



**Appalachian
Collegiate Research
Initiative**

The Appalachian Collegiate Research Initiative 2024

*Students Shaping a Positive Future for Appalachia
Through Research*

Participating Institutions and Project Descriptions

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 a community visualization study of the Allegany County village of Cuba, New York to help stakeholders envision potential strategies for asset-based development – revitalizing the downtown district into a vibrant public realm. This will also involve strengthening the connection to the Genesee Valley Greenway Trail to leverage historic transportation networks that can 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)

Wake of the Flood: Cultural Arts and Heritage Organizations Response to Hurricane Helene in Western North Carolina

In Fall of 2024, Appalachian State University students were set to study community Impacts of events and programs hosted by Mountain Home Music. In late September 2024, western North Carolina was hit by Hurricane Helene. In the wake of this extreme weather event, the focus of previously scheduled events shifted, and with that, our project shifted to cover the impact made by regional arts and music organizations. This includes events hosted not only by Mountain Home Music, but also efforts of other community-based cultural heritage organizations - Lost Province Center for the Cultural Arts (Ashe County), Carolina Rambler Productions

(Avery/Watauga County), and Sunny Morning WNC (Ashe County) - which have transferred their resources to serve shifting community needs. Our project mixes interviews with regional arts coordinators, who are using their creativity and platforms to channel funds and supplies to their neighbors, with data showing the positive impact of these non-profits as they expanded their missions in these challenging times for the mountains of western North Carolina.

Faculty: Trevor McKenzie, Dr. Tammy Haley, Dr. Julie Shepherd-Powell

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

Emory and Henry University (Emory, VA)

Contributing Community-Generated Power to the Powerhouse: A Collaboration Between Emory & Henry and the YWCA of NETN/SWVA

Emory and Henry Civic Innovation and CORE200 students will collaborate with the YWCA of NETN/SWVA's newly created Powerhouse, a holistic community wellness and resource center, which will serve Smyth and Washington Counties in Virginia. The students will gather data through qualitative research methods from individuals recovering from substance use disorder and/or striving to overcome poverty, and those individuals' select allies in Glade Spring, which will serve as a "model community," to determine individual and family goals and needs related to holistic health, substance use disorder recovery, and transitions to gainful employment.

Faculty: Dr. Theresa L. Burriss

Indiana University of Pennsylvania (Indiana, PA)

Orphan Wells – Sustainable Development through Environmental Remediation in Indiana County, PA

Indiana University of Pennsylvania students will collaborate with the Center for Community Growth to assist the organization in launching a project to locate and remediate orphaned wells for sustainable economic development in Indiana County, PA. Orphan wells are nonproducing wells whose ownership is unknown and, consequently, uncapped abandoned and orphaned wells become the responsibility of the state. Western Pennsylvania is arguably the epicenter of abandoned and orphan wells in the United States.

Faculty: Dr. Amanda Poole, Dr. Abigail Adams, Dr. Brandon Vick

Marietta College (Marietta, OH)

Assessing Rural Healthcare Workforce Needs

Marietta College students will collaborate with Ely Chapman Educational Foundation to assess the region's healthcare workforce needs over the next decade and determine what academic programs might be needed to support educating that workforce. Students will also explore how the College might collaborate with community partners to help build the capacity of organizations to address the health and wellness needs of the local region. In addition, students will assist the Foundation as it provides wellness checks for school-aged children, pop-up clinics for vaccines, and other health screenings, collecting data on the effectiveness of the clinics.

Faculty: Dr. Alexandra Perry

Marshall University (Huntington, WV)

Harvesting Heritage: Community Garden of War

Students in the SOC 310/603 class, under the direction of Dr. Kristi McLeod, will partner with the City of War, WV, to create a community garden and legacy gathering space, which will be a hub for community members to learn and pass on traditions. This initiative addresses the community's pressing needs, particularly improving access to healthy food. The garden, located beside the Big Creek Community Center, will provide fresh produce to residents who may struggle with growing their own food or lack transportation to markets.

Faculty: Dr. Kristi McLeod

Morehead State University (Morehead, KY)

Business Plans to Address Community Needs for a Lasting Impact

Morehead State University students will collaborate with Downtown Morehead, Inc., conducting research to provide business plans for the most needed types of businesses deemed essential as designated by Downtown Morehead, Inc. and their respective knowledge of the community. Building on data from last year's project, one focus area students will focus on the creation of business plans related to daycare facilities and recreational facilities. In addition, students will provide a public relations campaign on campus to make students more aware of the value of shopping locally and supporting small businesses in their respective local communities.

Faculty: Dr. Janet Ratliff

Ohio University (Athens, OH)

Follow the Food: Sustainable Economy, Environment, and Community in SE Ohio

Ohio University students will gather data from local food pantries and pantry clients to help Community Food Initiatives increase the amount, quality, and usability of local food options pantries can offer. Community Food Initiatives works to address the lack of access to healthy and affordable food in Southeast Ohio by working to strengthen the region with a focus on gardening, skill building, and feeding those in need. This project, which builds upon last year's project, will challenge students to engage in big picture thinking about how a local organization works with multiple local assets and stakeholders to create sustainable food access programs that keep philanthropic and other economic resources here in our local region.

Faculty: Dr. Rachel Terman, Dr. Tiffany Arnold

Radford University (Radford, VA)

Transforming the Foundry: Planning the Resurrection and Reuse of an Historic but Contaminated Industrial Site

Working together with the City of Radford, Radford University students will develop proposals for specific avenues of cultural, natural and historical study and development of a former foundry site into a multiuse business, greenspace, and recreational space, based on comparisons with similar urban renewal projects in other locations and the specific needs and nature of the City of Radford. Students will assess and analyze the context of the site through exploration of historical records, publicly available reports, and interviews with members of the community. In addition, they will compile

their findings to be delivered to representatives of the city both in person and as a “white paper” outlining their studies and findings.

Faculty: Tim Thornton, Dr. Jason Davis, Charlie Jewell

Seton Hill University (Greensburg, PA)

Research for development of a plan for community engagement and business growth in the City of Greensburg

Seton Hill University students, under the direction of Lyzona Marshall, assistant professor of Business and director of the Seton Hill Center for Entrepreneurship, and Cathlin Clark-Gordon, assistant professor of Communications, will partner with the Greensburg Business and Professional Association (GBPA) to research and develop a plan for community engagement and business development with a focus on encouraging more young professionals and graduate students to invest, live, and shop in the downtown area, which will enhance the City’s revitalization efforts.

Faculty: Lyzona Marshall, Dr. Cathlin Clark-Gordon

University of Charleston (Charleston, WV)

Realizing Regional Resilience: Appalachian Bridges to the Future

University of Charleston (UC) students will collaborate with the Clay County (WV) Business Development Authority (BDA), the City of Summersville (WV), and the Civilian-Military Innovation Institute (CMI2) to develop a proposed regional tourism transportation solution to assist visitors to the region by helping them more easily get to, and take advantage of, regional tourism assets leading to increased levels of satisfaction with their travels in the area and economic activity for the area. CMI2 brings in hundreds of military trainees each month but there is currently no private transportation from the CMI2 facility to the closest towns of Clay and Summersville WV where trainees can access basic services like food and convenience items, nor is there transportation to regional outdoor attractions like the Elk River Trail or Summersville Lake.

Faculty: Dr. Rick Ferris, John Finlayson, Dr. Lisa McCool

University of Tennessee-Knoxville (Knoxville, TN)

Reaching for the Skyway: Assessing and Envisioning Tourism Resources in Tellico Plains, Tennessee

Students in the 2024-2025 University of Tennessee ACRI class will work with residents and stakeholders of Tellico Plains, Tennessee to conduct a tourism assessment of their community and create a vision for future tourism development. Student work on the project will include a stakeholder analysis, a visitor's survey, an inventory and assessment, visioning and planning workshops, and a final report for the community partners.

Faculty: Dr. Tim Ezzell, Zoe Webb

Virginia Tech (Blacksburg, VA)

Collective Memory: Contested History Sites as Spaces for Social Growth and Economic 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 explore how the creation of monuments can contribute to racial justice and use that knowledge to support community collaboration in the development of monuments that encourage social well-being and economic development.

Faculty: Dr. Sarah Plummer, Dr. Emily Satterwhite

Westminster College (New Wilmington, PA)

Local and Amish Artisan Shop and Art Gallery Feasibility Study

Westminster College students enrolled in Entrepreneurship Practicum will collaborate with New Wilmington's Economic Development Committee (EDCOM), the New Wilmington Area Business Association (NWABA), and Forward Lawrence (Lawrence County Regional Chamber of Commerce and Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation) to conduct a feasibility study on the development of a local and Amish artisan shop and art gallery in the heart of New Wilmington's business district.

Faculty: Dr. Helen Boylan