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News from the Western Michigan University Graduate College

Message from the Dean

Much is happening within the Graduate College and in graduate education this year. We continue to have a number of staff changes. Dr. Marianne DiPierro, who managed many of our professional development offerings and worked very closely with students in the dissertation phase of their doctoral program, retired after 17 years of service to graduate students and the Graduate College. Please join us in wishing her well in retirement. This fall, we welcomed a new enrollment assistant to our staff, Ms. Melissa Bibler. Melissa previously worked in parking services and in her new role helps to manage the graduate application process and communication streams to both internal and external constituents. Starting in Spring 2019, we will welcome Dr. Ramona Lewis who has accepted the position of Faculty Director of Graduate Student Success. Currently Dr. Lewis is the faculty coordinator of the higher education and student affairs (HESA) leadership concentration in the Department of Educational Leadership, Research and Technology. Dr. Lewis brings a wealth of experience working with students and with success programming.

This year we have been updating many of our systems and processes to ensure we are meeting the needs of our constituents. Dr. Brian Horvitz, a faculty fellow within the Graduate College, is moving all our application processes for travel and research grants and fellowships to infoReady, a software solution that makes the application process more streamlined for the applicant and easier to process for the reviewer. Ms. Jodi Ward has worked with teams from Enrollment Management and Information Technology to help us transition from ApplyYourself to Target X as our platform for graduate applications. The transition occurred on Nov. 1; congratulations to Jodi for her leadership in this effort. This platform integrates with a new customer relationship management tool from Salesforce that will allow us to more effectively communicate with applicants as well as prospective and admitted students.
Graduate education and programs continue to expand at WMU. A new doctorate in physical therapy is now accepting applications for their first cohort to be enrolled in summer 2019. Accelerated graduate degree programs (in which an undergraduate can begin their graduate work in their senior year) have expanded to nearly 30 offerings. New partnerships are being forged with area colleges and universities to bring their students to WMU for graduate degrees. As Graduate Dean, it is an honor and a privilege to work with an incredibly talented staff who are always looking for ways to improve on service delivery, ensuring that faculty and staff have the information they need to achieve excellence in graduate education and provide resources for students to succeed in their educational and career pursuits.

It is indeed a great day to be a Bronco!

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

Watch our "Every Great Journey Leads to Gold" promotional video
Fall 2018 Three Minute Thesis

The Fall 2018 Three Minute Thesis (3MT) at WMU brought standing room only crowds to the Bernhard Center on Nov. 14. Twenty graduate students presented their research in two separate heats, then the highest scoring presenters faced the entire audience with a third set of judges. Presenters are judged according to standards set by the University of Queensland in Australia, which started the 3MT in 2008 as a way to increase their graduate students’ ability to speak on their research. Ten years later, 3MT now takes place in 66 countries with over 250 colleges and universities participating in the United States alone. [Read more about the 2018 WMU Three Minute Thesis]

2018 Graduate Student Research and Travel Grant Awards Announced

The Graduate College announces the 2018 Graduate Student Research and Travel Grant awards recipients. The Graduate Student Research and Travel Grants are established to support graduate students engaged in independent scholarly research, scientific inquiry, inventive technology and artistic/creative activity. [Full List of Fall 2018 Graduate Student Research and Travel Grant Award Winners]
WMU Biological Sciences Ph.D. Alum Tiantian Zhang Attains Post-Doctoral Position at Prestigious Cancer Research Lab

Tiantian Zhang, Ph.D. 2017 from Dr. Karim Essani’s cohort in the Department of Biological Sciences, has attained a post-doctoral position with the City of Hope cancer research center in Los Angeles. Zhang started a post-doctoral appointment in the lab of Dr. Larry Kwak immediately upon receiving his degree from WMU. Kwak was named one of Time Magazine’s 100 Most Influential People in 2010 and continues to do cutting edge research to develop vaccines for cancer treatment. His lab works on several different types of cancers, including asymptomatic lymphoma and triple-negative breast cancer. Each year more than 72,000 adults and children in the United States will be diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma, the most common type of blood cancer. City of Hope enrolls more than 250 patients with lymphoma in clinical trials each year. WMU alumnus Tiantian Zhang works to develop a promising new vaccine therapy for these patients. [Read More About Dr. Tiantian Zhang]

The New Graduate Student Commons at Waldo Library

Are you a graduate student looking for a place to study, collaborate with peers or just hang out? The new Graduate Student Commons at Waldo Library is available exclusively for you. From individual study cubicles and lounge seating to work tables and four group study rooms, the Commons has the work spaces you need. The Graduate Student Commons is available for use by all graduate students enrolled at Western Michigan University. A valid Bronco Card is required to enter the space. Come check out the new Graduate Student Commons on the third floor of Waldo Library in room 3028. [Or view a 360° photo tour on the Library's Facebook page.]

A Brief History of Walwood Hall

“My husband and I met at a dance in the ballroom.” “We used to sunbathe on the ‘asphalt beach’ outside the second floor dorm rooms.” “I ate lunch at the cafeteria just to see the dance students.” Alumni frequently stop in to reminisce about good times at Walwood Union and Walwood Residence Hall. The pages of The Teachers College Herald, now called The Western Herald, abound with references to Walwood Hall. The soda bar was popular with
students and community residents alike, who flocked to enjoy the “Walwood Hall Special Sundae” or a piece of pie with a “full quarter-pound of ice cream for only .15 cents!” When completed in 1939, the main floor of Walwood Union contained a general lounge, the Women’s League room, now the Bertha Davis Room, a powder room, a coat-check room, the soda fountain and the cafeteria as well as a faculty dining room and a kitchen. On the second floor a 5,000 square foot ballroom had a raised stage and hosted dances frequently. Homecoming, hoe-downs, sock-hops, winter formals and Sadie Hawkins dances brought out “masculine faces beaming above and below fantastic corsages and female escorts smiling beneath their loads of hair brushes, combs and huge compacts.” Holding up to 800 dancers, the ballroom at Walwood was the center of social life on campus. [Read More and View Photos of Walwood Hall]

WMU Graduate Standard -
Three Minute Thesis

WMU GRADUATE STANDARD: GRADUATE COLLEGE EVENTS SPOTLIGHT

Fall 2018 Three Minute Thesis - by Carson Leftwich

The Fall 2018 Three Minute Thesis (3MT) at WMU brought standing room only crowds to the Bernhard Center on Nov. 14. Twenty graduate students presented their research in two separate heats, then the highest scoring presenters faced the entire audience with a third set of judges. Presenters are judged according to standards set by the University of Queensland in Australia, which started the Three Minute Thesis competition in 2008 as a way to increase their graduate students’ ability to speak on their research. Ten years later, 3MT now takes place in 66 countries with over 250 colleges and universities participating in the United States alone.

David Sottile, a doctoral Behavior Analysis student in Psychology, won the Fall 2018 3MT at WMU with his presentation “Risky Choices in a Wheel of Fortune Game.” His scores will be compared with those who compete in the Spring 2019 WMU 3MT competition on Feb. 27, 2019. First place winners receive a $500 scholarship; second place winners receive a $300 prize and People’s Choice winners receive a $200 prize.
The participant with the highest score from the spring 2019 and the fall 2018 3MT competitions at WMU goes to the Midwest Association of Graduate Schools regional competition. There, dozens of graduate students compete for the MAGS title. The winner of that round then goes to the U.S. national competition at the Council of Graduate Schools conference in December.

Second place went to Dana Goetz, PhD student in Clinical Psychology, with “A Transdiagnostic Approach to the Development and Maintenance of Social Problem Solving.” Muaaz Gul, PhD student in Computer Science, who presented on “High-Performance Reductive Strategies for Big Data from LC-MS/MS” received third place. People’s Choice award went to Wassnaa Al-Mawee, Ph.D. student in Computer Science, for her presentation on “Mandatory Integrity Control for Arbitrary Structured Data.”

Judges included faculty members Carla Chase, Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Kathryn Docherty and Louann Bierlein-Palmer, and staff members Michele Behr and Jennifer Holm. Two graduate students who were also previous 3MT winners sat on the judges’ panel: De’Lon Dixon and Tanya Petrachkova.

3MT rules allow one static slide to accompany the presentation. Presenters have three minutes only to explain their research and its impact to a non-specialist audience. This format encourages presenters to avoid jargon and technical language. Many scholars have difficulty explaining their theories and findings to anyone but fellow experts so this experience has long-range positive outcomes. The process of preparing and delivering a 3MT helps all participants talk about their work more concisely. It can lead to higher rates of funding, acceptance as a speaker at conferences or on panels, and networking with a wider range of scholars. Furthermore, the experience enhances one’s ability to speak in public, thereby improving teaching skills.

A full listing of the Fall 2018 WMU 3MT presenters, their departments and degree levels, and their 3MT title and award follows.

- David Sottile, Behavior Analysis, Psychology Ph.D., “Risky Choices in a Wheel of Fortune Game” FIRST PLACE
- Dana Goetz, Clinical Psychology Ph.D., “A Transdiagnostic Approach to the Development and Maintenance of Social Problem Solving” SECOND PLACE
- Muaaz Gul, Computer Science, Ph.D., “High-Performance Reductive Strategies for Big Data from LC-MS/MS” THIRD PLACE
- Wassnaa Al-Mawee, Computer Science Ph.D., “Mandatory Integrity Control for Arbitrary Structured Data” PEOPLE’S CHOICE

- Arz Yahya Rzayyig Qwam Alden, Mechanical Engineering Ph.D., “Finite Element Modeling and Experimental Characterization of Knot Configuration Effect on the Mechanical Performance of Surgical Suture”

- Diksha Singh, MBA, “Nomophobia: Boon or Bane for Individuals in the Workplace”

- Divyesh Jain, MBA, “Rising Interest Rates Can Cause a Recession in 2020 with Regard to U.S. Real Estate”

- Elahe Honarvar, Chemistry Ph.D., “Improving protein analysis by Desorption Electrospray Ionization (DESI)”

- Florence Elfriede Sinthauli Silalahi, Geological and Environmental Sciences Earth Science M.S., “Frequency Ratio Method for Landslide Assessment in Bogor, West Java, Indonesia”


- Hussein Khudhayer Mohammad Mohammad, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Ph.D., “Reducing the Noise from Wind Turbines”

- Katherine Dvorak, Geologic and Environmental Sciences Ph.D., “The Canterbury Basin and the Lost Continent of Zealandia”


- Khushi Bhatt, Physics, Ph.D., “Studying p-process by 80Hg 196”

- Masoud Shabani Nezhad, Physics Ph.D., “Localized Surface Plasmons in Metallic Nanoparticles”

- Matt Delacruz, Political Science Ph.D., “Genocide as an Ethnic Bonding Ritual”

- Monisha Khapali, MBA “Application of Blockchain in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in India”
• Ran Wei, Sport Management Ph.D., “Does Human Reach the Limit?—An Analysis in Track and Field”

• Saif Ghazy Faisal Alrafeek, Mechanical Engineering Ph.D., “Development and Validation of Hybrid Continuum/Structural Finite Element Model for Evaluating Foot and Ankle Biomechanics”

• Shanshan Wang, Accountancy M.S., “Why is Mobile Payment So Popular in China?”

WMU Graduate Standard - Fall 2018 Research and Travel Grant Awards

WMU GRADUATE STANDARD: GRADUATE COLLEGE AWARDS SPOTLIGHT

Fall 2018 Graduate Student Research and Travel Grant awards

The Graduate College congratulates the following graduate students who are the recipients of the Fall 2018 Graduate Student Research and Travel Grant awards and wishes them continued success in their research.

The Research Grant Recipients for Fall 2018

• Mahawa Akara, Geological and Environmental Sciences

• Jordan Bailey, Psychology

• Beth Belachew, Psychology

• Troy Burtchett, Biological Sciences

• Peter Dobek, History

• Jose Sanchez Garrido, Music Performance

• Asghar Gill, Mallinson Institute for Science Education
- Lincoln Grevengoed, Geological and Environmental Sciences
- Peter Grohs, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
- Amy Janik, Biological Sciences
- James MacDonald, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
- Samuel Nyarko, Mallinson Institute for Science Education
- Andrew Nye, Music Performance
- Kimberly Peck, Psychology
- Erica Schlau, Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
- Susanne Var, Biological Sciences
- Olivia Walser, Biological Sciences

**The Travel Grant Recipients for Fall 2018**
- Ahmed Abed, Electrical and Computer Engineering
- Omar Mohammad Abu, Mathematics
- Fatima Albrehi, Communication
- Joao Amadeu, Mallinson Institute for Science Education
- Bandhan Ayon, Civil and Construction Engineering
- Ghassan Bilal, Electrical and Computer Engineering
- Brittany Brake, Political Science
- Li Cheng, Public Affairs and Administration
- Peng Dai, Mallinson Institute for Science Education
- Prashant Gunai, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
- Jamie Hallas, Mathematics
- Latif Ibraheem, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
WMU Graduate Standard - Tiantian Zhang

WMU GRADUATE STANDARD: GRADUATE ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

WMU Biological Sciences Ph.D. Alum Tiantian Zhang Attains Post-Doctoral Position at Prestigious Cancer Research Lab—Carson Leftwich

Tiantian Zhang, Ph.D. 2017 from Dr. Karim Essani’s cohort in the Department of Biological Sciences, has attained a post-doctoral position with the City of Hope cancer research center in Los Angeles. Zhang started a post-doctoral appointment in the lab of Dr. Larry Kwak immediately upon receiving his degree from WMU. Kwak was named one of Time Magazine’s 100 Most Influential People in 2010 and continues to do cutting edge research to develop vaccines for cancer treatment. His lab works on several different types of cancers, including asymptomatic lymphoma and triple-negative breast cancer. Each year more than 72,000 adults and children in the United States will be diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma, the most
common type of blood cancer. City of Hope enrolls more than 250 patients with lymphoma in clinical trials each year. WMU alumnus Tiantian Zhang works to develop a promising new vaccine therapy for these patients.

Zhang came to WMU in 2011 already having earned a medical degree from Wannan Medical College in Anhui Province, China. As an M.D. in Clinical Anesthesia, he was responsible for attending patients during surgery and procedures using local, intravenous, spinal and caudal anesthetics. He also provided life support and breathing management as well as monitored patients before and after anesthesia to counteract any adverse reactions. Many people might be satisfied with the career achievements of becoming an MD while winning “The Honor of Top Students” and China’s National Student Scholarship in 2007 and 2009, but Zhang’s research experience during this same period, at the Laboratory of Immunoregulation and Tolerance at the Chinese Academy of Biological Sciences, illuminated a path toward his current career as a cancer researcher.

In 2011 he began studying at WMU in the Biological Sciences Department in Dr. Karim Essani’s lab. Dr. Essani has been actively researching the molecular and immunological aspects of oncolytic viruses and colorectal cancer since the late 1970s and has supervised numerous doctoral students who have gone on to positions at prestigious institutions like City of Hope, rated by U.S. News and World Report as #21 in adult cancer centers in the United States. At City of Hope Dr. Tiantian Zhang participates in project planning and experiment design, generates, interprets and evaluates data and communicates the results to internal and external stakeholders.
Zhang’s work has led to numerous publications, presentations, and awards. In 2017 he was first author in several articles and papers published in Virus Genes; Medical Oncology; Open Virology Journal; and International Journal of Cancer Biology and Clinical Oncology, among other peer reviewed publications. He has presented at conferences around the world, receiving multiple Graduate College Graduate Research and Travel Grants. At the 34th Annual Kalamazoo Community Medical and Health Sciences Research Day in 2016 he received an award for “Best Clinical Research Presentation”, along with colleagues Yogesh Suryawanshi, Dennis Kordish, Helene Woyczesczyk, David Jeng and Karim Essani, for “Experimental Virotherapy of Human Melanoma Tumors in Nude Mice with 15L-knock-out Tanapoxvirus.” At that same event, he won, along with Kordish, Suryawanshi and Essani, first place poster award for “Tanapoxvirus Expressing Interleukin-2 Regresses Human Melanoma Tumors by a T-cell Independent Mechanism in Mice.” In 2015 he won the WMU 3MinuteThesis Best Presentation Award for his presentation “Genetically engineered tanapox virus expressing interleukin-2 is a potential therapy for melanoma” co-authored with Dennis Kordish and Karim Essani.

Zhang excelled at outreach to his fellow students as a member of the first Graduate Ambassador cohort in 2012-2013. As a student recruiter he informed prospective students about graduate program offerings at WMU as well as how to negotiate life as a graduate student. He represented the Graduate College at University Admissions events, HIGE and CELCIS orientations and social events sponsored by the Graduate Student Association. He brought new students to events and made new international students feel welcome. His friendly demeanor and enthusiastic, outgoing personality made him an instant favorite with any group.
Zhang returned to the Graduate Ambassadors for the 2013-14 academic year and recruited other notable Ambassadors from the department of Biological Sciences, including Yogesh Suryanwanshi, Mark Webster and Sarah Webster. Zhang hopes to return to Michigan when he gets a rare vacation to enjoy Western's beautiful campus.

WMU Graduate Standard - Walwood History

A Brief History of Walwood Hall—by Carson Leftwich

“My husband and I met at a dance in the ballroom.” “We used to sunbathe on the ‘asphalt beach’ outside the second floor dorm rooms.” “I ate lunch at the cafeteria just to see the dance students.” Alumni frequently stop in to reminisce about good times at Walwood Union and Walwood Residence Hall. The pages of The Teachers College Herald, now called The Western Herald, abound with references to Walwood Hall. The soda bar was popular with students and community residents alike, who flocked to enjoy the “Walwood Hall Special Sundae” or a piece of pie with a “full quarter-pound of ice cream for only 15 cents!” When completed in 1939, the main floor of Walwood Union contained a general lounge, the Women’s League room, now the Bertha Davis Room, a powder room, a coat-check room, the soda fountain and the cafeteria, as well as a faculty dining room and a kitchen. On the second floor a 5,000 square foot ballroom had a raised stage and regularly hosted dances. Homecoming, hoe-downs, sock-hops, winter formals and Sadie Hawkins dances brought out “masculine faces beaming above and below fantastic corsages and female escorts smiling beneath their loads of hair brushes, combs and huge compacts.” Holding up to 800 dancers, the ballroom at Walwood was the center of social life on campus.

Community members also enjoyed the amenities; a photo of Shakespeare Company employees at their annual banquet in 1943 shows a small orchestra onstage playing for the diners.
The second floor also held the men’s union room, now the Emeriti Lounge, and a student council room. The connecting women’s dormitory provided rooms for 115 students who paid $7.50 per week for room and board. Sixty-five students worked in the cafeteria earning .30 cents an hour. During its first year of operation, the cafeteria served 85,000 meals and the soda bar catered to more than 141,000 patrons, according to historian Larry Massie’s 2003 book, Brown and Golden Memories: Western Michigan University’s first century.

Walwood Hall now houses the Graduate College, the Office of the Vice President for Research, the Medieval Institute, Medieval Institute Publications, the Richard Rawlinson Center for Anglo-Saxon Studies and Manuscript Research, the Center for Cistercian and Monastic Studies, the School of Public Affairs and Administration, the Center for Research on Instructional Change in Postsecondary Education (CRISPE), and the Office of Marketing and Strategic Communications.

Two entrances reflect Walwood Hall’s original dual role as a student union and the first dormitory on campus. The east entrance has Walwood Hall Residence carved into the limestone edifice above the heavy wood doors. The west entrance leads into a spacious lobby, dedicated in 1989 as the Harold and Beulah McKee Alumni Center. It was renovated first in 1992 to house Development and Alumni Relations and again in 2016 to provide a gathering place for graduate students, as well as faculty, staff and emeriti. Philippine mahogany woodwork, tall casement windows, exterior brickwork and lighting fixtures in many areas lend a feeling of grandeur, while the original artwork featured prominently throughout the building gives a glimpse into
Western’s past. Murals in the northwest corner of the lobby painted by art instructor Kathryn Keillor in 1942 show a typically positivist mid-century view of Western’s history from the days of the one room schoolhouse to the establishment of Western Michigan Education College on the hill. The silhouettes of Victorian men and women parade under the word PROSPECT while founding fathers Henry Vandercook, Leslie Wood, Ernest Burnham and Dwight Waldo supervise approvingly. On the opposite corner, time marches on with the word FORWARD, showing early 1940s era students enjoying football, industrial arts, and the sciences under a jet trail while “Joe College” and “Betty Coed” represent the modern college student.
Another, sadder memorial lives on in the Honor Roll, a 1947 installation engraved with the names of over 1,450 alumni, faculty, staff and students who served in World War II. A star marks those who were killed or missing in action, but the list is incomplete.
Upstairs, two large oil panels depict scenes from campus life during the 1950s. These panels, painted by R. Rusling in the early 1960s, include a view of the long-vanished “Old Oak Tree” which functioned as a campus message center, and the “Faculty Dames Tea” which gathered the campus elite for civilized conversation and refreshments. These events were reported in local papers with detailed descriptions of the food, décor and distinguished guests.
In the Bertha Davis Room, a hand carved and gilded Art Deco plaque done by then-student Richard Riegel memorializes the presidents of the Women’s League from its founding in 1914 to 1938, while a sidelight continues the listing until 1963.
According to Dr. Sharon Carlson of Zhang Legacy Center, Archives and Regional History Collections, the Dean of Women, Bertha Davis founded the group after learning with horror that a number of female students had gone downtown after a football game and “made a spectacle of themselves” at a movie theatre by laughing and talking loudly in public. Davis formed the Women’s League to “provide educational programs that further the best interests of and assist the students in realizing their individual abilities, talents and skills; to provide leadership opportunities; to uphold high academic and social values; and to sponsor philanthropic activities.”
Philanthropy at its best is demonstrated in the artwork that anchors perhaps the most stunning room today, Walwood Commons. Above the mantel of a substantial fireplace a pastoral oil painting of cattle represents the work of noted American Impressionist, George Glenn Newell. Fittingly, it was donated by W. E. Upjohn, founder of the Upjohn Company, whose animal health branch under Pfizer became what is now known as Zoetis Inc. The massive fireplace and hearth hasn’t warmed the room in decades, but the visual impact of the sea-green tiles in the Arts and Crafts style made by famous Michigan pottery Pewabic Tile Co. gives the room a sophisticated, yet warm appeal. Original light fixtures in the Art Deco style appear so modern they might have been created today.

Many of the public rooms at Walwood are available for use by the University community. The Bertha Davis Room and Walwood Commons are perfect for committee meetings, luncheons, staff retreats and smaller gatherings. The Emeriti Lounge functions as a meeting room for the retired faculty group, as well as other administrative meetings. Walwood Lobby is outfitted with study tables and comfortable seating for study groups and may be reserved for larger events such as receptions and open houses. The Graduate Student Commons is designed for more informal trainings and workshops. For information on reservations please contact Sue Beougher or Paige Warner.