

## **Warren Wilson College Program of Distinction Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

*On June 27, 2015, James Tyson, Warren Wilson '07, and Bree Newsome were arrested after participating in the removal of the Confederate battle flag from the grounds of the South Carolina State House. James credits his years at Warren Wilson with helping to shape the person he has become. "The drive that Wilson has toward diversity is something that is absolutely critical. We have to get over all of the stereotypes that we've been dealing with, and we have to create the most open, equitable society. We have to create the world that we want."*

### **Background**

Warren Wilson College's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is deeply rooted in its history. In its earliest years as the Asheville Farm School, Warren Wilson served as a mission school, providing education for low-income Appalachian boys. Post WWII years brought an influx of international students—nearly 1/3 of the school's population—and thus began a rich campus dialogue about diversity, equity and inclusion that continues to this day. In 1952, Warren Wilson became the one of the first all-white institutions in the south to enroll an African American student, two years before Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka. This became a keystone event for the College and set a path for diversity actions to follow in three very important ways: the request to admit this young man came from the student body; the decision to admit this student was made after a highly engaged, all-community deliberation; Warren Wilson's mission and values supported this action thus desegregating was simply (though not so easily) a matter of walking its talk.

These characteristics define Warren Wilson's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion to this day: it is student-centered; the entire community of faculty, staff and students is engaged; and, it is mission and values driven. We continue to care deeply, develop new resources, and work in community to build an equitable and respectful campus climate for the amazing diversity of faculty, staff and students who join us. We continue to retool our framework of resources to foster a supportive and caring climate for each individual in our community. And, we know, we still have much work to do. Nevertheless, we believe our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion and the actions we take to support these deeply held values are distinctive in these times and extensive for an institution of our size.

### **Values-Based Framework**

Warren Wilson is committed to serve as a living laboratory for the hard work of inclusion that is not just a challenge for higher education, but for the world at large. The hands-on, often challenging, deeply rewarding experience of creating a respectful, caring and supportive campus community for all is an essential component of a Warren Wilson education. How better to learn how to work for respect, equity and inclusion in their own communities once they graduate than to have this campus experience.

## **Strategic Imperative**

Warren Wilson continues to articulate its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in its mission and in every new iteration of its strategic plans. The 2020 Strategic Plan empowers diversity, equity and inclusion as top priority commitments and supports the following strategic imperative with measurable action steps:

*The College is unwavering in our commitment to the dignity of all people – particularly those populations who have been both historically oppressed and continue to experience systemic oppression. While we value the breadth of diversity necessary for a rich campus culture, we also recognize the particular challenge and opportunity for growth and leadership around race, noting that such a focus necessarily intersects with deepening efforts around other aspects of identity (such as ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexuality, class, and worldview). We are committed to a culture of educational access and ensuring that students and employees from a diverse range of identities and experiences will thrive in this community.*

The breadth of diversity on campus is remarkable and intentional. From racial, ethnic, gender identity and gender diversity to economic, learning abilities, wellness commitments, religion, and politics, the Warren Wilson community weaves a rich fabric. Having recruited such a diverse community, the College, therefore, has a profound responsibility to ensure the campus climate is equitable, inclusive and above all, supportive. Warren Wilson's General Education declaration articulates clear commitment to a diverse and inclusive campus.

*An education not only brings knowledge, but also the skills to think through complicated real-world problems that arise in complex and diverse communities of which all people are a part. A Warren Wilson College education enables students to gain a clearer perspective on themselves and to better comprehend the perspectives of those around them. The General Education program includes scaffolded requirements that provide developmental guidance, while allowing students the flexibility to pursue their individual passions and approaches. Through experiential learning, students acquire knowledge, develop skills, and hone values that comprise their identity. Graduates participate broadly and effectively in the collaboration that is human culture and work collectively for a more just, equitable, and sustainable world.*

To meet the challenges of the College's sharpened commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion as articulated in the new Strategic Plan, a cross-campus committee of faculty, staff and students—the DEI Committee (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)— will work with Warren Wilson's President Lynn Morton to monitor and accelerate campus progress toward these goals.

## **Non-Discrimination Policies**

The following policies support Warren Wilson's commitment to non-discrimination. The College's Bias Response Team and the Title IX Coordinator provide support as necessary.

### *Warren Wilson College Non-Discrimination Policy*

Warren Wilson College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national or ethnic origin, gender, gender identity, or gender expression, age, marital status, military/veteran status, disability, or sexual orientation, in the administration of its educational

policies, recruitment or admission of students, scholarship, grant or loan programs, athletic or other College administered programs, employment procedures, training programs, promotion policies or other related personnel practices.

#### *Warren Wilson Work Program Non-Discrimination Statement*

The Work Program is committed to Warren Wilson College's belief that we are a community that respects the dignity of its members. The College and the Work Program are committed to maintaining a positive learning and working environment where diversity is honored and individuals are treated with respect. Harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment [discrimination], in any form are detrimental to this environment and fundamentally at odds with the values of the College.

All persons shall have equal access to the College's programs, facilities and employment without regard to age, color, disability, ethnic or national origin, gender or gender identity, race, creed, religion or sexual orientation. Any student, employee, volunteer, or other community member who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, whether such conduct occurred on or off campus.

#### *Title IX*

Additionally, any act of sex-based discrimination or harassment (including gender-based discrimination, and sexual violence) can also be reported to the College's Title IX Coordinator or Deputies. Sexual violence includes attempted or completed rape or sexual assault, as well as sexual harassment, stalking, voyeurism, exhibitionism, verbal or physical sexuality-based threats or abuse, and intimate partner violence.

### **Recruitment and Affordability**

Warren Wilson's pledge to diversity, equity and inclusion includes the recruitment of students, faculty and staff to create the rich mix. Human Resources assists in the recruitment of underrepresented groups. They work with staff and faculty search committees to affirm the College's goal to build a representative community through fair and equitable treatment of all candidates. And, they select job posting outlets to reach a diverse audience.

For students, the approach is as follows:

- Ensure a network of support resources on campus for all enrolled students
- Include recruitment outreach activities that will reach a broad and diverse audience
- Make a Warren Wilson education affordable

In 2018-2019, Warren Wilson implemented two affordability programs that have been invaluable for many students who would not otherwise have been able to attend:

- North Carolina Free Tuition Plan for North Carolina Students: Every qualified NC undergraduate student who is eligible for federal and/or state need-based aid can attend Warren Wilson tuition-free.

- Full-tuition Milepost One Scholarships: These are available for qualified students with total family income levels equal to or below \$125,000 per year. Families who may not be eligible for federal or state need-based grants have an opportunity to earn a Milepost One full-tuition scholarship as well as international and DACA students.
- Work Program Grants: Every student at Warren Wilson must join a student work crew on campus to fulfill graduation requirements. For this work, each student earns a grant that serves as a tuition discount.

## **Network of Support Programs**

The following programs seek to build awareness and support for an inclusive campus climate that honors and respects diversity of all kinds.

### **Deliberative Dialogue Day**

Deliberative Dialogue Day is held on the first day of class each winter term for faculty, students and staff. It is followed throughout the year by successive initiatives to support the learnings. This year, faculty and staff met for an afternoon session with Visions Inc., a national company that uses a "no shame, no blame," dialogue-based approach to help individuals and organizations talk across and embrace differences, acknowledge shared humanity, approach tensions in a healthy fashion, and achieve personal and institutional diversity, equity and inclusion goals. Students met for a facilitated dialogue on political differences in this important election year, led by the national group Better Angels.

### **Arms Open WIDE**

Diversity begins with inclusion and Warren Wilson strives to offer an inclusive environment for all students. The Wilson Inclusion, Diversity & Equity Office (WIDE) is central to this effort. WIDE provides advocacy, community building, empowerment, and identity affirmation in support of underrepresented student populations, including students of color and international students. Its focus is on community building and sharing of one's racialized or ethnic identities to create a celebratory platform with which students can feel both visible and have agency on campus. WIDE seeks to create and to support programming based upon the core values of social justice, equity, and civic agency in pursuit of these goals:

- Develop consciousness around issues of racial and ethnic diversity
- Engage multicultural perspectives through critical dialogue and programs
- Promote universal love and intercultural competency
- Create inclusive and equitable spaces in appreciation of differences

WIDE works with students, staff, and faculty through a range of programs. The WIDE Heritage Series presents awareness, celebration, and dialogue programs throughout the year including Hispanic and Latin@ heritage, Indigenous and Native American heritage, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration, Black World History Month, Chinese New Year, International Women's Month and Asian/Pacific Islander heritage. The WIDE student work crew provides classroom/crew presentations, conferences, trainings and workshops, social justice campaigns, solidarity programming and support of aligned student demonstrations. WIDE collaborates with organizations and higher education institutions in the surrounding region. The WIDE office also serves as an advocate and response unit.

To increase visibility on campus, in Fall 2018 WIDE joined The Global Engagement Office and The Office of Spiritual Life in a centrally located house in core campus so as to become a hub for dialogue across differences and build cross-cultural understanding.

### **Building Diversity: The Change Project**

Through a community-wide decision-making process, Warren Wilson College aligned campus needs and goals to focus its priorities on BUILDING Diversity, an initiative that focuses on current community—improving student learning through curriculum and campus climate, while expanding abilities as educators. Building Diversity is a five-year initiative designed to critically engage students with diversity and to infuse pedagogical strategies into the curriculum that are inclusive of all communities and identities and in doing so, create permanent change in curricular content. At the heart of BUILDING Diversity is the Change Project. Each year, Diversity Fellows design and/or revise their teaching environments to increase the diversity content. This broadened lens considers knowledge and the student experience from the perspectives of various and often intersecting social identities—especially the impact of race and ethnicity—and including the influence of ability, sexual orientation, gender expression, religious identity/spiritual path, socioeconomic background and first-generation-college status. The Change Project uses the existing structure of Warren Wilson’s educational model—liberal arts academics, work and community engagement—to develop three categories of campus educators who create Change Projects wherever their work occurs at the College. Each Fellow designs a Change Project to improve student learning about diversity, equity and inclusion.

### **The Center for Student Well-Being: Center for Gender and Relationships, Wellness Center and Substance Abuse Prevention**

#### *Center for Gender and Relationships (CGR)*

##### *Queer Resource Center*

The mission of the Center for Gender and Relationships (CGR) is to build and to sustain healthy relationships within the Warren Wilson Community. CGR offers education, advocacy and resources within the LGBTQIA community and especially in sexual assault and relationship violence prevention, gender equity and intersectionality, and sexual health and education. The CGR mission is accomplished specifically by providing the community with creative and relevant programming and workshops, affinity support groups, trainings, outreach through social media, and opportunities for community service and activism. In all events the CGR aims to acknowledge and embrace the intersectionalities of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, and ability. To further support the campus’ LGBTQIA community, the CGR also provides the Queer Resource Center as a gathering place and social hub.

##### *Wellness Center*

The goal of the Wellness Center is to help the members of the Warren Wilson community pursue and practice a lifestyle of healthy, peaceful, and joyful living. Activities—which are open to students, faculty and staff—include community dinners and classes in various forms of yoga, Zumba, meditation, tai chi, and stress reduction. The Wellness Center also offers workshops in areas such as healthy communication, sleep hygiene, self-care, and much more. In addition, the Center connects with community partners to bring other forms of stress reduction to campus such as emotional

support dogs and licensed massage therapists. Everyone on campus is welcome to drop in to develop an individualized wellness plan.

### *Center for Substance Abuse Prevention*

The mission of the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) is to enhance the health and well-being of the Warren Wilson College community through thoughtful dialogue and programming on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug-related issues. CSAP serves as a support and resource for all students. Programs are available for students in recovery, students whose lives have been affected by substance use or abuse, and educational programming for community members who are interested in learning more about substance use and substance abuse prevention.

### **Office of Global Engagement: International Student Resources**

Warren Wilson welcomes students from around the world, as well as DACA students, and provides a broad array of customized support. The following resources are coordinated by the College's Office of Global Engagement:

- International student recruitment
- New student orientation to help international students acclimate to US and to Warren Wilson culture
- ESL classes and writing labs for international students whose first language may not be English
- International student advising to assist with academics, cultural transitions and the visa and immigration process
- International student activities throughout the year, open to the entire Warren Wilson community, that include food and culture celebrations honoring the diverse nationalities represented on campus

### **Office of Spiritual Life**

The mission of the Office of Spiritual Life is to support students on their journeys of spiritual formation, faith development, religious exploration, vocational discernment, and social justice engagement. Spiritual Life seeks interfaith dialogue and creates campus opportunities for cooperative, constructive and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions and/or spiritual or humanistic beliefs. Its programs seek to revitalize the passion for spiritual exploration, promote diversity and awareness of social injustices and create an atmosphere of free and open interfaith dialogue on campus.

In addition to religious groups that meet on a regular basis, Spiritual Life staff and their student work crew sponsor seasonal rituals, holidays and celebrations. Programming is provided for students who find their spiritual path outside organized religions by offering opportunities to connect more deeply with oneself or pursue the bigger questions of meaning and purpose through art and music, yoga and dance, nature, silence and labyrinth walks. The Office of Spiritual Life is home to several student-run groups supporting many spiritual and religious practices as well as an active interfaith community who gathers monthly for a shared meal and organizes visits to other faith communities in town.

### **Clubs and Organizations**

Student clubs and organizations at Warren Wilson nurture and celebrate diversity of thought. A sampling of active clubs in the past three years follows: ACLU, Animal Collective Club, Bible Study,

Black Student Union, Buddhist Sangha, Chinese Club, College Democrats, College Republicans, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Indigenous Student Association, Jarheads, Kehila Hillel, Libertarians, Men's Support Club, Merry Pagans, Norse Club, Ozone, QSU, Showing up for Racial Justice (SURJ), Spectrum, WHOLA.

### **Values-Based Living Opportunities**

Student Life staff at Warren Wilson are committed to supporting a positive and inclusive campus climate. In addition to programs throughout the year to build community, they provide themed living opportunities to honor diversity and create links between living and learning experiences. Students in themed communities develop a supportive living environment together. Recent examples include the following:

- *Alliance Floor*: This community is an intentional and supportive space of all gender and sexual identities especially for students who identify as LGBTQIA and their allies. Residents will engage in honest dialogue about gender, gender identity, sexuality and interpersonal relationships as a means to self-awareness.
- *Wellness/Substance Free*: This community is for students who are engaged or want to become engaged in a wellness lifestyle. Students are introduced to a wide range of wellness topics such as substance-free living, physical wellness, emotional wellness, and the mind-body-spirit connection. Residents of this community sign a floor agreement stating that they will not have substances in their room at any time, nor will they enter the floor under the influence of any substances.
- *Outdoor Adventure*: From biking to hiking, camping and kayaking, residents of this floor will share experiences through coordinated trips on and off campus suitable for beginners and pros.
- *Gap Year*: Each year more than 10% of incoming Warren Wilson students are returning from a gap year. Residents of this community will be supported in understanding their Warren Wilson experience in the context of their gap year.
- *Quiet Study*: Though all Warren Wilson residence halls abide by designated quiet hours, the Quiet Study community shares a deeper commitment to intentional quiet time for reflection and focused academic work.
- *Transfer Suite*: This suite-style living arrangement affords new transfer students the opportunity to increase their sense of belonging and community through a shared living experience.
- *Co-Op living*: Students in this community cook all their own meals (often together) and are off the campus meal plan.
- *Single gender identity dorm: female* (gender-specific bathrooms)
- *Single gender identity dorm: male* (gender-specific bathrooms)

### **Center for Integrated Advising and Careers: Academic Support Center, Disability Access and Services**

Academic success at Warren Wilson College is dynamic, personal and cross-disciplinary. The Center for Integrated Advising and Careers (CIAC) honors all learners with custom resources for success. Its team of advisors assist all students in fulfilling educational requirements in civic identity, academics, work and community engagement. In addition, through the Academic Support Center and the Office of Disability Access and Services, CIAC provides one-on-one tutoring, writing support from our Writing Studio, academic coaching, time management assistance and support for students seeking

accommodations. CIAC also provides a slate of internships that are career or discipline-focused and extensive career support resources.

### *Academic Support Center*

The Academic Support Center helps students become more effective, engaged and intentional learners. Working collaboratively and one-on-one with support staff, students achieve academic success as follows:

- Gain an understanding of their learning behaviors
- Master learning strategies that can be applied to general knowledge acquisition or specific course work
- Connect with campus resources to assist them throughout your learning experiences at Warren Wilson College

### *Disability Access & Services*

Warren Wilson College strives to be in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA of 2008), and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others to have such an impairment. Warren Wilson promotes self-advocacy and equal opportunity through awareness, education and understanding of disabilities. The Director of Disability Access assists students with documented disabilities by designing plans with reasonable, appropriate accommodations for full and equal access to their educational program and serves as a resource by providing consultation to students, faculty, and staff when implementing an accommodation plan.

### *College Academic Strategies Course*

The focus for the College Academic Strategies course is to explore the learning terrain through an individualized learning process. Students are paired with an instructor who works with them to define and address areas of need and interest that will enhance their college academic experience. Topics covered might include goal setting and prioritizing, time management, focus strategies, exam preparation, and course scheduling support.

### **Counseling Center**

The Counseling Center offers confidential counseling for dealing with issues and life problems with trained professionals. Students often seek counseling when they realize that they need help making difficult life choices: managing conflicts in personal, family, or work life; coping with stress and anxiety; dealing with depression; healing from sexual assault; improving troubled relationships; grieving personal losses; healing wounds of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse; overcoming fears or phobias; recovering from addiction (tobacco, food, Internet, gambling, drugs, alcohol, sex); exploring spiritual crises; creating a healthier, happier lifestyle; building self-esteem; clarifying sexual identity; establishing healthy sexuality; clarifying life goals; addressing loneliness; deciding about pregnancy, birth, and parenting; or setting personal boundaries.