract set in place. To initiate an honorarium, complete the honorarium request form, which is linked below, and draft a letter thanking the recipient for their time and contribution. A completed W-9 form from the recipient must also be attached to the form and letter. Once the packet is assembled, obtain all necessary departmental and administrative signatures.

<https://www.wcu.edu/WebFiles/controller-request-to-authorize-honorarium.pdf>

After gathering the required signatures from the PI/Ao, send the full request to Ben Peters at bpeters@wcu.edu for grants approval via Adobe Sign. Once grants approval is complete and all signatures are in place, the finalized request should be emailed to the Controller's Office for processing.

If you have questions or need assistance with this process, please reach out to Ben Peters directly.

**CHECK OUT OUR
RESEARCH
MAGAZINE!**



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COMPLIANCE NEWS

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

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STUDENT RESEARCH NEWS

Summer Research Assistantships in the Graduate School

The Graduate School was able to fund 52 student research assistantships over the summer for a stipend total of \$196,000. Students from residential programs in Cullowhee and Asheville conducted research in May and June at either 15 or 30 hours per week. 40 different faculty members participated as research supervisors.

Programs included: Art (Fine Arts) M.F.A.; Biology M.S.; Chemistry M.S.; Counseling: Clinical Mental Health M.S.; Counseling: School M.A.Ed.; Engineering Technology M.S.; English M.A.; Experiential and Outdoor Education M.S.; History M.A.; Psychology (General) M.A.; Psychology (Health Service) Psy.D.; School Psychology S.S.P.; Social Work M.S.W.

Students who participate in a summer research assistantship are expected to showcase their research at either the 3MT competition in the Fall or at RASC (poster or oral presentation) in the Spring.

Save the Date: SNCURCS

The **State of North Carolina Undergraduate Research and Creativity Symposium (SNCURCS)** is held each November at a host institution within the UNC and NC Independent Colleges and Universities systems. This statewide symposium started at NC State University and now rotates among public and private institutions of higher learning in North Carolina.

It has grown to be a large event for any undergraduate student in North Carolina to be able to present their research or creative work. Presentations can be posters, oral presentations, exhibits, or performances.

All undergraduate students enrolled in North Carolina colleges, universities, or community colleges and high school students who have completed a mentored research project through an accredited university or other Summer Ventures or research program are eligible to participate in SNCURCS. Presentations include Poster, Oral, Exhibit and Performance options.

SAVE THE DATE!

This year the SNCURCS conference will be held on **November 7, 2026** at UNC Charlotte, in Charlotte, NC. For the first time ever, WCU will support a select number of students with their travel and registration for this conference.

For questions and inquiries, please contact Suzanne Melton, Research Programs Coordinator, at scmelton@wcu.edu.

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STUDENT RESEARCH NEWS

Apply to Present at the SoCon Undergraduate Research Forum (SURF)

Applications are open for undergraduate students to present their research at 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.

Apply Now!

Key Dates:

- **Information Session:** August 26, 2026, 1:00–1:30 PM via Zoom
 - Join Zoom Meeting: <https://wcu.zoom.us/j/81874565725>
- **Application Deadline:** September 14, 2026
- **Notification of Acceptance:** September 16–25
- **Mandatory Pre-Travel Meeting:** September 30, 2026, from 9:30 – 10:30 AM (details in acceptance letter)
- **Poster Printing due to Hunter Library:** October 1, 2026
- **Conference Dates:** October 9–10, 2026

For questions, contact Suzanne Melton, Research Programs Coordinator, at scmelton@wcu.edu