

**December 2016**

### **WMU Humanities for Everybody Awarded NEH Grant**

The National Endowment for the Humanities announced the awarding of a \$100,000 Humanities Access matching grant for the Humanities for Everybody program directed by Western Michigan University associate professor Dini Metro-Roland. A collaborative effort between the University Center for the Humanities at WMU and Open Doors, H4E provides members of greater Kalamazoo with a series of free, rigorous, humanities courses taught by experienced WMU faculty.



[Read the entire article »](#)

### **CECP Assistant Professor travels to Bangalore to provide workshops**

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### **Improving Education**

Lisa Williams (B.A. '98, Secondary Education; M.A. '04, Educational Leadership) was recently selected to participate in the Gerstacker Fellowship Program through Saginaw Valley State University, an initiative that, according to the SVSU website, includes 11 teachers, principals, superintendents and program administrators from across Michigan who will receive concentrated leadership training over a one-year period. The experience concludes with a capstone international trip to Japan in April.



[Read the entire article »](#)

### **Christine Robinson and Dr. Richard Zinser beginning new positions**

Christine (Chris) Robinson has been named the new Director of Admissions and Advising in the College of Education and Human Development. Dr. Richard Zinser is the new interim Chair of



parents, teachers, counselors-in-training, faculty members, and ministry leaders.

[Read the entire article »](#)

## Alumna Named Seita Director

Posted on Thursday, December 22, 2016

Ronicka D. Hamilton (BSW '02; M.A.'06, Counseling Psychology; M.A.'12, Educational Leadership), senior campus coach for the program, will take over as its director, effective Jan 3, 2017. She was selected to lead the nationally known initiative after a competitive search that considered input from campus and community partners.



[Read the entire article »](#)

the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences.

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## Associate professor presented with NAACP Humanitarian Award

Nov. 18, 2016

Associate professor of Counselor Education, Dr. Phillip Johnson, recently was presented with the 2016 Humanitarian Award by the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).



[Read the entire article »](#)

## Upcoming Events

### Arbor Financial Education Forum

Tuesday, January 24, 2017

5 p.m. to 7 p.m. 1920 Sangren Hall

Please join us for a multi-perspective panel and audience discussion about equity in learning spaces to enhance teaching and learning for all.

[Register here](#)

### Teacher Appreciation and Educator Innovation Award Ceremony

Friday, April 21, 2017

The Department of Teaching, Learning and Educational Studies (TLES) at Western Michigan University will host an event to honor students and recent alumni who have made unique contributions to the field of education in schools and in the community. For more information or to nominate someone, [click here](#).

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# WMU Humanities for Everybody Awarded NEH Grant

Media Contact: University Relations

## **Western Michigan University Humanities for Everybody Awarded NEH Matching Grant**

Matching grant will help H4E expand and create bridge year program

Kalamazoo, Michigan: Today the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) announced the awarding of a \$100,000 Humanities Access matching grant for the Humanities for Everybody (H4E) program directed by Western Michigan University associate professor Dini Metro-Roland (Department of Teaching, Learning and Educational Studies). A collaborative effort between the University Center for the Humanities at WMU and Open Doors, H4E provides members of greater Kalamazoo with a series of free, rigorous, humanities courses taught by experienced WMU faculty. The funding from NEH and other sources will enable H4E to expand its program to serve first-generation college students in what would constitute as a bridge year between their high school and freshman year in college.

This bridge year program addresses the need for greater community involvement in preparing first-generation college students to pursue and complete their college education.

“Unlike most bridge year programs, where universities send students out into communities before their freshman year, we propose to bring the university to the community itself,” said Dini Metro-Roland, Director of Humanities for Everybody. “We believe that without exposure to a rich and engaging curriculum, without emotional and academic support from committed members of the faculty, and without a safe and supportive peer group, many first-generation students will fail to take advantage of the opportunities available to them by the [Kalamazoo] Promise.”

The NEH grant will provide essential seed money for scholarships for Promise-ineligible students; operation costs; orientation; and the hiring of a program coordinator and recruiter.

The mission of Humanities for Everybody is to bring the humanities to members of the community who traditionally lack access or the means to a liberal arts education.

<http://www.humanitiesforeverybody.org/>

The mission of the Center for the Humanities is to recognize and support the humanities at WMU and the greater Kalamazoo community. <http://www.wmich.edu/humanities/>

# Improving Education

*Posted on Monday, January 9, 2017*



Lisa Williams (*B.A. '98, Secondary Education; M.A. '04, Educational Leadership*) was recently selected to participate in the Gerstacker Fellowship Program through Saginaw Valley State University, an initiative that, according to the SVSU website, includes 11 teachers, principals, superintendents and program administrators from across Michigan who will receive concentrated leadership training over a one-year period. The experience concludes with a capstone international trip to Japan in April.

Williams is the Principal at Lincoln Middle School in the Van Dyke Public School District in

Warren, Michigan. Over the years, she has gained extensive administrative experience having served as an Education Improvement Consultant at Wayne RESA and Principal at Ferndale High School. Williams began her career as an English teacher at Martin Luther King High School in Detroit and Oak Park High School in the Oak Park School District.

Aside from earning both of her degrees from WMU, Williams was the recipient of the 2013 Western Michigan University Golden Apple Award. Her involvement in education reaches beyond the school walls as she has served as a High School Principal Coach in Wayne County and numerous education committees across Oakland County. Her nominator noted her willingness to stand up for what is best for kids, even if it is hard; to dream bigger in a way that believes all kids, regardless of zip code, have the right to learn in a remarkable school.

Read more about the Gerstacker Fellowship [here](#).

## **CECP Assistant Professor travels to Bangalore to provide workshops**

December 2016

Dr. Jennifer Foster was invited to travel to Bangalore, India to provide child sexual abuse prevention trainings with parents, teachers, counselors-in-training, faculty members, and ministry leaders. The workshops focused on increasing participants' knowledge about child sexual abuse and learning specific strategies to protect children. Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a serious and widespread problem in India, which has the largest child population in the world. It is estimated that 53% of children in India experience sexual abuse before the age of 18 (National Study on Child Abuse in India, 2007). Beginning in 2012 laws were implemented mandating the reporting of child abuse. Yet, many children never disclose their abuse, and children who do tell may not be believed or protected because the offender is a close friend or family member. Due to cultural stigma surrounding abuse, many children suffer in silence. In order to decrease the prevalence of CSA, educational programs are needed to raise awareness about CSA and to assist adults to take steps to protect children. Foster's pilot program trained 400 adults in diverse prevention strategies. Follow-up research will be conducted on the efficacy of the training.



# Christine Robinson and Dr. Richard Zinser beginning new positions

Christine (Chris) Robinson has been named the new Director of Admissions and Advising in the College of Education and Human Development beginning Monday, January 23. Currently, Robinson is the assistant director for WMU's Haworth College of Business (HCOB). In her role as assistant director, Robinson managed the Phoenix Program, a support program for at-risk pre-business and business students, which received the WMU Assessment Steering Committee award for Outstanding Achievement in Assessment of Student Learning, 2013-2014, and won first place in the Mid-American Business Dean's Association (MABDA) Innovation in Business Education Award Program, 2014.

Prior to coming to Western, she advised at Davenport University where she is currently an adjunct instructor. Robinson has held various positions in the Kalamazoo community, including at-risk interventionist for Portage Public Schools, teen parent case manager for Catholic Family Services, early interventionist and parent



educator for Upjohn Community Healing Center and foster care case worker for Bethany Christian Services.

Robinson will replace Laura Ciccantell, who is the new Director of Teacher Certification in the College of Education and Human Development.

Dr. Richard Zinser, is the new interim Chair of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. Dr. Zinser has been with the department for over 18 years, teaching courses and conducting research in Career and Technical Education. One of his interests is international education, and he is currently setting up a study abroad course in Germany. Prior to coming to WMU Rick taught a high school vocational program. Before that he had a 15-year career in business/industry in training and human resources.

Dr. Zinser is replacing Dr. Gary Bischof, who has been



named the new Dean of the Lee Honors College at WMU.

## Alumna Named Seita Director

*Posted on Thursday, December 22, 2016*

A longtime Western Michigan University staff member has been tapped to head the acclaimed Seita Scholars support program for former foster youth.

Ronicka D. Hamilton (*BSW '02; M.A. '06, Counseling Psychology; M.A. '12, Educational Leadership*), senior campus coach for the program, will take over as its director, effective Jan 3, 2017. She was selected to lead the nationally known initiative after a competitive search that considered input from campus and community partners. She replaces Chris Harris-Wimsatt, who is leaving WMU to assume leadership of the Kalamazoo Boys and Girls Club.



In her new role at the University, Hamilton will not only oversee the campus-based Seita Scholars program, but also promote other programs that are a part of the Center for Fostering Success.

"The search committee was impressed by Ronicka's well-rounded experience at WMU, and her involvement in growing the Seita Scholars program over the past seven years," says Yvonne Unrau, professor of social work and director of the Center for Fostering Success. "We also were impressed with her genuine interest in student success and her solid record of career advancement. Ronicka brings a unique blend of qualities that make her ideally suited to lead the Seita Scholars program."

### **Ronicka Hamilton**

A Kalamazoo native, Hamilton joined the WMU staff in 2000. She initially spent nearly a decade of her University career in the Division of Multicultural Affairs, most recently serving as finance specialist there. She joined the Seita Scholars program in 2009 as a campus coach and became its first senior campus coach in 2013. Although joining the program early in its development, Hamilton was instrumental in developing and creating the Fostering Success Coaching model. Since 2013, more than 225 professionals around the country have been trained in the model. Hamilton also developed the strategy for supervising staff in the area of troubleshooting student challenges and celebrating their successes.

"I'm excited to continue partnering with students, staff and faculty, as well as campus and

community partners in this new capacity," she says. "I look forward to further equipping our students and strengthening our program services to ensure increased graduation rates for students who have experienced foster care."

Hamilton's personal background complements the talent and leadership she brings to the Seita Scholars program, in part because the new director was raised by her mother in a one-parent home and went on to obtain four college degrees.

"My passion for students who have experienced foster care starts at home with my godsons, who were once in the Michigan foster care system before being adopted by a family member," she says. "But I've always acted on my compassion to help young adults at risk. When working as a financial analyst for the Division of Multicultural Affairs, I also dedicated my time to developing and growing a local group home for young women at risk."

Hamilton earned an associate degree from Kalamazoo Valley Community College, and at WMU, earned a Bachelor of Social Work and two master's degrees, one in counseling psychology and the other in higher education student affairs.

#### **WMU's focus on student success**

The Seita Scholars program, launched in 2008, is the nation's largest and most comprehensive collegiate program for foster care youth. It provides a tuition scholarship, round-the-clock campus coaches, and mentors as well as campus housing that remains available to program participants during holiday breaks and between semesters. The program sparked creation of a Center for Fostering Success on campus that provides national leadership to inform teaching, research, learning and public service as they relate to the topic of foster care and higher education.

In addition to now housing the Seita Scholars, the center is home to the Fostering Success Coach Training program, which offers training nationally and has developed as well as been recognized for numerous best practices for supporting former foster care youth. The center's third major program component is Fostering Success Michigan, a statewide organization focused on increasing college-going rates and successful career transitions among Michigan's students from foster care by building a network of support on college campuses and within local communities.

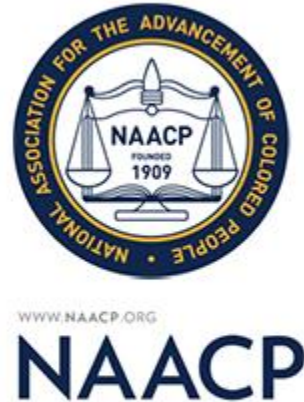
For more information about the center and its programs, visit [wmich.edu/fosteringsuccess](http://wmich.edu/fosteringsuccess).

*Press release and photo courtesy WMU University Relations.*



# Associate professor presented with NAACP Humanitarian Award

Nov. 18, 2016



Associate professor of Counselor Education, Dr. Phillip Johnson, recently was presented with the 2016 Humanitarian Award by the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). This award is a direct reflection of the contributions Dr. Johnson has made to improve the lives of people of color in the areas of politics, education, religion, civil rights and community service.

Throughout his career, Dr. Johnson has focused much of his efforts towards decreasing the impact of our racialized society on African Americans, specifically African American males. Dr. Johnson has presented his work at many conferences and written in various journals nationally. He is a member of the University-Community Empowerment Center at Western Michigan University and the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., and Galilee Baptist Church.