

Message from the President

Summer is busier than you might suspect at WCU. While many of our 17,000 students are elsewhere, at summer jobs or internships, on study abroad programs, or spending time at home with their families, the campus still buzzes with activity. WCU runs popular athletic and music camps for youth, we host new student orientation sessions for incoming first-year and transfer students, and we offer a range of undergraduate and graduate classes during our Summer Sessions.

It's also when we bring our new Academic Development Program (ADP) students on campus and get them ready for the academic year ahead. For more than 40 years, ADP at WCU has provided motivated students whose standardized scores don't meet admissions criteria an opportunity for admission upon successful completion of a 5-week summer program.

One component of ADP is the state funded ACT 101 program, which is designed to support students from economically and academically disadvantaged backgrounds. But students from all income levels and backgrounds also participate in ADP.

On June 30, 186 ADP students moved into Killinger Hall to begin the program, equipped with favorite coffee mugs, comforters, posters and other comforts of home. These comforts will come in handy because the program is, by design, intensive and rigorous

"We keep the students going from the time their first class starts at 8:30 a.m. until long into the evening hours," says ADP Director Dr. John Craig. "The students have academic classes in the morning, a break for lunch, then tutoring sessions with the Learning and Assistance Center and the Writing Center. After that, we hold a range of workshops on everything from student leadership and how to get involved in campus activities to choosing a major and career path."

On a whiteboard in Craig's office a scrawled message reads: *Do you have a fixed mindset or a growth mindset?*

The overarching philosophy of ADP is growth and change. This isn't always easy but it's essential to be successful in college and throughout life. In addition to lots of positive coaching from Craig and Associate Director Dr. Marie Bunner and Student Success Coordinator Dr. Juanita Wooten, peer mentors play a key role in ADP, now during the summer program and later throughout the academic year. Some of these mentors went through the Academic Development Program themselves. They understand the wide range of emotions that these new students may be experiencing as they adjust to college classes and college life.

"Students may doubt themselves and feel like they don't belong. They may miss home, friends, and their regular routines. They may fear that they won't measure up," notes Craig. "But we're here to guide them and let them know they can do it. Most importantly, we equip them with the tools they need to be a success, just like the generations of ADP students before them."

When the fall semester kicks off on August 28, these first-year ADP students will head to class with six credits under their belts from their summer experience at WCU. They will know the campus, know the college routine, and know that they have what it takes to be successful Golden Rams.