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Advanced degrees. Advancing careers.



Dean's Message

Hello.

It was an exciting Fall 2016 semester that started with the Graduate College moving to our newly designed space on the first floor of Walwood Hall. We recycled much of the office furniture and cubicle framework left by the Office of Development and Alumni Relations, turning it into our exciting new home. We unofficially opened our space to the public during Homecoming weekend and were pleased to welcome back many alumni and friends who stopped by to see our new space.



During the Homecoming weekend, we were excited to learn that the Alumni Association Board of Directors voted to include an opportunity for first time enrolled graduate students to apply for the Legacy Scholarship. Previously, the Legacy Scholarship was only available for undergraduate students. We are thankful to the Alumni Association Board of Directors for this exciting opportunity for our graduate students. Details about the application process for new graduate students will be forthcoming.

This fall, we also welcomed graduate students into the newly refreshed Stadium Drive apartments. Working with our colleagues in Student Affairs we were able for the first time to reserve on-campus housing for graduate students. Our thanks go out to the Vice President for Student Affairs and the staff of Residence Life for making this a reality.

The fall semester ended on a high note at graduation as over 27% of participants received graduate degrees. Forty of these new graduates were doctoral degree recipients. The scholarly work of these graduates along with their faculty mentors are advancing our understanding and knowledge in several areas: evaluating the training of student affairs professionals in community colleges; setting and evaluating expectations of mentors; understanding the impact of visual impairment on daily tasks; assessing the economics of child labor and education, and determining ancillary treatments for depression. We are incredibly proud of all our graduates and the contributions they have made to their fields of study and to the global Western community.

We are looking forward to an exciting 2017.

Susan R. Stapleton, Ph.D.

Alumni Spotlight



Dr. Kathleen Quardokus Fisher

Western's campus is covered in snow and ice. Temperatures hover near the single digits at WMU while alumna Kathleen Quardokus Fisher strolls across the campus of Florida International University in the 80 degree sunshine of Miami, Florida. Would she rather be back up north for the start of Spring semester 2017? Dr. Quardokus Fisher says "No". She's happy with a tenure track position at FIU, Miami's first and only public research university. FIU was recently designed a tier 1 research university; so her NSF grant to pursue a new diversity mentoring program gives Quardokus Fisher the ideal environment to grow as a scholar. As Assistant Professor she has a 50% appointment in the Department of Earth and Environment and a 50% appointment in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Technology (STEM) Transformation Institute.

[\[Full Story\]](#)

Student Spotlight



Cynda Harris - Doctoral student in Audiology

Every student knows the first question to ask when starting a writing project is "Who is my audience?" When Cynda Harris, Doctor of Audiology student in Western Michigan University's Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences, set out to write an essay, she knew the audience was not academic. In fact, it was radio station WIRX, a rock station her family listens to daily from their home near Western's Southwest Campus. The purpose of the essay? To win a contest sponsored by WIRX, "Get Lit This Christmas" that would bring a professional light installation crew to her parent's home to decorate for the holidays. Harris knew the radio station was not looking for an academic essay, so she wrote the following heart-felt letter, sent it off and thought no more about it.

[\[Full Story\]](#)

Faculty Spotlight



Dr. Brian Horvitz - Graduate Faculty Fellow

The Graduate College welcomes new faculty fellow Brian Horvitz, Associate Professor of Educational Technology in the College of Education and Human Development at WMU. Since 2015 Dr. Horvitz has served as Program Coordinator of the Educational Technology Program, which places him on the front lines of online education. He teaches technology for elementary education, introduction to educational technology, and creating online courses. His research interests include online teaching in higher education, the use of technology in teaching in higher education, and preparing pre-service teachers to integrate technology in learner-centered classrooms using a mixed-methods approach.

[\[Full Story\]](#)

Did You Know ?

10 Tips For Writing

Your Thesis or Dissertation

Also works for articles, specialist projects, books, papers and reports

1. Focus on your passion for your subject to get you through the doldrums.
2. Find a model for your work. Don't reinvent the wheel. Emulate the structure and form used by top scholars in your field.
3. Reach out to your support system when you feel stuck or frustrated.
4. Take care of yourself physically, mentally and emotionally. You cannot pour from an empty pitcher.
5. Find a writing group. Start by attending the Writing Haven in Room 215 East Walwood Hall on Wednesdays from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dr. Marianne Di Pierro is available to help you get going.
6. Write at the beginning of the day. You'll feel better without that hanging over your head.
7. Just write. Words on the page are better than no words on the page. Your goal is not to write the best thing ever written. Your goal is to finish your degree.
8. Write new words. Don't spend precious creative time rewriting. There will be time for that later.
9. Start by setting yourself to write for 20 minutes every day. If it turns into a longer session, great!
10. Begin writing now. Don't wait until you have signed up for dissertation or thesis credits.



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Dr. Kathleen Quardokus Fisher

Posted on [January 31, 2017](#) by [JamesKison](#)

Western's campus is covered in snow and ice. Temperatures hover near the single digits at WMU while alumna Kathleen Quardokus Fisher strolls across the campus of Florida International University in the 80 degree sunshine of Miami, Florida. Would she rather be back up north for the start of Spring semester 2017? Dr. Quardokus Fisher says "No". She's happy with a tenure track position at FIU, Miami's first and only public research university. FIU was recently designated a tier 1 research university; so her NSF grant to pursue a new diversity mentoring program gives Quardokus Fisher the ideal environment to grow as a scholar. As Assistant Professor she has a 50% appointment in the Department of Earth and Environment and a 50% appointment in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Technology (STEM) Transformation Institute.



Her field of scientific expertise is atmospheric science, but her current emphasis is the GEO Opportunities for Leadership in Diversity (GOLD): Hearts of GOLD. The result of an Ideas Lab

Activity, it is an NSF-funded project using the influence of top geoscientists to create champions for diversity. Mentoring is crucial in supporting underrepresented minority students in the sciences during the doctoral effort and through to a tenure track or other research position. As a graduate of three universities, Quardokus Fisher understands the importance of mentoring. She got her Bachelor of Science in Meteorology and Mathematics in 2005 and a Master of Education at Valparaiso University in 2007. During this same time period she taught mathematics and the sciences to high school students in Chicago, IL and later in Benton Harbor, MI. In 2010 she received an M.S. in Atmospheric Science from Purdue with a thesis designing and evaluating an undergraduate laboratory course in atmospheric science research. This led, rather naturally, to a contact with Dr. Charles Henderson at Western Michigan University's Mallinson Institute for Science Education. Focusing on instructional change in higher education, Quardokus Fisher dissertation is titled "Instructional change in academic departments: An analysis from the perspective of two environment-focused change strategies." Mallinson Institute for Science Education, named for Dr. George Mallinson, pioneer in the field of science education and the founding dean of the Graduate College at WMU, prepares undergraduate pre-service teachers to be science educators. At the graduate level, MISE prepares researchers to learn about teaching science and how students learn about science. Quardokus Fisher's main interest at WMU was exploring how an institution of higher education can support faculty in teaching about science through an examination of how social networks can be used to enhance faculty's learning about teaching. When asked if this includes social media, she explained, "It's about who talks to whom about what." Using ORA Social Network Software to analyze the structure of conversations between members of formal and informal social networks, Quardokus Fisher and Henderson determined if teaching and learning were being discussed. By doing so, the two scholars have been able to better understand the hidden structure of academic departments as well as facilitate faculty learning communities. After receiving her Ph.D. from WMU in 2014, Quardokus Fisher spent two years at Oregon State University doing post-doctoral study with mentors Milo Koretsky and Jana Bouwma-Gearhart on a project titled Enhancing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education at Oregon State University (ESTEME@OSU). In 2015 she and Henderson co-authored one article in the leading international journal in higher education studies, Higher Education, "Promoting Instructional Change: Using Social Network Analysis to Understand the Hidden Structure of Academic Departments". Another article under review is titled "Department-Level Instructional Change: Comparing Prescribed vs. Emergent Strategies". She has presented and published with numerous conferences, including, most recently, the American Society of Engineering Education Annual Conference, the National Association for Research in Science Teaching Annual Meeting, and the 19th Symposium on Education of the American Meteorological Association. Most importantly, she has landed not only a tenure track position at an R1 university, but an important grant from the National Science Foundation. She is actively engaged in developing mentorship circles and building diversity in the geosciences, which will trickle down to high schools like the ones in which she started teaching a dozen years ago. By working at the institutional level to build programs encouraging minority scholars at the highest level, she is influencing young people by developing mentors who can inspire them to pursue academic or research careers in the sciences.

Cynda Harris – Doctoral student in Audiology

Posted on [January 31, 2017](#) by [JamesKison](#)

Every student knows the first question to ask when starting a writing project is “Who is my audience?” When Cynda Harris, Doctor of Audiology student in Western Michigan University’s Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences, set out to write an essay, she knew the audience was not academic. In fact, it was radio station WIRX, a rock station her family listens to daily from their home near Western’s Southwest Campus. The purpose of the essay? To win a contest sponsored by WIRX, “Get Lit This Christmas” that would bring a professional light installation crew to her parents’ home to decorate for the holidays. Harris knew the radio station was not looking for an academic essay, so she wrote the following heart-felt letter, sent it off and thought no more about it.



“This is actually my parents’ home. They absolutely love Christmas, especially my mom. They work so hard every day. My father alternates between 14-hr night shifts immediately into day shifts. His days off vary every week. Sometimes, we don’t get to see him. Then, on his days off, he’s nonstop working around the house. Cleaning, fixing things up, taking care of the pet, doing laundry, mowing the lawn – you name it. It’s very stressful, and I can see him wearing down. But, he is always in a good mood. He smiles and jokes, and will get little to no sleep just to spend time with his family when he can. My mom is the same way. Her job is stressful, but she takes the criticism from her boss when she needs to be at work late or leave early to take care of my youngest brother (only 6 and in 1st grade). She will wake up at 3am with my Dad sometimes just to spend time with him. She cooks, cleans, drives all around for errands or my brother’s activities, and is always willing to do whatever she can for her family, despite her lack of sleep. My middle brother is in the Army and currently stationed in Korea. This has been hard on my parents, but they are always loving and supportive. Now that I (the oldest) am joining the Navy, I can see the sadness in their eyes, but they are so proud of us. After all they continue to go through, Christmas has always been a holiday of love and togetherness. For all they do and how

much they love this holiday, I believe they deserve a house of light to reflect all the goodness within their hearts.”

Imagine her surprise when, a few weeks later, the phone rang while she was taking a well-deserved nap between studying for finals, working her internship, volunteering with ROTC, and taking classes. The radio shock-jock’s voice blared in her ear, causing the type of damage her audiology program is educating her to treat (for audio of this conversation, click here: <http://www.wirx.com/get-lit-this-christmas/>). Harris got her wish; her parents’ home was covered in lights, and the radio station came out for a big lighting ceremony. But nothing made up for the fact that her brother wasn’t home for Christmas because he’s serving in the US military in South Korea. After she finishes her program, Harris plans to enter the military as well and serve as an audiologist. Only two of all graduating audiologists in the entire United States will be chosen for a Navy externship each year. The externship, which is the last thing she will need to complete her Au.D., would last from summer 2017 to summer 2018 and takes place at a Navy base either in the US or around the world, working in a Navy clinic or hospital. After graduation from WMU and getting her license to practice audiology, Ms. Harris has her sights set on a military training school which would lead to a career practicing as a military audiologist. Her commitment is palpable. In her own words, “The men and women who fight would willingly give up life and limb to protect their loved ones. I will only be happy if they are safe.” While audiologists are expected to be competent in every aspect of the hearing field, according to Harris, military audiologists differ from audiology specialist practices in the United States. These typically focus on one type of audiology, military audiologists must be proficient in every category of audiology: hearing loss from trauma, infection, or medical condition, and adult or pediatric audiology. If and when she decides to establish or join a practice back home, she knows she can handle any patient situation she encounters. While an undergraduate, she tutored Japanese students and traveled to Japan. Her love for all things Japanese has fostered her hopes to eventually be stationed on a military base in Japan. She double majored in Japanese Language and Culture and Pre-Audiology at Ball State University. A recipient of the Whitinger Scholarship, Ball State most prestigious scholarship, Harris was able to double major and received her bachelor’s degree in four years. As an audiologist entering the military she would be a commissioned officer, so she needs to know about each branch of the military. To that end, Harris volunteered for ROTC here on Western’s campus during fall 2016. Her busy schedule also includes working as Graduate Ambassador in the Graduate College at Western Michigan University for fall 2016 and spring 2017, where she acts as a liaison between students, faculty and staff in the College of Health and Human Services and the Graduate College. Harris is as determined now as she was while an undergraduate at Ball State. The Doctor of Audiology degree is a four-year post baccalaureate professional degree which prepares its graduates to provide high quality services and leadership in the field of audiology. Audiologists are health-care professionals who specialize in identifying, diagnosing, treating and monitoring disorders of the auditory system, which involves both the inner and outer ear. The degree program is rigorous. Currently 23 students are enrolled in some stage of the program, which involves completing all requirements of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association’s Certificate of Clinical Competence and/or state licensure. This means a four-year schedule packed with coursework, clinical practice, professional field experience, outcomes-based formative assessment and independent scholarly research.

While pursuing this rigorous schedule, Harris also performs as a Graduate Ambassador, works at PetSmart, volunteers with ROTC, and sometimes babysits for her six-year old brother. On top of all that, she takes time to write and submit winning essays designed to cheer up her parents. We'd say that's pretty impressive.

Dr. Brian Horvitz – Graduate Faculty Fellow

Posted on [January 31, 2017](#) by [JamesKison](#)

The Graduate College welcomes new faculty fellow Brian Horvitz, Associate Professor of Educational Technology in the College of Education and Human Development at WMU. Since 2015 Dr. Horvitz has served as Program Coordinator of the Educational Technology Program, which places him on the front lines of online education. He teaches technology for elementary education, introduction to educational technology, and creating online courses. His research interests include online teaching in higher education, the use of technology in teaching in higher education, and preparing pre-service teachers to integrate technology in learner-centered classrooms using a mixed-methods approach.



With two articles in press for the Community College Journal of Research and Practice and a publication in Innovative Higher Education (2015), Dr. Horvitz is an active scholar. In 2015 he received a National Science Foundation grant along with Co-PIs Regina Garza Mitchell, Andrea Beach and Charles Henderson. The Online Technical Education in ATE-Funded Programs grant is synthesizing what has been learned about online technical education in 38 Advance Technical Education (ATE) projects and making connections to the broader literature about what is most effective in online technical education. With his strong background in teaching and research, Dr. Horvitz now adds a strong service component to his C.V. with his appointment as Faculty Fellow in the Graduate College for the 2017 academic year. He will work with Associate Dean Christine Byrd-Jacobs to improve the online orientation for incoming or prospective graduate students and assist with other online training offerings. Currently graduate students must share an online

tutorial with incoming undergraduate transfer students. Since the needs of undergraduate and graduate students are radically different in many ways, developing and implementing a graduate-specific online orientation will greatly improve service to incoming students. Currently only incoming students who have been awarded a graduate assistantship participate in a day-long training that is offered in the fall semester. Funded students comprise about 20% of the total graduate student body, so a significant portion of graduate students are missing out on a comprehensive orientation. The vision for an online orientation is to provide to prospective and newly admitted graduate students helpful information on resources and services available at WMU in a convenient format. Online access means incoming graduate students can become familiar with Western Michigan University services to meet their needs at any time, during any semester or session. We anticipate that this will help new students feel more connected with the university as they begin their graduate programs.