Inside this issue
• Engaging the 21st-century learner
• One student’s global odyssey
• Overcoming bias in news reporting
Dear Friends,

Welcome to the start of another vibrant academic year at Western Michigan University and to the fall issue of the WMU Magazine. I especially enjoy this time of year.

The University is alive with thousands of talented students, faculty and staff members, already hard at work throughout campus.

As in previous editions, you'll find on the following pages more concrete examples of how, collectively, our University community is discovery driven, learner centered and globally engaged.

You'll learn about the 21st Century Student Initiative, a cross-institutional effort focused on studying the latest learning needs of our youngest students and bringing to bear the considerable talents of our faculty and other staff to offer students the best possible educational outcome.

You'll also see examples of WMU represented abroad, including a particularly well-traveled global studies student whose professors have made the world his classroom and an alumnus who created a unique news outlet in one of the world’s most troubled regions.

In addition, you'll find we've provided you with a look at a major development closer to home. The campus community is reaping the benefits of the long-awaited new Sangren Hall, completed last month. This stunning classroom facility was designed to support learning in instructional spaces that meet the needs of today's learners while also exemplifying WMU's commitment to environmentally sustainable construction and building maintenance. The facility is enhanced by a verdant pedestrian mall that adds to the tranquility and beauty of the campus.

I hope many of you will be able to join us on Sept. 28 when we celebrate the new Sangren and formally mark the renovation of the Lee Honors College.

Please visit campus at any time and enjoy reading this issue. There are many stories to share and those captured in this publication remind us of the hundreds of other positive initiatives associated with this great university.

Best regards,

John M. Dunn
President
4 | Cover Story

This TeachLIVE lab gives students learning to be teachers the chance to test their skills on a virtual class while being coached by their professor. This is also one example of WMU making the classroom an active, engaging learning environment for students.

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“We Bleed Brown and Gold” ...at Homecoming Weekend, Oct. 5-6

Soon to begin and full of events, it’s homecoming time at WMU, and this year’s theme is “We Bleed Brown and Gold.” Thousands will attend the football game at 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 6, when the Broncos meet the University of Massachusetts Minutemen at Waldo stadium in the 89th annual homecoming game. But there are other events to take in as well.

Highlights and activities include:

• Pep rally in downtown Kalamazoo: Catch the spirit on Friday, Oct. 5, at an 8:30 p.m. pep rally on the north end of Kalamazoo’s pedestrian mall. This portion of the mall is between the Radisson Plaza Hotel & Suites and Kalamazoo Valley Community College’s Center for New Media. The rally will feature dozens of football players, members of the University’s band and it coincides with the conclusion of Kalamazoo’s monthly Art Hop.

• Annual on-campus race: Ahead of the afternoon football game, thousands will start Saturday in sneakers by taking part in the 14th Homecoming Campus Classic. It features a 1K Fun Run and Walk at 8:45 a.m. and a 5K Run and Walk at 9:15 a.m. Top finishers in various categories win awards. Register and pay the race fee online at wmich.edu/campusclassic up until 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 4. Race-day registration is between 7 and 9 a.m. Find more race details at the Campus Classic website.

• Pre-game tailgating: The University is hosting organized tailgating outside the College of Health and Human Services leading up to the game’s kickoff Saturday. It will feature a pancake breakfast put on by the Haworth College of Business and be the setting for Alpha Phi Alpha’s 50th Anniversary Reunion.

WMU earns $2 million grant to provide array of services for migrant students

The U.S. Department of Education has entrusted the University with $2 million over the next four years to support first-year undergraduate students who are migrant or seasonal farm workers or the children of these workers.

WMU’s Division of Multicultural Affairs received $497,706 from the education department’s Office of Migrant Education to fund the effort for this academic year and expects the office to renew the grant for another four years for a total of $2,075,735.

The funding is for the College Assistance Migrant Program — also known as CAMP — an initiative that helps some 2,000 students across the country annually. WMU-CAMP will enroll 40 eligible students each year.

“Migrant and seasonal farm workers are essential to the agricultural industry in the United States and in Michigan, yet they continue to be one of the most impoverished and underserved populations in the country,” says Diana Hernández, director of the Division of Multicultural Affairs and principal investigator for the grant project.

“Our unique, holistic service plan for the CAMP program will provide participants with the comprehensive academic, financial, health counseling and support services migrant students will need to successfully complete their first year and to continue at WMU,” she says.

WMU is one of only nine institutions in the country and one of two in Michigan to receive funding to implement CAMP. Michigan State University received one of the four five-year grants just awarded for the migrant education office’s related High School Equivalency Program, or HEP.

Hernández says that Southwest Michigan is at the center of the state’s stream of migrant and seasonal farm workers, according to data from the Michigan Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Enumeration Profile Study, conducted in 2006 for the State of Michigan Interagency Migrant Services Committee.
NCAA lauds basketball, tennis players for academic achievement

Men’s basketball and women’s tennis players are skilled on the court and in the classroom.

Among Division I schools nationwide, the NCAA formally honored the WMU student-athletes with Public Recognition Awards this summer for achieving an “Academic Progress Rate” in the top 10 percent for their respective sports.

During the past four years, the WMU men’s basketball team has received a Public Recognition Award three times. This is the second time in the past three years that the women’s tennis team has earned the award.

The NCAA describes its Academic Progress Rate as an annual “scorecard” of a team’s academic prowess. Eligibility, retention and graduation rates figure into the calculation.

“Most student-athletes excel at balancing their academic and athletic commitments, yet each year there are those who perform at extraordinary levels,” says NCAA President Mark Emmert.

While WMU is one of eight Mid-American Conference schools to make the list this year, only four other MAC schools had multiple programs recognized.

Moreover, the Bronco men’s basketball team represents the only men’s basketball team in the MAC to post an APR in the top 10 percent, while the Bronco women’s tennis program is one of four in the MAC to be recognized.

Four players on WMU’s men’s basketball team posted grade point averages of 3.59 or better. The women’s tennis team had seven athletes with GPAs greater than 3.0, four with GPAs greater than 3.5 and one athlete with a perfect 4.0.

University breaks ground on Legacy Collections Center on Oakland Drive Campus

A new, privately funded 16,000-square-foot home is in the making for the University’s collection of archives and regional historical records. Workers broke ground for the $8.3 million building, called the Legacy Collections Center, in mid-July.

The bulk of the collection has long been resident in the gymnasium of East Hall, the University’s first building.

Years of planning and fundraising have brought this new home for the center close at hand.

“This has been our goal for many years, and now it is finally being realized,” says WMU President John M. Dunn.

“I’ve always considered the historical collections entrusted to us a public treasure and one for which we’ve needed a facility that could guarantee their safety and accessibility for years to come. With the support of this community, that goal will become a reality.”

The Irving S. Gilmore Foundation, the Kalamazoo Community Foundation and the late Dr. Frederick J. and Katharine D. Rogers are the project’s major donors.

Each year more than 1,800 people use the collection for historical and genealogical research.

When complete, the legacy center will house more than 28,000 cubic feet of what is now known as the WMU Archives and Regional History Collections as well as overflow books and serials from the University Libraries.

The collections include historical University, regional and local governmental records; manuscript collections; oral histories; census records; a research collection of books, magazines and newspapers; and several large photographic collections.

One recent and large addition to WMU’s collection is the complete archive of the Kalamazoo Gazette newspaper, a compendium of the greater Kalamazoo community in words and pictures that dates back to the 1800s.
WMU’s 21st Century Student Initiative focuses on fostering student success—by all means

As part of WMU’s ongoing practice of being learner centered, a cadre of professors, staff and students have embarked on a project called the 21st Century Student Initiative. Their mission is to help WMU continually grow as a student-friendly institution and advocate for teaching, learning and student services that keep pace with ever-changing student demographics. As President John M. Dunn has said, “In the end, everything we do has to be about the success of our students.”

Dr. Robert Wertkin began to notice a change in his youngest students in recent years and, at first, it worried the longtime social work professor. In fact, what he initially perceived as apathy and a tendency toward distraction among some students left him not only worried but also frustrated at times. “They don’t want to learn,” the 30-year veteran professor concluded one day after an exasperating statistics class.

But the professor, a passionate and popular instructor, soon realized his assessment was wrong. The desire to learn had not departed from students. He came to understand that the youngest learners in his classroom—practically raised on computers, accustomed to constant interaction with various forms of digital media and parented differently than past generations—respond well to teaching methods that make the classroom a more active, engaging and thereby even more rigorous learning environment.

“What snuck up on me was the gradual changing of a generation,” he says.

The professor’s next big realization was that he wasn’t alone. Colleagues reported similar experiences in their classrooms. Moreover, Wertkin learned that this phenomenon was not limited to WMU. The University is responding.
Fostering student success

Wertkin, as part of a team of professors, students and staff members, is leading an effort on campus called the 21st Century Student Initiative that recognizes a change in the University’s youngest learners, a generation of students popularly known as “millennials.”

Their mission to focus on student achievement covers all areas of the institution, both nonacademic and academic. The initiative’s project teams include one on teaching, learning and advising, another on supervision and employment of students, and another that serves as a student advisory group.

In the teaching and learning realm, the initiative has involved examining learning styles and redoubling WMU’s efforts to use the best practices to meet the educational needs of students in today’s classrooms.

“The intent is to be a resource on campus, to learn who our students are and what are the ways we can go about helping them succeed,” says Dr. Andrea Beach, director of the Office of Faculty Development.

Part of that requires tapping into the collective wisdom on campus and enlisting faculty members to share strategies they use in their classrooms.

They are also listening closely to students

“The main thing we hear in our subgroup meeting is that we want to be engaged in the classroom,” says Mitchell Zajac, a WMU senior and Lee Honors College member on the initiative steering committee and co-chair of the student advisory group.

“It’s not a sit-down-lecture-listen atmosphere that needs to take place anymore because students are bombarded all day with media outside of school,” says Zajac, who is pursuing two bachelor’s degrees as well as a master’s degree.

“Information is readily available a click away. The purpose of our groups is to help the educators know that.”

Continued on page 7
Using clickers can combat “brain shutdown” in class

During a class period, Dr. Michelle Kominz knows—real time—when 61 percent of her students comprehend a concept or know the answer to a question she’s posed. She also knows when 97 percent of them get it or just 8 percent.

That kind of precise insight into what her students are thinking can make for more finely tuned teaching during a given class hour. Based on responses, the professor can move on or spend more time on a point that seems to be confounding students.

Kominz, professor of geosciences, is one of the dozens of faculty members on campus who use a “clicker” student-response system to aid instruction.

The brand of clicker used at WMU is a small, rectangular device with a keypad. With it, students respond to multiple-choice questions an instructor poses.

How the class responds as a whole is typically displayed for every one in the class to see. Individual responses are recorded for the instructor to later access.

Anyone who has seen a “Who Wants to be a Millionaire?” contestant choose the “Ask the Audience” poll as a “lifeline” has seen this in practice. But in a classroom, the polling is an active-learning technique, provoking students to be alert and immediately demonstrate what they know—or don’t know—during class.

“For at least 90 percent of my questions, I want them to talk about it amongst themselves so they are helping each other think about it before they put their answer in,” Kominz says. “It allows for a more engaged, interactive class.”

This is especially helpful in a class with a large number of students. The class in which Kominz uses the clicker, Ocean Systems, may enroll between 100 and 150.

Before she began using it, Kominz might only have a general sense during class time whether students were picking up on a particular concept. Simply voicing a query like, “Does everyone understand?” doesn’t always elicit a full and accurate picture of whether students actually are comprehending. Some students are reluctant to reply to a question in front of their peers or admit that they’re lost.

Not all instructors who use clickers, use the devices in the same way. Some may ask only a hand full of clicker questions. Kominz asks between 16 and 24.

“I’m actually using the clicker to teach in a Socratic way. I’m asking questions and trying to help them learn as they are answering questions,” she says.

Long before clickers came along, Kominz used this teaching method. Back then, she would pose questions and call on students. Those who knew the answers or were unafraid to guess out loud would pipe up.

“But with the clicker you can question everybody,” she says. Students are answering anonymously with a click of a button; their peers don’t know how they’ve responded.

Dr. Andrea Beach, director of the Office of Faculty Development, says clickers can combat “brain shutdown.”

“If a faculty member is using clicker questions that are interesting—maybe some have a right answer, maybe some don’t—it gets people thinking about all the possibilities,” she says.

“It get students out of passive listening mode and keeps them active enough at short enough intervals as part of a class. They will be more engaged and they will retain more of what they are trying to understand,” Beach says.

As in some other professors’ classrooms, in Kominz’s class, the clicker serves the additional purpose of revealing who’s shown up for class. Attendance plays a role in her students’ overall grade.

wmich.edu/magazine
Active learning defined

Wertkin says that one of those best practices in teaching today’s youngest college students involves “moving toward active learning, engaged learning, learning communities (in the classroom). We’re getting away from the talking head.

“The talking head is that person up there who’s just talking for 50 minutes. Our average concentration time for a lecture is 10 minutes. It just doesn’t work. The better approach to the 50-minute lecture is to diversify,” says Wertkin.

Set out a challenge, have students work on it in small groups, reassemble and discuss the material, he says, describing one example of what “active learning” looks like.

“The more I’ve gotten into this, the more I’ve been able to recognize strengths of millennials and post-millennials. They’re good problem solvers. They’re good in groups. They’re civic-minded, loyal to parents and involved in service-learning,” Wertkin says.

“My question is, ‘How do you build on their strengths?’ I do lecture, there’s no question. But I don’t lecture like I used to lecture,” he says.

Though a traditional model, limiting class time to lecture or monologue without active engagement is not the best model to foster learning, says Dr. Mark Taylor, a leading national expert in teaching contemporary college students.

“It’s about getting students to be active participants in the construction of their own learning,” says Taylor, an educational consultant who’s been tapped by WMU and many other universities to address this issue on campus.

“On the one hand, we can say it’s responding to a new kind of learner but in fact, it’s just moving to best practice,” he says.

A member of the baby-boomer generation, Taylor says when he was an undergraduate the attitude about learning in college wasn’t very progressive.

“When we went to college it was only the middle class who went to school anyway and it was really a sink-or-swim environment,” he says.

Then came Generation X, which Taylor characterizes as the most adaptable and pragmatic cohort of students, who also was subjected to that sink-or-swim instructional mentality in the classroom.

But he says that students today, “are just not responding to that old pedagogy. It’s not their fault. It was always a bad model.”

Describing the generational attributes of “millenials,” he says they tend to be more collaborative and see themselves as creators.

“They are constantly creating stuff online. They see themselves as producers and they see themselves as having the power to impact their world. We can leverage that in our instruction,” he says.

Active learning in practice

There are various ways to promote active learning.

For industrial and manufacturing engineering professor Dr. Kailash Bafna, this has involved the gradual implementation of technology to assist instruction.

As a student, you come to Bafna’s engineering economic analysis class, a math-related course, ready to apply what he’s taught you outside of the classroom via recorded lectures (with video and audio), footage of him presenting concepts through PowerPoint slides and solving the mathematical problems.
**The class is totally paperless**

Students access and review this material online as many times as they need to, along with completing their assignments and quizzes. “No matter where they are, they may be at home or on vacation, if they have access to the Internet, they have access to all the class material. This is something that is a big plus,” Bafna says.

Whereas he once used the class period primarily for lectures, he now uses the time for solving mathematical problems with students, fielding their questions and administering quizzes and exams on the material.

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“Now when I solve the problems in class, they understand how the mind is thinking, how the mind should be analyzing. This has helped tremendously,” he says.

With changes he’s made over time, more of his students grasp concepts to a greater degree and, most importantly, Bafna says he’s documented an improvement of half a letter grade in student performance as a result.

“The material is the same, but the delivery method is completely different. If we want the students to do well, we have to modify our techniques,” he adds.

Dr. Suzan Ayers, an associate professor of human performance and health education, uses a similar approach in her teaching, with students doing assignments and accessing the content she's prepared before they meet.

“In my class, it’s phones off, hats off, brains on and we roll. You get the content before you come to class, and I’m going to work with you to apply it so you see why it was important that you learned this content,” Ayers says.

It leads to an intellectually challenging learning environment, says Ayers.

With her class time spent on putting into practice the information students have taken time to acquire, “they are taking more ownership of the content. You can’t really measure that part. But I see it,” she says.

**Broncoland**

The 21st Century Student Initiative isn’t limited to one aspect of the student experience. Another area of focus involves helping acclimate students to college life and what’s expected of them at WMU.

To that end, the initiative introduced Broncoland. Found online at wmich.edu/broncoland, this 3D game was created at the University by students under the direction of Kevin Abbott, project lead of interactive media at the University.

It’s an innovation “using the kind of technology, the kind of gaming that students already have a comfort level with,” Beach says.

Broncoland offers not only a virtual tour of campus and University buildings, but it provides prospective and new students with an interactive, how-to-survive-in-college experience using gaming.

Wertkin describes it as a problem-solving game in which students must decipher the best possible decisions to succeed in the various domains of college, including academics, social life and wellness.

The endgame for Broncoland and the initiative as a whole is to, by all means, support the myriad students WMU is charged with educating.

“I see this initiative as really tightly tied to or supporting President Dunn’s focus on student success,” Beach says.

“If we are going to promote student success, we have to be really intentional about understanding who are students are and what helps them succeed.”
Show us your “W”

Proudly displaying The “W,” this past summer alumni, friends and family members posed during an event in Malaysia recognizing WMU’s 25-year partnership with the country’s Sunway University. President John M. Dunn traveled to Malaysia to celebrate this important relationship that dramatically boosted international education and helped produce more than 2,500 Bronco alumni in that nation. While there, Dunn also signed articulation agreements with several other Malaysian higher education institutions. The WMU Magazine continues to invite readers to also show off the “W” while traveling in the states or abroad. Send a photo of yourself wearing your “W” on a T-shirt or hat to university-relations@wmich.edu. We’d also love pictures of your “W” license plate. Selected submissions (see back cover) will be published.

Penny D. Bundy, director of admissions, has been elected state representative for the Michigan ACT State Organization. She serves on the executive board of the state group and on the ACT’s national advisory body.

“The Western community has shown many times over that they care for those of us who have a second job serving our country.”

— Reserve Sgt. 1st Class Erik Conover, a WMU information technology specialist who nominated the University for an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Patriot Award. President John M. Dunn accepted the award recognizing WMU’s support of students and employees called to active duty.

WMU: Exceptionally Gifted

This 240 percent increase in private gifts to WMU during the 2011-12 fiscal year shatters all previous one-year records for fundraising. The funds include cash, pledges and planned and in-kind gifts.

$29,446,110

$41,575,189

WMU has role on ACT

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The read on campus

WMU has launched a campuswide common read, starting with Rebecca Skloot’s acclaimed book, “The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks.” It’s a story of questionable medical ethics and the remarkable cancer cells of a woman who died in 1951. Researchers found that Lacks’ cells, unlike others, could live on and wildly reproduce in the lab. Her cells have been the basis of numerous advances in medicine. But they were also harvested and cultured without consent. Skloot as well as Lacks family members are expected to be on campus in separate appearances next semester. For more, go to libguides.wmich.edu/WMU_Common_Read.

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Global Perspective:
Student travels to six distant countries in one productive year

In the space of 12 months, senior Clifford Pulley III traveled with WMU professors to more places overseas than many will see in a lifetime, and he racked up more credit hours studying abroad than any other student in recent memory.

The summer before Pulley’s junior year, he studied business practices in Singapore and Malaysia and then took a language course in China.

Since May he’s traveled to Uruguay and Rome and, until a few weeks ago, was in Chile. All these were overseas courses led by WMU faculty members.

In January, he returns to China for a semester at the Beijing Language and Culture University.

But the 22-year-old considers these far-flung excursions only the first steps toward a life and career on an international stage, initially as a businessman and perhaps one day as a diplomat.

Globally engaged

“I would like to make a global impact in whatever I do,” says Pulley, a global studies major whose number of trips abroad is high even among others pursuing this major.

“The value of it is that it makes me more marketable and I’m really gaining an appreciation for other cultures and seeing their perspective, from cultural aspects to political (ones) and even how U.S. policy can affect the rest of the world,” Pulley says.

Though safely away from the action, Pulley and other WMU students were in Malaysia in 2011 during a period of political strife in which thousands took to the streets in Kuala Lumpur to demand election reform.

The students were taken to another city and didn’t see the demonstrations but he says, “it was neat to have been there to hear about it and see the different challenges countries face.”

People close to Pulley speak of his drive and say they wouldn’t be surprised if he became an ambassador one day or CEO of a multinational corporation.

“Committed to making a difference in the world, he is absolutely a mover and a shaker and will undoubtedly make our list of distinguished alumni in the years to come,” says Kaitlyn Carr, student recruitment and outreach officer for the Haenicke Institute for Global Education.

The Haenicke Institute promotes and supports international education at WMU in all its aspects, including study abroad.

WMU abroad

While Pulley may be one of WMU’s most-traveled current students when it comes to studying in other countries for academic credit, he’s not alone in seeking these kinds of cross-cultural encounters outside the U.S.

Each academic year, better than 500 WMU graduate and undergraduate students study abroad in more than 30 countries. More than 11 percent of undergraduates will take a class or more in another nation before they leave the University.

WMU offers students a variety of international opportunities as part of the University’s mission to develop globally engaged students and educators.

Many of these overseas courses are led by WMU faculty members. In other cases, students take a class or classes at an overseas university taught by that institution’s instructors.

Some programs are semester long, others run a full academic year and many are short-term courses.

“Students often think, I’ll (travel abroad) when I start working,” says Dr. Jane Blyth, WMU’s study abroad director.

“But when you start working, it’s difficult to go and really live abroad and experience the culture. You can travel but you’re always a tourist. As a student, you can go there and live and become part of the culture,” she says.

That kind of deeper immersion is what Pulley is eager to experience next year in Beijing, where he’ll primarily take language classes and focus on understanding Chinese culture.

Culturally aware

A news junkie who grew up listening to NPR’s international coverage, Pulley had traveled extensively in the United States with his family as a child but longed to go beyond U.S. b
“Once you have an appreciation for traveling your own country, you want to explore and do more,” says Pulley, son of an elementary school teacher and a restaurateur.

He considered learning Arabic and enrolling at a university in the Middle East but instead chose to study Chinese.

“I was watching how China was buying up a lot of U.S. debt and how the country was having a global impact,” he says.

The additional allure of Chinese is that it’s one of the most difficult languages for a native English speaker to learn.

While in China last year, Pulley says he deliberately spent as much time as possible with native speakers “because I knew my objective was to learn Chinese.”

Just walking the communities of Beijing, asking strangers for directions and especially engaging merchants in markets, had the effect of dramatically improving his speaking and comprehension skills.

“Even though I was only there for 2 ½ weeks, it felt like I learned more over there than the first year of me learning Chinese because I constantly had to use it,” he says.

Attainable opportunity

In many ways, Pulley exemplifies the value of study abroad and how to make it work financially and otherwise in an academic program.

Study abroad director Blyth says that, “one of the reasons we’re working so hard to reach students before they come to Western or in their freshmen year is to let them know that, if they plan ahead, they can work it into their curriculum.”

Blyth notes that WMU has scholarships to help defray the cost of study abroad and students can use their financial aid.

Pulley’s trips have been financed through the Haenicke Institute’s dean’s scholarships, his own savings and support from community organizations he’s approached.

Traveling summers and always for credit, he’s set to graduate in just more than four years, on track to don his cap and gown in December 2013.

“Clifford knows that a thousand-mile trip begins with one step, and he takes each step steadily toward his goal,” says Dr. Xiaojun Wang, who led the Chinese language class Pulley took in China last year.

The young man says that he gives God, his parents and close friends the credit for his success so far.
Addressing a critical national need, new gerontology center focuses on education, research and community service

The WMU Center for Gerontology, an education, research and community service center established a year ago in response to the forthcoming population boom in elder adults in the United States, hits another milestone this fall. For the first time in several years, the University is offering a minor in gerontology and by next fall, students may have the additional option of pursuing the minor completely online.

The program of study offers a valuable skill set and knowledge base for those going into health care and a number of other professions, says the center’s coordinator, Dr. Janet Hahn. “Our population is aging and we’re really looking to the year 2030 when the younger half of the baby boomers are going to start needing services,” says Hahn, who is also an assistant professor in WMU’s School of Interdisciplinary Health Programs.

According to census projections, Americans who are age 65 and older will account for 20 percent of the U.S. population by 2030. Compare that to 2000 when this age group made up about 12 percent of the population. “We need more health care workers at all levels,” Hahn says. She says one of the center’s future offerings may include a graduate certificate. That's still being analyzed, but by the inquiries she gets, Hahn says there’s interest.

“I definitely get calls from people who want to change careers or who have lost a job and realize that working with older people is the future, and they want to retool their skills and expertise,” she says.

Critical need prompts restoration

The gerontology center represents the re-establishment of past programming at WMU. The University once had a gerontology program but it was eliminated in 2004 as part of budget cuts.

“It is exciting and gratifying that we have been able to restore the gerontology program at Western through the Center for Gerontology,” says Dr. Earlie Washington, dean of the College of Health and Human Services.

As a gerontologist herself, Washington says the program was one of the features that drew her to WMU in 2000.

The program, initiated by the now-retired Dr. Ellen Page-Robin, had been the longest standing such program in the nation at that time.

“When I became dean of the College of Health and Human Services, it was my goal to reinstate the program. With the well-documented aging of America and the need for health care professionals prepared to meet this population’s needs, the time was right when I called together a task force in 2007,” she says. The center was developed with input from the community and representatives of a variety of disciplines. In 2010, the Board of Trustees approved the plan to establish the new center.

Washington says the same “exciting synergy” that brought the center to fruition will make it all that it can be going forward.

Education, research, community service

The center’s mission is threefold — to enhance student preparation related to the aging population, to conduct research that helps local and national practitioners improve health and human services for elder adults and to use internal expertise for community outreach.

There are seven faculty members who are associated with the center, including professors in occupational therapy, social work, speech pathology and audiology and nursing.

This array of expertise speaks to the interdisciplinary nature of gerontology. Though housed at the College of Health and Human Services, the center, Hahn emphasizes is a universitywide enterprise that has relevancy across campus.

Many faculty researchers in various colleges of WMU already study aspects of aging, such as cell biology, neuro-rehabilitation, grandparenting, low vision and assistive technology.

For instance, Hahn is looking forward to working with the emergent WMU School of Medicine. “It’s a wonderful opportunity for us to strengthen our research in gerontology because often a physician is an important part of a research team,” she says.

On the research front, the center’s activities so far include analyzing gerontology programs in Michigan as part of assessing the value of a graduate certificate.

Researchers are also looking into the efficacy of an exercise program at a senior independent- and assisted-living facility in Kalamazoo.

To learn more about the Center for Gerontology, go to wmich.edu/gerontology.
Whether covering the U.S. presidential race or more mundane news, journalists are often accused of partiality in their reporting. A WMU professor who is also a former reporter offers a guide to help professional and student journalists as well as others uncover habits of mind that can threaten objectivity.

Journalists are biased, just not in the way most news consumers think, a Western Michigan University expert on journalism contends in her first book.

Sue Ellen Christian, WMU associate professor of communication, says far more real and pervasive than intentional bias are cognitive biases — the mental processing that influences individual perceptions and reasoning.


The book teaches readers to edit their thinking for habitual errors, making them more perceptive journalists, and seeks to provide a career-long foundation for challenging bias.

A blog at hhpcommunities.com/overcomingbias gives journalists, students, teachers and others a chance to delve deeper into the book’s concepts and make comments, primarily by examining topical news stories.

Analysis of distortions in coverage of George Zimmerman’s shooting of Trayvon Martin in Florida and the importance of accurate word choice in child sexual assault cases such as that of former Penn State assistant coach Jerry Sandusky are included.

“Media bias, or a purposeful slanting of the news, is the most common charge against journalists today. I believe the charge is overblown, and that the majority of journalists go out of their way to be neutral and independent in their coverage of people and events,” Christian says.

Her book explores biases in the way people think, filter information, ration attention, rely on cultural norms, default to rehearsed ways of thinking and naturally and instinctively categorize others.

She says ideological bias is a type of opinion-based media practiced by some cable news hosts and opinion blogs that many people now welcome.

In contrast, cognitive bias is typically not intentional and not directed toward any specific ideology.

Examples include being overcommitted to a story angle, selecting like-minded sources, relying on stereotypes or predictable “scripts” about how people in certain
roles should act, and rushing to report
important news based on assumptions
instead of confirmed facts.

CNN and Fox News fell into the
latter pitfall by initially incorrectly
reporting this past summer that the
Supreme Court had ruled President
Barack Obama’s health care plan
unconstitutional.

“The key for journalists is to always
report based on evidence and
observation,” Christian says. “They
need to be vigilant in their thinking
habits, and the context must be fair.”

For instance, she says a profile on
Republican presidential nominee Mitt
Romney may legitimately focus on his
wealth. Yet the reporter may pay undue
attention to small details that feed the
angle that Romney is an out-of-touch,
super-wealthy businessman to the
exclusion of relevant details that may
provide a more well-rounded portrait.

But she adds that
information is a
two-way street

“Journalists can’t control how
the audience is going to perceive any given
news report. They can only do their
part to be as neutral and balanced and
accurate as possible,” Christian says.

“Part of the blame-the-media vitriol
comes from what is called the ‘hostile
media effect,’ which is a phenomenon
in which partisans on both sides of an
issue perceive neutral media reports to
be biased against their side.”

Studies have repeatedly demonstrated
the phenomenon, Christian notes.

She cites a survey by the Pew Research
Center for the People and the Press
released in June that found Americans’
“values and basic beliefs are more
polarized along partisan lines than at any
point in the past 25 years.”

A separate Pew survey from February
found that more people think there’s
a “great deal” of political bias in news
coverage, up from 31 to 37 percent
since 2007.

Christian says the ideological divide
is one key difference in the 2012
presidential campaign compared to
presidential campaigns of two decades
ago. Another significant difference
is news outlet usage of mobile
applications, tablet computers, Twitter,
Facebook and other social media.

“My research indicates that in this era of
digital news and increasing partisanship,
the individual journalist has to be as
aware as ever of efforts at spin and
advocacy. Word choice is one example,”
Christian says.

“Journalists must scrub their language
of loaded words and terms so that news
audiences can make their own decisions
about candidates and issues. In today’s
digital media, words travel faster and
farther than ever,” she says.

Christian says that some words
become highly politicized, such as
using the term “illegals” to describe
undocumented immigrants, and some
words signal “otherness,” a common
tactic used in political ads and stump
speeches to suggest a person is different
or bad compared to the rest of us.

A vivid example of judgment words
occurred in Hurricane Katrina coverage,
Christian says, when one news outlet
described a resident carrying goods
who appeared to be black as “looting”
and another described a white man and
light-completed woman as “finding”
goods.

The photojournalist in the first case
reportedly saw the person go into
the store and take goods while the
second photojournalist said he
believed the couple had found the
items that they carried.

The question that arose is whether
there’s an involuntary tendency to
associate stealing with black people and
a converse involuntary inclination to
associate not stealing with white people.

“Journalists need to constantly work to
move outside their own comfort zones
to find sources who will challenge their
story angles and their understanding
of news events. Our natural instinct is
to seek people who think and act and
seem like ourselves,” Christian says.

She has similar advice
for news consumers

“So some information outlets would
still have you questioning whether
President Obama was born in the
United States or whether or not he’s a
Christian or a Muslim. Diversify what
you read or watch or listen to and
diversify the outlets from which you get
information,” she says.

“This results in a more informed and
balanced view of news events and
news figures—including presidential
candidates.”

Overcoming Bias in News Reporting

Professor’s new book addresses
Overcoming Bias in news reporting
1960 - 1979

Daniel B. Wilson, BBA ’61, was honored by the Michigan High School Athletic Association for 50 years as an official.

James R. Bohland, BA ’62, retired as professor emeritus of Urban Affairs and Planning from Virginia Tech and also retired as vice president and executive director of Virginia Tech National Capital Region Operations.

Jerry Aiken, BS ’66, has been appointed to the board of directors of Passport Pothole Inc., a resource company engaged in the exploration and development of advanced potash properties with offices in Vancouver, BC and Apache Junction, AZ.

James E. Bultman, MA ’66, EdD ’71, retired as president of Hope College in Holland, MI.

John George, MA ’66, was inducted into the Hammond Indiana Sports Hall of Fame. He retired from Hammond Public Schools as a coach and athletic director.

William Clark Brothers, MBA ’67, was appointed interim president of Judson University in Elgin, IL.

Matt Dinofo, BA ’69, was inducted into the Buchanan (MI) High School’s Hall of Fame. He is a private-practice doctor of internal medicine and infectious diseases at University of California, Los Angeles.

Bob Critchfield, BBA ’70, was hired by the First Federal Savings Bank of Elizabethtown (KY). He is executive vice president and chief credit officer.

Charles A. Baumann, BA ’73, has been promoted to retail lending officer for Middlesex Savings Bank, which has offices throughout eastern Massachusetts. He is responsible for the origination of residential real-estate mortgage loans.

Mary M. Bretscher, BA ’73, has retired as women’s swimming and diving head coach from DePauw University in Greencastle, IN. She will continue at the university as associate professor of kinesiology, associate athletics director and aquatics director.

Roger Frame, MA ’73, a conflict-resolution expert and speaker, is the author of a new book titled “Don’t Carve the Turkey with a Chainsaw: Resolving Family Conflict.”

James McIntyre, BBA ’73, MBA ’77, has been named a loan officer for the Economic Development Foundation, a lender to small businesses based in Grand Rapids, MI.

Norman Mintle, MA ’75, was named dean of the School of Communication at Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA.

Dan J. Martin, BA ’76, has been named the Stanley and Marcia Gumbring Professor and the dean of the College of Fine Arts at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

Sultan T. Abu-Orabi, MA ’77, has been elected as secretary general of the Association of Arab Universities, an organization that oversees 240 universities.

Larry J. Anderson, BBA ’77, was appointed vice president of worldwide Sales for Aehr Test Systems, a supplier of semiconductor test and burn-in equipment headquartered in Fremont, CA.

Mark A. Curtis, BS ’77, MA ’83, EdD ’92, was appointed president of Great Basin College in Elko, NV.

Kenneth Leslie, BBA ’78, has been named office managing partner for Plante Moran’s office in Flint, MI.

Michael S. Bogren, BA ’79, was elected chairman of the board of directors of Plunkett Cooney, a law firm based in Bloomfield Hills, MI. He manages the Kalamazoo office and practices in the areas of municipal law, civil rights and labor and employment law.

Cathleen Knauf, MA ’79, was reappointed to the Michigan Women’s Council by Gov. Rick Snyder.

Dave Shane, BS ’79, was named the editor of the Huron Daily Tribune in Bad Axe, MI.

Matt Stevens, BA ’79, was named news director for WADL TV 38 in Detroit.

1980 - 1990

Leonard Allman, MM ’80, is the band director for the Catawba Valley New Horizons Band and Orchestra in Charlotte, NC.

Wendy Van Gent, BM ’80, is an assistant professor of music education and director of the vocal jazz ensemble at Northern State University in Aberdeen, SD.

Ronald Hundienski, BBA ’81, was appointed chief financial officer for BorgWarner, a manufacturer of components and systems for powertrain applications headquartered in Auburn Hills, MI.

Dale Taratuta, BBA ’82, has been named president and chief executive officer of Georgia Heritage Federal Credit Union in Savannah, GA.

Colleen Theuerkauf, MBA ’83, is a wealth management advisor for Raymond James, in its Farmington Hills, MI, office.

Daniel E. Bitzer, MA ’84, was appointed president of West Michigan for First National Bank of Michigan’s Grand Rapids office.

Andrea Conti, BS ’84, was appointed chief of staff of the Department of Veterans Affairs Black Hills Health Care System in Hot Springs, SD.

Steven Gates, BBA ’84, is the new controller for Kerusso, a producer of Christian-themed apparel, jewelry and accessories, in Berryville, AR.

Ken Moench, BBA ’85, was promoted to QA label specification reviewer for Perrigo Co. in Allegan, MI.

Mike Woody, BS ’85, is the executive director of the Midland (MI) Community Tennis Center.

Steven Bohn, BS ’86, was hired as a yield specialist for AgVenture of Michigan.

Laura Doering, BA ’86, has been appointed registrar for Iowa State University in Ames, IA.

Perry Piccard, BS ’86, has been hired to serve as a business process architect for the information technology and services team at Perrigo Co. in Allegan, MI.

Today, Roberts lives in Oliver Springs, Tenn. But in 1961, she was a new graduate of WMU and immediately began using her education degree teaching elementary school in North Muskegon, near her hometown, Montague.

Story time was a favorite feature of her classroom through the years and students particularly loved that Roberts involved them in the storytelling. She would encourage her young pupils to suggest elements of the tales, such as characters. That’s how a skunk, then named Stinky, was born.

After a student asked if there was a book about the character, Roberts decided to pen the story.

But life was busy — she earned a master’s degree in counseling from WMU in 1970, for instance — and she set that story aside. Roberts says she remembers thinking, “One of these days, I’ll pick it up again.”

That day didn’t come for more than 40 years when Roberts, by then retired, came across an old cardboard box containing the pages she’d written as a young teacher.

“I told my husband, “I’m going to sit down and write these stories,”’ Roberts says.

She wrote a dozen adventures starring Sammy, a little skunk who becomes a hero to a cast of forest animals. All of those adventures

Alumna creates new children’s book series based on a story she wrote as a teacher decades ago

A character that was inspired by a WMU alumna’s young students in North Muskegon, Mich. more than 40 years ago has recently found new life in a series of children’s books. Adele A. (Kinney) Roberts’ stories chronicling “The Adventures of Sammy the Skunk” can now reach more children. Her first book was published in 2011 and she’s currently working on a fifth.
CLASSNOTES

are contained in the first volume of the series, which is published by CrossBooks Publishing and illustrated by artist Kathy Holland.

Now, with the debut of her fourth Sammy story in March and a fifth in the making, Roberts has no plans to stop writing.

Her onus to continue Sammy's saga is more meaningful to Roberts than simply completing a project begun long ago. She says her stories help children and parents talk about important life lessons and principles of her Christian faith. Through his adventures, Sammy learns about values such as forgiveness, humility and serving others.

Roberts says she's gotten great feedback from her most valued constituents as she reads the books at schools, churches and libraries.

"Children come up to me and say, 'We just love Sammy.'" Thinking about where to take Sammy next, Roberts says she'd like to begin reading the books to the young patients of children's hospitals.

"My dream is to also have other people who love to read to children join me in sharing these little stories about Sammy," she says.

Learn more about "The Adventures of Sammy the Skunk" at sammytheskunk.blogspot.com and contact Roberts at adeleroberts38@gmail.com.

The book series is illustrated by Kathy Holland. All of the illustrations are done with colored pencils.
William Schirmer, BBA '86, has been appointed president and chief executive officer of Evansville (IN) Teachers Federal Credit Union.

Mark Jenness, MA '87, EdD '90, was awarded the George G. Millerson Award for Lifetime Achievement by the Michigan Science Teacher’s Association at its annual meeting in Lansing.

Paul Kwami, MM '87, is the director of the Five Lubelle Singers, a collection of vocal artists and students at Fisk University in Nashville, TN. They recently performed in Kalamazoo and WMU.

Raynard Durham, BSE '88, vehicle line executive at Chrysler Group LLC, received the President’s Award at the Black Engineer of the Year Awards, science, technology, engineering and math professionals annual conference in Kalamazoo.

David Gray, BS '89, was named vice president of relationship management for CBRE Holdings Inc. in New York.

Rae Ann (Francisco) Knope, BS '99, was named executive director for The Connecticut Council for Education Reform.

Lynn Kerber, BBA '90, MBA '95, is executive vice president and regional president for Chemical Bank’s south region.

Carolyn “Carrie” Pickett-Erway, BSE '95, is the owner of a certified financial planning firm in Kalamazoo.

Shriver, BSE '96, was promoted to director of global change management for the Global Human Resources team at Perrigo Co. in Allegan, MI.

Leversee, BSE '96, is a vice president on the executive management committee for Donohue & Associates Inc., a provider of water, wastewater, storm water and transportation engineering services headquartered in Sheboygan, WI.

Susan Dalton-Akers, MBA '97, has been appointed senior operations financial analyst for the cost accounting team at Perrigo Co. in Allegan, MI.

Clarence Lloyd, BA '97, was named manager of the Kalamazoo branch of Consumers Credit Union.

Jerry McDaniel, BS 97, MA '09, has been hired asprinter Paw (MI) Middle School.

John Shagonaby, BSE '97, chief executive office of the Gun Lake Tribal Gaming Authority, was keynote speaker at a WMU Keystone Community Bank Breakfast Series presentation. His talk was titled “Tribal Sovereignty and Tribal Governmental Gaming.”

Susan (Kruger) Woodcock, BS '97, is president and CEO of the SKRNB Study Skills book, a best-seller.

Catherine Earl, DPA '98, was appointed associate provost at American Sentinel University in Aurora, CO.

Robert Passage, MA '98, has been named the athletic facilities and operations manager at Williamsette University in Salem, OR.

Scott Spada, BS '98, coach of the Kalamazoo Central High School baseball team, accepted Comerica Bank’s $10,000 Grand Slam Grant at a Detroit Tigers game. He also threw the first pitch of the winning game against the Boston Red Sox.

Brian Krol, BBA '99, has been promoted to partner at Seber Tanis PLC, a certified financial planning firm in Kalamazoo.

Phil Sullivan, BBA '99, has been appointed senior operations financial analyst for the cost accounting team at Perrigo Co. in Allegan, MI.

Robert “Rob” E. Hunt Jr., MA '00, an estate planning and wealth preservation executive at Rose Street Advisors in Kalamazoo, has been named a principal with the firm.

Amanda Kreps-Long, MSW '00, has been named director of development at Manchester College in North Manchester, IN.

Teresa (Weatherall) Neal, MA '00, has been appointed superintendent of Grand Rapids (MI) Public Schools.

Dylan M. Foster, BBA '01, has been promoted to first vice president of Century Bank and Trust in Coldwater, MI.

Samuel Centellas, BS '02, was appointed director of student life, development and leadership at Ith Tech Community College, North Central, IN.

Raymond Hall, MBA '02, was appointed director of public safety at the University of Michigan-Flint.

Judith Hopwood, BA '02, MBA '04, took on the presidency of Williamson Employment Services Inc., in St. Joseph, MI. The company recently celebrated its 20th-year anniversary.

John Liberty, BA '03, was named the entertainment reporter at Kalamazoo Gazette/MLive Media Group.

Kristopher A. McWilliams, BBA '03, has been named a team service coordinator for Greenleaf Trust, a Kalamazoo-based trust bank and wealth management company.

Michael Rowe, BBA '03, has been named executive director of the Bronson Lifestyle Improvement and Research Center, with management responsibility for the Bronson Athletic Club in Texas Township, MI.

Jordan Ford Sligh, BBA '03, is the owner of Sigh Closet and Glass of Holland, MI.

Johathan Kus, BBA '04, has been promoted to senior business system analyst for lending services at PNC Financial Services Group Inc. in Kalamazoo.

Katia Levintova, PhD '04, an assistant professor and chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, presented a lecture at WMU titled “Evolution of the Communist Party in post-communist Russia.” Her appearance was sponsored by WMU’s Institute of Government and Politics.

Eric Sanchez, BBA '04, joined Kalamazoo-based Southwest Michigan First as a director.

Patrick Crandell, BS '05, has joined Collins, Einhorn, Farrell & Ulricoff PC as an associate in the firm’s coverage practice group in Southfield, MI.

Cara Danis, BS '05, has joined IDA Design LLC in Zeeland, MI as a project manager.

Ryan Goldman, BBA '05, was recently recognized by the Business Times as one of Northwest Indiana County’s “20 Under 40.” The award honors the community’s top 20 business leaders under age 40. He is a financial representative with Northwestern Mutual Financial Network in Grand Haven, MI.

Kimberly A. Montanye, BBA '05, has been named a team service coordinator for Greenleaf Trust, a Kalamazoo-based trust bank and wealth management company.

Phillip M. Shane, BA '05, has joined the litigation and government at the Kalamazoo office of Miller Canfield. His practice is focused on electronic discovery and records management.

Joanna Klett, BM '06, a cellist with the Oxford Arts Trio, performed at the Oxford (OH) Community Arts Center.

Michael Ott, MA '06, has been named head baseball coach at Kalamazoo College.

Andrew Riker, MBA '07, has been promoted to senior wealth management advisor for Greenleaf Trust, a Kalamazoo-based trust bank and wealth management company.

Christopher J. Ryan, BBA '07, has joined Garramone, Mullins & Horton PC as an associate in the business practice group, focusing on health care law, and in the litigation group, practicing medical malpractice defense. The firm is in Troy, MI.

Tyler Burke, BBA '08, has been promoted to commercial lender for Macatawa Bank’s Clyde Park branch in Grand Rapids, MI.

Michael A. Henke, BBA '08, has been named an operations technician for Greenleaf Trust, a Kalamazoo-based trust bank and wealth management company.

Casey B. Jager, BBA '08, has been named an operations technician for Greenleaf Trust, a Kalamazoo-based trust bank and wealth management company.

Brett McGreaham, BS '08, was named the 2012 Traverse City Young Professional Chair by the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce. He is the supply-chain manager for the Northwest Michigan Surgery Center.

Simon A. Thalmann, BA '08, was hired as digital marketer/writer for Kellogg Community College.

Brooks Boughton, BSE '09, is vice president of operation at Kentucky Trailer’s technologies facility in Walled Lake, MI.

Adriana M. Kniffin, BBA '09, has been promoted to senior accountant at the Kalamazoo office of Yoe & Yoe PC.

Kathryn Mohr, BS '09, was appointed the women’s lacrosse head coach for Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, OK.

Mark Pytlak, BBA '09, is the owner of Green Home Energy, a home performance contracting company based in West Bloomfield Township, MI.

Kendra A. Johnson, BBA '10, has been named a team service coordinator for Greenleaf Trust, a Kalamazoo-based trust bank and wealth management company.

Frederick “Fritz” Klug, BA '10, was named government and taxes reporter for the Kalamazoo Gazette/MLive Media Group.

Melinda Moustakis, PhD '10, has been selected by The Lewis Center for the Arts at Princeton University as a Mary Mackall Grinni Hodder Fellow.

Nate Brussee, BSE '11, joined Prudential Premier Reatators as a graduate professional serving greater Kalamazoo, Portage and areas in Van Buren County.

Angelique Day, PhD '11, joined the Wayne State University School of Social Work in Detroit as an assistant professor.

Danielle M.G. Forato, BA '11, is the editorial assistant associate for the Kalamazoo Gazette/MLive Media Group.

Michele McGrady, PhD '11, has joined Child and Family Psychological Services as a limited licensed psychologist based at the Portage office.

Ashley Rop, BFA '11, joined the Chelsea (MI) Center for the Arts as its office manager.
Highest alumni honors bestowed on two influential people

A retired paper-industry executive of long tenure and an accomplished specialist in breast cancer treatment have been selected by the WMU Alumni Association to receive its highest honor, the Distinguished Alumni Award.

The 2012 recipients of the award are: Dr. Jan A. Huston, medical director at the Connie Dwyer Breast Cancer Center at Saint Michael’s Medical Center in Newark, N.J., and C. Wesley Smith, retired vice president of operations for International Paper Co., a global paper and packaging company. They will be honored during Homecoming weekend at a Friday, Oct. 5, dinner and award ceremony.

Today, Dr. Jan Huston is a physician, medical director and researcher who has cared for thousands of patients diagnosed with breast cancer.

At WMU, Huston earned a master’s degree in clinical psychology in 1974. She says her training at the University continues to play a role in her work as a doctor.

“I grew up professionally at WMU. The University increased my confidence, which influenced me to apply to medical school,” Huston says. “I now tell three to five women per week that they have breast cancer. I’m sure my time at WMU helps with my honest but caring approach.”

A trailblazer in medical technologies, Huston is a general and vascular surgeon who specializes in breast care. She’s been a pioneer in the Rapid Breast Biopsy Diagnosis, a test that reveals results in less than 24 hours. She’s also principal investigator for a study looking at “biomarkers” in breath that may predict risk of developing breast cancer.

Much like her work in medicine, Huston’s home life is also busy and consequential. She is the mother of 12 children, 10 of whom have been adopted from various other countries.

Huston’s advice for students: “Don’t let anyone talk you out of your dreams.”

C. Wesley Smith graduated from WMU in 1961 with a bachelor’s degree in pulp and paper technology. His education led to a career that spanned more than four decades and culminated with a position in the top echelons of the industry.

Smith’s professional life in paper was one of ever-increasing responsibility, through his 20 years at Procter & Gamble and then 23 years at International Paper Co.

He retired from International Paper in 2002 as executive vice president of operations and in that role was responsible for a $6 billion portion of the company.

John Dillon, IP’s chairman and CEO at the time of Smith’s retirement, remarked that, “Wes played a major role in the tremendous growth and success of our company. … We are a much stronger company as a result of having had Wes as part our senior management team.”

Amid his weighty professional responsibilities, Smith still found the time for involvement with his alma mater. A member of WMU’s Paper Technology Foundation Board of Trustees from 1994 to 2000, he chaired the foundation’s capital campaign when it kicked off in 1995.

The campaign began with a goal of just over $5.7 million and it successfully concluded four years later with $6.3 million raised.

Smith has also been feted before at WMU. He was honored with the Bill Brown Award for Exemplary Service and Leadership, the Paper Foundation Honor Award and the Paper Technology Hall of Fame Award.
OBITUARIES

Alberta P. (Porter) Brant. TC '27, BA '34, Jan. 1, 2012, in Des Moines, IA
Agnes R. (Robb) Bouyocuos. TC '34, BA '38, April 12, 2012, in East Lansing, MI
Arlene S. (Schneider) Tobe. BS '38, April 26, 2012, in Montague, MI
Charles E. Henry. BS '39, April 23, 2012, in Hudson, FL
Ford A. Hess. BS '39, April 5, 2012, in Eureka, CA
Vani O. Wilkinson. BS '39, April 4, 2012, in Grand Rapids, MI
Margaret J. (Koenig) Tobey. TC '35, BA '40, Feb. 29, 2012, in Three Rivers, MI
Millicent (Larimer) Snook. TC '41, March 8, 2012, in Grand Rapids, MI
Mildred E. (Gold) Adams. BS '39, April 26, 2012, in Muskegon, MI
Margaret A. (Smith) Brecheisen. BA '45, March 7, 2012, in Belting, MI
Clark H. Bouwman. BS '46, Feb. 7, 2012, in Tampa Bay, FL
Ingrid K. Schmidt. BS '46, April 13, 2012, in Des Moines, IA
Clinton V. Brown. BA '47, Jan. 2, 2012, in Brea, CA
Nancy A. (Pierce) Kohlstein. BS '47, March 22, 2012, in Marin, CA
Eugene E. Buechner. BA '48, Feb. 29, 2012, in West Palm Beach, FL
Marvin O. Francisco. BA '48, June 18, 2012, in Mesa, AZ
Mary Davros. BS '66, MA '68, Feb. 16, 2012, in Muskegon, MI
Thomas D. Guerne. MA '66, May 18, 2012, in South Haven, MI
Robert L. Horton. MA '66, PhD '73, Feb. 4, 2012, in Medford, OR
Patricia A. (Jones) Houseman. BA '66, MA '69, March 8, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Aileen M. Klingaman. MA '66, EDS '79, June 2, 2012, in Kalamazoo
David S. Sothe. BS '66, Jan. 5, 2012, in Grand Rapids, MI
James R. McKinley. BS '66, July 6, 2012
Louis B. Owen. BS '66, Jan. 1, 2012, in Houghton, MI
Mary L. Philo. BS '66, May 20, 2012, in Boyne Falls, MI
Edith Ragozyn. BS '66, Jan. 12, 2012, in Kalamazoo
David D. Reeves. BS '66, MA '73, Feb. 18, 2012, in Vicksburg, MI
Louis G. Sist. BA '66, April 21, 2012, in Bluffton, SC
Dwight Anderson. BBA '67, MBA '68, May 8, 2012, in Lansing, MI
Kathleen (Suabedissen) Cappella. BA '67, March 10, 2012, in Niles, MI
Mary E. Maloney. BS '67, Feb. 12, 2012, in Grand Rapids, MI
Thomas W. Preston. BS '67, June 2, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Carol A. VanderWeide. BS '67, March 27, 2012, in Grand Rapids, MI
Nanette L. (Hill) Bowman. BS '68, May 15, 2012, in Kewadin, MI
James W. Burist. BS '68, May 19, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Barbara L. (Derthick) Bushouse. BS '68, MA '63, April 27, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Nancy K. Kaars. BS '67, March 6, 2012, in Chippewa, MI
Margaret M. Otte. BA '49, April 2, 2012, in Easton, MD
Patricia J. Rooney. BS '49, Jan. 17, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Carol M. Rosenow. BS '49, Feb. 25, 2012, in Grand Ledge, MI
Stephen Merriman. BS '49, March 30, 2012, in Battle Creek, MI
Donald E. Thornton. BS '55, May 18, 2012, in Traverse City, MI
Robert L. Horton. MA '58, April 12, 2012, in East Lansing, MI
Mary Davros. BS '66, MA '68, Feb. 16, 2012, in Muskegon, MI
Thomas D. Guerne. MA '66, May 18, 2012, in South Haven, MI
Robert L. Horton. MA '66, PhD '73, Feb. 4, 2012, in Medford, OR
Patricia A. (Jones) Houseman. BA '66, MA '69, March 8, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Aileen M. Klingaman. MA '66, EDS '79, June 2, 2012, in Kalamazoo
David S. Sothe. BS '66, Jan. 5, 2012, in Grand Rapids, MI
James R. McKinley. BS '66, July 6, 2012
Louis B. Owen. BS '66, Jan. 1, 2012, in Houghton, MI
Mary L. Philo. BS '66, May 20, 2012, in Boyne Falls, MI
Edith Ragozyn. BS '66, Jan. 12, 2012, in Kalamazoo
David D. Reeves. BS '66, MA '73, Feb. 18, 2012, in Vicksburg, MI
Louis G. Sist. BA '66, April 21, 2012, in Bluffton, SC
Dwight Anderson. BBA '67, MBA '68, May 8, 2012, in Lansing, MI
Kathleen (Suabedissen) Cappella. BA '67, March 10, 2012, in Niles, MI
Kathryn A. (Smith) Carter. BA '67, May 14, 2012, in Muskegon, MI
Nancy K. Kaars. BS '67, March 6, 2012, in Chippewa, MI
Mary E. Maloney. BS '67, Feb. 12, 2012, in Grand Rapids, MI
Thomas W. Preston. BS '67, June 2, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Carol A. VanderWeide. BS '67, March 27, 2012, in Grand Rapids, MI
Nanette L. (Hill) Bowman. BS '68, May 15, 2012, in Kewadin, MI
James W. Burist. BS '68, May 19, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Barbara L. (Derthick) Bushouse. BS '68, MA '63, April 27, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Nancy K. Kaars. BS '67, March 6, 2012, in Chippewa, MI
Mary E. Maloney. BS '67, Feb. 12, 2012, in Grand Rapids, MI
Thomas W. Preston. BS '67, June 2, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Carol A. VanderWeide. BS '67, March 27, 2012, in Grand Rapids, MI
Nanette L. (Hill) Bowman. BS '68, May 15, 2012, in Kewadin, MI
James W. Burist. BS '68, May 19, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Barbara L. (Derthick) Bushouse. BS '68, MA '63, March 31, 2012, in Ft. Lauderdale, FL
Freda C. Fatato. BS '68, May 25, 2012, in Battle Creek, MI
Jack R. Gernaat. BS '68, Jan. 17, 2012, in Kalamazoo
William A. Hecker. BA '68, March 15, 2012, in South Bend, IN
Donald W. Kuit. MBA '68, Jan. 13, 2012, in Holland, MI
Annette J. (Brandt) Rickman. BA '68, MA '96, Feb. 10, 2012, in Moraga, CA
Suzanne Bennett, MA ’69, April 21, 2012, in Peabody, MA
Cheryl C. Bohlin, BA ’69, May 8, 2012, in Michigan City, IN
Sally A. Ingraham, BS ’69, MA ’76, May 14, 2012, in Grand Rapids, MI
Frederick G. Jeschke, BS ’69, Feb. 14, 2012, in Baytown, TX
Michael F. Kuzmin, BS ’69, May 25, 2012, in Mesa, AZ
Barbara A. (Belstrom) Oja, BA ’69, Jan. 14, 2012, in Green Bay, WI
Christina Tomlinson, BA ’69, MA ’73, Feb. 16, 2012, in Marshall, MI
Margaret L. Watson, BS ’69, April 4, 2012, in Bethel, NC
Connie S. (Fredenburg) Collick, BA ’70, May 26, 2012, in Charlotte, MI
James B. Ferguson, BA ’70, Apr. 2, 2012, in Saginaw Township, MI
Kathryn E. Hillard, BS ’72, April 8, 2012, in Toledo, OH
Lucy A. Jacoby, MA ’70, Jan. 1, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Joseph M. Kalinowski, BA ’70, MA ’73, PhD ’85, May 4, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Ronald J. Latourette, BA ’70, June 5, 2012, in Owosso, MI
Peter A. Phillips, MBA ’70, May 10, 2012, in Charlevoix, MI
Joe I. Sanchez, MA ’70, Jan. 19, 2012, in Mercedes, TX
Ted R. Scarff, MBA ’70, May 24, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Margaret T. Brown, MLS ’71, March 31, 2012, in Pierre, SD
William D. Gravning, BBA ’71, June 27, 2012, in Holland, OH
Donald E. Hanson, EdD ’71, June 27, 2012, in Waterloo, IA
Michael J. Ryan, BS ’71, Feb. 6, 2012, in Tallahassee, FL
Robert E. Sturm, BS ’71, April 8, 2012, in Alexandria, VA
Daniel F. Tomanica, BBA ’71, April 23, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Mitchell M. Zainea, BS ’71, July 26, 2012, in Grand Rapids, MI
Gordon D. Brown, BA ’72, MSW ’74, Feb. 7, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Roger A. Cook, BS ’72, June 12, 2012, in Hamburg, MI
Daniel A. Fogg, MBA ’72, April 28, 2012, in Casa Grande, AZ
Katherine M. Gwizdala, BS ’72, Jan. 5, 2012, in Westlake Village, CA
Elizabeth N. (Paul) Ellisson, BS ’73, MA ’96, Jan. 3, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Jane E. Furniss, BA ’73, MA ’76, Jan. 31, 2012, in Arnold, MO
Quenton Yoder, BA ’73, MPA ’77, June 13, 2012, in Burlington, WI
Sally A. Eustice-Humphrey, BS ’74, June 26, 2012, in Cheboygan, MI
Michael V. Gottwald, MBA ’74, Feb. 6, 2012, in Bloomfield Hills, MI
Hildred A. King, MA ’74, June 25, 2012, in Ocala, FL
Bernice Meekhof, BS ’74, June 8, 2012, in Grand Rapids, MI
Glenn M. Oliver, BA ’74, Feb. 27, 2012, in Anchorage, AK
John E. Ross, BS ’74, MPA ’76, April 12, 2012, in Kalamazoo
David J. Barton, MLS ’75, June 14, 2012, in Abilene, TX
Juan D. Guajardo, MSW ’75, June 13, 2012, in San Bernardino, CA
Nancy V. Homrich, BA ’75, MA ’05, March 4, 2012, in Hastings, MI
Keith A. Layzell, BS ’75, Feb. 27, 2012, in Portage, MI
Kathleen R. (Fitzgerald) Yelling, MA ’75, March 18, 2012, in Holland, MI
Pauline R. (DeGood) Baldwin, BS ’76, Feb. 25, 2012, in Rochester Hills, MI
Lee S. Bertrand, BS ’76, MBA ’78, Feb. 1, 2012, in Banning, CA
Steven R. Miller, MA ’76, March 9, 2012, in Holland, MI
Nicholas T. Nelson, BS ’77, March 12, 2012, in South Haven, MI
James Perry, MA ’77, Jan. 15, 2012, in St. Joseph, MI
William Teare, BBA ’77, Jan. 28, 2012, in Portage, MI
Donna J. English, BS ’78, MA ’81, April 13, 2012, in Battle Creek, MI
Rick D. Rynearson, BS ’78, Jan. 3, 2012, in St. Joseph, MI
Samuel G. Bond, BBA ’79, May 14, 2012, in Allegan, MI
Timothy E. Burke, BBA ’79, Feb. 3, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Gary S. Juhlin, BS ’79, April 22, 2012, in Cadillac, MI
Victoria M. Ware, BS ’79, April 13, 2012, in Cape Elizabeth, ME
Jane E. (Shippy) Gardner, BA ’80, MA ’86, March 19, 2012, in Battle Creek, MI
John D. Kingsnorth, MA ’80, Feb. 2, 2012, in Fremont, CA
Joan T. Kramer, BA ’80, Jan. 8, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Dale P. Pattison, BS ’80, June 27, 2012, in Lansing, MI
Philip D. Vining, BS ’80, May 1, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Ronald D. Polk, BS ’80, May 1, 2012, in Portage, MI
Robert L. Jones, professor emeritus of accountancy, Jan. 30, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Robert L. Jones, associate professor emeritus of finance and commercial law, Sept. 13, 2011, in Syracuse, IN
Dale D. King, associate professor emeritus of mechanical engineering, April 9, 2012, in Jenison, MI
Leo Niemi, professor emeritus of business information systems, March 2, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Dale P. Pattison, associate professor of history, April 16, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Carol L. Stamm, professor emeritus of management, April 15, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Van Cooley, interim dean and professor of the College of Education and Human Development, July 31, 2012, in Fernandina Beach, FL
Joseph F. Young, MPA ’03, June 12, 2012, in Detroit
Cynthia M. Wilcox, MA ’04, March 8, 2012, in Sault Sainte Marie, MI
Eric Zapata, Unknown Bachelor ’05, April 18, 2011, in Kalamazoo
Nathan R. Mchone, BS ’05, Jan. 21, 2012, in Helwinq Province, Afghanistan
Jeffrey Rush, MSA ’05, May 15, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Rachel J. Worthington, BS ’05, Jan. 28, 2012, in Lansing, MI
Kimberly D. Bozek, BA ’06, June 3, 2012, in Howard City, MI
Marilyn V. O’Bryant, MA ’07, May 5, 2012, in St. Joseph, MI
Matthew P. Boeve, BS ’11, March 27, 2012, in Holland, MI
Deanna J. Romanosky, BA ’11, April 19, 2012, in Muskegon, MI

Faculty

Hermia E. Breisach, professor emerita of University Libraries, Oct. 25, 2011, in Kalamazoo
Edward T. Callan, professor emeritus of English, Nov. 17, 2011, in Kalamazoo
Robert “Bobby” M. Davidson, assistant professor emeritus of music, June 3, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Franklin G. “Greg” Fisk, professor emeritus of science studies, Dec. 28, 2011, in Portage, MI
John D. Grace, professor emeritus of geosciences, May 21, 2011, in Kalamazoo
James W. Hill, professor emeritus of management, April 9, 2012, in Tucson, AZ
Richard L. Hodges, associate professor emeritus of accountancy, Jan. 30, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Robert L. Jones, assistant professor emeritus of finance and commercial law, April 9, 2012, in Jenison, MI
Leo Niemi, professor emeritus of business information systems, March 2, 2012, in Kalamazoo
Dale D. King, associate professor emeritus of mechanical engineering, April 9, 2012, in Jenison, MI

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New Sangren Hall meets modern learning needs, exemplifies sustainable design

The center of main campus has been dramatically transformed by the construction of a new Sangren Hall and the creation of an expansive pedestrian mall in front of this just-completed, $60 million classroom building.

These projects, along with the renovation of the Lee Honors College, will be formally marked during a campuswide celebration at 6 p.m. on Sept. 28. “Excellence Renewed” is the theme of this event.

Sangren is home to the College of Education and Human Development and the Department of Sociology. It is also one of WMU’s most heavily used classroom facilities.

Just as the original Sangren Hall, completed in 1964 and soon to be razed, offered the campus the innovations of its day, the new version meets the modern needs of today’s students, faculty, staff and the community at large.

The 230,000-square-foot facility has 50 classrooms and 2,255 instructional seats, including two large, 200-seat lecture halls.

Designed by SHW Group of Berkley, Mich., and constructed by Kalamazoo’s Miller-Davis Co., Sangren was also built with some of the highest environmental and energy standards.

The University is applying for the Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED) gold certification level for new construction, a top designation for sustainability granted by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Continued on page 24
Sangren Hall building facts
• Home of the College of Education and Human Development and the Department of Sociology
• Four floors, 230,000 square feet
• 50 instructional rooms and 2,255 instructional seats
• Large grants and research center, clinical rooms and teaching labs
• Education library with five meeting rooms, 36-seat computer/teaching lab, plus a quiet study room
• Just like the original building, the ashes of WMU’s second president, Paul V. Sangren, and his wife, Flossie, are interred in the building.

Sustainability Sangren Style
• Estimated annual energy savings of $345,000
• Green roofing of a lower-tier roof and entry canopy on south side of building
• Water-efficient plumbing features
• Daylight harvesting
• Solar-shading devices
• Sustainable wood products
• Use of salvaged granite for paving
• Storm-water management system that includes porous asphalt, gravel drainage strips, landscape swales and underground retention basins, water-efficient landscape plantings and irrigation
• Preferred parking for fuel-efficient vehicles
College of Engineering and Applied Sciences

Sunseeker solar car takes eighth place in cross-country race

WMU's Sunseeker solar racecar team captured eighth place in this year's American Solar Challenge. The car crossed the finish line a mere eight minutes after the winner. The team also won the biennial event's sportsmanship award.

Powered by the sun, collegiate solar car teams took off on the 1,600-mile, eight-day race in July, starting in Rochester, N.Y. and finishing in St. Paul, Minn. The teams had several stops on the way to the finish line, including at WMU's College of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

Of the 16 original teams that qualified to compete, 11 finished the race. The University of Michigan came in first. Iowa State University and Principia College took second and third place, respectively.

College of Fine Arts

Professor created art installation in Old Havana

A WMU art professor's talent was showcased during the 11th Havana Biennial. Patricia Villalobos Echeverría was invited to create an installation for the biennial, which displayed the work of artists from Cuba and elsewhere in the world in May and June.

Villalobos Echeverría's installation, “Cystema @ 23°8'27.054"N 82°21'10.117"W,” adorned the facade and interior of the Centro de Arte Contemporaneo Wilfredo Lam in Old Havana.

The professor will discuss the experience at 5:30 p.m. on Nov. 15 in the Richmond Center for Visual Arts on campus. For more information, contact Mindi Bagnall at the center at (269) 387-2467.

College of Health and Human Services

Health and human services programs among nation’s best

Several of the University's graduate programs in health received high rankings in the 2013 edition of the U.S. News & World Report’s Best Grad Schools.

Three of those WMU graduate degrees—occupational therapy, physician assistant and speech-language pathology—were rated both highly in Michigan and also were among the top 50 nationwide.

Additionally, the University's rehabilitation counseling and teaching degree came in at No. 45 of 96 ranked programs nationally; the doctoral program in audiology was rated 45 of 64 programs and the School of Social Work was ranked 66 of 200 programs.
Dr. Andrea Beach has been recognized with an Emerging Leader Award from the American Association of University Administrators. Beach is an associate professor of educational leadership, research and technology and directs WMU’s Office of Faculty Development. She was nominated by Provost Timothy Greene.

According to the AAUA, this award goes to an early-career administrator “who has achieved recognition from peers, superiors and subordinates, and who is deemed to show promise of emerging as a future prominent leader in American Higher Education.”

The honor will be formally bestowed at the AAUA Leadership Seminar in November.

Dr. Joseph Stoltman, professor of geography and science education, is the editor of 21st-Century Geography: A Reference Handbook, published earlier this year by Sage Publications. The two volumes, covering more than 70 chapters, are meant to enhance library reference collections.

The business college's sales and business marketing program is one of the best in the nation, according to annual rankings released by the Sales Education Foundation.

The rankings include programs that have a strong sales curriculum, enjoy university recognition and support and offer students hands-on learning experiences, such as through internships. Three other schools in Michigan and a total of 65 nationally appeared on the list.

In related news, three WMU students each earned $1,000 scholarships from the Sales Education Foundation: Rebecca Hard of Coldwater, Mich., Brian Little of Kalamazoo and Joseph Russell of Saline, Mich.

Dr. Susan Stapleton was named dean of the Graduate College. Stapleton, for the past five years, served as associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. But she is also a professor with a joint appointment in chemistry and biological sciences.

On WMU’s faculty for 22 years, she has received research awards from the Diabetes Research and Education Foundation, the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. Stapleton has also been a leader in supporting research-training opportunities for graduate, undergraduate and high school students.
WMU alumnus Ben Lando is of a generation whose college years are marked by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on American soil and the U.S. invasion of Iraq less than two years later.

Awed by these world events like most people at the time, they also sometimes figured into Lando’s studies as a political science major at WMU and into some of his reporting as a student journalist for the University’s independent student radio station, WIDR.

But the Kalamazoo native had no idea then how much more personally the U.S. involvement in Iraq would shape his life and journalistic career in the years that followed his 2005 graduation.

Today, Lando, 32, lives in Baghdad and runs the Iraq Oil Report, a news and information organization he created in 2009. What two years earlier had started as a blog when he worked for another news agency now has a staff of journalists.

“On a mission”

“Our mission is to cover Iraq by following the oil. So that goes from the economy to the political issues to security issues to society issues—how that affects and is affected by oil,” he says.

Looking back to his days at WMU, Lando says, “I didn’t expect to go from Kalamazoo to 10 years later living in Baghdad.”

Talent, drive and pluck were probably the drivers, guesses Andrew Robins, news director for WMUK and Lando’s former boss. Robins came to know all of those qualities when Lando was a stringer for WMUK, the University’s public radio station. He covered city and county government.

“He was adventurous. That was clear even then,” Robins says. “He would go right to the edge. That could be exhilarating and terrifying at the same time. One half of my brain was admiring of his courage, the other half was saying, ‘I need to rein this guy in before he falls over.’”

Lando made some of the typical mistakes of a cub reporter but never fell.
outlet covering the oil industry

“I gather he’s become quite respected in that rarified” arena of foreign reporting, Robins says.

Controversy, danger
Lando has become an authority on news related to the oil industry in Iraq. He once appeared on Fox News, challenging Donald Trump’s knowledge of Iraq following the mogul’s controversial assertion that the country’s oil should be America’s to take.

He’s had brushes with danger inside the war-marred country. For Time magazine, he wrote a first-person account in early 2010 about being at the scene of hotel attacks in Baghdad. The experience left him mostly unscathed physically, but others more seriously hurt.

He had only moved to Baghdad some six months earlier. Along with many other foreign correspondents, Lando lived in a hotel compound near the scene of those attacks.

“I was there at the tail end, compared to between 2004 and 2008, when it was extremely dangerous. But this is a close-knit community of journalists, and a lot of them helped with directions in terms of what to do and not to do,” he says.

On that perilous day in Baghdad, Lando had covered the announcement of a lucrative deal between two giants in the oil industry. This interest in reporting on Iraq and its oil has roots in Lando’s first full-time job as a journalist. He covered energy policy for United Press International.

While still in Kalamazoo, Lando began working for UPI after pitching an energy-related story idea to the news service. He wrote the story and UPI became one of the several news outlets for which he did freelance work.

With an opening on UPI’s energy desk in 2006, Lando moved to Washington, D.C. and cultivated an interest in Iraq energy issues.

“Oil has always been a key, if not the key component of life in Iraq. Whether it is basic society issues or high-level political issues, both good and bad,” Lando says.

The most pronounced debates in the United States on Iraq have been “invade. Don’t invade. Occupy or don’t occupy. Troops stay. Troops go. But when you come down to it, everything in Iraq is about oil,” he says.

While Lando was encouraged to keep reporting on Iraq as one area of focus, his various assignments for UPI took him around the world. In addition to Iraq, he reported from London, Qatar, Russia and Saudia Arabia as well as from British submarines and aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf.

So he didn’t have as much time as he wanted to dedicate to Iraq coverage.

As a way to compile his own articles but also other stories and information related to the energy sector there, he started his blog, Iraq Oil Report, in 2007.

The blog gained a following but Lando’s life got even busier when he was named editor of the energy desk.

“I had freelancers around the world working for me and I started to understand the value of niche news. It allows you to get really deep into something.

“When it comes to an area like energy where there’s a big need for it, that creates an opportunity for people to invest and that creates more and more interest for information, add to that its connection to a war zone,” he says.

Seizing on that news niche by establishing an online digest turned out to create an opportunity for him as well at a critical time. Lando’s position at UPI was part of a work force reduction. But by then, he had created a specialty reporting on Iraq oil.

“I had a choice to make, either find other reporting opportunities or focus on Iraq,” he says.

He took the riskier route.

“I wouldn’t make a different choice, even if I had not been successful. I learned a lot about me, about journalism, about humanity, and the fact that the company has been successful is an amazing bonus,” he says.

In addition to news, the Iraq Oil Report has expanded to provide research for clients seeking information on various aspects of Iraqi society and it has a division that, with another firm, produces stock photography of images inside the country.

All these years after graduating, Lando says that he still reflects on his experiences as a student and student journalist.

“I can’t say that, thanks to my degree, I am where I am. But the sum of my experiences in life, including at WMU, is the reason I am where I am right now,” he says.
Veteran at teaching, Dr. Marcia Fetters recognizes when the “afternoon drowsies” are stealing her students’ attention.

“You’re fading on me,” the education professor announced on one such occasion. “We’re going outside.”

It was time to demonstrate the Diet Coke/Mentos experiment, a “science is everywhere” lesson that sent a geyser of the soft drink erupting a few dozen feet into the air outside Wood Hall.

Her students watched intently, knowing that soon they would need to design and test their own version of the experiment.

They too will be faced with grabbing the imaginations of students while driving home important science or math concepts as practitioners of what some will say is society’s most critical work—educating its youth.

WMU turns scientists, engineers and other technical professionals into schoolteachers
TECHNICAL PROFESSIONALS TRANSITION TO TEACHING

The experiment demo was just a moment from the early weeks of a teaching fellowship program at WMU.

The 13 fellows have previous professional or academic experience in STEM disciplines—science, technology, engineering and mathematics—and are now pursuing a specially designed master’s degree in the practice of teaching.

Professors are preparing them to shift into careers as science and math instructors in urban or rural secondary schools deemed “high-need” due to poor overall performance on standardized tests or where many of the pupils come from low-income households.

Transforming teacher education

They represent WMU’s second cohort of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation’s Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship program. This is the second year of the initiative at WMU, which trained its first cohort in 2011.

The Kellogg Foundation put some $18 million toward this statewide effort to attract the very best candidates to teaching, putting them through innovative teacher-education programs to thereby improve student achievement in mathematics and sciences at secondary schools.

The intent is also to transform teacher-education, as participating universities agree to redesign their programs.

WMU is among six public universities in the state teaching a total of 64 fellows. This year’s class was selected from more than 2,000 applicants who were put through a rigorous screening process.

Some of the fellows at WMU are recent college graduates but most are seeking this master’s degree on the heels of a career in another field.

“We have a pharmacist. We have an engineer. We have a commercial pilot. All of them have a degree in a STEM field and a few already have a master’s degree,” says Dr. Tabitha Mingus, an associate professor of mathematics at WMU who co-directs the program with Fetters.

“Essentially, they have the content they need, though some of it may be a little rusty,” Mingus says.
Building on expertise
Kozak and DeLong have a little experience in the classroom, and with backgrounds in STEM fields, all the fellows have the subject knowledge they need.

“But it’s one thing to know the content; it’s another to be able to apply it and think about how you’re going to teach it,” says Fetters, associate professor of teaching, learning and educational studies.

The fellows began taking classes taught by Fetters, Mingus and four other WMU professors over part of the spring and most of the summer.

During their courses, fellows focused on adolescent development, science teaching, and mathematical thinking for grades six through 12 ahead of their yearlong internship at a local school. Internships began earlier this month.

“I didn’t honestly think it was going to be rigorous, but it is,” Wilson fellow Rich McCoy says of the program.

McCoy has two decades in engineering and 55 patents to his credit through his professional work.

“Why I didn’t realize is all the science behind teaching. They’re kind of substituting all of our traditional concepts of teaching with how they want us to approach teaching. They’re doing it by showing us in class,” he says.

McCoy is a software and controls engineer. But after his position at Whirlpool Corp. was eliminated, he was faced with seeking new work.

Varied paths, same aspiration
Each fellow has his or her own story about moving onto this different professional path.

Longtime pharmacist Steven DeLong was looking for a new challenge.

He has experience creating pharmacy services and managing pharmacies. But he says he was on the cusp of burnout after 14 years.

“After months of pondering what to do, I decided to resign my position and pursue a career in education,” says DeLong, who began substitute teaching.

In recent years, she began volunteering at Benton Harbor Girls Academy, a small faith-based school.

“I was very moved by working with them,” she says. That experience converged with her desire to earn another degree and when she learned about the Wilson fellowship at WMU, “it all came together.”

The program, “will allow me to earn my degree and accomplish my goal as a teacher, educator and mentor to inner-city children. There is such a great need,” she says.

She plans to teach biology at the high school level.

Wilson fellow Rich McCoy confers with one of his peers in class.

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“Building on expertise” Kozak and DeLong have a little experience in the classroom, and with backgrounds in STEM fields, all the fellows have the subject knowledge they need.

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McCoy is a software and controls engineer. But after his position at Whirlpool Corp. was eliminated, he was faced with seeking new work.
There are jobs he could secure in engineering but he didn’t want to uproot his family from their small community and school system in Southwest Michigan to secure another position in the field.

“I really worry about kids. I have three of my own. Kids need good influences and I think I can bring them a unique set of experiences,” says McCoy, who expects to teach mathematics and possibly physics.

McCoy says the master’s degree program at WMU has moved at a swift pace. Professors have high expectations of the fellows.

“It’s the front end of a pretty long journey that we’re signing up for. It’s like boot camp,” McCoy says.

Better by experience

As part of the program, the fellows commit to teaching for three years, get ongoing mentoring during that period and receive a $30,000 stipend.

The fellows have reached an important phase of the program by interning alongside a mentor teacher at one of four Southwest Michigan school systems: Battle Creek Public Schools, Benton Harbor Area Schools, Comstock Public Schools and Kalamazoo Public Schools.

Kalamazoo schools superintendent, Dr. Michael Rice, lauded the partnerships between the school systems and the University as well as the lengthy internship as key strengths of the degree program.

“Teaching is a mission and it’s not for everybody and you don’t find that out until being in front of students for a period of time, Rice says.

“You need to experience the learning and where best to experience it than with outstanding teachers,” Rice says.

Now that their internship has begun, the 2012 fellows are in school district classrooms three days a week and then have a full day of classes at WMU. But by the second half of this school year, the fellows will be teaching daily at their school districts.

Before completing their internship, students will take the teacher certification test, begin job hunting and hopefully secure their first teaching position by next fall.

After this first year is done, fellows still must complete remaining coursework for their degree, including producing a thesis.

To learn more about the Wilson fellowship program at WMU, go to wmich.edu/education/fellowships.

Wilson fellow Ashley Teed

Wilson fellow Anna Kozak