Winter 2013

University College Connection Winter 2013

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From the Dean’s Office

University College Connection

** Regional Mail **

University College is responsible for getting mail from the Bowling Green campus to the regional campuses. If you have an item that needs to go to South Campus, Elizabethtown, Ft. Knox, Radcliff, Glasgow or Owensboro campuses, you may call our office (745-4092) by 12:00 p.m. for same day pick-up. You may also drop off your mail at: Tate Page Hall, Room 201. Please CLEARLY label the mail with the person’s name, campus, building name, and room number. Your cooperation is appreciated!

Where’s Big Red?

Liza Ramirez, from our Radcliff campus, sent us a picture of Big Red celebrating Valentine’s Day. Look for Big ‘Cupid’ Red throughout the pages of the newsletter. The first one to respond with the location will win a University College travel mug. Email wendi.kelley@wku.edu and...
This spring at the ALIVE Center
February 28
Celebrating Service at WKU Men’s Basketball game
March 7
Hill House Informational Meeting
March 8
Bonner Leadership Scholar informational meeting for students and parents
March 19
Random Acts of Service
March 30
Hill House block party
April 1
Deadline for Hill House, Bonner Leader, and $100 Solution Graduate Assistant applications
April 1
Deadline to apply for Community Partnership Incentive Awards
April 22-26
National Volunteer Week
April 23
CANstruct for a Cause
April 25
President’s Volunteer Service Awards
April 29
The $100 Solution End of the Semester Celebration

Learn more about all of our projects at www.wku.edu/alive!

Service-Learning
The WKU ALIVE Center continues to utilize The $100 Solution™ program as a service-learning tool. This semester 120 students will create projects relevant to their coursework. The $100 Solution™ utilizes course learning objectives combined with the five principles of service-learning to help students answer a central question: “with this $100 bill, what can I do to enhance quality of life for others?” It teaches students to ask what they can do rather than self-determining the needs of others, and it demonstrates that many social problems exist which can be solved with small amounts of money, or rather, by even thinking beyond monetary solutions to make a difference in their community.

Volunteerism
Students can call or visit the ALIVE Center’s office or website to identify opportunities to serve in the local and regional area. Students and student groups can utilize the ALIVE Center’s services to develop their own projects using the Partnership Tool Kit. In addition, students and faculty can participate in the monthly Random Acts of Service projects and National Volunteer Week in partnership with WKU Student Activities.

Community-Based Research
The WKU ALIVE CCP supports community-based research at WKU through the Community Partnership Funds and the Hill House program. Last fall, the Hill House students looked at Unity in Politics. They created a survey instrument, conducted a neighborhood survey, and analyzed data from the survey assessing neighborhood perceptions on national and local government issues. They also held a debate watch and an election results viewing party. The students continue this spring semester by completing their research projects. View their work at this year’s Research Conference at WKU.

Remember the next deadline to apply for Community Partnership Incentive Awards is April 1st. Community Partnership Funds (CPF) is a funding program that provides the opportunity for faculty, staff, students, and members of the community to implement campus and community partnership projects that address social issues locally and abroad. CPFs support public problem-solving through service-learning, community development or community-based research.
Gender and Women’s Studies FUSE Award

Gender and Women’s Studies minor, Anna Nichols, was the recipient of a FUSE Grant for the summer and fall of 2012. Dr. Molly Kerby, Department of Diversity and Community Studies and Dr. Gayle Mallinger, Department of Social Work, led the project. The research/study examined the variations in sexual identification among attendees of two distinct national women’s music festivals. Specifically, the study, grounded in sense of place theory, compared the sexual identification of women who attended a separatist event with those who attend a non-exclusive venue. The team also presented a workshop at the National Women’s Music Festival, 32 Flavors and Then Some, on sexual identity and intersectionality. The workshop explored diverse identities and the development of a sense of place. Data from these investigations have been submitted for presentation at the National Women’s Studies Association Conference, which will be held in November 2013. Work toward a national publication in a peer-reviewed, scholarly journal is also underway.

Kimberly Nessler (English), Gayle Mallinger (Social Work), Molly Kerby (GWS), and GWS minor/Honors student Anna Nuckols.

Women’s drum circle and dance at the National Women’s Music Festival

Planning Committee of the Coalition for Gender & Racial Equality

Members of the Coalition meet bi-weekly to plan events for the coming semester. This spring, the Coalition is hosting a reading group for the memoir by Steve Pemberton, A Chance in the World. The Coalition will purchase books for Coalition students and for our co-sponsoring group, Black Men of Western, in preparation for Pemberton’s visit to WKU on March 7, which is sponsored by the Office of Diversity Programs.
Gender and Women’s Studies student assistants and minors Meghan Kennedy and Tracy Jo Ingram spent the first half of January in Cuba partaking in a course on Cuban culture and literature. Aside from soaking up all things Hemingway and socialist revolution, the two also completed their service project initiative Bras4Cuba. Prior to departure, they collected over 300 bras in addition to pads and tampons. The students came up against unexpected frustrations and governmental restrictions when it came to distributing so many items.
In Tracy Jo’s words:
However, we’d brought much more than what could appropriately be left in hotel rooms every few days, and besides, we were hoping for them to get to a place where they might assuredly be useful. We’d collected over 300 bras at home—every size color, form, and structure imaginable. Picking out a wide range of sizes and sorting to accommodate for those that were newest or in the best shape, we finagled as many as we could pack into our luggage, focusing primarily on sizes that may best fit developing adolescent girls. In conjunction with the tampons, we’d hoped to supply a growing gal with a few of the items she would need (and are incredibly expensive to purchase in Cuba).

The following is an excerpt from Meg’s travel blog, written on their last day in Cuba:
The defining moment came last night. Our guide, after struggling against restrictions on American travel, decided to take us to a dance school in Havana whose students and teachers are women of all ages. She was nervous, knowing that we truly had good intentions but wondering how we’d be received—two Americans arriving unannounced at the top dance school in the country. I too was worried—that these girls might be too privileged to use and appreciate the donations as much as others would.

Our fears were unfounded. Though at first the word “Americanas” brought a visible pall over the room, the news of our gifts opened doors: we received posters, observed a class, met the lead dancer, and were welcomed into a private exhibition. As I sat in my fold-out wooden chair, watching beautiful, strong girls whose skirts and movements called to mind fields of sunflowers, I began to cry. How could I have been so lucky? The instructors graced us with a gift of ballet and flamenco because they understood the great need of their students for our tangible gifts, a need great enough to overcome any of the rightful “arrogance” our guide had feared. I wondered about each girl’s life. When she went home, did she have enough food? Did she have soap or enough money for the clothes her growing body needed? I couldn’t tell by looking, and in that moment, it didn’t matter. Their faces showed that nothing mattered beyond the resonance of their heels, the flourishes of their skirts, and the beauty of the dance.

Tracy Jo, who has a background in dance, tells the story from her perspective:
The girls twisted, spun, and weaved with all the grace of both a butterfly and a black widow, simultaneously fluttering and demanding. Here came my tears. Each whirl of yellow, each clack of the heel sent another drop of water over the lid of my eye. Their elegance, their talent overwhelmed me, especially so young. The dancer in me caught every movement and held it in the space between my ribs that aches to leap and to turn when she sees another dancing. For those twelve minutes, those girls felt like my sisters, their spirits belonging to me, my own owed to them.

This project, but particularly the completion of this project, was an honor. There is nothing like the spirit of women working together, nothing like the spirit of dance to snap you into reality.

For both the beautiful performance and the attitude check, I end my day much more aware, gracious, and thankful. Thanks be to the small wonders in life. Thanks be to the unexpected slice of humble pie. “

[Photo of Meg and Tracy Jo prior to departure with the 300+ bras collected for Cuban women and girls.]
Sara Acker recently joined the Center for Gerontology as a Graduate Assistant. Her primary responsibilities include working with the WHO Age Friendly Cities research project and providing support to faculty who are teaching sections of GERO 100. Sara is currently working on her Master’s in Health Care Administration and will be returning home in May to become a nursing home administrator. She has been working in long-term care since she was 16 years old and fell in love with it right away. Sara shared that she “absolutely loves the elderly and enjoy any time I get to spend with them.” In her free time she enjoys exercising, reading and hanging out with her miniature pinscher Joey.

Congratulations to WKU Aging Faculty Affiliates, Kathleen Abrahamson, Dana Bradley, Kara Dassel, Kelly Fitzgerald and Tina Peterson on their presentations at the Annual Scientific Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America in San Diego, November 2012.


D. B. Bradley. *Historical Changes In Family Transnational Caregiving: The Case Of New Zealand Settlers*


H. Ewen1, K.B. Dassel & J.K. Chahali. *Satisfaction To Stigma: Living and Aging In A CCRC.*


February 2 was an exciting day on the WKU Main campus. Over 140 teams from across the Commonwealth gathered in Diddle Arena to compete in the 2012 First Lego League Championships. Elementary and junior high aged students competed in robot building and a project design around the theme of “Senior Solutions.” WKU Center Director, Dana Bradley was an enthusiastic judge for the event and was glad that the Center enjoyed being an underwriter of the state-wide event. The Center is looking forward to helping several teams develop their ideas more fully into marketable products to improve the lives of older adults.
WKU Aging partnered with CORE, Sigma Phi Omega (The Gerontology Honor Society), The Gatten Academy and many offices on the WKU Campus to collect items for people in personal care homes. The 2012 Silver Bells Campaign was a HUGE success: Over 40 bags of gifts were delivered in December to the offices of the Barren River Long Term Care Ombudsman. Thank You WKU!

C.O.R.E., Companions of Respected Elders, is a new student group who are dedicated to spending time with older adults who are in long term care facilities. The first meeting of this semester will be on Monday, February 11th at 5:30 in Tate Page Hall room 244. Students have invited Brittany York from Home Helpers Senior Care speak to us at the meeting about a possible partnership in a fundraising event (Zumbathon) for the Alzheimer’s Association. Also, Nolly Costello is coming to speak to us about how the process of being partnered with an elderly person happens. Spread the word, and invite people!! For more information, contact President Kaleb Moore (joseph.moore687@topper.wku.edu) or Dr. Bradley (dana.bradley@wku.edu).

WKU Aging along with the city of Bowling Green and AARP, Kentucky are working on a project initiated by the World Health organization called “Age Friendly Bowling Green”. The main purpose of this project is assessing the friendliness of Bowling Green. Last year the City of Bowling Green, neighborhood division trained around 30 seniors for the 50 over 50 Citizens Academy to learn about the city. This January 22nd, WKU Aging organized a winter reunion for the Citizens academy graduates, a time to meet old friends and discuss about the next training session. This was a great success as there were some old members and some new members. Our senior scholar BJ Mckenzie welcomed the old and new members, followed by Karen Foley from the city of Bowling Green, neighborhood division, who gave the updates on the Citizen’s academy. Dr Dana Bradley explained the WHO Age Friendly city project and AARP, KY Associate Director Patrice Blanchard explained the next phase of WHO project “Ask Bowling Green”. It was fun to see the seniors interact with each other, play games and plan for the spring research activities.
Age Friendly Bowling Green Project Enters New Phase

A five-year community-based research project to make Bowling Green more age friendly will enter its next phase this spring with a series of community conversations.

The project is part of the World Health Organization’s Age Friendly Cities and Communities Initiative. In 2012, Bowling Green became one of the first seven cities in the United States – and the only city in south - to become a member of the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. The network has 105 members in 19 countries. “This truly is a project that has international reach,” said Dr. Dana Burr Bradley, director of WKU’s Center for Aging. “The world really is watching, they want to know how we are doing it in the south, in rural communities like ours.”

WKU’s Center for Aging, the City of Bowling Green’s Neighborhood Division and AARP Kentucky are the convening organizations for the project and for the upcoming Ask Bowling Green community conversations. As part of a 50 Over 50 Citizens Academy last October, 27 people were trained as community experts and to help collect data and develop an assessment plan for the project. Members of the group reunited on January 22nd at WKU’s Knicely Conference Center to learn more about this spring’s Ask Bowling Green sessions.

“AARP is really interested in Age Friendly Cities and in livable communities because this is about all people,” said Patrice Blanchard, associate director of AARP Kentucky. This spring’s small group discussions will held throughout the community and will brainstorm answers to the question of “What kind of community do you want to live in?” “In a way it’s a visioning exercise,” Blanchard said. “We’re not trying to be problem solvers, we’re not trying to identify what’s wrong, we’re trying to look at what’s right in your best dreams and then helping make that happen.”

In addition in May, WKU’s Center for Aging will host a “Gathering” of service providers and organizations that work with older adults to share information, ideas and challenges. “Why should Bowling Green care about being age friendly?” Dr. Bradley asked. “In less than two decades there are going to be more seniors over 65 than there are people under 18. One in five people will be over 65. Right now, every eight seconds someone turns 65 in this country.” Dr. Bradley noted, however, that community aging is an opportunity, not a crisis.

The project provides an opportunity for all community members to share their concerns and ideas; for WKU students to gain experience researching and collecting and analyzing data; for economic and business development; and for the community to identify its age friendly strengths and challenges. “Anytime you can have community folks involved in thinking about their vision for the community and getting that feedback from them, I think it gives our elected leaders, staff and other leaders direction,” Neighborhood Services Coordinator Karen Foley said. The Age Friendly Cities Initiative looks at eight domains – outdoor space and buildings, transportation, communication and information, housing, respect and social inclusion, social participation, civic participation and employment, and community support and health services.

The data and information collected this spring will provide a baseline assessment of age-friendliness and the groups will develop an action plan to move forward. As a requirement of the Age Friendly Cities Initiative, the project must involve older adults in the phases of the project. “Older adults are the experts in what make a city age friendly,” Dr. Bradley said. Being age friendly isn’t just about older adults, Blanchard said. For example, a curb that may present mobility issues for older adults also could be an issue for mothers pushing a stroller, she said. “It’s about making the community better for all of us,” Blanchard said. Citizens Academy member John Warnhoff said the World Health Organization project is vital as society ages. “We’re all different people because of ethnic background, because of personal life experiences,” he said, “but if we can combine all that and integrate it, then we produce a better community and better world.”

Want to learn more?

For those interested in hosting a community conversation this spring, send an email to aging@wku.edu, the Center for Aging will supply a facilitator and a notetaker.

To find out more about the AARP’s Livable Communities resources, visit http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/
To learn more about the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, visit http://www.who.int/ageing/projects/age_friendly_cities_network/en/index.html or http://www.agefriendlyworld.org/cities-and-communities

Contact: Dana Burr Bradley, (270) 745-2356.
Would you like to help make Bowling Green an Age Friendly Community?

Please consider join the WKU Aging, The City of Bowling Green, Neighborhood Division and AARP Kentucky in hosting a conversation. Our trained facilitator will ask 3 (and only 3) questions and all information remains anonymous. ASK Bowling Green begins with a simple question: What kind of community do you want to live in?

Every semester GERO 100 honors student learn about Aging, a class lead by Dr. Dana Bradley and Dr. Keith Knapp. Along with the concepts and controversies about aging this class also has an opportunity to visit and interact with residents of Village Manor, an independent living facility here in Bowling Green. Once every month these students discuss various topics with the senior scholars, this year they are discussing “The Blue Zones”. This is an enriching experience for the students as they not only get theoretical knowledge but also gain expert advice from senior scholars who have actually lived through those situations. Students also get to volunteer once a month for the any of the activity at Village Manor. This helps the student get along with the senior scholars. The all time favorite activity for students and the senior scholar is the “Wii Bowling”, and they simply love it. Senior scholars encourage the students to play with them, but it is definitely difficult for the students to beat them. Many of the students have also established a close relationship with the resident and maintain the same even after the semester is over.
Student Spotlight: Noelle Johnson

In the summer of 2011, Noelle Johnson attended the American Democracy Project National meeting in Providence, Rhode Island with other ICSR faculty, staff, and students. While she attended several academic sessions at the conference, one session that focused on a “combination of working with kids, education, and civic engagement” caught her attention. The session highlighted the Public Achievement program started at the Center for Democracy at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Since that session, Johnson has been extremely active in the Public Achievement program at Western Kentucky University’s Institute for Citizenship & Social Responsibility. Assisting in the start of the program, she was one of the first Public Achievement coaches serving at T.C. Cherry Elementary School. While continuing her coaching position at the school, she has also served as the coordinator for the entire school, supervising three Public Achievement teams. She was also at the forefront of planning the first international Public Achievement conference held at ICSR last spring. As she reflects about the Public Achievement program, she states Public Achievement is “something I wish that I had as a kid. I could have really benefited from a Public Achievement program in my school.”

Johnson, originally from Danville, Kentucky, is now a senior graduating in May with a degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with an emphasis in Social Justice and Equity Studies. She plans to pursue a Masters degree in Sustainable Communities at Northern Arizona University. While there, she hopes to continue coordinating Public Achievement at a local elementary school in Flagstaff. Furthermore, she hopes to establish regional coordinator positions across the United States.

Johnson has been a student worker since the fall of 2011. She states that she wants to incorporate the “values and goal of ICSR into her career.” While at the ICSR, she has been a vital asset to our program development, including Public Achievement, but also beyond. Moreover, Johnson hopes to combine her passion for the deaf community with the Public Achievement program in the near future.
Dr. Jane Olmsted and Dr. S. Kay Gandy directed a collaborative study abroad project in Peru entitled, "Community, Place, and Leadership on the Amazon Frontier." This collaborative course was designed for doctoral students in the EdD in Educational Leadership and master's students in Social Responsibility and Sustainable Communities. Both programs are firsts at WKU. The SRSC is the first interdisciplinary Master’s program devoted to sustainability and community leadership. The EdD in Educational Leadership is the first stand-alone doctoral program at WKU. Dr. Olmsted, is professor and head of the Department of Diversity & Community Studies, and Dr. Gandy, associate professor in the School of Teacher Education, received the Collaborative International Activities (CIA) Fund, which supports interdisciplinary, innovative projects that involve collaboration between/among two or more WKU departments, offices, colleges, or other units. Grants awarded from this fund provide start-up money to initiate creative approaches to internationalization that hold reasonable promise of success and sustainability. These funds were used to offset the cost of the study abroad for participants.

Gandy and Olmsted collaborated with Dr. Devon Graham, president of Project Amazonas, to provide participants with opportunities to include an international aspect in their program of study and to meet with international leaders and work in international communities. Dr. Graham is an instructor in The Honors College at Florida International University (FIU) where he currently co-directs the FIU Amazon Study-Abroad Program and also teaches an interdisciplinary course on the Florida Everglades. Objectives of the study abroad in Peru included providing students with an opportunity to examine human-environment interactions in urban and rural settings, employing experiential learning (City as Text) as a means to understand the dynamics of place and community, and developing students’ field research skills through individually designed projects.
Brittany Ryan

Through the SRSC program, I have been able to really discover what my passion is in life and have gained the knowledge necessary to work in this area for the rest of my life. I love how the program allowed me to create my own focus and was so diverse in its courses, giving me many perspectives to consider. My thesis is titled, “Overcoming Barriers to Local Food Access: A Case Study.” By conducting a case study, which incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data, I will argue that local food access through farmers’ markets can counter negative health trends, discuss the perceived barriers to fix access, and offer suggestions for overcoming those perceived barriers. This case study can serve as a nationwide model.

Kristy Howell

In her thesis Kristy Howell will be evaluating the effectiveness of online, sustainability-related professional development for community college faculty teaching in the liberal arts and social sciences. By providing self-paced professional development opportunities to faculty, Kristy hopes to improve their understanding of sustainability principles in a way that will be reflected in the classroom. Of her experience in the SRSC program, Kristy says, “as a full-time employee in KCTCS, being involved with this program has been one of the most rewarding things I’ve participated in, especially because of the sustainability work I already do in my job. It’s improved my job performance within education in ways I wouldn’t have imagined from the outset, not to mention giving me a number of outstanding opportunities for professional development and travel.”

M.A. Social Responsibility & Sustainable Communities

Review of applications for the 2013 cohort begins in early April.

The Master of Arts in Social Responsibility & Sustainable Communities is an interdisciplinary program of study that provides students with the tools to lead communities toward social justice and sustainability. It is designed especially for students inclined toward the humanities, social sciences, and related fields. Students take a core set of courses that provide interdisciplinary grounding in social justice and sustainability, economic and policy issues, leadership issues, community-building, and community-based research. Students may focus their elective courses on environmental sustainability, women’s & gender studies, intergenerational studies, or other issues—depending on their interests, on availability of courses, and in consultation with their advisor. Students in the MA in Social Responsibility & Sustainable Communities will cultivate the skills and knowledge necessary to encourage and lead for economic, political, and social change for more just and sustainable communities.

Please visit our website for more information: www.wku.edu/cohort/srsc

Compatible with the graduate certificates in Gender & Women’s Studies, Gerontology, Leadership, Nonprofit Administration.
Interfaith Movement at WKU

“Diversity left unattended can lead to tensions, intolerance, and outright conflict; diversity positively engaged can build social cohesion and social capital,” stated Eboo Patel and Cassie Meyer. Engaging diversity through interfaith cooperation has been their main focus at their organization – Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) – attempting to develop leaders who “build a movement of people from all faiths and traditions who are working together to change the world.” Additionally, the IFYC envisions the role of colleges and universities as the key context for the work of interfaith collaboration.

Striving to make interfaith cooperation a reality at WKU, the Institute for Citizenship & Social Responsibility (ICSR) hosted the IFYC in conducting a workshop last semester. The workshop was well received by numerous students and has led to a student movement with the intent of building social cohesion at WKU and the broader community through interfaith collaboration. In an effort to achieve these objectives, the ICSR is hosting an interfaith cultural exchange on February 20th. This event, known informally as ICE, will acquaint religious and nonreligious persons with organizations on campus.

Additionally, this year’s Wii™ the People bowling league will build from the interfaith cultural exchange. The league will provide a fun context for students from a diversity of religious traditions to gather together to discuss contemporary social topics. Teams of four gather together once a week to Wii™ bowl, introduce themselves to one another, and discuss a specific topic determined beforehand. The league starts in mid-March and continues through April.

Students have agreed that they want to move their collaboration into collective action. So the interfaith programming will culminate with an Interfaith Service Day with Habitat for Humanity in April. (The specific details of this event are still to be determined.) Working together building housing and community encapsulates physically the abstract goals of the interfaith movement.

If you are interested in any of the interfaith events on campus, please contact terry.shoemaker@wku.edu for more information.


http://www.ifyc.org/
Western Kentucky University students Polly Cowan and Chelsea Pitts both from Russellville, Kentucky, and Steven Fioretti from Hopkinsville, Kentucky, received an undergraduate research award at a recognition ceremony in Helm Library on Friday, December 7. WKU Libraries and WKU University Experience faculty offer the awards in an effort to recognize the important role of good undergraduate research in college academic success.

“The quality of the library skills projects this semester was outstanding,” said Sara McCaslin, University Experience Coordinator. “Information literacy and library skills are essential for student success at any level, and I am happy to be a part of introducing the importance of college level research skills to our first year students.”

Cowan, a first-year student from the University Experience class on the main campus, received the award for best annotated bibliography in the non-major category. Pitts, a first-year student from the University Experience class at South Campus, was recognized for the best career essay. First year student Steven Fioretti, double majoring in history and music, received the award for his annotated bibliography titled “The Legal Career of Abraham Lincoln.”

“I am so honored to be accepting this award,” said Fioretti. “It has built up my confidence as a writer, researcher, and critical thinker.”

Students received a $100 cash award along with a plaque honoring their achievements. The winning documents, along with past recipients, are posted on TopSCHOLAR—WKU’s research and creative activity database—at http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/ueul_award/.
Record Enrollment for Spring 2013

The School of Leadership Studies has a record enrollment for all Leadership classes in spring 2013 with a 15% increase. With a total of 288 students enrolled in spring 2012, that number has jumped to 330 for the spring 2013 semester.

First three students earn bachelor’s degree in Organizational Leadership program

First 3 students earn bachelor’s degree in Organizational Leadership program
WKU alumni Linton Hughey of Bowling Green, Jerrod Davis of Leitchfield and Tim Sheldon of Owensboro became the first three graduates to earn the Bachelor of Science degree in Organizational Leadership.

The first three graduates to complete their Bachelor of Science degree in Organizational Leadership are (from left) Tim Sheldon, Linton Hughey and Jerrod Davis.

The Organizational Leadership degree was created for members in the community who had already earned an associate degree and wanted to complete a bachelor’s degree at WKU.

“This is the end of a six-year journey for me,” Sheldon said. “I am not sure when this is going to hit me.

“This degree and the knowledge I gained from the classes have already paid off both in my personal and work life,” he said. “I have worked 20 years in the manufacturing business and with a bachelor’s degree, I cannot wait to see what the next 20 years holds.”

Davis said he would not have been able to complete his degree if not for the professors and the format.

“The degree was completely online. I have two kids, a wife and a full-time job,” Davis said. “There is no way I could have completed my degree if the program was not online.”

Hughey was ecstatic to have finally gotten to this day. “Dr. John Baker and Dr. Cindy Ehresman have been amazing in teaching these classes. The classes were heavy in teamwork, which is essential in today’s world,” he said.

“Leaving this program, I now have confidence in myself,” added Hughey.

The graduates were recognized at WKU’s 172nd Commencement on Dec. 15.

For information on the Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership, visit http://www.wku.edu/leadership/bachelors/index.php or contact Marie Yager at marie.yager@wku.edu.

Contact: Dr. Cecile Garmon, (270) 745-6673
Bucket-List Trip to Galapagos

In January I was fortunate to have the opportunity to travel with a WKU Study Abroad to the Galapagos Islands to conduct research on sustainability and communication through leadership.

I joined the Agriculture trip lead by Dr. David Coffey that had already visited the Amazon Valley and would end the trip with several days in the famous Galapagos Islands which lie about 400 miles off the coast of Ecuador in South America. These islands are famous as the site for the investigations conducted by Charles Darwin in the 1930’s which led to his seminal work on the origin of the species.

The group was already in Quito when I arrived and we left early the following day to travel by plane to Balta, by ferry to Santa Cruz, by bus to the Darwin Preserve, by boat to Isabela Island where we stayed in the village of Puerto Villamil. Isabela Island is volcanic lava from the still active Sierra Negro volcano. Because the terrain is mostly lava, very little grows on the island in the way of vegetation, but it is the home for the ancient turtles, iguanas, and other remnants of prehistoric animal life. On the first day in Villamil, we walked down the dirt street toward the ocean and I spotted a road sign, “Drive Slow: Iguana Crossing.” This was the place where the iguanas come out of their nests and cross over to the beach while the tide is out. When they have finished their meal and the tide returns, the all go back to their homes. There were hundreds of them of all sizes. We had to be careful not to step on them.

One day we took a boat trip to the “tunnels” which are giant caverns and tunnels made when the lava rock met the cold waves of the Pacific Ocean. We snorkeled and swam in the lava pools along with sharks, sealions, blue-footed boobies, ancient iguanas, mantras, and all kinds of fish. What a thrill to swim along and see the dolphins swimming and playing with us in the water as we watched the coral and lava reefs which were home to very exotic sealife.

Another day we took a trip to the Breeding Preserve for Giant Tortoises, a government operation designed to keep the ancient and giant turtles alive. We saw turtle embryos at various stages, baby tortoises, mid-life and ancient turtles. Some of the larger ones were about 4 feet long and some were double-humped, like some camels.

I also had the opportunity to conduct interviews with a variety of local residents about their idea of sustainability and how they thought the concept related to them on the island and to the rest of the human race throughout the world. I was particularly interested in the ways in which they communicated with their leaders about sustainability and how they saw this particular locale as a unique place on earth and the responsibility they felt because of that fact. They were very interested in how others understand sustainability and what other people do about it to maintain their planet.

Because the Galapagos Islands have always been known as the most unique place on earth as related to prehistoric animal life, this trip was truly a wonderful experience and I am very grateful that WKU sponsors such Study Abroad trips for students and that I have had the opportunity to take part in it.

By: Cecile Garmon
Chaplain (1LT) Jeff Grimes, Task Force Renegade, 160th Military Police Battalion, Afghanistan, received a care package from the Western Kentucky University Military Student Services Office in December. Chaplain Grimes, a 1999 graduate of WKU, used the package to bring a little bit of home to his office while giving WKU a visible presence in Afghanistan.

New materials

Several new reference materials have been added to the Veterans Resource Center. Some of the titles include “Calculus for Dummies,” “American Military History,” Vols. 1 & 2; the complete 50th Anniversary of World War II Commemorative Pamphlet series covering the war overseas and on the Home Front; Books on American history, political science and communications, just to name a few.

Math tutoring

Developmental Algebra Tutoring is available to veterans. To sign up, contact Tonya Archey at tonya.archey@wku.edu.
Save money and time with CLEP

The Veterans Resource Center is offering study assistance to veterans, Active duty, Guard, Reserve, ROTC and dependents. College Level Examination Program tests are available at the WKU Testing and Counseling Center. By successfully completing one exam, testers can save more than $1,000 in tuition and books and 15 weeks of study and homework. Save time and money and test out of GenEd classes. For more information, stop by the VRC in Tate Page Hall, room 237, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Those interested can also email Teresa Jameson at Teresa.jameson201@topper.wku.edu for more information.

Recognition Cords

Military and Veterans graduating from WKU as well as faculty/staff military veterans participating in the graduation ceremonies are eligible to wear these beautiful red, white, and blue honor cords. Stop by TPH 207 or 237 to learn more.

Book Donations

The Military Student Services office is accepting donations of current, gently used textbooks. The Textbook for Troops program then lends these books, free of charge, to military veterans, active-duty, Guard, Reserve and ROTC members not currently receiving a book stipend or scholarship. Book donations can be dropped off in the Veterans Resource Center in Tate Page Hall, Room 237. Show our service men and women how much we appreciate their sacrifices and donate your books at the end of each semester.
All the Project Graduate Representatives from public Kentucky Colleges received an “Excellence in Retention” Award from the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. WKU’s PROJECT FINISH has helped over 200 students return to complete a degree since the program began in 2008.