

# Public Policy Institute students assist foundation with listening sessions

WCU ADMINISTRATOR ([HTTPS://NEWS-PROD.WCU.EDU/AUTHOR/WCUADMIN/](https://news-prod.wcu.edu/author/wcuadmin/)), SEPTEMBER 24, 2019

Western Carolina University graduate students representing the university's **Public Policy Institute** (<https://www.wcu.edu/engage/regional-development/public-policy-institute/index.aspx>) assisted the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation by facilitating a recent series of listening sessions with community leaders.

Four



<https://news-prod.wcu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/publicpolicyinstitutestudents-for-web.jpg>

WCU graduate students (from left) Addie Ward, Will Scarbrough, Lance Morsell and Sara Joss assisted the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation with a series of listening sessions.

students from the **Master of Public Affairs Program** (<https://www.wcu.edu/engage/regional-development/public-policy-institute/index.aspx>) – Sara Joss, Lance Morsell, Will Scarbrough and Addie Ward – worked with foundation staff members to coordinate group discussions concerning pressing needs within the WNC region. Each of the four sessions focused on one of four topics – community vitality, economic stability, access to health care and education. The sessions were held in Cashiers and Highlands, and the graduate students interacted with regional nonprofit, governmental and educational leaders from the six westernmost counties in North Carolina through structured dialogues.

With a main office located in Highlands, the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation aims to improve the health and well-being of Highlands, Cashiers and surrounding communities, including through collaborative partnerships that serve the health and well-being of all people in Western North Carolina. The foundation has a regional focus, with particular emphasis on Macon, Jackson, Swain, Graham, Clay and Cherokee counties, and is funded by donor

support.

The foundation supports area organizations by providing grant opportunities for selected projects, and awarded more than \$1.2 million earlier this year. The organization’s current **grant cycle opened Sept. 16** (<https://highlandscashiershealthfoundation.org/2019/08/highlands-cashiers-health-foundation-announces-second-grant-cycle/>), with applications due by Friday, Oct. 18.

“Information gained from the listening sessions will be utilized to target the social determinants of healthy living, such as lack of transportation, poverty, or limits on health care provider access,” said Todd Collins, WCU’s Steed Distinguished Professor of Public Policy and director of the Public Policy Institute. “Another important goal from these sessions was to bring service providers together to look for useful ways to collaborate in serving the people of our region.”

For more information, contact Collins at 828-227-3898 or [tcollins@wcu.edu](mailto:tcollins@wcu.edu) (<mailto:tcollins@wcu.edu>).

[DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS \(HTTPS://NEWS-PROD.WCU.EDU/TAG/POLITICAL-SCIENCE/\)](https://news-prod.wcu.edu/tag/political-science/)

[PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE \(HTTPS://NEWS-PROD.WCU.EDU/TAG/PUBLIC-POLICY-INSTITUTE/\)](https://news-prod.wcu.edu/tag/public-policy-institute/)

[MASTER'S OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM \(HTTPS://NEWS-PROD.WCU.EDU/TAG/MASTERS-OF-PUBLIC-AFFAIRS-PROGRAM/\)](https://news-prod.wcu.edu/tag/masters-of-public-affairs-program/)

## SHARE ON

[Tweet](#)  
(<https://twitter.com/sh>).

## LATEST NEWS

 (<https://news-prod.wcu.edu/2019/10/impending-rain-forces-cancellation-of-wcus-homecoming-parade-in-downtown-sylva/>)

**IMPENDING  
RAIN  
FORCES  
CANCELLATION  
OF  
WCU'S  
HOMECOMING  
PARADE  
IN  
DOWNTOWN  
SYLVA  
(HTTPS://  
PROD.WC  
RAIN-  
FORCES-  
CANCELLATION  
OF-  
WCUS-  
HOMECOMING  
PARADE-  
IN-  
DOWNTOWN  
SYLVA/)**