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From fresh perspectives in the art studio to ground-breaking work in the lab, new faculty members at [West Virginia University](#) will build on the schools academic and research successes, according to interim Provost E. Jane Martin.

Deans and chairs have reported that their schools and colleges this year have continued to recruit top-notch faculty members across disciplines and areas of expertise, Martin said.

Several deans made the point that they have had wonderful hiring experiences, and most of the positions they have recruited for were filled by their first-choice candidates, she said. I understand there is an excitement about the opportunities available here.

The [Eberly College of Arts and Sciences](#) WVU s largest college has added 22 new tenure-line faculty members since January, Dean Mary Ellen Mazey said.

We were pleased to have attracted these new outstanding faculty to West Virginia University, Mazey said. These new faculty will implement the colleges teaching, research and service missions and enhance our national and international recognition.

New faculty member Letha Sooter cites the tiniest of reasons for coming to WVU nanotechnology, the study and manipulation of matter finer than the hair on your grandfathers scalp.

An assistant professor in biology, Sooter will teach an upper-level biochemistry course and a new special topics course on in vitro selection. But it was the opportunity to do research through the [WVNano Initiative](#) that landed the scientist, whose postdoctoral research at Massachusetts Institute of Technology involved the study of glowing peptides on yeast that bind to airplane cracks to prevent crashes.

WVNano was a huge selling point for me, she said. I am very excited about having a center that draws from diverse areas of the University to further nanoscience and nanotechnology. I believe WVU s collaborative environment and state-of-the-art facilities will enable us to be leaders in today s research communities.

I am also enthusiastic about the biology department because a lot of the research being conducted centers around evolution, Sooter added. Directing evolution to a desired endpoint is a topic that I am very interested in.

SilverMoon, an assistant professor of history, said she was drawn to WVU by the positive comments of former faculty members she met while in graduate school at Duke University.

They told me how much they loved it here,said SilverMoon, who specializes in colonial and postcolonial societies with a focus on Latin America.One told me that when he left here, he never really left because WVU is like an extended family. I thought, â€That must really be a neat place to work in that you feel so attached,so I applied and was accepted.

Upon arriving on campus, SilverMoon said she was impressed by the collegial atmosphere in the [Department of History](#) and knew she had made the right choice.

The students I met were so curious and willing to test their boundaries,she added.I saw that in coming to WVU , I would not just be a teacher but also a mentor, and I look forward to that.

Bernard Schultz, dean of the [College of Creative Arts](#) , said he has filled all 11 of his positions this year, and that the past two years have been exceptionally productive in attracting top candidates.





The College of Creative Arts is on a roll we've brought in some very good people, Schultz said. I think the success rate of the quality of people we are bringing in is just phenomenal. And they bring with them an exceedingly high level of expertise, professional reputation and engagement.

I think it speaks very well for the faculty and staff who are here and the environment that they share with these candidates, he added. Secondly, I think it speaks very well of WVU as a university, because they hear good things about it and its attractive to them.

The University's national reputation is an important consideration for prospective faculty members. While the positive environment created by the faculty in the College of Creative Arts has a positive impact on Erika Osborne, assistant professor of art-painting, the atmosphere of the University was also an important factor in her decision.



I've always heard wonderful things about the school, and knowing its a research institution is huge, she said. It's a place where you can be serious about creative pursuits and faculty research. That's another strong point: Its not just a teaching school; its also a research institution where creative work can go forward.

The dean of the [Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry and Consumer Sciences](#) , Cameron Hackney, filled five positions for the fall and expects another three faculty members in January.

Every single faculty member we've hired is absolutely outstanding, he said. There is a feeling that WVU is going places. Candidates who visit campus see the new facilities and how fast the University is growing. It leaves an impression that WVU is dynamic and forward-thinking.

For new faculty member Holly Spooner, the chance to come to WVU represents an opportunity to build a unique program from the ground up. As an extension specialist and jointly appointed assistant professor in the Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry and Consumer Science, Spooner will focus on developing an equine science program with statewide and possibly national implications.

I was excited to come here because although it is a research institution, there is still a tremendous amount of support and enthusiasm for teaching, she said. At WVU , I have an opportunity for upward growth and to develop a program from the ground up, into perhaps one of the top programs in the country.

The [College of Engineering and Mineral Resources](#) will have eight new faculty on board come fall, Dean Eugene Cilento said.

We are excited about the new faculty who will be joining our college this fall, Cilento said. They offer a wide spectrum of knowledge and expertise in multidisciplinary areas of study and research, including biomedical engineering, nanotechnology, energy and advanced materials. All of these have important implications for the future of our society and our world.

One new face on the engineering campus is Robin Farmer, who is joining the [Department of Chemical Engineering](#) as an assistant professor in its new [biomedical engineering program](#) .

Biomedical engineering entails designing devices or creating materials that can be used in health care. Pacemakers and tissue-engineered blood vessels are examples of bioengineering products.

Farmer, who is coming to WVU fresh off postdoctoral work in bioengineering at the University of Toronto, will teach courses on biomaterials and tissue engineering. In her research, she works with biologically related molecules to design molds for silicon structures or cell growth.

I enjoy this area of engineering, and I look forward to the challenge of starting up a new biomedical program, Farmer said. I think WVU has an excellent opportunity to create a successful program, and being part of that starting on the ground floor really appeals to me.

William Trumbull, interim dean of the [College of Business and Economics](#) , said he feels that changes in total compensation packages and the ability to perform research have been important factors in recruiting new faculty for the college.

Being able to offer a competitive, market-based salary and provide the funding and support needed for quality research is an important factor in recruiting top-level faculty, Trumbull said.

We have secured several tremendous faculty members, he added. One has taught at Cambridge University and another at the Chinese University of Hong Kong two fine institutions. We have been able to demonstrate the potential for them to complete research and create the environment where it will be supported and rewarded.

For one new faculty member in the College of Business and Economics, George Selgin, who was recently announced as the BB&T Chair of Free Market Thought, a key element in his decision to come to WVU was the quality of the faculty he met. He was struck by the enthusiasm and interest displayed by the faculty and thought it created a healthy environment for discussion.

I really think it's all ultimately about people, Selgin said. The facilities and the town, those things are certainly important, but you learn the importance of the people that you're going to be working with. You learn that what matters most is how congenial they are and how excited they are about their work and how much they can inspire you.

I think WVU's situation is going to be very good on those scores, he added. They are trying to build a very special department and really put it on the map, and I think that is something you don't see at a lot of schools.

The [Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences Center](#) is also bringing top-notch faculty and researchers to Morgantown.

The [School of Pharmacy](#) has added six new faculty members since the spring, including three who will start in the fall, Dean Patricia Chase said.

From being top researchers in the country to practicing at highly acclaimed comprehensive cancer centers, each new faculty member has brought the valuable expertise needed to educate our students and mold them into extraordinary pharmacy professionals, to provide unsurpassed patient care to our community members and make the school and University great, Chase said.

These new faculty members will help uphold our mission to improve the health and well-being of West Virginians and society at large by educating students and practitioners to provide optimal pharmaceutical care, she added.

Diana Vinh joins the School of Pharmacy as director of the Health Education Center. She completed her ambulatory care residency from The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy and has practiced as a community pharmacist with CVS /pharmacy. Her practice interests include ambulatory care and wellness and prevention, especially in regard to cardiovascular health and diabetes.

What attracted me to WVU and this position as director of the Health Education Center was the great opportunity to teach students a new facet of the pharmacist's role in wellness promotion and disease prevention, Vinh said. Not only can we strengthen their experiences within the curriculum, but I believe the skills the students acquire will enable them to have a positive impact on patient care.

The [School of Nursing](#) has added five new faculty to teach in the classroom and diverse clinical areas to prepare tomorrow's nurses, Dean Georgia Narsavage said.

Our focus on excellent clinical nursing education has resulted in our ability to hire five experienced educators and nurse practitioners into our clinical faculty track that support not only our educational mission, but our practice and service mission as well, Narsavage said.

One of the new tenure-track faculty is Laurie Theeke, a nurse scientist and one of the first new hires in the School of Nursing's Quality of Life Institute.

Prior to accepting the position at the school, Theeke practiced nursing in Morgantown for 20 years, both as a staff nurse at Ruby Memorial Hospital and as an advanced practice nurse at University Health Associates. She was part of an interdisciplinary team that developed the geriatric program and 65Plus Clinic at WVU . She continues to practice at the Clark Sleeth Family Medicine Center at the Health Sciences Center and is committed to geriatric care in West Virginia.

For me, it was a natural choice to teach here, s he said.

Besides teaching courses in research, theory and practice, Theeke will be doing research focusing on the problem of loneliness for older adults. She has done similar research based on national data, but her current research will focus on residents of Appalachia. She has a particular interest on the relationship of loneliness to depression and health outcomes related to chronic illness.

West Virginia has a growing aging population, and I am interested in what we can do to improve the well-being of that demographic, Theeke added.

In addition to filling teaching and research positions, the University has also made three key dean appointments, effective July 1.

William Trumbull was named the interim dean of the WVU College of Business and Economics. A 25 -year member of the WVU faculty, he has served as director for the Division of Economics and Finance in the college since 1998.

Joyce E. McConnell was named dean of the [WVU College of Law](#) . She was formerly the associate dean for academic affairs and an endowed professor of law at the college. She is the second woman to serve in the role and brings a background of academic excellence, teaching experience and policy development to the position.

And the [WVU College of Human Resources and Education](#) announced Dee Hopkins as dean. Hopkins, the former dean of the College of Education at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, brings a background of administration, academics and research and development excellence to her role at WVU .

The main attraction for me to WVU was the people, Hopkins said. From the first telephone interview to the final acceptance, I was impressed with the friendly, open, professional attitude of everyone I met. There are great things happening at WVU . It is no wonder folks are proud to be called Mountaineers. Me too.”

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