



*Gordon C. Baylis*

There is something wonderful, almost magical, about research and creative activity. After all, this is one pursuit where a product — new knowledge — can be created where it previously simply didn't exist. This exciting freshness of research attracted me to a career in research when I was an undergraduate student. Learning about research was the most formative experience I had at college. As a university with teaching as its foremost mission, WKU has a rich tradition of excellence in teaching that includes involving students in research and education.

This magazine is a snapshot of the research carried out by the faculty, students, and staff of WKU. The overwhelming majority of this research involves work by both graduate and undergraduate students. As a result, our students have invaluable exposure to world-class, cutting edge research.

In today's world, we all have instant access to a surfeit of information, putting assessment of information and knowledge at a premium. To achieve this understanding, there is no substitute for an immersion in high quality, original research. Teaching universities must prepare our students for a world we can barely imagine, and for careers that do not yet exist. Understanding the production, assessment, and application of knowledge are the tools that will best equip them. The students who have participated in the excellent projects described in this issue will be given an advantage in careers in industry just as surely as for careers in finance, or teaching, or research.

At the same time, the increasingly interconnected world means that business needs increasing interaction with universities engaged in applied research. The WKU community is now embarking on a further evolution of the university, as we increase our portfolio of research and creative activity in order to augment our teaching, and to increase our contribution to the quality of life in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Most of my colleagues can, like myself, point to a special encounter with research or creative activity that inspired their career. I am proud that WKU will provide students with such formative experiences that will irrevocably change their lives for the better — regardless of the careers that they choose.

**Gordon C. Baylis**

*Vice President for Research  
& President of WKU Research Foundation*