



1-2016

## The Graduate Standard - 01/2016

Western Michigan University

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## Dean's Message

Hello.

The opening of Heritage Hall, the official name for the newly renovated East Hall, brings about a sense of excitement and nostalgia on campus and provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the beginnings of WMU and how we have grown as a university. Heritage Hall is now the home to the WMU Alumni Center and WMU's Office of Development and Alumni Relations.



The move of WMU's Office of Development and Alumni Relations opens up the first floor of Walwood Hall and the Graduate College will be relocating into this space. This relocation allows us for the first time to provide dedicated office space to the Graduate Student Association and to create the Graduate College Student Commons, a room for graduate student meetings, workshops, seminars and study space. Within the student commons we hope to be able to highlight former graduate student leaders and past and present supporters of graduate education. If you were a former graduate student leader we would love to hear from you and how your days at WMU may have helped influence your current success.

We will also be creating a donor wall to recognize those who have made financial contributions to the Graduate College in support of the creation of the Graduate College Student Commons. To donate to help us make this a reality, go to the Graduate College page on [mywmu.com](http://mywmu.com) or follow the link for Giving to Graduate Education on the Graduate College homepage ([www.wmich.edu/grad](http://www.wmich.edu/grad)).

Susan R. Stapleton, Ph.D.  
Dean, Graduate College

## Alumni Spotlight



### **Dr. Leslie Wilk Braksick**

Google Leslie Wilk Braksick's name and you'll have to decide among thousands of results from Amazon, Bloomberg Business News, Small Business Advocate.com, Barnes and Noble, hundreds of references to her long-time business, Continuous Learning Group, Inc., and just as many more from her new corporation, My Next Season.

After obtaining her doctorate in psychology at WMU in 1990, thus becoming the youngest person at the time to ever receive a PhD at Western, Leslie Wilk Braksick went on to establish corporate consulting business, Continuous Learning Group, Inc. in 1993. Under her leadership, CLG became the world's largest behaviorally based management consultancy within ten years. Her first book, "Unlock Behavior, Unleash Profits: Developing Leadership Behavior That Drives Profitability in your Organization" was published in 2000 and updated by popular demand in a second edition in 2007. It ranked No. 6 among business books published in 2007 and hit the Wall Street Journal's Business Best Seller list.

[\[Full Story\]](#)

## Alumni Spotlight



### **Courtney Dunsmore - Master's degree in Social Work**

In [April 2015](#), Courtney Dunsmore walked across the stage to receive her Master's degree in Social Work from WMU. After two years' of work in the Policy, Planning, and Administration concentration of the MSW, Courtney's experiences in that program include a co-authored article with her mentors, a professional conference presentation to a packed house in Las Vegas, various committee appointments, and a field placement that has confirmed her belief that this degree was the right choice for her.

A former Bronco undergraduate with degrees in sociology and psychology, Courtney knew she wanted to work in the human service field but dreamed of travel and moving far away from Michigan. Soon after her first graduation from WMU, she joined AmeriCorps, moving to South Carolina and working chiefly in administrative program planning for Georgetown County United Way AmeriCorps\*VISTA Collaborative. After this, Courtney looked briefly at graduate programs across the country, but eventually her vision shifted back to Michigan. She knew the MSW program here and it became clear that returning to WMU for graduate study was the

correct path.  
[\[Full Story\]](#)

## College Spotlight



### **The History of the Graduate College at Western Michigan University**

Graduate education at WMU began in [July 1938](#) with a cooperative agreement between the University of Michigan and the four State Teacher's Colleges. This agreement made Western State Teacher's College (later WMU) an extramural unit of the University of Michigan's Rackham School of Graduate Studies. Dr. Manley H. Ellis was the chairman of the Graduate Council that was formed to manage this cooperative agreement. Students applied to the University of Michigan, although they were enrolled at Western State Teacher's College. Graduate courses on Western's campus began in 1939 and were offered by instructors from the University of Michigan or faculty from Western who were approved by the University of Michigan. Four graduate courses were offered, and 147 graduate students enrolled that first year. It was possible for students to complete all of the work for their master's degree at Western, although their degree was conferred by the University of Michigan. Dr. Elmer H. Wilds was appointed in 1940 as

## Student Spotlight



### **Graduate Student Association Evening of Excellence and Make a Difference Awards**

On [April 17, 2015](#), the Graduate Student Association held its annual Evening of Excellence and Make a Difference Award Ceremony at the Radisson Hotel in downtown Kalamazoo. Guests were offered an assortment of Mardi Gras-style masks to accent the theme and posed on a red carpet for formal photographs. Strains of classical music from the WMU Brass Quintet created an elegant atmosphere along with the sky-high centerpieces at the round tables, each seating 10 for a festive buffet dinner. After a welcome from GSA Vice-President Amaury Pineda, PhD student in Political Science, Dr. Diane Anderson, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, greeted the crowd of about 150. She was followed by GSA President Damon Chambers, PhD student in Counseling Education and Counseling Psychology, who addressed the gathered audience with a reminder that GSA serves all graduate students. Membership is automatic, and funding for activities like the Evening of

chairman of the Graduate Division of Western,  
the precursor to the Graduate College.

[\[Full Story\]](#)

Excellence comes from student-paid fees. Shealyn Blanchard, PhD student in CECP and GSA Standards Chair introduced Keynote Speaker Britne Amos. Ms. Amos, past chair of GSAC, is a doctoral candidate in Counseling Psychology. She spoke on establishing a positive reputation with your conduct and accomplishments and reminded listeners that your reputation precedes you in all areas of life: scholarly, personal, and professional.

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