



Fall 2014

# The Graduate Standard - Vol. 3, No. 1

Western Michigan University

Follow this and additional works at: [http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/grad\\_news](http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/grad_news)

 Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

---

## WMU ScholarWorks Citation

Western Michigan University, "The Graduate Standard - Vol. 3, No. 1" (2014). *The Graduate Standard*. Paper 1.  
[http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/grad\\_news/1](http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/grad_news/1)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate College at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Graduate Standard by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact [maira.bundza@wmich.edu](mailto:maira.bundza@wmich.edu).



## Dean's Message



Fall is such a wonderful time of year. The temperatures begin to drop and the leaves begin to turn into a beautiful array of colors that include the brown and gold of WMU. These colors were very evident on campus recently as we welcomed home many alumni during the homecoming festivities. It is always a great time to meet these proud Broncos and hear of their experiences as students and the difference our university has made in their lives and careers. If you have a story to share, we would enjoy hearing from you.

The fall is also a time to reflect on all that we have accomplished over the past year. I am proud to serve as Graduate Dean and work with an amazing staff who are committed to graduate education at WMU. During this past year we partnered with the Office of Faculty Development and hosted the graduate student teaching institute to help students develop their teaching and communication skills. We rolled out an online graduate admissions process that integrates domestic and international student university application with departmental applications providing a more user-friendly experience for applicants and staff. We also partnered with Transfer Student Services and Extended University Programs to develop and implement an online orientation for new graduate students. We continue to work very closely with our graduate student groups to ensure we are delivering the services they need and are helpful to their academic and scholarly pursuits. We continue to advocate for a physical space that accommodates not only the needs of graduate students and the Graduate College but also the faculty and staff who contribute. Please consider joining us in making this a reality.

Best wishes to all for a warm and safe end of the year.

Susan R. Stapleton, Ph.D.

Dean, Graduate College

# Keith Thompson – Master of Arts degree in Communication

Posted on [November 14, 2014](#)



Keith Thompson's eyes light up when he starts talking about his Master's degree from Western Michigan University. After a comprehensive tour of the WWMT Channel 3 News offices and studios, Keith and I sat down to talk about his experiences in graduate school. Keith earned his

Master of Arts degree in Communication from Western Michigan University in April 2013, and he has high praise for WMU, The School of Communication, and the Graduate College. While working part-time on his degree, Keith continued to work full time as the chief meteorologist for WWMT, a position he has held since 1995. He won an Emmy award for best television weathercaster in Michigan for a weathercast focusing on an intense winter storm that came through in February 2013. His Facebook page lists him as a "News Personality" who is "liked" by thousands of people, and he does have a larger than life personality, so perhaps that title is most fitting. Keith displays a caring, calm demeanor that puts viewers (and interviewers) at ease.

For background, it is important to know that Keith grew up in Jacksonville, Florida. His life was shaped by the influence a large body of water has on a geographical area, just as West Michigan's climate is shaped by conditions on Lake Michigan. For his bachelor's degree Keith went to college at Harding University in Arkansas. He started his broadcast career in Gainesville, Florida at WCJB-TV and joined the NEWSCHANNEL 3 team in 1989. In 2001 he received the American Meteorological Society Seal of Approval. In 2005 he considered the idea of going back to school and received much encouragement from then director of the School of Communication, Dr. Steven Rhodes. It took him several years to finish due to demands of his work and growing family, but even attending classes part-time, he managed to become a scholar whose groundbreaking work gained him a respected place in his department and at professional conferences.

His first classroom experience was with Dr. Mark Orbe, who taught Introduction to Research Methods. The rigorous instruction and attention to detail, according to Keith, “set the bar as high as it could go.” He noticed right away that faculty and advisors had high expectations, and he rose to the occasion. He was inspired by the culture of learning and the way that graduate students were treated as peers. Several faculty in the School of Communication were especially helpful and inspiring to him, including Dr. Orbe, Dr. Sandra Borden, and Dr. Leigh Ford, as well as Dr. Autumn Edwards and Dr. Jennifer Macciorlatti. Dr. Michael Pritchard from the Department of Philosophy was also on his thesis committee. They encouraged him to present his original research at conferences, and he gave successful presentations at annual meetings of the National Communication Association and the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics.

Keith’s area of specialization is philosophical in nature, with special focus on the dilemma faced by television meteorologists who, as part of a news organization, are bound by a journalist’s ethical obligation to objective, no-opinion reporting, but as scientists, may feel compelled to express an opinion based on expertise. In his thesis, Keith used the highly-politicized topic of climate change to analyze the ethical dilemma, applying the “weighted duties” reasoning of philosopher W. D. Ross to conflicts a weathercaster may encounter. For instance, Ross’ prima facie duty of fidelity — manifested by keeping the implied promise of objectivity — is measured against other duties which may be fulfilled by the offering of an expert opinion. The thesis laid out several scenarios wherein a weathercaster might be inclined to express his/her opinions, including in a book, a blog, and a newscast. Keith used Ross’ “weighted duties” approach to analyze each scenario for its adherence to the prima facie duties. Among his conclusions: weathercasters may not be justified in expressing an expert opinion in a newscast, but may find justification in doing so using another vehicle such as a web blog or authored book.

As for his future plans, Keith will keep his day job and try to remain active as a scholar. He wants to do more research on his thesis topic and related questions, write, and present at conferences. He would also like to do some teaching in the future. Getting his master’s degree has been a big confidence booster, and he highly recommends Western Michigan University and the School of Communication for their graduate faculty, advisors, staff and students. When asked what he would say to someone considering graduate study at Western, he says, “Having a Master’s degree has allowed me to redefine my career. I’m more proud of this than getting my Emmy award. It’s the best thing I could have done!”

# Jeanne LaMere – Ph.D. in Psychology

Posted on [November 14, 2014](#)



Jeanne LaMere is the model of an involved alumna. After getting her Bachelor's degree in 1985, her Master's degree in 1990, and her Ph.D. in 1993, all in Psychology at Western Michigan University, she moved to Atlanta, GA. There, friend and fellow alumna Michelle Olmsted encouraged her to get involved in Atlanta's very

active official WMU alumni chapter. Dr. LaMere participated in sponsored events including game watch parties, receptions, golf outings and trips to football games in Florida, Tennessee and Alabama. After several years of enthusiastic participation, Dr. LaMere decided to get more involved and joined the Alumni Association Board of Directors, where she is currently an at-large member of the executive committee and was on the bylaws review task force, which rewrote the bylaws as part of the reorganization that occurred when the offices of Development and Alumni Relations merged a few years ago.

Dr. LaMere has been on the Alumni Association Board of Directors for four years. This is her second three-year term. In 2011 she was elected Vice President for a one year term. The Alumni Association's executive committee works closely with the Office of Development and Alumni Relations, enthusiastically performing recruitment and engagement activities. They attend homecoming and other games, wear Western gear, and encourage alumni to attend games, golf outings, watch parties, mixers and other events. The Alumni Association Board of Directors disburses the Legacy scholarship, which is given to deserving students whose parent or relative attended WMU. Dr. LaMere sits on the Distinguished Alumni Award committee, which awards the Alumni Association's most prestigious honor. The Distinguished Alumni Award was established in 1963 to recognize graduates of WMU who have achieved a high level of success in their professions. Dr. LaMere has also reached a pinnacle of success in her field. She works for OnCourse Learning, a company that provides training and education in the financial services, real estate and IT industries sectors. Since this field is regulated by the government; courses must be approved by a regulatory body. She was invited to sit on the government regulatory committee and she states, "That kind of participation at that level was a great honor." OnCourse Learning provides "best-in-class" education

and compliance solutions to help people get started and succeed in their chosen fields. OnCourse Learning delivers professional compliance and occupational tools as well as customized training solutions to individuals, companies, educators, associations and government agencies. It trains and certifies people in real estate, home inspection, banking and finance, energy management, and information technology through seven online campuses.

She uses her training now in instructional design, which is based on research on effective training methods. That research is now 20 years old, so she is updating it by working with current students and Dr. Alyce Dickenson at WMU. Their investigation focuses on the most recent findings on effective education and effective training. During her years of study at Western, Jeanne worked closely with Dr. Dickenson, and she remembers the wonderful feeling of camaraderie between faculty and graduate students. Close friendships with other students and faculty developed because many of them were quite young at the time, so it was natural that they would socialize. Everyone was working so hard and was so poor, but in the group everyone was in the same situation. They worked, played, studied and ate together, helping each other out when needed. On Friday afternoons they would go to colloquium and then play Euchre together. She says, “We stuck together and worked so hard! There was a community in my department.”

She has fond memories of time spent in Wood Hall with her friends and colleagues from the Department of Psychology. She particularly misses Knollwood Tavern, a campus institution for many years until it was torn down in 1999. It was a favorite hangout for Jeanne and her friends, as it was for the entire campus community. Dr. LaMere is from Portage, Michigan, and her parents still live here. She travels to Michigan and visits campus at least twice a year, in spring and fall, for Alumni Association Board of Directors meetings. She appreciates the fact that WMU is going green with its sustainability program, and particularly loves the way campus looks today. The landscaping department makes the campus very welcoming and beautiful. Jeanne LaMere was just as active as a student as she is now as an alumna. She was a Presidential Scholar as an undergraduate and received a Graduate College Fellowship, which used to be offered to exceptional students in their first year of graduate study. She was a graduate assistant in her department and in the Office of Admissions welcome center. She also worked at the Child Development Center, which was affiliated with the department of psychology at that time. Jeanne is the personification of school spirit and encourages other alumni to support the University and the Graduate College to continue the quality education WMU provides.

# 2014 Graduate Ambassadors

Posted on [November 14, 2014](#)



A new team of Graduate Ambassadors has been chosen and they are actively participating in campus life this fall. A two-day training event in June at the Kellogg Biological Station and Conference Center at beautiful Gull Lake kicked things off as the group bonded and learned about their new responsibilities. Each ambassador has an assigned role in the Graduate

Student Association as well as their duties as liaisons between the Graduate College, prospective, new and continuing graduate students, and the colleges and departments. All ambassadors participate in recruitment, retention and outreach activities sponsored by the Graduate College and by GSA. Each also has a role on the GSA Executive Board; as such, they participate in strategic planning and event development and represent the graduate student population to key administrative groups at Western Michigan University.

The new ambassadors and the area each represents follow. Carol Adams-Shearer, M.A. in Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology/Higher Education and Student Affairs, reaches out to Extended University Programs students and also acts as representative to the Planning and Finance Faculty Senate committee. Michael Bobbitt, is pursuing a Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology. He represents students in the College of Education and Human Development who are in teaching related positions. He also sits on the GSA Executive board as Events Co-Chair. Chartanay Bonner is working on her Ph.D. in Chemistry. She is available to help students in the College of Arts and Sciences in mathematics and science related programs and is also Communications Chair of the GSA Executive Board. Felicia Dotson is pursuing her Master of Arts degree in Blindness and Low Vision Studies. Her position in GSA brings her into contact with many prospective students in the College of Health and Human Services. She is a Student Media Board Representative from GSA to the Western Student Association. Gibril Mohamed works with students in the Haenicke Institution for Global Education while he pursues a Master's degree in Public Administration. He also sits on the International Education Faculty Council as the graduate student representative. Stephanie Goodman, Ph.D. student in Counselor Education and Counseling

Psychology, is GSA Events Co-Chair and is the Outreach Chair for the GSA Executive Board. Alex Houser is pursuing his Ph.D. in Economics as he represents students in the Haworth College of Business. He is also Co-Communications Chair on the GSA Executive Board. Michael Lindquist, while working on his Master's degree in Philosophy, represents students in the Humanities and Fine Arts. He also sits on the Faculty Senate Research Policies Council as graduate student representative. Justin Moore is working on his Ph.D. in Psychology and represents students in the social sciences areas of the College of Arts and Sciences. He is also Outreach Co-Chair for GSA. Jesus Romero is pursuing a Master's in Educational Leadership with a concentration in Higher Education and Student Affairs. He is in charge of diversity for GSA and also sits on the Graduate Studies Council as a graduate student representative. Michael Saldana represents the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences while he works on his Masters of Science in Engineering Management. He is also a Student Media Board representative. Danielle Smith is working on her Master of Arts in Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology and is the liaison to the College of Education and Human Development for students in non-teaching programs, and GSA Executive Board Outreach Co-Chair. The Graduate College and the Graduate Student Association are still looking for a graduate ambassador who can represent students in the Veterans and Military Affairs area. If you or someone you know may be interested in this spot, please contact Damon Chambers at [gsac-info@wmich.edu](mailto:gsac-info@wmich.edu).

## The New Graduate Student Association

Posted on [November 14, 2014](#)



Through a vote of the membership, The Graduate Student Advisory Committee has now officially changed its name to the Graduate Student Association. The change reflects more truly the makeup of the GSA: an association, not a committee, which implies that membership is limited and exclusive. Since all graduate

students are automatically members of this campus wide student organization, we wanted a name that reflects the inclusive nature of the group. Damon Chambers, previously the chair, and Marcial Amaury Pineda, previously the vice-chair, have had their titles change to reflect the new order.

Damon is now president, and Amaury is now vice-president. Membership includes all graduate students, no matter where they take classes.

A University-sanctioned fee assessed from each graduate student at the beginning of each semester funds activities and initiatives. These include informational and social events for new and returning graduate students, monthly GSA meetings with refreshments, travel to various graduate student conferences throughout the country, and a new series of graduate student presentations called Grad Talks. These are modeled on TED Talks, which feature experts on any subject giving informational talks to an audience of interested listeners. Grad Talks are an excellent way for graduate students to get practice presenting their thesis, dissertation, research ideas, book reviews, journal articles, posters or paper ideas. It is also a good way to prepare for conference presentation. Student contributions will be filmed and published on the GSA website for reference or for future viewing. Students from all disciplines are encouraged to submit by sending an email to [gsa@wmich.edu](mailto:gsa@wmich.edu). Grad Talks are open to the public; some seats are reserved for graduate students and their guests who pre-register to attend. For more information on the new GSA, including bylaws, executive board members and directions for applying for funding, please visit their updated website at <http://www.wmich.edu/gsa> and follow them on Facebook. Call the Graduate College at (269)387-8212 or GSA leadership at (269)387-8207 for information on visiting GSA offices in Walwood Hall on East Campus. A meeting schedule can be found on the GSA website at <http://www.wmich.edu/gsa/calendar-activities>.

The Graduate College  
1903 West Michigan Avenue  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008 - 5242

[www.wmich.edu/grad](http://www.wmich.edu/grad)