Project will result in broader autism services

Those suffering from autism and their families are getting some much-needed help thanks to a $500,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Community Health to two psychology department faculty members. 

The grant has been awarded to Chair Stephanie M. Peterson and B. Wayne Fuqua, who are implementing the grant project as co-investigators. It will fund a sweeping array of initiatives that will use high-tech methods to help train mental health practitioners, parents and others dealing with autism spectrum disorder, ultimately leading to wider certification of other professionals trained in treating autism.

“The need is really huge,” Peterson says. “We’re taking a bite out of the elephant.”

The grant project comes after the state reviewed existing autism services and passed legislation requiring insurance companies to cover treatment. Peterson and Fuqua looked closely at the gaps that were identified by the state and wove their grant proposal around those needs.

“We think what we’re doing is very compatible with the overall state mission of improving services for those with autism spectrum disorder and their families,” Fuqua says. “Services have been pretty spotty until now. This is an important part of a larger state plan to ramp up services in the state of Michigan. We’re pleased to be a part of it.”

Projects that will be funded under the grant include:

• A tele-consultation initiative in which WMU will work with service providers and possibly teachers to increase their behavioral assessment and intervention skills when working with the autistic population. Five sites will be equipped with camera systems to give providers the necessary tools to effectively carry out both assessment and treatment.

• A podcasting project in which autism experts from across the country would explore important issues in behavior analysis related to autism assessment and treatment. Podcasts geared toward parents and family are also a possibility.

• Continuing the Michigan Autism Conference, bringing autism experts from across the country to Kalamazoo. The first such conference was held in October.

Design meetings set for dining center initiative

The campus community can take part in the site development process for the new Valley Dining Center by participating in public meeting sessions at 4 or 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 25, in 159 Bernhard Center.

The sessions will focus on building placement options for the new 1,000-seat dining center, which will provide innovative, state-of-the-art food service options to enhance the Valley Residential Neighborhood. Actual construction of the new Valley Dining Center is expected to begin in spring 2015.

The Feb. 25 meeting is the first in a series of such meetings that will take place during different stages of the design process. They have been set for the beginning of the design process.

Additional meetings will be scheduled midway through the process, likely in June, and at the end of the process, as the final plans are ready for presentation.

The upcoming meeting sessions will feature design professionals from SmithGroup JJR, a firm selected early in the planning process. They will present an overview of the project that will explore project goals, site details, building placement options and logistical needs specific to this facility.

Additional topics to be covered include:

• core design elements, focused on the Valley area attributes,

• approaches to entry points and flow from parking and pedestrian areas into the building, and

• benefits for Valley residence hall students.

WMU’s Valley Residential Neighborhood encompasses six residence halls in three complexes that were completed in 1965 and currently house more than 2,800 students. The complexes primarily house first-year students and are also home to five specialized academic communities and three interest-based communities.

At present, the Valley residence halls are served by two full-service dining rooms and one limited service dining room along with MugShots Coffee House.
Around campus and beyond

Editor's note: Visit wmich.edu/news/events for more information about events.

Environmental justice is lecture topic
Environmental protection for all Americans will get a closer look at 6 p.m. tonight when Peggy Shephard, co-founder and executive director of WE ACT for Environmental Justice in West Harlem, speaks in 2452 Knauss Hall.

The environmental justice activist will present “Advancing Environmental Health and Justice: A Community Perspective,” as part of the University Center for the Humanities 2013-14 Changing Climates Series.

Hockey team helping to raise funds
The hockey team will host its 2014 Hockey Cares Weekend Friday and Saturday, Feb. 21-22, in Lawson Ice Arena. In addition to bearing their University of Nebraska Omaha rivals, the hockey team will be focused on raising money to support research that will find a cure for Duchenne muscular dystrophy. This is a personal cause for the Broncos, as Associate Head Coach Rob Faccal’s son, Louis, is afflicted with DMD.

Those attending the game will have a variety of ways to make a donation and will be treated to special activities, including a pre-game performance by the Synchro- nized Skating team and free “no bad days” rally towels to the first 2,000 fans.

Worker motivation to be discussed
David M. Kreps, the Adams Distinguished Professor of Management in the Stanford University Graduate School of Business, will speak at 3 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 26, in 2028 Brown Hall. His presentation, “The Economics and Psychology of Worker Motivation,” is part of the Sichel Lecture Series.

Youths invited to explore two careers
Accelerated Weekend Experience courses for academically talented youths to explore video game creation and veterinary science will be offered from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, March 2-3. Multimedia Games (with Scratch software) is for grades five through seven while Veterinary Science is for grades seven through nine. Visit ctd.northwestern.edu/sep/program/awe for cost and details or call (269) 387-3230.

Cloud company exec to give talk
Melissa Gray, senior director of sustainability for Rackspace, will present “How We Will Want from Work” at 3:30 p.m. Thursday, March 13, in 2028 Schneider Hall as part of the Haworth College of Business Distinguished Speaker Series. Rackspace has been featured on Fortune’s list of 100 Best Companies to Work For. Register at wmich.edu/business/dss-rsvp, cynthia.reeves@wmich.edu or (269) 387-5069.

Correction
The location for tomorrow’s Fridays with Friends edition is incorrect in the Feb. 6 issue of the Western News. That event will be in the Gilmore Theatre Complex atrium, as will the March 21 mixer.

Exchange

Jobs
Current job opportunities at WMU are announced daily on the Human Resources website at wmich.edu/hr/jobs. Please note that applications must be submitted online by the stated deadline. Complete application procedures are included with each posting.

Two serving as statewide instructors
Mary L. Anderson, counselor education and counseling psychology, and Christopher Tremblay, enrollment management, are two of four statewide instructor-facilitators for an inaugural eight-month, hybrid professional development course that focuses on the college-going process.

The High School Counselor Postsecondary Planning Training Course was launched last year by the Michigan College Access Network and Michigan Virtual University.

School counselors are uniquely positioned to change the postsecondary trajectories for all students. They are expected to know the ins and outs of college admissions and financial aid, but most never received formal training on this content.

Executive elected to national board
Dawn M. Gaymer has been elected to the University Professional Continuing Education Association Board of Directors for a term that begins in late March.

The association builds greater awareness of the vital link between adult learners and public policy issues. It is the leading association for those in professional, continuing and online education. It serves more than 365 institutions, including a majority of North America’s foremost public and private colleges and universities.

Gaymer, associate provost for Extended University Programs, was elected as a director-at-large. At WMU, she is responsible for off-campus education and professional development programs, as well as online education and the University Studies degree program. She joined the staff in 2009.

Journal names professor top editor
Mark Hurwitz, political science, has been named editor-in-chief of Justice System Journal, a peer-reviewed publication sponsored by the National Center for State Courts, which collaborates with the Conference of Chief Justices, the Conference of State Court Administrators and other associations of judicial leaders.

An interdisciplinary publication, Justice System Journal aims to use the latest in advanced social science research and analysis to bridge the gap between practicing and academic law and the judicial and political communities. Along with other types of writings, it publishes original research articles on all aspects of law, courts, court administration, judicial behavior and the impact of all of these on public and social policy.

Hurwitz came to WMU in 2005 and has a joint appointment with public policy and women’s studies. His research focus includes judicial politics, behavior, selection and diversity.
Researchers focusing on northern Michigan for CO2 storage

For nearly a decade, WMU researchers have been studying Michigan geological features to determine the state's capacity and potential to store large amounts of carbon dioxide in a process called sequestration.

They showcased the potential in a Feb. 12-13 workshop for industry professionals by presenting physical features on a special species of concern in the state and are protected under Canada's Wetland Species at Risk Act.

The researchers' findings can be readily observed in the actual sample cores collected from wells in the area. Those cores show the pore spaces are capable of storing large quantities of carbon dioxide. The process that could further Michigan's new carbon sequestration industry entails capturing and extracting CO2 from the emissions produced by power plants or other large, stationary, industrial emissions sources. Liquified CO2 is then delivered into deep geological reservoirs, thousands of feet beneath the surface. WMU has been a partner since 2005 in the Midwest Regional Carbon Sequestration Partnership. The partnership consists of representatives from leading universities, state geological surveys, nongovernmental research organizations and private companies from nine Eastern States. In Michigan, its partners are studying data and samples from subsurface geological formations relevant to CO2 storage, CO2 containment and the potential for enhanced oil recovery.

This regional effort is led by Battelle Memorial Institute, a Columbus, Ohio, research organization. Industry partners include Core Energy, LLC of Traverse City, Mich. William B. Harrison III, emeritus in geosciences and director of the Michigan Geological Repository for Research and Education, says WMU's research suggests that in addition to the CO2 storage potential, the technology involved in carbon sequestration could recover some 180 to 200 million barrels of "stranded" oil in old fields.

Harrison along with David Barnes and Duane Hampton, geoscientists, also created a carbon sequestration research center called MidCarb in 2009 with more than $600,000 in federal funding.

Award nominations due soon

Nominations are being accepted through Sunday, March 16, for awards recognizing WMU's lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgender communities and their allies.

Nominations are being accepted in the individual category as well as the unit, team and organization category. WMU students, employees, units and organizations are eligible to receive the awards, and anyone on or off campus may make a nomination. For guidelines and a nomination form, visit wmich.edu/diversityandinclusion/lgbt.

Obituaries

Michael A. Myckowiak, a former regional director of continuing education, died Jan. 23. He was 89. Myckowiak retired in 1984 after 30 years of service in the College of Health and Human Services, died Feb. 5. He was 77. Williams founded WMU's holistic health program in 1982. A memorial service will be held in April.

Joseph T. Work, emeritus in music, died Feb. 7. He was 82. Work retired in 1993 after 30 years of service.
Students to vie for $16,000 scholarships

Some 140 high school seniors will compete in the Multicultural Leader Scholarship competition at WMU from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 22, in the Bernhard Center. WMU established the by-invitation-only event in 2012 to broaden diversity and multiculturalism on campus. Only qualifying students from select high schools are invited to compete. During the competition, they will vie for membership in WMU’s Martin Luther King Jr. Academy as well as one of about 50 Multicultural Leader Scholarships, each totaling $16,000 over four years. Since the event’s inception, some 100 students have received nearly $1.6 million in scholarships. Students who receive a Multicultural Leader Scholarship automatically become part of WMU’s Martin Luther King Jr. Academy. The academy is a comprehensive program that offers academic, social, and professional development support and services to students from their first year on campus through graduation.

Area high school students competing in Brain Bee

Southwest Michigan high school students will use their brains while learning about the brain during a neuroscience competition Saturday, Feb. 22, in Wood Hall. The fourth Southwest Michigan Brain Bee is open to the public and begins at 10 a.m. It is a key part of Brain Awareness Week, an educational outreach mission aimed at increasing awareness about neuroscience. Following the competition, neuroscience labs personnel will conduct tours and demonstrations.

WMU’s event is being organized by the Graduate Student Advisory Committee’s new graduate student symposium, WMU Grad Talks, which takes place at 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 21, in the Lee Honors College Building lounge. Inspired by TED Talks, it gives graduate students a chance to present their research in 10-minute public presentations. Visit wmich.edu/gsac/gradtalk.html for details.

First WMU Grad Talks slated

The Graduate Student Advisory Committee’s new graduate student symposium, WMU Grad Talks, takes place at 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 21, in the Lee Honors College Building lounge. Inspired by TED Talks, it gives graduate students a chance to present their research in 10-minute public presentations. Visit wmich.edu/gsac/gradtalk.html for details.

Funding technology seminar set

A networking seminar titled “Building University-Industry Research Partnerships to Secure Federal Funding for Your Technology” will take place from 1 to 3 p.m. Friday, March 14, in Schneider Hall. Registration is open at misbtdc.net/events.aspx. This interactive program will explore questions for faculty members and small businesses in the context of funding programs for translational research, university spin-out companies and small business product development. It will also cover new programs for technology transfer at NSF, NIH, and other federal agencies, as well as the well-known SBIR and STTR programs that award more than $2 billion annually in research and development funding to small businesses.

Michael Konik from BBC Entrepreneurial Training and Consulting will be the guest facilitator. In addition, representatives from WMU research centers and business development offices will offer consultation and support to attendees. There will be plenty of time for questions, discussion and networking. Light refreshments will be served.