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Stampede: E-newsletter for students

Western Michigan University

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Western Michigan University

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W STAMPIDE

Get a leg up in job interviews and grad school

WMU Signature challenges you to get engaged in the many experiences the University offers outside of the classroom—speakers, on-campus employment and study abroad—to help you find your passion.

[Learn more](#)



Know your impact on WMU pride

Did you know that more than 23% of college apparel worn on campus isn't WMU branded? A group of Haworth College of Business students is devoting its marketing research project to learning what's behind this. Please take two minutes to complete a short survey to help your fellow students understand how WMU can increase pride on campus.

[Take the survey](#)



[Stanford design school names three WMU students innovation fellows](#)



[Student veterans find place to grow, thrive at WMU](#)



[Human resource management student wins competitive scholarship](#)

WMU students in the news



WMU students give back during FOCUS Kalamazoo's Impact Day

Broncos are known for their volunteerism in a variety of realms in the greater community; Giving back is a way of life.

[WWMT](#)



Western Michigan twirler conquers flames, advocates for other burn survivors

Media outlets featured student Brianna Bolinger, whose talent and life experiences have inspired many.

[Detroit News](#) [Battle Creek Enquirer](#)



WMU to hold esports invitational as collegiate-gaming grows

“The WMU Esports Arena right here is one of very few in the nation right now,” WMU Esports President Trevor Cwiek told WOOD TV. “There’s not really anything else like it in terms of collegiate esports arenas.”

[WOOD-TV](#) [WWMT](#)

Get a leg up in job and grad school interviews with WMU Signature



Posted by Erin Flynn on November 15, 2019

[Video of vRXJbQyUICO](#)

[WMU Signature](#)—a program designed to help students highlight their co-curricular experiences and give them a leg up in job or graduate school interviews—just received the Innovative Program award at the NASPA Region IV-East annual conference. It challenges students to get engaged in the many experiences WMU offers outside of the classroom, like speakers, on-campus employment and study abroad, and find their passion.

All students are enrolled in WMU Signature and can track progress or find approved events in the ExperienceWMU student engagement portal.

The program culminates in a PEAK experience, where students put their passion into action. Check out a few recent experiences below.

CREATING CULTURE



Drum major Stevens directs the Bronco Marching Band during a football game.

Tori Stevens doesn't just march to the beat of her own drum—she has several others falling in step with the beat. Working her way up the ranks to drum major in the [Bronco Marching Band](#), she knows what it takes to be a leader.

"I've realized there are a lot of applicable lessons through an organization like the Bronco Marching Band that people should know about and look into for their own organizations and leadership projects."

Her PEAK project is about creating culture in an organization.

"It's about empowering people to do their best and have ownership of something, because if you have ownership in something, you're going to be excited about it and you're going to want to do it," says Stevens, a music therapy major from Hillsdale.

The experiences she completed in the leadership pathway also laid a solid foundation for her future career.

"My dream job is to work in a hospital on an interdisciplinary team. Working with speech pathologists and child life specialists and doctors," Stevens says. "Being able to act as a leader in a team like that to provide the best service that we can is crucial."

The PEAK project, Stevens says, will help her better communicate her qualifications during an interview.

"We do all these extracurriculars in college and attend these events, but it's difficult to show that on paper. But with Signature you're learning to put that into words. It's kind of your elevator pitch of how this experience has given you the tools to succeed outside of academia."

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Black visited Africa over the summer to help develop a new study abroad course.

Creating economic stability and empowerment in local communities might seem like a lofty goal, but **Justin Black** is already taking steps to make it happen. The [Seita Scholar](#) from Detroit is about to launch WMU's first multi-country African study abroad program, which will take students to Rwanda and Uganda.

"With this program we'll be covering a variety of different topics including economic empowerment, women empowerment and learning to heal racial and ethnic conflicts," says Black, who is majoring in public relations and African studies. "I want to create leaders that will have the skills, knowledge and understanding of how to solve those problems."

It's not difficult to see the passion Black has in his PEAK project. Since starting the ball rolling in the spring, he's watched his endeavor develop into a class that will enroll students in fall 2020: Global Challenges for a Global Society.

"I put so much time and effort into this program that I thought it would be perfect in general for my PEAK project. The difficult part was making this entrepreneurial," says Black, who is focusing the program on the entrepreneurial mindset of assessing a problem and creating a solution.

Black knows this project, with the help of Signature, will be a launching point for career opportunities after he graduates this summer.

"It challenges you to have an idea of what you want to do and the impact that it will have. You need to be able to articulate what you want to do with your life, how it will translate into a career and how it will have the impact you intended it to have."

Signature has also provided Black with networking opportunities.

"It's helped me to interact with other students who are embarked on the same journey that I am," Black says. "Seeing young people creating initiatives and programs that are just as inspiring, just as impactful gave me motivation."

BREAKING DOWN CULTURAL BARRIERS



Abdulhameed is passionate about active learning.

Learning computer science is difficult when you're deciphering it in your native language. But **Tiba Zika Abdulhameed**, who is from Iraq, had to do it while learning English as well. The doctoral student started with [CELCIS](#) classes when she first came to WMU in 2013. An instructor herself in her home country, she noticed many cultural differences right away.

"I found that the teaching techniques that they're using are so interesting," she says. "I was comparing the techniques with what I was doing back in Iraq, and I decided I shouldn't only be getting my Ph.D., I should also be getting teaching experience because it's very different and so exciting."

Abdulhameed began immersing herself in all of the faculty development workshops she could and exploring technology to get more experience with active learning techniques. Her passion for learning helped when she became a part-time instructor at the University and also fit well with Signature's teaching and student success pathway.

"The experience of teaching was really, really exciting. The class that I taught was the same as I taught back in Iraq, but the culture was very different," says Abdulhameed, who found challenges with cultural and language barriers in the classroom.

She found a way to break down the cultural barriers using active teaching techniques she picked up in the various workshops she attended.

"If you make the student the center of the teaching, the process will be very successful," Abdulhameed says.

By leading students to find information instead of just lecturing and allowing students to share their own classroom challenges and struggles with classmates to collectively find solutions, Abdulhameed found that students learned more and were able to look past the cultural differences. Her experience with Signature will help her translate the classroom skills she's learned when she returns to Iraq.

"This was the goal. When I was attending Signature experiences, I was thinking of how to get these techniques and this experience back with me in Iraq for the students there."

Stanford design school names three WMU students innovation fellows

Contact: Deanne Puca

November 13, 2019



KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Three Western Michigan University students are among students worldwide who have been named University Innovation Fellows by Stanford University's Hasso Plattner Institute of Design.

They are among 360 students from 90 higher education institutions in 13 countries selected for the program, which is designed to empower students to become agents of change on their own campuses and ensure their peers gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to compete and make an impact on the economy of the future.

Fellows, sponsored by faculty and administrators as individuals or teams of students, are selected through an application process each year. WMU's latest class of fellows are:

- **Caylee Prater**, an aerospace engineering major from Jackson
- **Aisha Thaj**, a product design major from Portage
- **Cate Troost**, a leadership and business strategy and English major from Grosse Pointe Woods

The trio will travel to the Silicon Valley Meetup **March 19-23** with 400 students and faculty from around the world. The students will participate in several days of experiential activities at Stanford, Google and the surrounding area to teach attendees new skills and mindsets to help them with their campus projects.

WMU's 2019 University Innovation Fellows completed six weeks of online training from **Sept. 3 to Oct. 13** using a Stanford course platform, and all of the activities they did as part of training took place on the WMU campus. They interviewed students and faculty, surveyed the ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship activities, met with campus leaders, and designed projects to fill needs they discovered.

The WMU University Innovation Fellows produced a "pitch video" as part of the application process. That video can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/fRiNDwXSRp0>.

This is the third year WMU has had multiple students selected for the program. The University's 2018 fellows were **Andy Sylvain Hobelsberger**, **Megan Nicole Miller**, **Saleh A. Mohamed** and **Daniel Paul Mozel**. The 2017 fellows were **Nathan Lawarre** and **Jill Puckett**.

With the addition of the new fellows, the program has trained nearly 2,200 students since its creation.

"Higher education needs to change faster to meet the need of students and industry today," said **Humera Fasihuddin**, co-director of the University Innovation Fellows program. "In traditional education systems, students have to wait until they graduate to make a difference. We don't believe in that. As the key stakeholders of higher education, students should be active participates in a change process that helps them learn the skills and mindsets necessary to create the future. The students who participate in our program are ideally poised to help accelerate the pace and change at their schools."

"Through this program, fellows gain skills, mindsets and knowledge to face ever-more complex challenges at their schools and in the world," added **Leticia Britos Cavagnaro**, co-director of

the University Innovation Fellows program. "During training, fellows learn to analyze their campus ecosystems and identify opportunities for change related to innovation, entrepreneurship, design thinking, and creativity. They work to understand the needs of peers across disciplines and the perspectives of faculty and administrators. They apply this new knowledge and perspective to design new educational opportunities for their peers.

Student veterans find place to grow, thrive at WMU

Contact: Erin Flynn

November 11, 2019



Marine Corps veteran Patrick McConnell, now an electrical engineering student, completed several tours of duty including this deployment to Afghanistan in 2011.

KALAMAZOO, Mich.— On Veterans Day, Western Michigan University honors the service of its robust military community. Currently, there are 825 military-connected students on campus—that includes those who have served or are actively enlisted in the US Armed Services or their dependents.

"Right now, in a nation divided, it is important to know that military-connected students are all around us," says **Billy Clayton**, WMU's ROTC enrollment and scholarships officer, who retired from the Army after serving for 20 years. He points out that a number of other faculty and staff members have also served in the military.

Ranked a 2020 "Best for Vets" college by Military Times, WMU offers a [number of programs](#) designed to support the military community. A major resource is the [Office of Military and Veterans Affairs](#), which was established on campus in 2009 to help service members make a smooth transition into civilian and college life.

"OMVA is the greatest resource you could have (as a veteran)," says **Patrick McConnell**, an electrical engineering major from Edwardsburg who served in the United States Marine Corps.

SERVICES AVAILABLE



The military and veteran student lounge offers a space for military-connected students to relax and meet other vets.

Services for military members and their family on campus are wide-ranging, from priority registration and a military transition course to a military and veteran student lounge and active [Student Veterans of America](#)—SVA—chapter.

"The hardest part of transitioning is not having the same brotherhood when you get here; you feel kind of isolated," says **Troy Duck**, a Marine Corps veteran and SVA public relations officer. "Being able to have the vet lounge and the events that we do helps a lot."

WMU also participates in the Department of Veteran's Affairs [VetSuccess on Campus](#) program, which places a VA counselor on campus to connect servicemembers and their families to VA benefits.

"Military students add to the already diverse student population of WMU," says **Ashley Goodwin**, a military advocate in the Office of Military and Veterans Affairs who is an active member of the Army National Guard. "Military-connected students are usually older, have been introduced or immersed in another culture, and are driven and focused on quickly reaching their educational goals."

Some members of WMU's SVA share their service stories below.

CONTINUING A LEGACY



Duck and his son sit in the cockpit of a military aircraft in 2015.

"Aviation's in my blood," says Duck, who is majoring in aviation flight science. "My grandpa has his own grass strip in Edwardsburg. I've been flying since I was little with him."

Service, it seems, is also in Duck's blood. His father served in the Marines for 20 years, his uncle was in the Navy and his grandfather served in the Air Force. He chose to follow his father's lead with the Marines, joining the aviation unit. As a crew chief, he flew missions around the Middle East, doing everything from evacuating embassies to delivering supplies.

After missing the birth of his son while he was deployed, Duck decided to end his active service so that he could be home in Edwardsburg with his growing family. With so much experience flying, pursuing a degree in aviation seemed like a logical next step.

"I feel like if I would have come to college straight out of high school it wouldn't be the same," he says. "The military gave me the discipline to go to class every day and do my homework."

Duck also appreciates the close relationships he's formed within WMU's aviation community.

"I've had the same flight instructor since I started my private pilot's license," says Duck.

"Building that bond is nice. Some of the head instructors are also good mentors who helped me (through my courses)."

Unsure what the future might hold, Duck is focused on finishing his flight time and exploring potential career options. There are some opportunities in the Department of Homeland Security and the CIA drawing his interest, as well as the possibility of becoming a commercial pilot.

ON THE FRONT LINES



McConnell and his daughter and fiancée pose for a photo before the 2017 ROTC Ball.

Patrick McConnell loves adventure. He was still in high school in Edwardsburg when he decided to enlist in the Marine Corps.

"I knew there was a chance I would see combat, and that's what I wanted," says McConnell, who had been on the pre-med track at a community college before deciding the field wasn't for him.

"I wanted adventure, but I also wanted to serve my country."

Infantry was closed when McConnell enlisted, so he chose ground option and headed to boot camp in late 2007. In September 2008 he deployed for the first time to Iraq.

"Every year I was in the Marine Corps I was overseas," says McConnell, who served eight years on active duty.

In his early deployments, McConnell ran logistical missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. He drove trucks to deliver troops and supplies in various areas, eventually promoted to vehicle commander where he used his tactical and navigation experience to plan safe routes.

"I was exposed to all kinds of things. I've been exposed to 11 improvised explosive devices, fire fights, medical evacuations; I've seen the whole ordeal."

After completing his contract with the Marines, McConnell decided to pursue an engineering degree at WMU. The skills he developed in the military, like perseverance, leadership and problem-solving, have helped him make a successful transition to college life.

"Teamwork is another big one. That's a huge skill to have here, because if you combine teamwork with leadership you can get groups organized," he says, "I know there's no way I could get through school without help from my peers."

McConnell has also enjoyed being part of Student Veterans of America for both fellowship and networking opportunities.

"Part of it is helping incoming veteran students transition and guide them through how school works along with giving recommendations or tips and tricks. It's the kind of help you would get from a team being in the military."

FINDING COMMUNITY



Gough, second from left, stands with President Edward Montgomery in the President's Box at a Bronco football game.

"I never thought I would come to college and make a bunch of friends. I thought I'd just go to school and get it done, but then I got involved with SVA," says **Ivan Gough**, the organization's treasurer.

As a Marine Corps veteran, Gough has seen friends from his old unit struggle to find their place once they finish their service.

"It's definitely important to be involved in something. Making connections, meeting other people, networking. People come through here, they come to SVA events, and then when they graduate and get good jobs, you can talk to them and ask for help."

Military connections are what motivated Gough, of Adrian, to pursue a college degree once his commitment to the Marines ended.

"A buddy was doing mechanical engineering at a school in Connecticut. I thought about it and knew I had aviation as a fallback, so I thought I'd go ahead and try college and see how that goes."

He chose WMU for its engineering campus and after taking some classes decided to major in mechanical engineering. Having worked on aircraft in the military, the program fit well with his skill set. Now in his second year at WMU, he still has some time to decide what his career will be. But he knows the basic skills he honed in the Marines will help him reach his ultimate goal: a college degree.

"It's given me perspective on how to get things done," says Gough. "Failure is one thing I wasn't prepared for coming out of high school. The Marine Corps was the first time I really got chewed out. I feel like that helps coming here where stuff just kind of happens, and you get over it instead of dwelling on it."

Human resource management student wins competitive scholarship

Contact: Riley Lukowski

November 6, 2019



WMU business student Holly Harmon

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—**Holly Harmon**, a student at Western Michigan University's Haworth College of Business, recently won a competitive Junior Achievement \$2,500 scholarship from the Society of Human Resource Management. The merit-based scholarship is intended to help students realize that the education they are getting today will help them have a bright future tomorrow.

Harmon of Saline, Michigan, was selected for the scholarship based on her accomplishments, scholastic ability and leadership potential. Judges were impressed with her application, stating she is an ideal candidate for the award. Some of Harmon's accomplishments and leadership positions include:

- Serving as vice president of professional development for the Society for Excellence in Human Resources, WMU's chapter of SHRM.
- Participating in the Harvard Business School Summer Venture in Management Program.
- Being selected for the Forbes Under 30 Scholars program.
- Completing two internships with the Washtenaw County Road Commission.
- Working as a resident assistant for WMU's Residence Life and Housing Services.
- Earning second place, as part of a team, in the state HR Games hosted by the Michigan Society for Human Resource Management.
- Volunteering at WMU's Zhang Career Center and the Saline District Library.

"This scholarship provides me with support to continue to develop as a human resource management professional without the pressure of financial debt sitting squarely on my shoulders," Harmon says. "I am grateful to the SHRM for seeing my potential and choosing to support my studies. Being recognized by this nationally-recognized organization that empowers professionals in HR is extremely important to me. In addition, I am excited to bring attention to the Haworth College of Business's exceptional HR program."

ABOUT THE SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The [Society for Human Resource Management](#) is the world's largest human resource professional society, representing 285,000 members in more than 165 countries. For nearly seven decades, the organization has been the leading provider of resources serving the needs of human resource professionals and advancing the practice of human resource management. The Society for Human Resource Management has more than 575 affiliated chapters within the United States and subsidiary offices in China, India and United Arab Emirates. The WMU chapter, known as the [Society for Excellence in Human Resources](#), strives to enhance the potential of its members by providing them with the tools necessary to excel in human resource management and other fields in the business world.