



Transforming

Lives through the **Power of Learning**



2019 - 20
ANNUAL
REPORT



Letter from

As I reflect upon last year, it is marked by some important events, including the largest single gift to the College, a significant Capital Improvement Project, enrollment growth, and statewide recognition for our employees.

One thing is a common thread throughout—we transform lives through the power of learning. We adopted this vision statement because this is what we do—even when it’s hard, as when COVID-19 upended our spring semester. We rallied to provide the best possible experience for our students as we moved to remote learning under trying circumstances. As you will see in this report, our faculty and staff found creative solutions to maintain a strong

the President

connection to students when it mattered most. I am so pleased with our progress and the dedication of those around me.

I extend my deepest appreciation for those who made it possible to transform our vision into reality. Thank you for investing in our students and allowing us to build a vibrant college that transforms lives through the power of learning.

With best regards and gratitude,



Dr. Laura Leatherwood

P R E S I D E N T

Blue Ridge Community College



OUR VISION:

Transforming Lives through the Power of Learning

OUR VALUES:

Student Success

We are committed to the success of our students by adhering to the highest levels of academic and professional standards.

Integrity

We demonstrate the ideals of honesty, fairness and ethical behavior in all situations and circumstances.

Excellence

We are dedicated to continuous improvement and providing the highest quality teaching, training, and service to our community.

Responsibility

We accept responsibility for our actions and decisions and are accountable to our students, communities and the generations who come after us.

Adaptability

We are responsive and innovative when meeting the changing needs of our communities.



Board of Trustees

(as of June 30, 2020)

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Dr. Laura B. Leatherwood

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Ms. Lilly Blankenship, ex-officio,
non-voting

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

(Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2020)

EXPENSES

REVENUE

State Aid	12,332,164
Student Tuition and Fees	2,309,013
County Appropriations	4,848,460
Noncapital Contracts, Gifts and Grants	5,954,142
Capital Aid and Grants	1,559,136
Sales and Services	186,005
Other Revenues	368,816

Total Revenues **\$27,557,736**

Instruction	10,855,090
Research	24,184
Public Service	-
Academic Support	1,624,424
Student Services	1,858,161
Institutional Support	4,479,788
Operations and Maintenance	3,636,874
Student Financial Aid	3,048,562
Auxiliary Enterprises	10,867
Depreciation	1,725,847

Total Expenses **\$27,263,797**

Please Note: These are figures from our unaudited financial statements. They may be subject to change following our financial statement audit.

Our New Website



After much deliberation, hard work, and continuous attention to detail – followed by an unexpected delay due to the COVID-19 pandemic – Blue Ridge launched our new website in April 2020. With a fresh look in keeping with our updated brand, along with a new design and improved navigation, our new website provides relevant, up-to-date content for students, employees, and our community. The website was designed to be accessible and responsive, meaning that it is easily viewable and user friendly no matter the type of device or person's needs.





Transforming the Lives of our Community





Local entrepreneur calls Small Business Center “a hidden gem.”

David Foti started his business Sandy Bee Mine in 2015 after retiring from corporate life. The company sells honey and products from the hive, like personal care products and bee pollen. It also offers apiary installation and management services.

While Foti was passionate about his growing business and customers, he started to feel overwhelmed with work.

“Many small business owners are overworked because they’re trying to do it all,” he said.

Foti reached out to Blue Ridge’s Small Business Center in March 2020. He received business counseling and started taking classes to identify his ideal customer, create a business plan and improve his website’s search engine optimization.

2020 Reboot, Recover, Rebuild (R3) Program for Small Business

In response to COVID-19, the Blue Ridge Small Business Center offered affected businesses free business counseling, with confidential one-on-one remote counsel and access to industry and content experts.

Since then, he's hired a bookkeeper so he could focus on beekeeping and business strategy. And thanks to his new SEO skills, he has seen the Sandy Bee Mine website climbing in the search engine rankings.

He encourages local entrepreneurs to take advantage of the Small Business Center's services – many of which are free.

“Take the time to invest in yourself and connect with the Small Business Center to get guidance. I don't think you'll be disappointed.”

 *David Foti*





COVID-19 Spurs Innovation in Learning

Little did we know at the beginning of March that our final semester for the 2019-20 term and our fall semester for 2020-21 would look so vastly different.

Thankfully, like many community colleges that had already begun to offer online learning options, Blue Ridge was ready. To ensure safety for all and continued success for our students, Blue Ridge quickly transitioned to all online classes – while remaining committed to providing high-quality education to our students.

Students that had previously completed our student online learning orientation (SOLO) possessed the skills and behaviors needed to be successful at online education. As a result,

they felt empowered to successfully transition from in-person to online classes in a matter of weeks.

Faculty and staff were able to utilize our online transition toolkit, accessing tips for communicating with students online, developing assignments, creating quizzes, recording video lectures and setting up grade books.

When approached with the needs of students and faculty in mind, online learning can be an innovative tool to sustain student growth, even in the most challenging of times.



2020-2021 Military Friendly® School Designation

In February of 2020, Blue Ridge Community College earned the Military Friendly® School designation, further reinforcing our commitment to serving our veterans. To receive this designation, our college had to share data regarding our ability to meet thresholds for Student Retention, Graduation, Job Placement, Loan Repayment, Degree Advancement or Transfer, and Loan Default rates for all students and, specifically, for student veterans. We're honored to be among the 695 other institutions across the country that received this designation. Blue Ridge is proud to be able to serve those who sacrificed so much for our country.

**Students
Enrolled:** **2,334**

Average Age:

25

Student Diversity:

Caucasian: 1,790

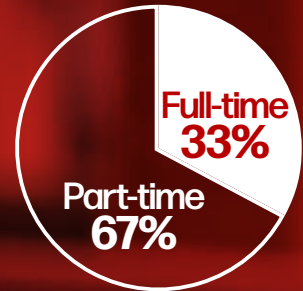
Hispanic: 317

Other: 108

African American: 91

Asian: 28

Enrollment:



Fall Semester 2019



Transforming

the Lives of
Students





“I thought college teachers wouldn’t really care and would just hand you assignments, but the teachers at Blue Ridge are really interactive and want to make sure you do well.”



Baxter Swicegood

Blue Ridge was 2020 high school graduate's first choice.



Baxter Swicegood, a 2020 Brevard High School graduate, is an accomplished student-athlete. He maintained a high GPA while leading the Blue Devils varsity football team as quarterback and captain. He was also active in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the career and technical organizations FFA and SkillsUSA.

Swicegood's successful high school career earned him several prestigious scholarships, including the Connestee Falls Student Scholarship, Good Citizenship Scholarship in memory of Dorothy Silversteen Bjerg, Charles E. Monteith Memorial Scholarship, Brevard High School Blue Devil Club Scholarship and J. Daniel Furr Memorial Scholarship.

When it came time to choose a college, Swicegood said Blue Ridge was his first choice.

"It was an easy decision for me to choose Blue Ridge," he said. "I knew I wanted to stay close to family and our farm. Blue Ridge also made sense because it's affordable."

Swicegood got a head-start on college classes while in high school, studying American Sign Language, welding and art appreciation through Blue Ridge. He earned 11 tuition-free credit hours toward his associate degree and, eventually, his bachelor's degree.

Adjusting to college life

Despite starting college during the COVID-19 pandemic, Swicegood said it's been easy to adjust to life at Blue Ridge.

"I was planning to take online classes anyway before COVID hit because I can work during the day and then study at night," he said.

Swicegood noted that Blue Ridge faculty and staff have been instrumental in helping

him transition to the rigors of college study. "I thought college teachers wouldn't really care and would just hand you assignments, but the teachers at Blue Ridge are really interactive and want to make sure you do well," he said.

His favorite class so far is biology because he enjoys his instructor's video presentations and in-person experiments.

Planning for the future

Swicegood is currently pursuing an associate in arts degree. While he's still exploring his career options, he enjoys working outdoors and is considering starting his own landscaping or construction business one day. By going to school close to home, he has the opportunity to work in these fields while continuing his education.

After completing his associate degree, Swicegood plans to transfer his credits to Brevard College or Western Carolina University to pursue a bachelor's degree in business management.

And thanks to the North Carolina Comprehensive Articulation Agreement, transferring credits between the state's community colleges and public and private institutions will be a seamless process, wherever he continues his education.

Blue Ridge a constant in local public safety leader's career.



Henderson County Emergency Services Director Jimmy Brissie first developed an interest in emergency services at age 14 after learning about emergency preparedness through the Boy Scouts. His middle school teacher's husband served on the Henderson County Rescue Squad and through that connection, Brissie began volunteering with the Squad that year.

From there, his passion for the field only grew, and he earned his EMT certificate through Blue Ridge when he was a senior in high school, attending training at the Edneyville Fire Department two nights a week.

A career transition

When an opportunity in emergency management leadership opened up in Henderson County, Brissie welcomed the chance to serve in his hometown.

"Henderson County is blessed to have some of the best public safety professionals in the nation who live and work here," he said. "I get to interact with them on a daily basis as they sacrifice and give back to their communities."

Brissie said his training at Blue Ridge helped him make the transition from law enforcement to emergency services.

"Blue Ridge has been a constant throughout my public safety career for continuing education, whether through taking recurring training to keep my certifications up to date or new classes," said Brissie. "All of the continuing education programs in this field, whether for incident management or leadership skills, played a big part in developing my baseline level of knowledge necessary to transition to another chapter in my career."

Brissie then headed to Appalachian State University, where he planned to pursue a career in law enforcement. While earning his bachelor's degree in criminal justice, he also earned a paramedic certification through Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute (CCC&TI).

After graduating from ASU, Brissie completed basic law enforcement training at CCC&TI. He then moved home to Hendersonville and served as a police officer at the Asheville Regional Airport for 18 years. As a police officer, he completed regular continuing education credits and training through Blue Ridge.

Supporting workforce development

Brissie's connection with Blue Ridge has now come full circle and he serves as an adjunct instructor, teaching classes in emergency management and rescue. As a public safety leader, he says Blue Ridge is a vital part of the area's workforce development.

"Blue Ridge is a tremendous partner in our workforce development," he said. "Without Blue Ridge, we wouldn't be able to train and equip our Fire, Rescue and EMS personnel to provide critical services to our community. Working with the College, we have been able to develop some innovative programs that not only benefit our local responders, but also draw attendees from across North Carolina."

“All of the continuing education programs in this field... played a big part in developing my baseline level of knowledge necessary to transition to another chapter in my career.”

 *Jimmy Brissie*





*Apprenticeship graduates (above)
Apprentices begin program in 2018 (left)*





Kimberly-Clark apprentices graduate into new careers.

At Kimberly-Clark Berkeley Mill, a recent expansion, technology shift and high attrition rate as employees retired left a gap in its maintenance workforce.

“We had many operators who wanted to move into the maintenance organization, which has a higher pay level, but we didn’t have a system that allowed us to train them,” said Fred Hart, team manager at Kimberly-Clark.

In 2018, the company partnered with Blue Ridge to create a two-year apprenticeship program to train current employees who could eventually join the maintenance team. The program taught participants the critical skills necessary to support the company’s goals and prepare them for new opportunities.

In 2020, Kimberly-Clark and Blue Ridge celebrated eight graduates from the inaugural apprenticeship program. These graduates were able to obtain growth opportunities in the maintenance organization and a substantial hourly raise.

“Working with Blue Ridge was a win-win for our employees and Kimberly-Clark... it allowed us to develop employees within our organization and has been huge for our mill and the career growth of our team members.”

 *Fred Hart*
Kimberly Clark

Chemistry professor takes innovative approach to teaching amid COVID-19.

Blue Ridge chemistry instructor Vicki Audia, Ph.D., is passionate about helping her students succeed.

“I want them to have an appreciation for chemistry, logic and problem-solving because that’s what chemistry is about,” she said.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began and she was required to transition from in-person to online classes in just a few days, the chemistry professor immediately put her problem-solving skills to work.

Transitioning to online teaching

As a longtime member of the American Chemical Society and the Two-Year College Chemistry Consortium, Audia tapped into their resources for educators. She utilized webinars for online instruction, reached out to colleagues who already taught virtually and purchased a Rocketbook, whiteboard, standing desk and upgraded camera so she could lecture from her foyer.

Audia said Blue Ridge offered many helpful resources to her in the transition to online teaching.

“I relied heavily on my relationships with the Distance Learning office, IT Help Desk and Student Success Center,” she said. “I sought their input on creating a true online course. I couldn’t have done it by myself.”

Challenges in teaching chemistry online

The greatest challenge in teaching chemistry online is recreating lab experiments, Audia said. For her general chemistry courses, she found an online platform using lab simulations.

“The simulations are about one hour and take students into high-tech simulated lab environments,” she explained. “This gives them a more real-life experience, similar to working in a lab at a company.”

Another challenge is that her teaching relies heavily on visual demonstration. Blue Ridge’s Technology office received a grant for a Wacom Cintiq tablet, so she could draw structures and demonstrate approaches to problems in real-time.

“I try to be very engaged with my classes,” Audia said. “I’m never one to stand up there and read a PowerPoint. I’m going to demonstrate applications.”

Extending support to students

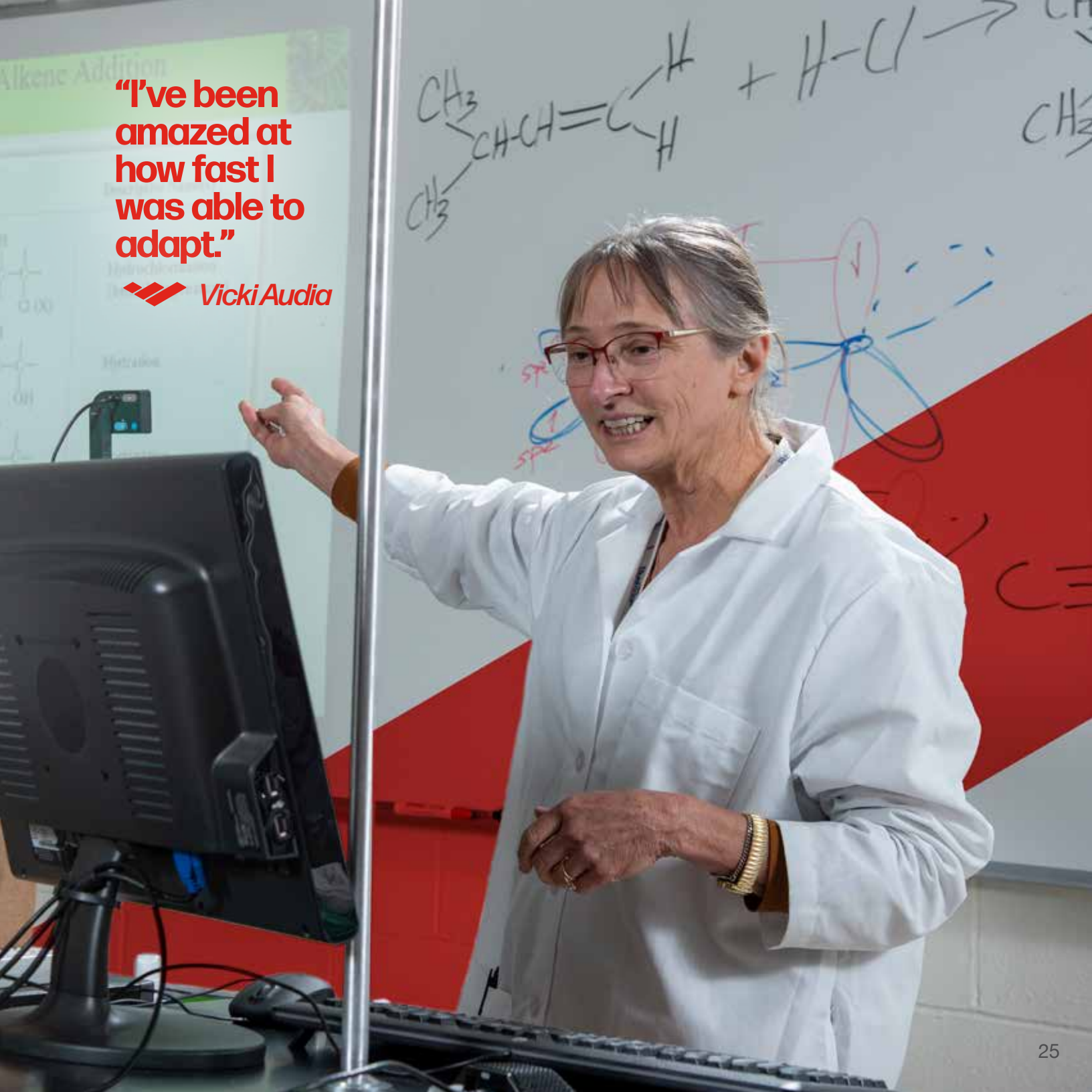
All of Audia’s classes are synchronous, meaning she lectures online during regular class times. Lecture replays are available afterward.

She also hosts virtual office hours and frequently checks in with students via email to remind them of assignments and tutoring resources.

“I’ve been amazed at how fast I was able to adapt,” Audia said. “I joke to my husband that I’m ‘Gumby.’”

"I've been amazed at how fast I was able to adapt."

 **Vicki Audia**





Transforming our Campus



Capital Improvement Project



When we rebranded the College to Education Elevated in 2019, it became vitally important that all elements of the Blue Ridge experience embody that concept. Blue Ridge was already providing innovative instruction and high quality classes to our students; we needed to bring that level of quality and elevated education to our physical spaces as well.

In response to our request and careful strategic planning, the Henderson County Commissioners approved a \$31 million campus improvement project. Their unprecedented approval for Blue Ridge's facilities needs will enable us to provide new and renovated state-of-the-art classrooms and job training labs at our Henderson County Campus.

A completely renovated Patton Building and its adjoining new construction will contain classrooms, offices, science labs, a Student Success Center, a multi-purpose auditorium, and a flexible training area for industry. We expect that project to be completed by the summer of 2022. The Public Safety Training Center will provide dedicated space for training new and incumbent law enforcement officers as well as fire and rescue personnel from around the region.





As our students navigate the admissions process, we find that they could use one resource and one physical location in which to access information. Certainly, the new and improved website is an option, but industry trends point to the consolidation of all admissions, registration, financial aid, and onboarding functions into one space. In response to this need, we were able to create a One Stop in the Sink Building for that purpose, more efficiently serving prospective and current students.

In addition to physical improvements like building renovations, signage and wayfinding updates across all three campuses, our College administration also recognized the need to plan for a growing student body interested in pursuing educational and career opportunities close to home. Blue Ridge was able to purchase 18 acres adjacent to the Henderson County Campus in summer of 2020, positioning the College for future expansion in the coming years.



The past year was certainly significant for all of us, but for the College and the Educational Foundation, it was a year of incredible gifts. We had the good fortune to receive the single largest gift from an individual in the history of the College, along with grants that will support our efforts to train a highly skilled workforce in fields like advanced manufacturing and behavioral health services.

Mrs. Liselotte R. Wehrheim bequeathed \$1.75 million to the Foundation in order to provide scholarships and other program support for healthcare training programs at Blue Ridge Community College. Mrs. Wehrheim grew up in Germany, where she studied nursing and served as a nurse in World War II. She moved to the United States in 1954, where she continued in her nursing profession before retiring with her husband in North Carolina. Wehrheim understood the importance of a college education and loved seeing students work hard to improve their lives.

In addition to Mrs. Wehrheim's generosity, the College received grants from **Duke Energy** and **Pisgah Health Foundation**.

The \$200,000 grant from Duke Energy will allow the College to further connect students with hands-on training and career development opportunities. Funds will be used to update learning labs to align with state-of-the-art advanced manufacturing standards and to purchase new equipment like the Piranha Ironworker and Thermal Imaging Trainer. A portion of the funds will also provide scholarships for students interested in pursuing a career in the high-tech, rapidly evolving advanced manufacturing field.

Pisgah Health Foundation's \$180,000 grant will support the College's initiatives to elevate awareness and increase education opportunities among behavioral health and frontline emergency response professionals providing mental health and substance abuse care in Henderson and Transylvania Counties. The grant will also assist with start-up costs for a new associate degree program in Human Services Technology, as well as short-term training programs in Psychiatric Technician and Substance Abuse Education - both of which began with the Fall 2020 term.



Grants Awarded

American Association of Community Colleges Expanding Community College Apprenticeship	\$140,000.00
Appalachian Regional Commission-Driving Success: Automotive Innovation Project	\$589,464.00
Appalachian Regional Commission-Power Technical Assistance w/Mayland Community College	\$1,500.00
Arts Council Grassroots Music by the Lake	\$1,000.00
Duke Energy Community College Growth Program	\$200,000.00
NCCCS - EHSI	\$281,500.00
NC Dept of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions - Finish Line Grant	\$25,000.00
NC Dept of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions - Finish Line Grant Admin Support	\$20,000.00
NC Military Business Center w/Fayetteville Technical Community College.....	\$32,651.00
Pisgah Health Foundation - Continuing Education.....	\$80,000.00
Pisgah Health Foundation - Curriculum.....	\$100,000.00
US Forest Service - Schenck	\$94,536.00
WIOA Adult.....	\$145,977.76
WIOA Dislocated Worker	\$180,957.54
WIOA Dislocated Worker - Contingency.....	\$77,500.00
WIOA Empower WNC: Empowerment to Employment Program.....	\$55,000.00
WIOA Work Based Learning	\$22,005.85
CARES Institutional	\$713,446.00
CARES Student Awards	\$713,446.00

Foundation Financials

Net assets at 7/1/2019

\$13,210,484

Current Liabilities

\$55,018

Net assets with donor restrictions

\$11,242,881

without donor restrictions

\$3,895,750

Net assets at 6/30/20

\$15,138,631

Increase in assets

+\$1,596,937

Total Expenses

\$1,863,867

Supporting Services

\$77,662

Program Services

\$1,786,206

Award-Winning Impact

Our faculty play a significant role in the lives of our students — as teachers, advisors, and mentors. The faculty and staff at Blue Ridge are dedicated to helping students find purpose and direction in their educational process, setting them on a path to meet their career and life goals.

Each year Blue Ridge Community College Educational Foundation honors several outstanding employees for their service to the community, the College, and its students. Our 2020 award recipients continue to uphold our highest standards and showcase Blue Ridge's commitment to Education Elevated.

2020 Award Recipients:

Dr. and Mrs. William D. Killian Outstanding Teacher Award: **Wanda Gant, Student Success Center Coordinator**

Dr. Molly A. Parkhill Staff Person of the Year Award: **Carol Ann Lydon, Director of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness**

Dr. David W. Sink Jr. Community Service Award: **Lynde Mickey, R.N., Nursing Instructor**

Dr. Eliza B. Graue Extra Mile Award: **Hamid Najafi, Adjunct Math Instructor**

Wellness Employee of the Year: **Carol Ann Lydon, Director of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness**

Blue Ridge Employees Earn Top Honors at State Level



After winning the 2019 Dr. Molly A. Parkhill Staff Person of the Year here at Blue Ridge, registrar **Sara Schumacher**, went on to be named the 2020 North Carolina Community College System Staff Person of the Year.

Sara was chosen for her commitment and contributions to Blue Ridge Community College, not only through her role as registrar, but also through her work as an adjunct faculty member. Over the years, Sara has collaborated with and led team members in process improvements that make the application process and student communications more streamlined and efficient.

Dean for Public Safety **Philip Hosmer**, who was chosen by his peers as the 2019 Dr. and Mrs. William D. Killian Teaching in Excellence recipient, was a top five finalist for the 2020 North Carolina Community College System Faculty of the Year. Philip was recognized for continually working to meet the needs of students at Blue Ridge Community College. He is known across campus for his boundless energy and expert knowledge of his field.



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(serving July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020)

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Tribute Gifts

In honor of:

AAUW Brevard
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Corum Smith
Robin Stow
Josh and Laura Sutton
Michael, Elaine, Hunter and Sallie Kate Thompson
Rodney Workman

In memory of:

Mike Alden
Eleanor Cosgrove
Paul Curlee
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Stephen Russell Gregory
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Fred Jackson
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Alan Koenig
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Sally Melzer
Pepper Moreno
Bill Moyer
Louise Unrath
Marion Vamosy
Deidre Waters

In-Kind Gifts

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AdventHealth Hendersonville
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Mr. Michael Robert Burton
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Gifts of \$25,000 or more

AdventHealth Hendersonville
Connestee Falls Student
Scholarship Program
Duke Energy
Estate of Ellen C. Perstein
Pisgah Health Foundation
Estate of Liselotte R.
Wehrheim

Henderson Patrons

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John and Donna Crawford
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McKenzie-Wilson
Pardee UNC Health Care
Mr. John F. Prim and Mrs.
Margaret J. Prim
Southeastern Chapter of the
American Rhododendron
Society

Flat Rock Guild

Gifts of \$5,000 to \$9,999

American Association
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Hendersonville Branch
Anonymous
Azalea Society of America -
Vaseyi Chapter

Cooper Construction
Company, Inc.
Fitzpatrick Foundation
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Dr. Stuart and Barbara
Glassman
Hendersonville ABC Board
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Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company
Dr. and Mrs. Timothy A.
Powers
Mr. and Mrs. Louis R.
Santiago
Smart Products USA, Inc.
Dr. Ivan E. Sutherland

Foundation Club

Gifts of \$1,000 to \$4,999

American Association of
University Women, Brevard
Branch
Robert "Jay" and
Carolyn W. Alley
Anonymous
Apple Country Antique Engine
and Tractor Club, Inc.
Asheville E-Z Gardeners
Dr. Judy M. Babb and Mr.
Scott P. Hertel
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Scholarship Fund
Mr. and Mrs. Michael &
Shanda Bedoian
Benevolent, Patriotic Order of
Does #258
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The Birthday Club

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First Citizens Bank
Four Seasons Rotary
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Gilmore Consulting, Inc.
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Airport Authority
Henderson County Master
Gardener
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Jessie M. Kerth Scholarship
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Campbell Shatley PLLC
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Karen A. Talley
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Transylvania County
Republican Party
Valley Hill Fire and Rescue
Department
Chip and Cindy Walker
Womansong of Asheville, Inc.
Duke and Ann Woodhull
Cheng Yang
Young Office Environments

Transylvania Society

Gifts of \$500 to \$999

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Baysden
John M. Belk Endowment

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Claris Memorial Fund
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Globe Treks, Inc.
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Joseph D. Poli Memorial Fund
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United Community Bank
Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC
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