Updates in Academic Affairs - 12/16/13

Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

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Updates in Academic Affairs
December 16, 2013

Title IX, violence prevention and other online training
All employees are invited and encouraged to participate in three interactive online training programs developed specifically for Western Michigan University, as one measure to address equity and inclusion.

Access the self-paced programs—Title IX awareness and violence prevention, unlawful harassment prevention and bullying prevention—on the Human Resources website at wmich.edu/hr/employeeresources/training/awareness/index.html.

These online trainings align with Goal 4 of the University Strategic Plan, to “ensure a diverse, inclusive and healthy community.” They are just one way for WMU to create an environment that “cultivates a healthy, diverse university community that recognizes the value of each individual and helps ensure the safety, civility and respect for all people.”

If you have questions about this training opportunity, please contact Human Resources at hr-training@wmich.edu.

Open forums address academic program review and planning
The Office of Academic Affairs and the Faculty Senate are co-sponsoring an open forum to discuss academic program review and planning from noon to 1:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 30, in the Fetzer Center’s Putney Auditorium.

Additional information regarding academic program review and planning is available on the Office for Institutional Effectiveness website at wmich.edu/effectiveness/review.

We look forward to the opportunity to have constructive discussion and feedback from the academic community at this forum. Two additional forums will be held later in the spring semester.
University begins process to identify ‘STARS’ sustainability courses
by Jody Brylinsky, associate provost for institutional effectiveness

We are pleased to announce that WMU is officially registered as a participant for the Sustainability, Tracking, Assessment and Rating System administered by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education.

Known as STARS, the program is the only one of its kind that involves publicly reporting comprehensive information related to a college or university’s sustainability performance.

The program encourages sustainability in all aspects of higher education as reported in five overall areas:

- Academics
- Engagement
- Operations
- Planning/Administration
- Innovation

The academics category includes both curriculum and research. The criteria for curriculum seek to identify formal education programs and courses that address economic, environmental and social sustainability. In order to earn points for this credit, the institution must conduct an inventory documenting how sustainability is integrated into coursework.

Three graduate students under the supervision of Kim Juwong, the STARS Tactical Action Community data coordinator, initiated a review of course syllabi.

Using the President’s Universitywide Sustainability Committee definitions for sustainability courses, the research group began their work by categorizing courses listed in the University’s 2012-2013 course catalog. The team then reviewed submitted course syllabi to further categorize courses based on stated learning outcomes and/or course objectives.

In the final stage of this process, each faculty member whose course has been identified as a sustainability course will be notified. Faculty members will be asked for their permission to include their course or courses in the inventory.

Any faculty member wishing to proactively submit his or her course for inclusion in the inventory is welcome to do so by contacting Kim Juwong at wmu-strategicplanning@wmich.edu. For guidance on the President’s Universitywide Sustainability Committee definitions, contact the Office for Sustainability at (269) 387-0943.
Many thanks and happy holidays
from Provost Tim Greene

Before our winter recess begins, please allow me to thank each and every one of you for all you do for our students and for the WMU community. As you well know, we educate our students one at a time.

You dedicate countless hours preparing for class, grading individual papers and exams, answering questions through email and during office hours, advising and providing guidance to help each student learn. As a learner-centered University, faculty and staff together play an important role in supporting student success.

One of the most important aspects of our role as educators is our ability to motivate and inspire our students to learn. Whether a student simply passes a course or wins a national competition, each is impacted by the many acts of professionalism, kindness and inspiration that are extended from each of you.

While many of our students acknowledge and express their gratitude for what you have done for them, some do not. On behalf of all students that you have profoundly impacted, past and present, I would like to say thank you for all that you do.

Best wishes for safe and happy holidays.