



# Appalachian Community of Education Scholars

APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY®

## APPALACHIAN COMMUNITY OF EDUCATION SCHOLARS 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

PREPARED BY

*Megan Kasper*  
*Ike Smith*

*a year's overview*

# SERVING OUR MISSION

On behalf of the Appalachian Community of Education Scholars (ACES) Leadership Team, it is my pleasure to share with you the rewarding year we have had with the ACES program.

Many aspects of our program have been altered by this pandemic, just as our lives have been. This year was a difficult one for our scholars to navigate academically and socially. Despite a virtual setting, this year was one of growth and connection.

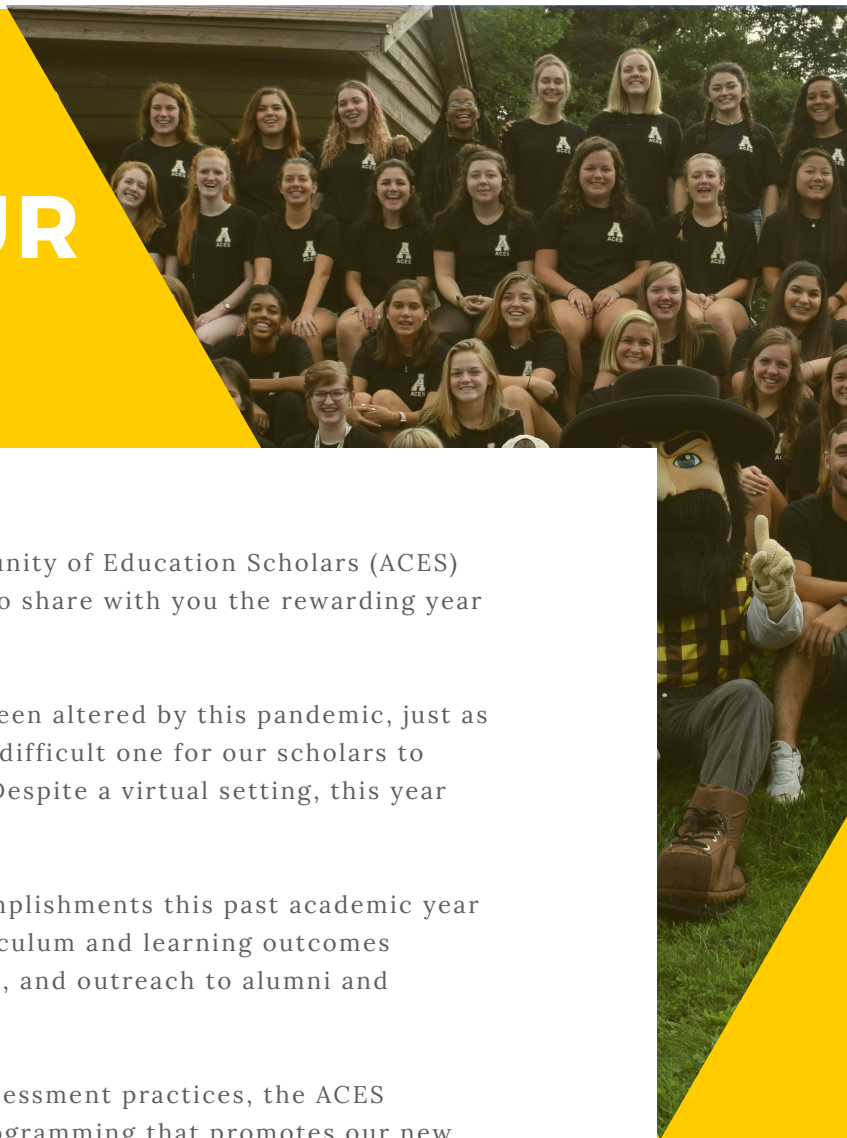
One of our program's greatest accomplishments this past academic year was the implementation of our curriculum and learning outcomes informed by research, best practices, and outreach to alumni and professional leaders.

Through our new curriculum and assessment practices, the ACES program can strive to implement programming that promotes our new mission statement... ***"to develop teacher leaders who will positively impact the profession through their skills in critical thinking, collaboration, reflective practice, and advocacy for equity and inclusion."***

This annual report provides a snapshot and accounting of how the program is engaged in creating the foundation for new beginnings across our mission. As we take pride in our accomplishments, we also are looking to continuous improvements that will guide us in preparing teacher leaders who are prepared to serve the education profession and the diverse needs within it.



Megan Kasper, Assistant Director for Student Engagement  
James Center for Student Success & Advising  
Reich College of Education



*infographic*

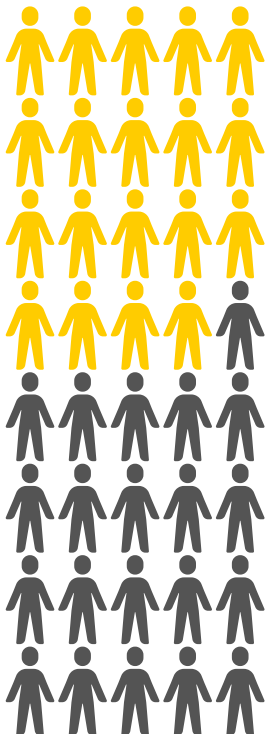
# YEAR IN REVIEW

# 134

INTERVIEWS

# 19

FIRST-YEAR  
SCHOLARSHIP  
RECIPIENTS

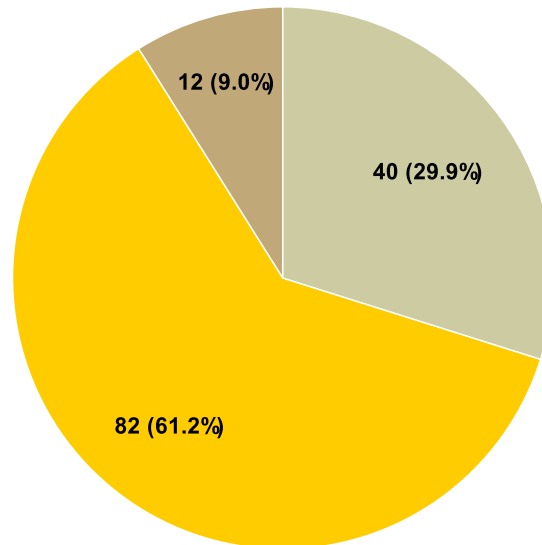


# \$72,737

TOTAL FUNDS AWARDED

# \$3,828

AVERAGE AWARD AMOUNT



- First-year, scholarship
- First-year, non-scholarship
- Transfer

## EXIT SURVEY

To what degree did the ACES program influence your decision to attend Appalachian State University?  
1 = "...not at all..."  
5 = "ACES was the reason..."



To what extent has ACES positively contributed to your teacher preparation?  
1 = "...none..."; 5 = "...essential..."



To what extent has ACES helped you grow as a teacher leader?  
1 = "...none..."; 5 = "...essential..."



Overall, would you recommend the ACES program to other future teachers?  
1 = "Definitely no"; 5 = "Definitely yes"



## AVERAGE ACES GPA

# 3.66



*meet*

# OUR SCHOLARS

## First Year ACE Scholars

Cheyenne Banister  
 Kayla Bare  
 Mitchell Berzack  
 Sarah Bridgwood  
 Lillie Brock  
 Harmony Brown  
 Adam Caliri  
 Kasey Clift  
 Darah Cole  
 Bailey Davis  
 Isabella Dobbs  
 Meredith Forrey  
 Leo Fowell  
 Madison Goodwin  
 Jessica Guion  
 Aidan Hefner  
 Jordan Henes  
 Hannah Grace Jacob  
 Nadine Jallal  
 Seth Kegley  
 Alonha Ketchum  
 Katelyn Kidd  
 Audrey Lomax  
 Sydney Lowder  
 Jason Macias  
 Francisco Martinez  
 Bryson May  
 Megan McCraw  
 Bianca Patterson  
 Katie Pittman  
 Rebecca Pollard  
 Maddie Puckett  
 Sasha Ramsey  
 Matthew Reep  
 Athena Ross  
 Renee Sharpe  
 Laura Tellez-Elias  
 Dorian Turner  
 Malcolm Vaughn  
 Jennifer Vera Osornio  
 Alec Via  
 Tatum Ward  
 Brady Warlow  
 Makenah Wilson

## Second Year ACE Scholars

Brett Baker  
 Alexis Barber  
 Edgar Blanco  
 Berenice Blanco-Rodriguez  
 Rae Bradley  
 Jared Clendenen  
 Lindsay Cowley  
 Britta Crist  
 Taylor Ann Doss  
 Jenny Eure  
 Joanne Ferhadi  
 Michael Gautier  
 Gabriella (Gabbi) Goelz  
 Emma Kate Greene  
 Emily Gulden  
 Kalina Hanowski  
 Katie Hayes  
 Diego Hernandez Guillen  
 Reagan Houchard  
 Kylie Howell  
 Madeline Huffman  
 Anna Jessup  
 Isabel Kaczmarek  
 Grace Key  
 Alexis Lail  
 Maria Limon-Jimenez  
 Karly McChesney  
 Bethany Memola  
 Tymber Morrison  
 Candace Myers  
 Brenda Najera  
 Meredith Newsome  
 Travis Pressley  
 Alexandra Ramirez-Tinoco  
 Olivia Shepherd  
 Dawson Shropshire  
 Jessica Spainhour  
 Katherine Sumrell  
 Edwin Tamayo Hernandez  
 Gigi Upchurch  
 Dylan Ward  
 Libby Warren  
 Izabela Willis  
 Emma Wright  
 Irena Wyatt  
 Holly Zimmerman

## Third Year ACE Scholars

Morgan Anderson  
 Jean Carlos Garcia Reyes  
 Ryan Carter  
 Katie Clifford  
 Ashley Connor  
 Clare Daggs  
 Kate Duran-Rivera  
 Rachel Estes  
 Emma Everson  
 Jasmine Garcia  
 Mary Anders Giavedoni  
 Maggie Beth Heavner  
 Nicole Hernandez  
 Erin Holtzapple  
 Liz Jenkins  
 Karlee Lambert  
 Kira Laws  
 Max Libera  
 Thomas McNeil  
 Mitchell Michaels  
 Hudson Miller  
 Alex Olinger  
 Roslyn Reynolds  
 Lauren Rowe  
 Carrie Semke  
 Kailey Seward  
 Sarah Turner  
 Simeon Wallace  
 Kathryn Watson

## Fourth Year ACE Scholars

Abby Anderson  
 Alicia Biel  
 Alexis Borlase  
 Bridgette Brody  
 Olivia Bryant  
 Abigail Bumgarner  
 Jennifer Cable  
 Alexandra Carpenter  
 Meghan Clotworthy  
 Carman Crook  
 Lily Crum  
 Hannah Dalness  
 Ragan Dalton  
 Sarah Dixon  
 Alex Dudash  
 Brooklyn Farrington  
 Hannah Gosey  
 Omnie Grabs  
 Elizabeth Greene  
 Megan Haigler  
 Joshua Handy  
 DeAnna Head  
 Rett Hill  
 Tori Hunt  
 Zoe Hurwitz  
 Michael Joseph  
 Kristen Kinley  
 Nicholas Lavender  
 Samaria McKnight  
 Daisy Mullis  
 Taylor Polson  
 Mary Martha Prince  
 Christopher Rhyne  
 Anna Robinson  
 Audrey Rudinsky  
 Jennifer Sanchez  
 Kailey Seward  
 Sydney (Syd) Shadrack  
 Bailey Sparks  
 Jayne Spencer  
 Kate Stone  
 Paige Strickland  
 Samantha Sweet  
 Elizabeth Valois  
 Melanie Werth  
 Winn Williams

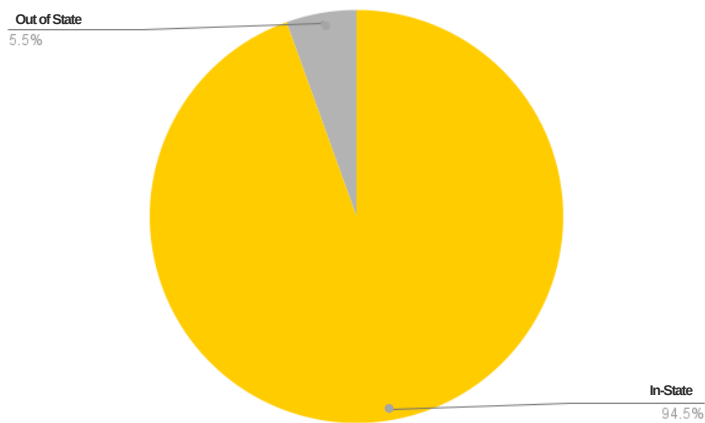


*get to know*

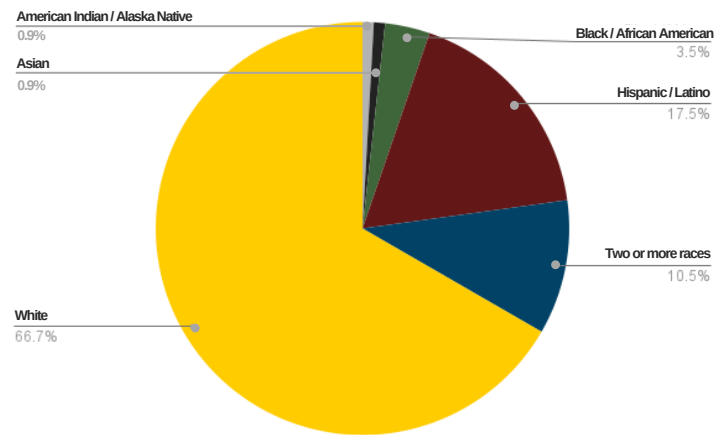
# OUR SCHOLARS

The 166 students who make up the ACES program are a diverse group. They come from 43 North Carolina counties and seven other states, represent a wide variety of education majors, and embody a plethora of identities, backgrounds, and experiences.

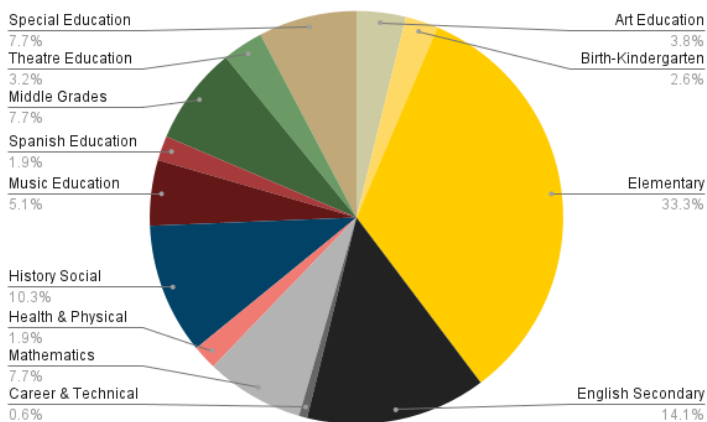
## Where are they from?



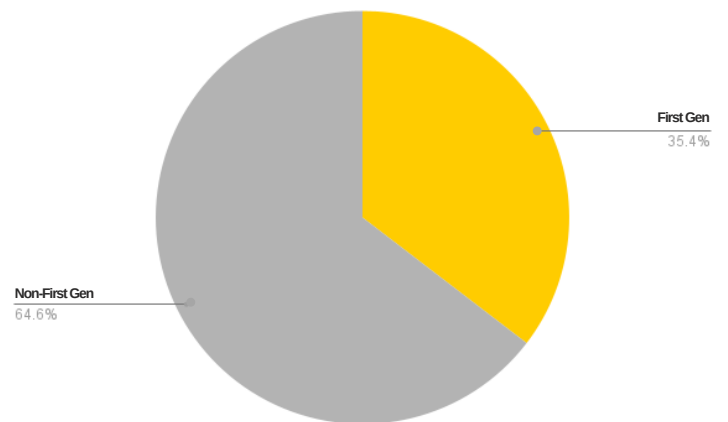
## Race/Ethnicity



## What do they major in?



## First Generation



*programming*

# LEARNING OUTCOMES

The ACES curriculum is driven by program-level and yearly learning outcomes, which are based in the National Education Association Teacher Leadership Competencies, the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards, the Learning for Justice Social Justice Standards, and Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological model. These outcomes are evaluated through program pre- and post-assessments, event-specific surveys, and a yearly Reflective Practice Form.

<b>Overall</b>	<p>Through participation in the ACES program, scholars will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop skills necessary for effective teacher leadership, including decision-making, collaboration, and reflective practice;</li> <li>• Become impactful agents of social justice in their classrooms, communities, and lives;</li> <li>• Gain perspective and understanding of the teaching profession at the national, state, and local levels;</li> <li>• Develop and become a contributing part of a diverse, supportive professional learning network.</li> </ul>
<b>Year 1</b>	<p>By the end of their first year, participants in the ACES program will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand and apply strategies for successful life and study at Appalachian;</li> <li>• Make positive connections with other ACES;</li> <li>• Broadly explore elements of teaching and teacher leadership;</li> <li>• Reflect on, discuss, and gain increased understanding of concepts of identity, diversity, and social justice.</li> </ul>
<b>Year 2</b>	<p>By the end of their second year, participants in the ACES program will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to build positive relationships as a cohort and program, including through peer mentoring;</li> <li>• Understand and apply pedagogical strategies and tools;</li> <li>• Consider the connections between educational systems and the communities in which they are embedded;</li> <li>• Apply understandings of identity and diversity to group development and examinations of educational systems.</li> </ul>
<b>Year 3</b>	<p>By the end of their third year, participants in the ACES program will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to strengthen relationships as fellow scholars and future educators;</li> <li>• Consider the structures and roles through which school districts function;</li> <li>• Consider how school districts can create equitable opportunities;</li> <li>• Develop high-quality resumes appropriate for use in their job search.</li> </ul>
<b>Year 4</b>	<p>By the end of their fourth year, participants in the ACES program will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice skills for effective networking and interviewing;</li> <li>• Engage with career educators to discuss strategies for success in their first year of teaching and beyond;</li> <li>• Consider specific strategies for advocating for students, families, and communities;</li> <li>• Consider how relationships formed during the program will serve as a professional learning network.</li> </ul>

*programming*

# LIVE. LEARN. LEAD.

**FALL 2020****FIRST YEAR RETREAT**

Scholar Learning Outcomes:

- *Become acquainted with each other and the James Center Staff*
- *Review the components of the ACES program and how it relates to the overall college experience/transition*
- *Understand the significance of building a caring, creative, resourceful, inclusive, bold team—people who matter to each other and who value each person's special contribution to the group—people who can inspire each other to be the best*
- *Establish the beginning of a support network - both professionally and personally*

This year's retreat was the first event of the academic year to be held virtually. The retreat engaged the First Year Cohort in community building and outlined the ACES program for the subsequent years of their undergraduate experience.

**ACES PROGRAM ORIENTATION**

Scholar Learning Outcomes:

- *Reconnect with other ACES in their cohort, major, and across the program*
- *Understand the ACES learning outcomes and curriculum*
- *Identify ACES requirements for the coming year and plan accordingly for success*

Over 160 scholars participated in our annual Fall Orientation. ACES from all cohorts were able to virtually connect and review important program information and updates.

**STUDENT SUCCESS SEMINAR**

Scholar Learning Outcomes:

- *Understand and apply strategies for successful life and study at Appalachian*
- *Make positive connections with other ACES*

ACES program staff partnered with the Student Learning Center to present first year scholars with study strategies, time management techniques, and support resources available on campus. Afterwards, scholars met with upperclassmen to create graduation plans so they could map out their coursework to encourage timely graduation and create a tool for their first academic advising appointment.

**SECOND YEAR TEAM BUILDING RETREAT**

Scholar Learning Outcomes:

- *Consider the connections between educational systems and the communities in which they are embedded*
- *Apply understandings of identity and diversity to group development and examinations of educational system*
- *Continue to build positive relationships as a cohort and program*

Scholars engaged in virtual learning and team building on a Zoom retreat. The event started with a discussion and exploration of Courageous Conversations Agreements and applications to the classroom. Scholars were then asked to create their own virtual classroom in Google Slides and set goals for professional growth using the National Education Association Teacher Leadership Competencies.



**ACES INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS (1:1s)**

Scholar Learning Outcomes:

- *Understand and apply strategies for successful life and study at Appalachian*

All first year scholars met with ACES program staff to reflect on the first half of the semester.

**SENIOR AWARDS CEREMONY**

- *Engage with career educators to discuss strategies for success in their first year of teaching and beyond*
- *Consider how relationships formed during the program will serve as a professional learning network*

45 ACES, who were graduating either in Fall 2020 or Spring 2021, were recognized for their outstanding achievements throughout their time in the ACES program with a Senior Awards Ceremony. Alumna speaker, Charley Carpenter, and student-nominated speaker, Tori Hunt, shared words of encouragement and advice. Students were also presented with a video to commemorate their time in the ACES program.

**FALL SCHOOL DISTRICT ORIENTATION**

Scholar Learning Outcomes:

- *Learn about the structures and roles through which school districts function*
- *Consider how school districts can create equitable opportunities for students, staff, and the communities they serve*

The Junior Cohort met with Caldwell County Schools district leaders, including Superintendent Dr. Don Phipps, for the Fall School District Orientation to learn more about the district and the diverse roles required to run a school system.

**SENIOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE**

Scholar Learning Outcomes

- *Practice skills for effective networking and interviewing*
- *Engage with career educators to discuss strategies for success in their first year of teaching and beyond*
- *Consider specific strategies for advocating for students, families, and communities*
- *Consider how relationships formed during the program will serve as a professional learning network*

The Senior Cohort participated in the annual Professional Development Conference. This year's conference was centered around the theme of "Advocating for Success". Scholars ended their final day with mock interviews and resume reviews thanks to the help of various alumni to lead both experiences. For more details, visit the conference website at [bit.ly/acespdconference2020](https://bit.ly/acespdconference2020).

**CI 3531 - SEMINAR ON TEACHER LEADERSHIP**

Scholar Learning Outcomes

- *Develop an understanding of leadership and the role of a teacher as a leader*
- *Explore global perspectives of education*
- *Understand the role of the teacher as an advocate and change agent*
- *Engage peers in dialogue around current topics in K-12 education*

All first year scholars are enrolled in the course, Seminar on Teacher Leadership, which allows participants to explore an understanding of leadership and how it applies to the role of a teacher. Using current research and frameworks, scholars examine teacher leadership and engage in opportunities to promote teacher leadership within themselves and with others.

## SPRING 2021

### URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT ORIENTATION

Scholar Learning Outcomes:

- *Learn about the structures and roles through which school districts function*
- *Consider how school districts can create equitable opportunities for students, staff, and the communities they serve*

The Third Year Cohort was immersed in a second virtual School District Orientation in which they were able to learn more about Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools (WSFCS) as well as the roles within an urban school district. Various speakers from the school district spoke on roles within the district, navigating the first years of teaching, and the national context of school choice as well as its role in WSFCS's history. This professional development opportunity was led in collaboration with WSFCS leadership and Dr. Alan Brown, alumnus and Chair of the Department of Education at Wake Forest University.

### IMMERSIVE ENRICHMENT EXPERIENCE

Scholar Learning Outcomes:

- *Identify and discuss learning strategies presented by Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) LearningMedia and identify resources that can be applied to future coursework and teaching practice*
- *Reflect on how professional development and networking can impact your practice*

Due to travel restrictions, the Second Year Cohort held this virtually. Our program partnered with PBS Learning Media, and their staff instructed the students on free resources they provide for educators as well the importance of diverse representation in the media they choose for their classrooms. Students also debriefed their Community Exploration projects with advisors and peers. The experience focused on the exploration of resources -- both digital and in our communities -- and how scholars may connect with them.

## YEAR-LONG

### COMMUNITY EXPLORATION PROJECTS

Scholar Learning Outcomes:

- *Consider the connections between educational systems and the communities in which they are embedded*
- *Gain a better understanding of community organizations' impact on education, community resources they may use or provide referrals for in the teaching profession, and the importance of teachers knowing the community in which they serve*

A new initiative this year; scholars were put into groups and paired with various local non-profit, journalism, governing bodies, and community leaders related to the education system. Scholars researched and interviewed their community partners and prepared an infographic and presentation to share with their peers.

### MENTORING PROGRAM

Scholar Learning Outcomes:

- *Understand and apply strategies for successful life and study at Appalachian*
- *Make positive connections with other ACES*

All first year ACES were paired with a returning member of the ACES community who resided in the Residential Learning Community. ACES Mentor Committee Chairs assisted with community development by leading activities at the First Year Retreat and social events throughout the year.

### COMMUNITY SEMINARS (IDENTITY, DIVERSITY, JUSTICE, ACTION)

Student Learning Outcomes

- *Reflect on, discuss, and gain increased understanding of concepts of identity, diversity, and social justice*

As a part of the new ACES curriculum, the First Year Cohort completed a series of seminars focused on Learning for Justice's Anti-Bias Framework and Social Justice Standards. Students engaged in self reflection and discussion of various techniques for honoring, respecting, and encouraging diversity in the classroom. Discussion also included reflection on their role to be agents of change through working towards creating equity within their profession.

*feedback from*

## OUR SCHOLARS

“

“My most significant take away was professionally growing as an educator and a student. **I found my voice in education** and the ability to shine light on the importance of public education.”

“

“Before this semester I spent very little time thinking about teaching and the many challenges teachers face. I was more invested in the subject I will be teaching, and less in the actual education side of things. This semester I have been given many valuable resources and connections that have helped me form ideas about the kind of teacher I want to be. To put it simply, before this semester I couldn't imagine going into a career that wasn't music related. Now, after understanding more about the importance of teachers and child development, **I can't imagine a world where I am not educating in some way.**”

“

“ACES does a really good job of integrating incoming freshman into the program. **I felt like I had a huge support system within ACES** as I was becoming a Mountaineer.”

“

“I am thankful for the workshop we attended, the activities we had through our Zoom retreat, and the seminar class. Through all of these ACES resources, I have learned so much about my future as an educator. There were a lot of things I knew were big topics in education like equity and identity, but I never knew how to contextualize those issues to talk about them productively, so I am glad we got the chance to talk about those things in class and in the workshop without it feeling overwhelming. **I feel a lot stronger about my decision to go into education after this semester with ACES** and I especially feel the need to make sure I am a teacher leader wherever I may end up.”

“

“ACES provided me with **plentiful PD opportunities** which I am extremely grateful for! The trips and service opportunities we had were also very meaningful and insightful.”

“

“**Overall, my ACES experiences this semester helped me to grow as an advocate for students in my classroom.** I think the focus this semester was on minority populations and how community context plays a role in a diverse classroom. These conversations and experiences were well worth the time, as I have grown in understanding of diverse groups I will see in my classroom and can continue to learn throughout my career so that I may become a model teacher in my school and an advocate for my future students.”

“

“**ACES gave me confidence to step into leadership roles** within the [Reich] College of Education and gave me an education that made me feel able to advocate for myself and my peers, as well as my students, throughout my time at App.”



*alumni*

# LEADING THE PROFESSION

Many of our ACES alumni have earned prestigious recognitions at the university, school, district, and state levels.

**Reich College of Education Commencement Speaker**

Alexis Borlase, Class of 2021

**Student Teacher of the Year Finalists 2020-2021**

Nathan Minton, Class of 2020

Alexis Borlase, Class of 2021

Carman Crook, Class of 2021

Megan Haigler, Class of 2021

**Cleveland County Schools Beginning Teacher of the Year**

Charley Carpenter, Class of 2019

**NCCAT 2021 Prudential NC Beginning Teacher of the Year Finalist**

Charley Carpenter, Class of 2019

**Orange County Schools Beginning Teacher of the Year**

Antonia Kolosiecke, Class of 2018

**Park View Elementary School Beginning Teacher of the Year**

Rebecca Boyles, Class of 2020

**Watauga County Schools Rookie Teacher of the Year**

Audrey Jones, Class of 2020

**Watauga High School Teacher of the Year**

Brandon Winbush, Class of 2017

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, OR OTHER FEEDBACK,  
FEEL ENCOURAGED TO EMAIL US AT [JAMESCENTER@APPSTATE.EDU](mailto:jamescenter@appstate.edu).**



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