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THE RESEARCH REVIEW

A Monthly Newsletter by The Office of Research Administration

UPCOMING

Pre-Award Services

- NIH Update: DMS Plans No Longer Required for K Awards
- NASA Update: SciENcv Now Required for Proposal Disclosures
- NSF Update: Data Management and Sharing Plans Now Completed in Research.gov

Post-Award Services

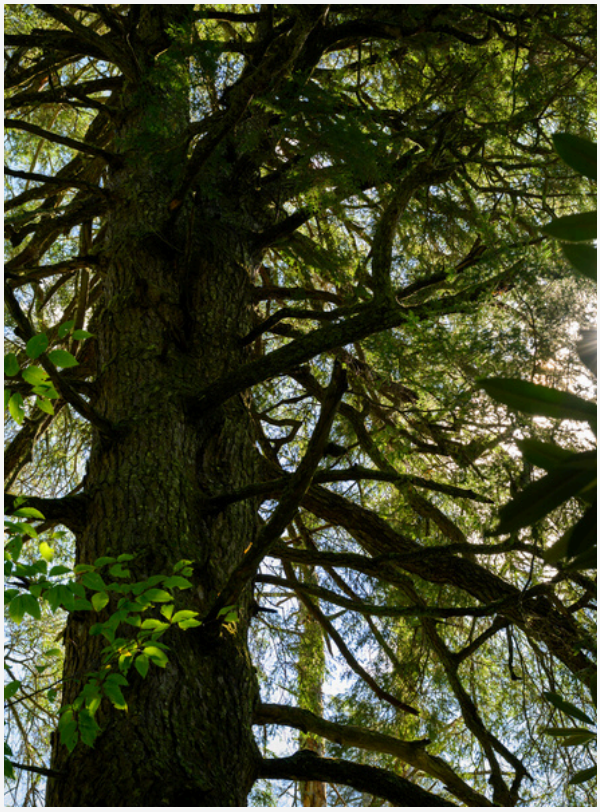
- Procurement Guidance
- Spring 2026 Academic Effort Preparation Underway

Compliance

- International Travel & International Visitors
- IRB Study Closure Reminder

Student Research

- Undergraduate Academic Project Grants & The National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR)
- 2 WCU grad students attend forensic genetics conference in Montreal



A 467-YEAR-OLD HEMLOCK HAS A SONG TO SING

AFor 467 years, an eastern hemlock in the mountains of Western North Carolina has counted the seasons ring by ring. Now, Highlands Biological Station scientist Liam Stiefel has translated those rings into music, allowing us to listen to the tree's centuries-old record.

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

NIH Update: DMS Plans No Longer Required for K Awards

The NIH has announced an important change for Career Development (K) Award proposals. Effective immediately, applicants are no longer required to submit a Data Management and Sharing (DMS) Plan with K award applications. This change supersedes previous guidance that would have implemented the requirement in October 2027.

Eliminating this requirement reduces administrative burden for both applicants and institutions while ensuring that K award expectations remain focused on investigator development.

Learn More: NIH Notice NOT-OD-26-120.

NASA Update: SciENcv Now Required for Proposal Disclosures

NASA has launched support for SciENcv and will require its use for all grant and cooperative agreement proposals. As of September 1, 2026, only the NASA-specific biographical sketch and Current and Pending (Other) Support forms generated through SciENcv will be accepted.

SciENcv provides a centralized platform for creating, managing, and sharing standardized disclosure documents. Investigators can leverage existing SciENcv profiles, import available data, and generate the required NASA forms directly within the system.

How to Get Started:

- Log in to SciENcv.
- Select "Create a New CV" from the My NCBI dashboard.
- Choose "New Document" and select either the NASA Biosketch or NASA Current and Pending (Other) Support form.

Researchers planning to submit NASA proposals should ensure their SciENcv profiles are established and up to date.

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PRE-AWARD SERVICES NEWS

NSF Update: Data Management and Sharing Plans Now Completed in Research.gov

NSF has streamlined the proposal submission process by moving the Data Management and Sharing Plan (DMSP) from a standalone attachment to a web-based form within Research.gov. The new structured form guides investigators through key data management and sharing requirements.

NSF applicants should incorporate DMSP development into their proposal preparation timeline, as the information must now be entered directly into Research.gov and can no longer be submitted as a separate attachment.

FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM!

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POST-AWARD NEWS

Procurement Guidance

The Post Award team has put together a helpful guide to support Principal Investigators, Departmental Administrative Support Associates, and Project Coordinators in navigating the university's procurement systems with confidence.

You can find helpful guidance documents and examples by clicking this hyperlink!

Whether you're using Catamart, Emburse Enterprise, Talent Management, or P-Cards, the goal is to make sure your documentation is complete, accurate, and aligned with your project's Awarded Budget of Record (ABOR). By following these best practices – like using the right budget codes and providing clear business purposes – you'll help streamline approvals, avoid delays, and stay in compliance with university and funding agency requirements.

Each system has its own set of expectations, and these guides break them down in a clear, approachable way. For example, Catamart requisitions need detailed vendor and budget info, while Pcards are best for small purchases and require itemized receipts and monthly reconciliation. Emburse Enterprise is your go-to for travel and expense reimbursements, and Talent Management handles hiring and professional services, with a focus on aligning proposals with your ABOR and budget justification. Across all platforms, clarity and specificity are key – especially when describing purchases, travel, or hiring needs.
Before you hit submit, take a moment to run through this final checklist:

- Is your business purpose clearly stated and tied to your budget?
- Are your receipts, invoices, and quotes itemized that are legible?
- Have you used the correct fund and account codes?

Ensuring these details are in place not only helps your request move smoothly through the system but also supports the integrity of your sponsored project. With this guidance, WCU is here to help you succeed in managing your project funds with ease and confidence.

Spring 2026 Academic Effort Preparation Underway

As the fall semester is over halfway done, Post Award is starting to prepare the entries for academic effort for the upcoming Spring 2026 semester. Faculty can expect an email from us within the next month to confirm the grant effort. Our goal is to ensure accurate and timely booked entries on your grants.

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COMPLIANCE NEWS

International Travel & International Visitors

Planning international travel or hosting an international visitor? Be sure to complete the required approvals before making arrangements.

International Travel

- Review **University Policy 100**
- Complete the **Policy 100 Travel Form** with departmental approval
  - Include a detailed travel itinerary with your submission

Hosting International Visitors or Scholars

- Obtain Provost approval before the visit
- Submit the **International Visitor Approval Form**
  - Provide the visitor's itinerary
  - Disclose any university-owned equipment or technical data that will be shared

Questions? Contact **IRB@email.wcu.edu**.

IRB Study Closure Reminder

If your study is complete, it may be time to close your IRB record.

A study may be eligible for closure when:

- All data collection activities are complete
- Participant contact and study interventions have ended
- Access to identifiable or coded data is no longer needed
- Only de-identified data remain, or all analyses have been completed

How to Close a Study

- Submit a Continuing Review request
- Indicate within the submission that you wish to close the study
- Follow the study closure **instructions**

Questions? Contact **IRB@email.wcu.edu**.

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STUDENT RESEARCH NEWS

Academic Project Grants (APGs) include individual travel requests to attend the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR).

Undergraduate students engaged in research and creative scholarship are encouraged to apply for the **National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR)** 2027, taking place **April 12–14, 2027**, in **Grand Rapids, Michigan**. The abstract submission deadline is **December 4, 2026**.

Academic Project Grants (APGs) are available to support all undergraduate research and creative activities, including supplies, equipment, travel, and NCUR participation. Funding awards range from up to **$750** for individual projects, **$2,000** for group travel, and up to **$1,250** for NCUR travel support. Students are encouraged to apply early, as funding is competitive and limited.

Discover APG proposal guidelines, template, and submission portal.

Contact **Suzanne Melton** for more information.

2 WCU grad students attend forensic genetics conference in Montreal

Just about anyone's going to be starstruck when they meet their favorite celebrities. Natalie May's idols, however, are a bit different than most. They're scientists, whose research she's read since she started graduate school at Western Carolina University.

Recently, she had the opportunity to present her research to them on a worldwide stage.

May, fellow WCU student Jordan Brown, chemistry and physics assistant professor Brittania Bintz and biology associate professor Maureen Hickman attended the annual International Society for Forensic Genetics meeting in Montreal, Canada. Read more here.



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PROGRAMS & MORE

Save the Date! RASC 2027

This year, the Research and Scholarship Conference (RASC) will return with in-person exhibitions of student and faculty research, scholarship, and creative inquiry. The event will host various scholarly content, including posters, exhibits, performance presentations, a keynote address, faculty 3MR, two celebrations, and awards for scholarly activities.

RASC
RESEARCH FOR ALL

Undergraduate students, Graduate students, faculty, and staff can register their academic work and present it at this showcase event; additionally, the annual Faculty Scholarship Celebration highlights faculty scholarly accomplishments.

Save the date to attend RASC, WCU's largest showcase for graduate, undergraduate, faculty, and staff academic work.

Registration opens November 19, 2026.

Learn more about RASC.

Contact Suzanne Melton, Research Programs Coordinator, scmelton@wcu.edu, for more information.

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PROGRAMS & MORE

ORA Staff Updates



Amanda Lytle

We are excited to welcome Amanda Lytle to the Office of Research Administration as Director of Research Compliance and Integrity. Amanda most recently served as the university Laboratory Safety Officer. She is also an adjunct instructor in Biology.

Amanda brings extensive experience in biosafety and research safety, along with deep regulatory and technical expertise.

We look forward to the contributions she will make in advancing research compliance and supporting WCU's research enterprise.



Samantha Ellithorpe

The Office of Research Administration is pleased to announce Samantha Ellithorpe's appointment as Post-Award Manager. Throughout her tenure with ORA, Samantha has played a key role in advancing operational improvements while providing leadership in proposal development and submission activities, helping faculty successfully navigate the grants process.

We extend our sincere gratitude for her many contributions to the pre-award unit and her commitment to fostering a strong research environment at WCU.

We are excited for Samantha as she begins this next chapter of her professional journey at WCU.