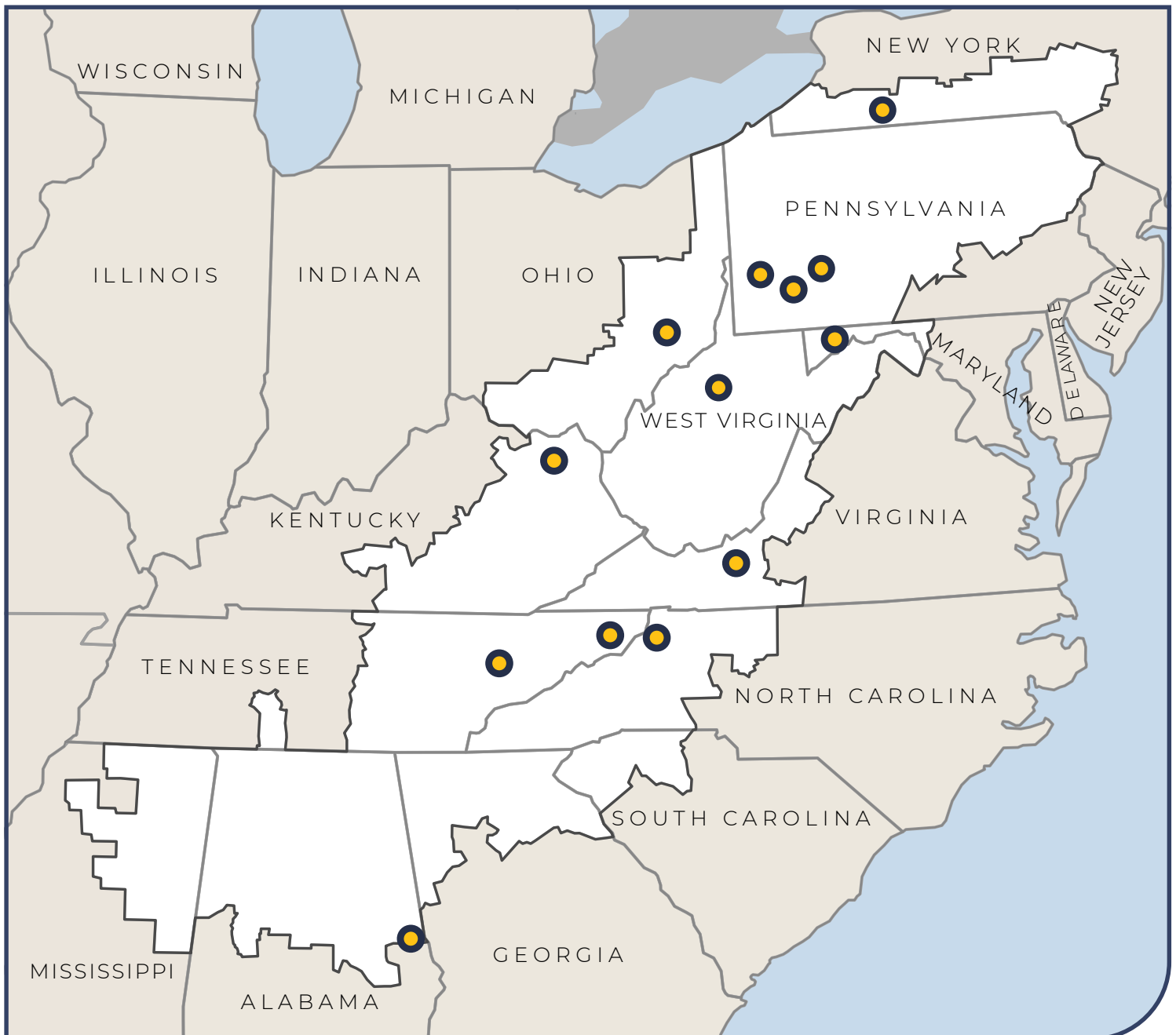




2023 Appalachian Collegiate Research Initiative

Projects and Participants

*Students Shaping a Positive Future for
Appalachia Through Research*





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Alfred State College (Alfred, NY)

Leveraging Historic Transportation Networks to Promote Heritage Tourism and Community Connectivity: A Vision for Sustainability and Growth in Allegany County, New York

Alfred State College students will complete community visualization studies of two Allegany County villages—the Village of Angelica and the Town of Friendship—along the historic County Road 20 corridor to help stakeholders envision potential strategies for asset-based development. These strategies will be designed to revitalize and connect downtown districts into vibrant public realms to promote heritage tourism in New York’s Southern Tier and the larger Appalachian region.

Faculty: Dr. Craig Clark, William Dean, Matthew DiRado

Appalachian State University (Boone, NC)

Feast or Famine: A Post-pandemic Examination of New Market Channels for Local Food in the North Carolina High Country

Appalachian State University students will collaborate with Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture (BRWIA) to support ongoing economic development of equitable, sustainable local food systems and explore the impact of pandemic-era relief efforts on new local food market channels developed since 2020. The project will help to further build capacity to utilize and direct resources in local food box programs to address food insecurity among vulnerable individuals.

Faculty: Dr. Tammy Haley, Tom Hansell

Auburn University (Auburn, AL)

Culture and Community in Camp Hill, Alabama

Students from Auburn University will research, design, and present a heritage tourism development plan for the town of Camp Hill, Alabama. This project, which builds upon an existing cultural resources survey of Camp Hill that Auburn University public history students completed as part of their 2022 project, will help Camp Hill community partners connect with state tourism officials to begin establishing networks with existing historical and cultural sites.

Faculty: Dr. Keith Hebert

East Tennessee State University (Johnson City, TN)

Langston Centre Health Equity Task Force: Seeking Economic Sustainability through Health Ministries in Appalachian Black Churches

East Tennessee State University students will collaborate with Langston Centre Health Equity Task Force to document the work of health ministries in area Black churches, evaluate health needs within the Black community, organize and participate in a health fair, and create a three-year strategic plan for the Task Force to address health disparities and economic needs in the community through educational programs and community outreach.

Faculty: Dr. Rebecca Adkins Fletcher

Frostburg State University (Frostburg, MD)

Will's Mountain State Park: History, Ecology and Opportunity in Western Maryland

Frostburg State University students will partner with the Allegany Museum and Will's Mountain State Park in Cumberland, Maryland, to develop an exhibit and community visioning sessions featuring Will's Mountain State Park. The project comes at a critical juncture as Will's Mountain State Park moves toward becoming publicly accessible for geo-tourism initiatives while continuing to protect and preserve the park's fragile mountain-top ecology.

Faculty: Dr. Kara Rogers Thomas

Glennville State University (Glennville, WV)

Addressing the Need for Moderate Income Housing to Attract Professional Talent to Central West Virginia

Glennville State University students will work with two county economic development corporations to complete a multiple case study to find ways to provide modern, affordable moderate-income housing to attract higher education and medical professionals to the rural, economically distressed counties of Calhoun and Gilmer, West Virginia. The study will investigate the need for housing, the impact on local employers who are trying to recruit employees, and the factors prohibiting the building of needed housing.

Faculty: Dr. Mark Sarver

Indiana University of PA (Indiana, PA)

The Indiana Health Barriers Project (IHPB)—Barriers to Recreational Park Access and Usage in Rural Western Pennsylvania

Indiana University of Pennsylvania students will collaborate with the Center for Community Growth and other local organizations to identify community needs in relation to rural health, especially for disadvantaged groups. As part of a larger project identifying barriers to health services and activities, IUP students will assess the state of municipal parks and recreation areas in the county—their accessibility, their usability, and their approaches to welcome diverse groups. Specific neighborhoods that especially need park investment or healthy-activity programming will be identified. The overall goal of the project is to promote cross-organization coordination to address unmet health needs faced by the communities around Indiana, PA.

Faculty: Dr. Brandon Vick

Morehead State University (Morehead, KY)

Seeking the Right Retail Mix

Morehead State University students will collaborate with Downtown Morehead, Inc., conducting research to determine the right retail mix for retail spaces associated with a new Fairfield Marriott Hotel, slated for construction in 2023 to complement the existing Morehead Conference Center. Morehead, like many downtown areas, struggles to keep viable businesses in storefronts. Students will help the community to address this by completing a gap analysis and creating sustainable business plan options for the new retail spaces being added to the downtown area.

Faculty: Dr. Janet Ratliff

Muskingum University (New Concord, OH)

Community Assessment for the Village of New Concord: Place-Based Applied Research for Enhancing Cultural Tourism and Walkability for Economic Revitalization

Muskingum University students will work with the Village of New Concord to conduct a community needs assessment for improving walkability and access to the downtown business district. This project will highlight local historic landmarks, enhance wellness and eco-tourism through new linkages to outdoor trails and natural resources, improve signage, and create a digital story map of various points of interest around the community, helping to build economic stability for the downtown area.

Faculty: Dr. Stephen Van Horn, Dr. William Toombs

Seton Hill University (Greensburg, PA)

Assessing Entrepreneurial Needs and Inclusive Economic Development Opportunities for the City of Greensburg Healthcare-Education Corridor Development Plan

Seton Hill University students will collaborate with the Greensburg Community Development Corporation (GCDC), and additional key stakeholders to assess the entrepreneurial needs and inclusive economic development opportunities for a planned healthcare-education corridor in the City of Greensburg, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. Student work will include a gap analysis and research to identify future key macroeconomic variables that may influence the development of businesses near the planned healthcare education corridor.

Faculty: Lyzona Marshall

University of Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh, PA)

Realizing Regional Resilience: Appalachian Bridges to the Future

A cross-disciplinary group of University of Pittsburgh students will collaborate with the Fayette County Cultural Trust (FCCT) and other key stakeholders in developing a county-wide asset map and recommendations toward sustainable economic development. The project builds upon last year's work to address the so-called "brain-drain" that greatly affects the Appalachian region, as the capacity of the region to remain economically competitive suffers with the outmigration of skilled human capital.

Faculty: Bryan Schultz, Dr. Michael Glass, Dr. Kristin Kanthak, Dr. David Sanchez

University of Tennessee (Knoxville, TN)

Closing the Regional Tourism Gap: Promoting Multi-jurisdictional Tourism in Cumberland Gap Communities

University of Tennessee students will work with stakeholders from Cumberland Gap communities to explore ideas for regional tourism, develop a multi-community tourism strategy, identify and implement a short-term goal, and develop a funding proposal for a long-term project. This project builds upon the 2022 project, which noted a lack of coordination among area communities to promote regional tourism and recommended that these communities work together to develop a shared and mutually beneficial community strategy.

Faculty: Dr. Tim Ezzell

Virginia Tech (Blacksburg, VA)

Placekeeping: Collective Memory Projects, Public Health, and Community Development

Virginia Tech students will participate as co-researchers in Monuments Across Appalachian Virginia (MAAV), a \$3 million-dollar initiative funded by the Mellon Foundation, to plan and guide community collaboration in the development of monuments to maximize public health and economic development outcomes. By guiding local people's co-creation of monuments funded by MAAV, this project will help ensure that each monument boosts community and regional pride via the reflection of community taste, self-identity, and collective memory.

Faculty: Dr. Emily Satterwhite