

THE RESEARCH REVIEW

A Monthly Newsletter by The Office of Research Administration

UPCOMING

Pre-Award Services

- New to WCU? We're Glad You're Here!
- Find Your Next Grant Opportunity

Post-Award Services

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- Need a Prior Action/Approval Request (PAR)? Start Early!
- Academic Year Release Season Is Here!

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- Fall Review Board Deadlines Approaching
- New Sponsored Project Hiring Templates Now LIVE in Talent Management
- Project-Specific Disclosures + New External Activities

Student Research

- SoCon Undergraduate Research Forum (SURF) Application Open!
- Undergraduate Academic Project Grants
- SNCURCS Save the Date!



GRANT TO DIGITIZE MAGNETIC REELS IN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

One of Kellen Carpenter's first memories during his early days working at Hunter Library as a technician in special collections is of helping an older gentleman find a picture of his family band.

[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

New to WCU? We're Glad You're Here!

We are excited to welcome you to Western Carolina University, where curiosity, creativity, and collaboration drive our mission forward. Whether you're joining us from graduate school, industry, or another academic institution, you are now part of a community that values scholarship, innovation, and the people behind it.

If you plan to engage in research, scholarship, or creative activities, we've developed a helpful resource to guide you through the essential first steps of establishing your research profile at WCU.

Get started here: [New Faculty Research Guide](#)

This resource includes information on:

- Research compliance and required training
- Internal and external funding resources
- Grant development and proposal support
- Research administration contacts
- Additional tools and resources to support your scholarly activities

We look forward to supporting your success and helping you advance your research, scholarship, and creative endeavors at WCU.

Find Your Next Grant Opportunity

Looking for opportunities in your discipline? Visit Research CAT to browse funding opportunities by field of study: <https://affiliate.wcu.edu/engagedresearch/find-funding/>

Also, don't forget to complete your college's Grants Checklist before beginning proposal development. College-specific Grants Checklists are available through Research CAT and are linked below.

- [College of Arts and Sciences](#)
- [College of Education and Allied Professions](#)
- [David Orr Belcher College of Fine and Performing Arts](#)
- [Hunter Library](#)

Faculty are also encouraged to contact the Pre-Award Team for assistance identifying funding opportunities, navigating college-specific requirements, and developing competitive proposals.

Samantha Ellithorpe at sellithorpe@wcu.edu

Matt Salerno at msalerno@wcu.edu

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POST-AWARD NEWS

Staff Update

Please join us in wishing **Ben Peters** all the best as he transitions from ORA to a new role as **Budget Analyst in the Controller's Office**. We are excited for Ben as he begins this next chapter of his professional journey at WCU and thank him for his contributions to research administration. For post-award assistance, please contact **Kloo Hansen** (kchansen@wcu.edu), Director of Research Administration, or **Cameron Lopez** (clopez@wcu.edu), Grant Specialist.

Need a Prior Action/Approval Request (PAR)? Start Early!

Many sponsor actions, including no-cost extensions, budget revisions, and changes in scope, require sponsor prior approval. The first step is to contact your Post Award team to determine requirements and develop the request strategy. PARs often require internal review and sponsor processing, which can take days or even weeks, so early engagement is key to avoiding project delays.

View our New Video for More Information!

https://youtu.be/IKdGVaDS6BI?si=C_EgUc6ZREIPM7mq



You can also learn about individual PARs by visiting our Granting Success page for award & financial management at go.wcu.edu/research

Contact Kloo Hansen (kchansen@wcu.edu) or Cameron Lopez (clopez@wcu.edu) for assistance with PARs.

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POST-AWARD NEWS

Academic Year Release Season Is Here!

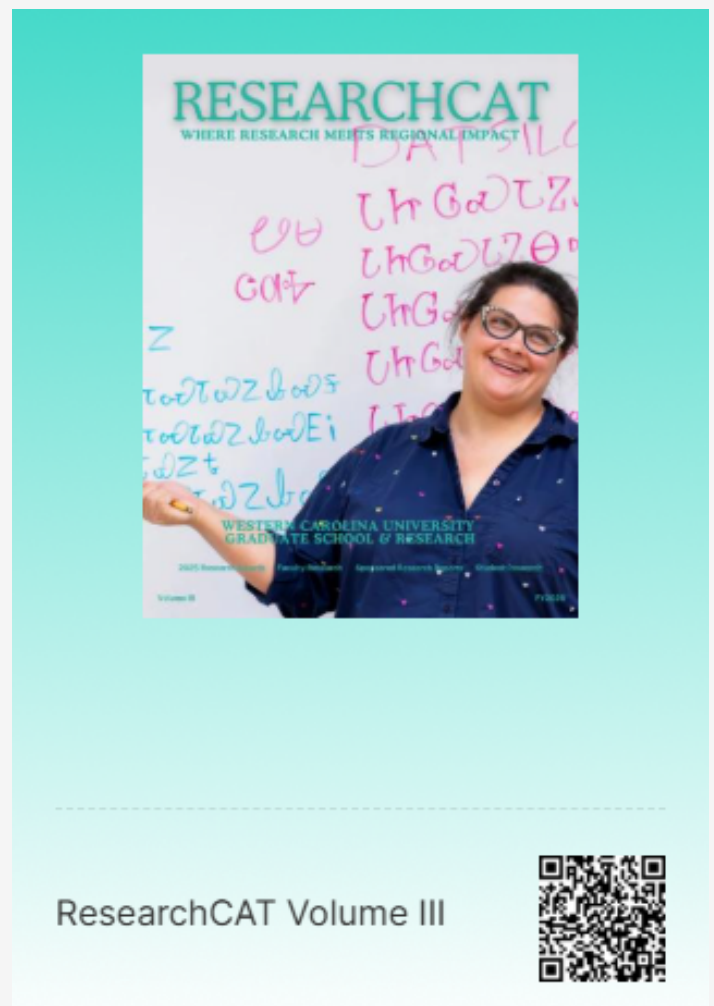
PIs should have received an email detailing all personnel with Academic Year (AY) release effort beginning between August 1 and **December 31, 2026**, including project information, person months, salary replacement amounts, and effective dates. Please review and submit any approvals, comments, or requested changes as soon as possible. Our internal deadline for submission through Talent Management (TM) is **September 4, 2026**. A second round of notifications for release effort beginning between **January 1 and May 31, 2027** will be distributed in November. If you anticipate a need for AY release on a sponsored project, please contact the Post Award team early to discuss options, requirements, and timelines.

Contact Kloo Hansen (kchansen@wcu.edu) or Cameron Lopez (clopez@wcu.edu) for assistance with PARs.

ResearchCAT Magazine Volume III

The Graduate School & Research has released its annual research magazine. The third volume summarizes the fiscal year 2026 annual report of the Office of Research Administration (ORA), showcasing the pursuit of research, scholarship, and creative activities, as well as extramural sponsorship and initiatives.

[Explore the magazine.](#)



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COMPLIANCE NEWS

Compliance Updates: Fall Review Board Deadlines Approaching

Planning research involving human participants, animals, or recombinant/synthetic biological materials? Be sure to review upcoming **IRB, IACUC, and IBC meeting and protocol submission deadlines** and submit materials early to allow adequate time for review. Investigators are encouraged to take advantage of the **help guides, templates, FAQs, and submission resources available on the ORA website** to streamline the process. For questions, protocol planning, or assistance with submissions, please contact **Kloo Hansen** (kchansen@wcu.edu) or **Billy Hutchings** (wshutchings@wcu.edu). We're here to help ensure your protocols are complete and ready for review.

See the Deadlines Here:

[Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#)

[Institutional Animal Care and Use \(IACUC\)](#)

[Institutional Biosafety Committee \(IBC\)](#)

Compliance & Post-Award Hiring: New Sponsored Project Hiring Templates Now LIVE in Talent Management

ORA and Human Resources have launched new hiring features to streamline the onboarding of employees supported by externally funded projects. The updated features include a dropdown to select the type of **funding source (Federal NIH/NSF, Federal Non-NIH/Non-NSF, & Non-Federal)**, and a **required training attestation question** on the job description templates. On hiring proposals, an **optional document upload feature** is now available that allows hiring managers to verify project-specific training certifications within the hiring proposal. These enhancements are designed to help ensure compliance with sponsor requirements while reducing guesswork during the hiring process. Help guides will be available to support implementation, and our **Post-Award and Compliance teams are available to answer questions and provide guidance throughout the hiring process**. If you work with sponsored project hiring, please don't hesitate to reach out for assistance.

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.

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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.

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](#)

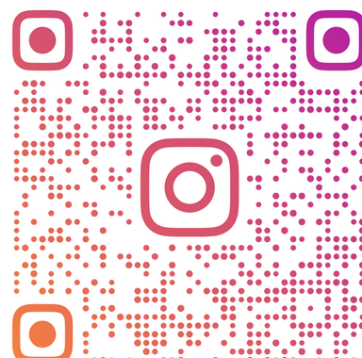
[Supervisor COI Review](#)

[Responding to Additional Information Needed](#)

FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM!



@WCU.ORA



WCU.UNDERGRAD.RESEARCH

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STUDENT RESEARCH NEWS

SoCon Undergraduate Research Forum (SURF) Application Open!

The Southern Conference (SoCon) Academic Exchange is proud to announce that the annual **SoCon Undergraduate Research Forum (SURF)** Conference will be held on **October 9–10, 2026**, on the campus of Wofford College in Spartanburg, SC. This multidisciplinary conference will bring together approximately 150 student presenters from all ten colleges/universities of the SoCon for a two-day event that features projects in the arts and humanities, as well as the STEM disciplines.

Please note that there is no registration fee. WCU will cover expenses for a select number of students.

Key Dates:

Info Session: August 26, 2026 | 1:00–1:30 PM | <https://wcu.zoom.us/j/81874565725>

Application Deadline: September 14, 2026

Acceptance Notification: September 16 – 22, 2026

Mandatory Pre-Travel Meeting: September 30, 2026 | 9:30 – 10:30 AM

Poster Printing due to Hunter Library: October 1, 2026

Apply Now!

Questions? Contact: Suzanne Melton (Research Programs Coordinator) scmelton@wcu.edu

Undergraduate Academic Project Grants Fall Cycle Opens Soon!

Academic Project Grants (APGs) support undergraduate research and creative work efforts at Western Carolina University. Any student or group of students working with a faculty sponsor is eligible to apply for a grant.

Funding Uses:

Equipment, materials, and supplies

Individual or group travel to present at conferences

Support for travel to NCUR

*Awards are competitive, with limited funds awarded

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STUDENT RESEARCH NEWS

Important Dates:

Submission Portal Opens:
August 17, 2026

Cycle Deadlines:

Cycle 1: September 24, 2026
Cycle 2: October 22, 2026
Cycle 3: January 21, 2027
Cycle 4: February 18, 2027

Visit the [APG webpage](#) for guidelines, templates, and the submission portal.

Questions? Contact: Suzanne Melton (Research Programs Coordinator) scmelton@wcu.edu

State of North Carolina Undergraduate Research and Creativity Symposium (SNCURCS)

The State of North Carolina Undergraduate Research and Creativity Symposium 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. WCU will cover expenses for a select number of students. Registration details coming soon!

Questions? Contact: Suzanne Melton (Research Programs Coordinator) scmelton@wcu.edu

Learn more about [SNCURCS](#).

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PROGRAMS & MORE

Fall Proposal Opportunities: PSDA & FaRM Programs

The Office of Research Administration (ORA) will begin accepting proposals this fall for two key funding opportunities: the **Provost's Scholarship Development Awards (PSDA)** and the **Faculty Research Mentoring (FaRM) Program**.

A formal call for proposals will be released on August 25, 2026, with submissions accepted until October 26, 2026, at 11:59 PM.

Stay tuned for more details and mark your calendars!
More information can be found [here](#).

ORA Workshop Series

The Office of Research Administration (ORA) is excited to announce our Workshop Series for Fall 2026.

Our sessions include:

- **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!
- **Grant Seeking:** designed to help faculty search and locate funding opportunities using the SPIN database and other grant-seeking resources

[Register Now](#). Seats are limited.



15 SEP 2026 9:30 - 11:00 AM	22 OCT 2026 1:30 - 3:00 PM
Grant Seeking: designed to help faculty search and locate funding opportunities using the SPIN database and other grant-seeking resources.	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!