8:00 – 8:55am **Check-in & Continental Breakfast** (Blue Ridge Conference Room)

8:55 – 9:00am **Welcome** (Blue Ridge Conference Room)
  
  • Robert Hunt Ferguson, Assistant Professor of History, WCU

9:00 – 10:15am **Public Education** (Blue Ridge Conference Room)

North Carolina’s public education system – from elementary school through college – has long been a cornerstone of the state’s success. This panel will assess North Carolina’s past and current approaches to public instruction and suggest constructive paths for the future.

  • June Atkinson, North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction
  • Stephen Samuel Smith, Professor of Political Science, Winthrop University
  • Moderator: Elizabeth Gillespie McRae, Associate Professor of History, WCU

10:30 – 11:45am **Farming & Foodways** (Blue Ridge Conference Room)

By bringing academics and farmers into dialogue, this panel will discuss North Carolina’s diverse culinary identity and the process of bringing homegrown food to the tables of our homes and restaurants. Past and current barriers to the economic viability of small-scale farmers – and suggestions for overcoming these obstacles – will be addressed.

  • Elizabeth Engelhart, John Shelton Reed Distinguished Professor of Southern Studies, UNC-Chapel Hill
  • Adrienne Petty, Associate Professor of History, City College of New York
  • Paige Witherington, Owner and Operator of Pitch Pine Organic Farm
  • Moderator: James R. Veteto, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, WCU

11:45am – 1:15pm **Break**

1:30 – 2:45pm **Social Change** (Blue Ridge Conference Room)

North Carolina is home to many diverse social groups, all of whom are connected through an intricate web of cultural, economic, and political interaction. These various groups have changed over the years while helping to define the state. This panel will address the impact social activists have had on North Carolina’s past and present.

  • David Cunningham, Professor of Sociology, Brandeis University
  • Mandy Carter, Co-founder of Southerners on New Ground
  • Moderator: Takeshia Brown, Associate Director of Intercultural Affairs, WCU
3:00 – 4:15pm Politics and Voting Rights (Blue Ridge Conference Room)

National political observers have long been confused by North Carolina’s politics. Eminent political scientist V.O. Key called North Carolina a “progressive plutocracy” in the 1940s, and more recently prominent political journalist Rob Christensen referred to the “paradox” of North Carolina politics. This panel will address North Carolina’s past and present politics within the context of a national political framework while paying special attention to recent developments affecting the state’s citizens.

- Dan Carter, Educational Foundation Professor Emeritus, University of South Carolina
- J. Peder Zane, Chair of Journalism and Mass Communication, St. Augustine's University and contributing columnist to News & Observer
- Moderator: Chris Cooper, Professor and Department Head of Political Science and Public Affairs, WCU

4:15 – 5:00 pm Break

5:00 – 6:00 pm Keynote Reception (University Center Grand Room)

6:00 – 6:30 pm Student Essay Presentations (University Center Grand Room)

6:30 – 7:30 pm Keynote Address (University Center Grand Room)
- Harvey Gantt, former Charlotte mayor, US Senate candidate, and civil rights pioneer
- Moderator: Alexander Macaulay, Associate Professor of History, WCU
- With an Introduction by Richard Starnes, Associate Professor of History and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, WCU

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