The Folk School Story

John C. Campbell had been an educator in southern schools for ten years when he received a research grant from the Russell Sage Foundation to study the mountain regions of the South. With his wife, Olive Dame Campbell, in a wagon outfitted as both home and workplace, the Campbells began their travels in the southern Appalachian mountains. While John Campbell studied population statistics, education, health and working conditions in the mountains, Olive’s focus was on the rich native culture of craft, music, and dance she found in Appalachia.

The Campbells began to explore the model of the Scandinavian folk school as an alternative to missionary and independent settlement schools, but John Campbell died before they were able to put this idea into practice. Olive Campbell and her friend and fellow mountain worker, Marguerite Butler, set out to Scandinavia to study the folkehøjskole (folk high schools) which had revitalized rural Denmark, and they determined such a system might greatly benefit the mountains of Southern Appalachia.

The John C. Campbell Folk School was founded in 1925 by Olive Dame Campbell and Marguerite Butler, with the collaboration and enthusiasm of the people of Brasstown. With the belief that positive social change was rooted in cultural life, the school encouraged students to embrace their traditional crafts and music as sources of both income and pride. Young people came to live at the Folk School not only to learn practical farming, cooking, history, and math, but also to sing, dance, weave, and carve wood. Students worked hard for their tuition, and gained a sense of accomplishment and pride in work well done. The results of such an education were both inner growth as thoughtful individuals and social development as tolerant caring members of a community.

The Folk School has adapted and changed with the times, but it still provides a place for those who find beauty and simplicity in hard work done well. The Folk School’s motto, “I sing behind the plow,” which comes from an old Danish poem, reflects the belief that creative expression is everywhere. “Behind the plow”, there is a life of the mind, the hands, and the heart, where we carve wooden animals, move to the sounds of fiddles, forge steel into graceful curves, find vessels in the mud, and flowers in the crossings of thread.
Life at the Folk School

Our Campus
Several special events occur throughout the year on our 300 acre campus, including concerts, dances, auctions, community activities, Fall Festival, and year-round classes in crafts, music and dance. Our beautiful campus is dotted with 16 fully equipped teaching studios and lodging facilities for students, all joined by winding mulch and gravel paths. You’ll also want to visit our History Center, Craft Shop, gardens, and walking trails by Little Brasstown Creek.

Classes
The Folk School offers over 800 week long and weekend classes annually in various subjects, with instructors coming from around the country, including many regional artists. Knowledgeable instructors, small class sizes, hands-on instruction, and a non-competitive atmosphere are what make Folk School classes unique.

The Folk School’s Resident Artists, who schedule our instructors and maintain our studios, live in nearby communities and are frequent instructors and valuable resources. Classes are offered in various media including traditional crafts, fine art, music, dance, cooking, gardening, nature studies, photography, and writing. Browse through our catalog or visit folkschool.org to see a complete schedule of classes.

Music and Dance
Folk music and folk dance have been an important part of the school’s program since its founding in 1925. In addition to music and dance classes throughout the year, the Folk School hosts Tuesday night beginner contra dances followed by informal jam sessions, and Friday night concerts. Other folk music performances are scattered throughout the week (including daily MorningSong) and there are two Saturday night contra and square dances each month on one of the best hardwood floors in the country.

Activities and Special Events
Activities for Folk School students, instructors, and Work/Study students are planned by the programming staff for most afternoons and evenings. Programs may include trips to neighboring craft studios, campus tours, nature walks, and slide or video presentations. Special events include craft auctions, Fall Festival, and youth weeks.

Work/Study Job Description
The Work/Study Program is designed to benefit both the school and the student. For the Folk School, the program fills the need for work in various areas and departments. For the Work/Study student, the program is a chance to spend nine weeks working, living, and learning in the Folk School environment.

Work/Study students have the opportunity to become integrated into daily life at the Folk School, from work assignments and class time to afternoon and evening programs for students. Interaction between Work/Studies and other students and staff is an important part of the experience. It’s our hope that you will benefit from the experience of living, working, and studying here, and the Folk School will benefit from the richness and variety of skills you bring.

Work
Work/Study students assist in various tasks such as gardening and landscape maintenance, buildings and grounds projects, and a variety of other mostly outdoor and often physically demanding jobs. Please be aware that you do not “sign up” for one particular job, but must be flexible and available for all types of work. One day you may be weeding flowerbeds and the next day you may be helping with catalog distribution. You may start the day preparing garden beds and end the day painting a studio.

Work hours and days are generally 9–5, Monday–Friday, but will vary on occasion to include weekends and early or late hours. For example, you may work with the Registration staff until 6 p.m. on a Sunday afternoon. You may also collect trash at Fall Festival on a Saturday morning, or guide “Little/Middle Folk School” children in an evening game of kickball on a Tuesday night after supper.

All work will be supervised by Folk School staff, but the Work/Study student should be self-motivated and able to work independently after assignments are made.

Study
The Folk School provides learning experiences that are joyful and enlivening, and offers over 800 classes in traditional and contemporary craft, art, music, dance, cooking, gardening, nature studies, photography and writing each year. You will earn three classes during your nine week stay at the Folk School. A proposed schedule of classes chosen from the Folk School catalog or website should be submitted with your application. Work/Studies are asked to work during the first week of their session but may schedule classes for any 3 of the other 8 weeks. Schedules of all Work/Study students must be coordinated to assure coverage of work duties and your advance planning increases the likelihood of getting into the classes of your choice. Please take note of any skill level requirements when choosing classes. As with all students, Work/Study students are responsible for their class material fees.
Room and Board

Work/Study students are required to live on campus, and housing and meals are included as a part of the Work/Study program. Meals will be served in the Dining Hall during the weeks that classes are in session, but you will be responsible for your own meals on weekends when there are no other students at the school.

Work/Study students live in the Keith House, which was completed in 1929 and serves as the main “hub” of the school. Students gather here for early morning coffee, relax in the living room, and enjoy concerts and dances in the Community Room. The book arts studio occupies the lower level, the administrative offices are located on the main floor, and Work/Study students, Hosts, and other students live on the second and third floors. Wireless internet is available in the Keith House if you choose to bring your own laptop computer.

Who are Work/Study Students?

Students come to the Work/Study program from a variety of circumstances and stages in life. Some are in college and on a break from school, changing jobs, or incorporating the program into their existing livelihoods.

The Work/Study program might be a period of strengthening skills in specific areas, exploring a variety of interests, or an opportunity for personal growth while living and working in a community. Each student’s experience in the program is a unique combination of hard work, study, and play.

Eligibility

You must be at least 18 years old to apply.

You must have strength and stamina to accomplish physically demanding work, including heavy lifting of at least 30 pounds. (The Work/Study program is not suitable for those with back problems or heart conditions.)

You must be able to work outdoors in hot or cold temperatures. (The Work/Study program is not suitable for those with severe allergies.)

You must be self-motivated and able to work independently once instructed about a task.

All students are welcome at the Folk School regardless of race, gender, religious affiliation, national or ethnic origin.

How to Apply to the Work/Study Program

1. Complete the Work/Study Application Form.
2. Submit two complete schedules of classes you propose to take to be reviewed and approved by the Work/Study Committee.
3. Write a 1-2 page personal statement describing your reasons for applying to the program. Please include the following information:
   - Why you want to be a Work/Study student
   - Background experience that relates to your interest in participating as a Work/Study student. Please list any outdoor work experience you might have (gardening, landscaping, maintenance, etc.) Almost all work is outdoors.
   - What you hope to gain from your time at the Folk School, and any other information you think is pertinent to our consideration of you as a Work/Study student.
4. Include recommendation forms from two people who know you well in a work or community environment. When you give them a recommendation form to complete, please describe the program to them so they may tell us about you with that context in mind. These letters may be sent under separate cover.
5. Enclose a check for $35 non-refundable application fee payable to the John C. Campbell Folk School.
6. Please send your complete application form and supporting materials to:
   Work/Study Committee
   John C. Campbell Folk School
   One Folk School Road
   Brasstown, NC 28902

After the Work/Study Committee has received and reviewed your application materials, you will either receive a letter by mail or be contacted by phone for a brief interview. No application will be reviewed until we have received all the forms.
Work/Study Application Form

Mail completed application form with supporting materials to:

Work/Study Committee
John C. Campbell Folk School
One Folk School Road
Brasstown, NC 28902

Call (828) 837-2775 with questions.

Name ____________________________________________

Address __________________________________________

City ___________________________ State ______ Zip _____

Telephone Number (Day) ____________________________

Telephone Number (Night) __________________________

Email Address ___________________________________

Birth Date ___________ Social Security# ________________

For Housing Purposes:   Female □  Male □

Education:

High School:    9 10 11 12    Graduate?    Yes □ No □

College/Vo-Tech: 1 2 3 4    Graduate?    Yes □ No □

Other ____________________________________________

Employment Status:    Currently Employed □  Unemployed □  Student □

Current or Last Employer ______________________________

Location __________________________ Phone _____________

Previous Employer ________________________________

Location __________________________ Phone _____________

Have you ever been convicted of a felony?    Yes □    No □

Do you have any physical disability that requires special services? Yes □    No □

If yes, please explain: ________________________________

Your work duties during this period may include gardening, housekeeping, kitchen work, groundskeeping, and maintenance. Is there any reason you would not be able to perform any of these duties?   Yes □    No □

If yes, please explain: ________________________________

Do you have a valid driver’s license?    Yes □    No □

License # __________________________ State __________

Special dietary needs such as vegetarian: ________________________

2016 Work/Study Program Dates

Listed below are the arrival and departure date options for the 2016 Work/Study Program. If there are special events that you will be expected to assist with, they are listed in parentheses. Please note that there may be additional events added to this schedule that you may be required to work.

Session 1: January 10—March 12 **SESSION IS FULL**
Session 2: March 13—May 14 **SESSION IS FULL**
Session 3: May 15—July 16 (Gala Auction, Little Middle Folk School)
Session 4: July 17—September 17 (Intergenerational)
Session 5: September 18—November 19 (Fall Festival, Blacksmith Auction)

Proposed Schedule of Classes

You will earn three classes during your Work/Study stay at the Folk School. Please list the three classes you’d like to take that occur during the nine week period you’ve chosen for Work/Study. Please note: Choose your classes wisely. Once you are accepted into the Work/Study program and confirmed into your class choices, our standard transfer fee may be charged if you choose to transfer from one class to another. Some classes fill early; first choices may not always be available.

First Choice

Arrival Date _________________  Departure Date _________________

Class Dates   Class Titles

1. ___________________   ____________________________________

2. ___________________   ____________________________________

3. ___________________   ____________________________________

Second Choice

Arrival Date _________________  Departure Date _________________

Class Dates   Class Titles

1. ___________________   ____________________________________

2. ___________________   ____________________________________

3. ___________________   ____________________________________

Other enclosures:

□ 1–2 page personal statement
□ Non-refundable application fee ($35)
□ 2 letters of reference enclosed or □ under separate cover

I understand that if I am accepted into the Work/Study program, I will be responsible for abiding by all Folk School policies and fulfilling all work commitments. I agree to represent the Folk School to the best of my ability.

____________________________________________ ______________
Signature     Date

All students are welcomed at the Folk School regardless of race, gender, religious affiliation, national or ethnic origin. All students must be at least 18 years of age.
Work/Study Recommendation Form

Please return completed form to applicant, or mail completed form to:
Work/Study Committee
The John C. Campbell Folk School
One Folk School Road
Brasstown, NC 28902
Call (828) 837-2775 with questions.

Name of Work/Study Applicant

Your Name

Telephone

Address

City

State

Zip

Email Address

May we contact you for further information?   Yes  No

How long and in what capacity have you known the applicant?

______________________________________________

_________________________  _____________________
Signature       Date

Participants in the Work/Study program are involved in a wide variety of Folk School activities, from gardening, building and grounds, kitchen work, and office duties. Work assignments will be made and supervised by appropriate members of the Folk School staff, but for the most part, students will work independently after assignments are made.

Personal responsibility, self motivation, and the willingness to work are essential factors in our consideration of all applicants to the Work/Study program. Please address these characteristics as they apply to the applicant.

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

Signature       Date