

Dr. Brandon E. Schwab is a first-generation college graduate who grew up in rural north central Ohio. Consequently, he has a deep understanding of the powerful mission of higher education to transform the lives of students, their families, and broader communities. He currently serves as the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs at Western Carolina University (WCU), a regional comprehensive, Carnegie community-engaged university of approximately 10,500 students and the western-most of the 17-campus University of North Carolina System. In this role Brandon oversees all aspects of Faculty Affairs, curriculum approvals, undergraduate research, and several other areas including the Office of Global Engagement, Coulter Faculty Commons for Teaching Excellence, Highlands Biological Station, Office of the Registrar, and the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines. Brandon also serves as liaison to the Faculty Senate and leads the Associate Deans Council, regular Department Heads Workshops, and New Faculty Orientation, among other responsibilities.

One of Brandon's strengths is his ability to identify underlying issues and bring together individuals with diverse and complementary strengths to address the challenge or opportunity at hand. Brandon led the development of a promotion pathway for non-tenure track faculty, worked with faculty and others to reform academic program development and review processes, and co-founded an equity-advocate program for faculty search committees, as well as a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Community of Practice. He has shepherded the approval of more than a dozen new academic programs at the undergraduate, masters, and doctoral levels and helped establish the University Research Council to elevate and support scholarly and creative activities across the institution.

Prior to moving to the southern Appalachians, Brandon rose through the faculty ranks from one-year Instructor to tenured Professor and Chair of Geology at Humboldt State University (now Humboldt Polytechnic) in Arcata, CA. Understanding how impactful engagement in research was in his own development, he built his research agenda around undergraduate students. Brandon was awarded a fellowship to the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institution and is a big proponent of professional development, both his own and for others. He has completed multiple leadership programs including the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)'s Becoming a Provost Academy, Arizona State University-Georgetown's Academy for Innovative Higher Education Leadership, and the University of North Carolina Executive Leadership Institute. Brandon has created and delivered leadership development programs for academic department heads and chairs from dozens of institutions and has served as a co-leader and mentor-coach for AAC&U's Project Kaleidoscope (PKAL) STEM Leadership Institute for many years.

Brandon earned his B.S. in Geology from the University of North Carolina Wilmington and his Ph.D. in Geological Sciences from the University of Oregon. He enjoys being outdoors, seeing live music, and flat-water kayaking. Brandon and his spouse, Angie, a non-profit management and rural economic development professional, are proud parents of two sons, Avery, a Senior at North Carolina State University, and Harper, a second-year student at the University of Chicago.