



Contemporary illustration of the Asheville Farm School Library constructed in 1932–33 as a student building project. The structure now houses the Center for Experiential Learning including our Work Program, Community Engagement, and Global Engagement offices.

“PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION” DEFINED

- Emphasizes hands-on learning by doing
- Connects theory and practice through academics, work, and community engagement
- Focuses on problem solving and real-world action
- Values collaborative and interdisciplinary group work
- Embraces pluralism and individual inclusion for all
- Advances social responsibility and democracy
- Fosters lifelong learning, ethical responsibility, and social skills

Our Progressive Promise

Our promise is student empowerment—through learning for the mind, experience for the heart, and community for the soul. *Our Progressive Promise* stands on the following pillars:

1. **Advance Curricular Innovation and Deepen Experiential Learning**
2. **Ensure Access, Inclusion, and Student Success**
3. **Achieve Sustainability and Better Outcomes for All**

Our Progressive Promise For All: Education in Action for the Common Good

Warren Wilson College as the National Leader for Learning in Action

Our founders would be proud. A 1933 Asheville Farm School report entitled *A New Progressive Educational Program* announced a bold vision—one that rejected the “standard educational procedures,” embraced “the changing conditions” of the students at that time, and promised education that gives “the student the first and last consideration.” The School promoted access and innovation to cultivate the minds and hearts of students who, empowered, would live lives of purpose.

The Progressive Promise Renewed: Today, 90 years later, Warren Wilson College advances that inspiring tradition. Today we recommit to being a national leader for learning in action for our times. We are rekindling the progressive principles on which our College was built. We will reaffirm our commitment to the liberal arts and sciences for positive impact on the world. **We will be an innovative, inclusive, experiential liberal arts college committed to excellence and access. Through learning by doing—in the classroom, in our work program, and in our communities—our students will gain tools and confidence to advance individual purpose in service to the common good.**

Warren Wilson is reimagining liberal arts education for our times by:

- leveraging our 1,100-acre campus, rich with biodiversity in the Swannanoa Valley, and expanding community partnerships across the greater Asheville region for hands-on, action-based education embedded in the real world.
- deepening our strengths in environmental studies, the arts, and human dynamics and social justice.
- empowering student learning in and out of the classroom through experiential learning, meaningful work supporting College operations, and credit-earning community engagement and career relevant courses across all majors.

Our enhanced experiential learning model will provide students engaging ways to address the pressing issues of our times as well as the timeless questions of human existence. Our goal is to empower students with skills, purpose, and ethical agency. Our ultimate aspiration is to educate the bold, ethical, entrepreneurial leaders of tomorrow who will usher in a better world for all.

Onward,

Damián J. Fernández, Ph.D.
President



Warren Wilson
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Onward: Implementing the Plan

Advance Curricular Innovation and Deepen Experiential Learning

Every undergraduate student is guaranteed our experiential learning and living programs designed to develop skills and expand perspectives leading to successful careers of meaning and purpose. Every major is designed for learning in action and includes a carefully designed sequence of experiences integrating theory with practice.

Experiential Courses for All Students, in Every Major, for Credit

- Project-Based Introductory Course
- Community-Engagement Course
- Work-Integrated Course
- Internship/Practicum
- Research or Creative Project Capstone

Experiential Journey Options

Available to all but not required of students, there are additional experiences designed into the academic calendar that allow faculty and staff to provide even more experiential, problem/project-based, community engaged, and global learning experiences for students. These include our global engagement courses and study away semester programs, our new Lightning Term courses over fall and spring break, and opportunities for students to complete on-campus and off-campus internships and apprenticeship semesters for credit.

Experience Leads to Career Pathways

We honor the value of all work. In doing so, we foster peer-to-peer engagement and team building, enhance student reflection, provide practical skills, and familiarize students with professional workplaces.

Warren Wilson is one of only nine federally designated work colleges in the country. All students hold jobs mentored by faculty and staff. Our students help to operate the College. In addition to supporting essential campus services, students have two more work-based experiences through work-integrated learning courses and leadership internships.

Timeline

Spring 2024

Faculty revise the College's 21 majors to fully integrate experiential learning

Fall 2024

New program requirements implemented for new students

Fall 2025

First class begins the Masters in Applied Climate Studies program



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Number of majors—all—that will integrate credit-bearing, experiential education for students to better prepare them for life after college

Ensure Access, Inclusion, and Student Success

Warren Wilson College aspires to be a place of radical inclusion. Forty percent of our students are Pell-eligible (from the lowest income brackets). More than half identify as LGBTQ+. Twenty-two percent of first-year students identify as first-generation college students and 20 percent identify as being of African/Black, Latiné, Indigenous, and Asian (ALIA) heritage.

We are dedicated to increasing access and will foster student success across the campus. We provide the tools and resources for graduates to collaborate and contribute to their communities and the nation.

Achieve Sustainability and Better Outcomes for All

Learning is every day, and education is life-long. Our *Progressive Promise* extends to Swannanoa, Asheville, and beyond through engagement with our community partners and programming through the Mountain Institute for Lifelong Learning, Swannanoa Gathering, Farm School General Store, Chamber Music Series, public events, and more. We will pursue partnerships and programs to connect the College and region—strengthening both.

Coming Soon: Masters in Applied Climate Studies

The College will maximize its 1,100-acre, biodiversity-rich campus as an outdoor classroom with the launch of the Masters in Applied Climate Studies. This low-residency, applied program will explore climate change adaptation, mitigation, and response, and will integrate career-ready scientific and technical skills into the academic program. Three on-campus experiences will address real issues and research cases from around the world to complete team-based, collaborative, action-focused research with mentoring from industry professionals and scientific experts in the field. The program will welcome its first class in the Fall of 2025.

The Warren Wilson College Way

HOW WE EDUCATE: Learning by doing for real world agency.

WHERE WE EDUCATE: On the land and in the city, in local and global communities—places of bio and human diversity.

WHO WE EDUCATE: All—because we are affordable, accepting, affirmative—a place of radical inclusion within a pluralistic community.

WHY WE EDUCATE: For individual empowerment in service to the common good.