Two important events rescheduled
This week's severe weather resulted in two important events being rescheduled.

The community input session designed to give campus and area residents an opportunity to be part of the WMU Alumni Center design process is now set for 4 to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 14, in the Little Theatre. Parking will be available in a lot adjacent to the Little Theatre and in Parking Lot No. 1 by Walwood Hall.

The session is the second in a series of three such events and will feature design professionals from TowerPinkster, a Kalamazoo architectural and engineering firm selected last year to guide the renovation, and the Hopkins Burns Design Studio in Ann Arbor, a firm that specializes in historic preservation.

Also rescheduled is the Academy of Lifelong Learning’s January Tham/Semester Warm-up, now set for 9:30 to 11 a.m. Monday, Jan. 13, in the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, 314 S. Park St. in Kalamazoo.

That event will allow interested members of the public to learn more about the academy and its offerings, enjoy coffee and refreshments, and discover what’s happening at the KIA. A registration fee of $5 per person is required. Visit wmich.edu/offcampus/lifelong to register or obtain details.

Faculty scholar nominations due soon
Nominations are due Friday, Jan. 31, for the Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award, which is the highest honor WMU bestows on its faculty members. For details and a nomination form, visit wmich.edu/research and click the Awards link.

Chinese research grants available
A research and creative activities grant valued at up to $1,000 is available to support the study of Greater China by WMU faculty members. The deadline to submit proposals is Friday, Feb. 7. Application information is available on the Light Center website at http://international.wmich.edu/content/blogcategory/271/1571 or by writing to the center at hig-lightcenter@wmich.edu.

Annual MLK celebration starts next week
Activities at WMU and across the broader Kalamazoo community are planned for January and February to honor slain civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr.

“Past, Present and Future: Living the Dream” is the theme of this year’s MLK celebration. Many scheduled events are free and open to the public.

They begin with a birthday celebration at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 15, at Kalamazoo Valley Community College’s Texas Township Campus and conclude with a career-related panel discussion at noon Wednesday, Feb. 26, at WMU.

Major events taking place this month are:
• Friday, Jan. 17, a “Redeem the Dream: All Hands on Deck” community reflection, 11 a.m., Stetson Chapel, Kalamazoo College.
• Saturday, Jan. 18, a public school students’ visitation, 9 a.m., registration, East Ballroom, Bernhard Center. Open to middle and high school students and parents and guardians.

Alumni center to incorporate core of East Hall only
WMU officials, honoring a previously announced Dec. 31 deadline for setting design parameters for the new WMU alumni center, have made a final decision to focus renovation only on the original core of East Hall.

A decision about the final building configuration was made so that design work could be finished in anticipation of a spring 2014 start to construction.

The configuration chosen will turn the University’s birthplace into a center that reflects national best practices, preserves the building’s designation as part of the National Register of Historic Places and incorporates a high level of sustainable building features.

Construction is expected to be complete by summer 2015. The budget, set at $21.4 million, includes $15 million borrowed by the University as well as $1 million donated by the WMU Alumni Association. The remaining $5 million-plus will come from additional private gifts. Funds raised in excess of the project budget will go into landscaping for the site.

East Hall was completed in 1905. The north and south wings of the building, built in 1908 and 1909, respectively, were demolished before construction on the alumni center begins, with the likely timetable for demolition to be late February or early March. During the design process, WMU

Building setbacks net about $200,000 in energy-cost savings
Temperature setbacks in campus buildings from Dec. 14 to Jan. 5 avoided $194,257 of energy expenditures.

The University began lowering building temperatures Dec. 14 at the end of winter semester, particularly in residence halls.

Then with a single mouse click Dec. 24, business and finance Vice President Jan Van Der Kley used WMU’s sophisticated building energy management system to dial back more than 3,000 campus thermostats to 55 degrees for the annual eight-day holiday closure. This closure was expected to avoid about $140,000 in energy costs.

“We need to be good stewards of the University’s resources and a model for campus sustainability,” said Van Der Kley as she dialed back temperatures campuswide from the University’s Campus Facilities command center.

That setback affected 75 campus buildings and some 5,000 pieces of mechanical equipment. The temperature reduction was carefully planned to avoid impacting animal and research spaces on campus.

“The colder the outside temperature, the greater the savings when you lower the inside building temperature,” notes Peter J. Strazdas, associate vice president for facilities management.

“You really can lower your home energy bill by lowering your thermostats at night and when you go on vacation in the winter.”

Building setbacks net about $200,000 in energy-cost savings

A scene from last year’s MLK celebration (Photo by Mike Langa)
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DEADLINE: Items to be considered for publication should be submitted to the Office of University Relations by 3 p.m. Friday the week preceding publication. Spring publication dates are Jan. 9 and 23; Feb. 6 and 20; March 13 and 27; and April 10. Items should be submitted to Jeanne Baron via: email, jeanne.baron@wmich.edu; mail, Campus Mail Stop 5433, phone, (269) 387-8423; or fax, (269) 387-8422.

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Spring Chinese culture classes slated

The Confucius Institute at WMU is accepting registrations for spring Chinese culture classes that begin the week of Jan. 20. The low-cost classes are open to the public, taught in English and meet once a week for personal enrichment rather than academic credit.

A half-price tuition discount is offered to participants age 55 and older and WMU students. All WMU full- and part-time employees may participate in classes tuition-free. Some classes change all participants a fee for materials, and those with low enrollment may be canceled.

Spring 2014 offerings are Basic Chinese Painting, Basic Chinese Language, Chinese Minority Dance, Tai Chi, Intermediate Chinese Painting, Chinese Characters, Chinese Crafts, Chinese Calligraphy and Intermediate Chinese Language. More information is available at wmuconfucius.org, wmu-confucius.cc@wmich.edu or (269) 387-3784.

Lee talks to focus on uncertainty

The Lee Honors College’s spring Lyceum Lecture Series, called “Living With Uncertainty,” will begin Jan. 15 and continue through April 9. Topics to be discussed will encompass areas such as economics, politics, education and the arts as well as explore factors such as decision making, and information availability and accuracy. The 12 multidisciplinary talks are free and open to the public and will be held from noon to 1 p.m. Wednesdays in the Lee Honors College Building.

Attendees are welcome to bring a brown bag lunch. Not all will be offered March 5 due to the spring recess. Visit wmich.edu/honors/lectures for more information.

Sichel lecture series resumes Jan. 22

The 2013-14 Sichel Lecture Series continues Wednesday, Jan. 22, with a talk titled “Economic Development from a Historical Perspective: The Origin and Nature of Good Institutions” at 3 p.m. in 2028 Brown Hall.

The program will be presented by Avner Greif, professor of economics at Stanford University and winner of a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. The series, now celebrating its 50th anniversary, is bringing six high-profile economists to campus this spring. The theme for 2013-14 is “Award-winning Economists Speak on Contemporary Economic Issues.”

First spring faculty-staff mixer set

The first Fridays With Friends faculty-staff mixer of the spring semester will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 24, in the Gilmore Theatre Atrium. This free event features light hors d’oeuvres and a cash bar.

Registration starting for lifelong learning academy classes, trips

The academy also has planned several one-day excursions as well as a six-day trip to Minneapolis and a two-day golfing trip. Registration for most classes and trips began Jan. 6 for members of the Academy of Lifelong Learning. Registration for non-members opens Thursday, Jan. 23.

The Academy, developed under the auspices of Extended University Programs, provides low-cost, short-term, non-credit learning experiences for adults in an informal and stimulating environment without exams or grades. Academy faculty members are volunteers. Some are retired teachers while others are experts from the local community.

The spring courses brochure is available at wmich.edu/offcampus/lifelong or by calling Extended University Programs at (269) 387-4200. Visit wmich.edu/extended/reducepoverty for more information about the poverty reduction semester.

Jobs

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

Professors earn statewide awards

Debra Lindstrom and Jaclyn West-Frasier, occupational therapy, were awarded Distinguished Service Awards during the Michigan Occupational Therapy Association meeting in October.

The awards honor MiOTA members for their continuing and outstanding contributions to the development, growth and process of MiOTA.

Lindstrom also was named to the association’s Roster of Fellows, a highly prestigious award that recognizes MiOTA members who have contributed significantly to the education and professional development of members by using special skills or knowledge in therapeutic practice, education, research or administration.

Shakespeare expert writes new book

Grace Tiffany, English, has written a new novel that explores the life of a female writer in the age of Shakespeare. Titled PAINT, the book is based on the life of Emilia Lanier, an early 17th-century poet.

It has been described as both poignant and hilarious and was published in October by the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies.

Project team receives national honor

Amy Wagenfeld, occupational therapy, was one of three faculty advisors on a project involving University of Washington students that received a Student Honor Award in the community service category during the annual American Society of Landscape Architects conference in November.

The project addressed the unique needs of elderly Japanese American residents by integrating therapeutic and universal design features into the Nikkei Manor Assisted Living Center Ichi-go Ichi-e (“a moment in time”) Garden in Seattle.

Wagenfeld, an adjunct faculty member at WMU, has a landscape design consultation practice and is certified in health care garden design.

She is on the review board of two occupational therapy journals and was the lead author of the recently published article, “Collaborative Design: Outdoor Environments for Veterans with PTSD.”

Around campus and beyond

Editor’s note: Visit wmich.edu/news/events for details and more event news.
Key administrative appointments made

Recent appointments have filled two key administrative posts. Jane Baas is the new associate dean of the Lee Honors College while Nancy B. Mansberger is the new director of academic collective governance. The appointments were effective Jan. 1, pending Board of Trustees approval.

Baas has been a member of the dance faculty since 1981 and since 2012, had been serving her fifth term as department chair. She also served as coordinator of academic activities for the College of Fine Arts from 1986 to 1990 and even while a full-time faculty member, had partial administrative duties in the dance department as director of recruitment and retention.

Baas received the College of Fine Arts Outstanding Service Award in 2003 and the college’s Dean’s Teaching Award in 2006. She has received grants to produce her own concerts and recently has conducted research projects focusing on dancer wellness.

Mansberger, associate professor in the College of Education and Human Development, has a research background in the areas of school reform and leadership. She has held leadership posts with the WMU chapter of the American Association of University Professors, including vice president for 2011-12.

WMU Board of Trustees approves retirements of 12 faculty, seven members

University trustees approved 19 employee retirements and five faculty resignations during their Dec. 5 meeting.

All of the faculty members retiring are doing so with emeritus status. Their names, positions, years of continuous service and effective dates of retirement are: Nora Bertra, physics, 23 years, effective Aug. 31; Dwayne E. Channell, mathematics, 35 years, effective April 30; John Gregory Fitzgerald, University Libraries, 33 years, effective June 30; Marion W. “Buddy” Gray, history, 18 years, effective April 30, 2013; Barbara L. Harris, social work, 26 years, effective April 30, 2019; and Allen Zagarrell, anthropology, 29 years, effective April 30, 2013.

The staff members retiring are: Linda K. Cleland, Sindecuse Health Center, 16 years, effective Oct. 29, 2013; Leon J. Coleman, building custodial and support services, 35 years, effective Oct. 31, 2013; Judy K. Dinda, building custodial and support services, 33 years, effective Dec. 31, 2013; Cheryl L. Edgar, business information systems, 12 years, effective Jan. 5; Patricia A. Evans, University Recreation, 22 years, effective Dec. 31, 2013; Margaret T. Magallon, building custodial and support services, 15 years, effective Jan. 1; and Rosalie J. Nelsen, development and alumni relations, 26 years, effective Dec. 31, 2013.


Obituaries

Editor’s Note: Visit wmich.edu/news/obituaries for complete obituaries.

Lonnie E. Duncan, counselor education and counseling psychology, died suddenly Dec. 31. He was 46.

Anthony Ellis, English, died Jan. 7. He was 46. A celebration of life is being planned for Ellis, who battled leukemia for the past two years.

James A. Howell, emeritus in music, died Nov. 16. He was 81.

John E. Martell Jr., retired from the Lee Honors College, will be honored from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 17, in the lounge of the Lee Honors College Building. Memorial remarks will begin at 6:30 p.m. He died Nov. 12 at age 71.

Dunn praised for leadership

Acting at their Dec. 5 meeting, WMU trustees unanimously approved a positive annual evaluation for President John M. Dunn.

They cited Dunn for improving the University’s financial strength, increasing student diversity, improving relations and giving among alumni, and developing and implementing the University’s first strategic plan in many years.

They also praised the president for improving WMU’s standing with partners in Lansing, at the Higher Learning Commission and with many other strategic organizations, in addition to his leadership in creating the WMU School of Medicine and a formal affiliation between WMU and the Thomas M. Cooley Law School.

Long commitment to WMU—Fifty-two people who began their service to WMU in 1988 were inducted into the 25 Year Club Dec. 3. The club is a way to recognize the valuable contributions made by employees who commit themselves to the University. The 2013 inductees included, from left, Amy J. Seth, University Recreation; Delores R. Gauthier, music; Ian A. Bell, construction; and Denise S. Williams, building custodial and support services. (Photo by Mike Lanka)
Thirty-seven faculty members granted sabbatical leaves by board

During its Dec. 5 meeting, the WMU Board of Trustees granted sabbatical leaves to 37 faculty members.

Fourteen faculty members were granted leaves by the semester and 23 were granted leaves for the full 2014-15 academic year.

Fall 2014 semester
Bruce E. Bejcek, biological sciences; Elena Gapova, sociology; Barry Goetz, sociology; Michael Millar, Spanish; Michael G. Miller, business information systems; Cynthia Jo McGrew, philosophy; Gary J. Miron, educational leadership, research and technology; Holly J. Nibert, Spanish; Ginger Y. Owen, art; Susan V. Piazza, special education and literacy studies; Susan Pozo, economics; Rika Saito, world languages and literatures; Eve Salisbury, English; Laura T. Spielvogel, anthropology; Ann Veec, marketing; and Yuan-kang Wang, sociology.

Spring 2015 semester
Lucius F. Hallett IV, geography; Margaret Joyce, chemical and paper engineering (effective date change); Pairin Katerattanakul, business information systems; Cynthia Jo Klekar, English; and Caroline B. Webber, family and consumer sciences.

Fall 2014-15 academic year
David A. Barnes, geosciences; Linda J. Borish, history; Kristal E. Ehrhardt, special education and literacy studies; Katherine Joslin, English; Mitch Kachun, history; Tianshu Liu, mechanical and aerospace engineering; Timothy McGrew, philosophy; Gary J. Miron, educational leadership, research and technology; Holly J. Nibert, Spanish; Ginger Y. Owen, art; Susan V. Piazza, special education and literacy studies; Susan Pozo, economics; Rika Saito, world languages and literatures; Eve Salisbury, English; Laura T. Spielvogel, anthropology; Ann Veec, marketing; and Yuan-kang Wang, sociology.

Regulatory changes result in fewer student work hours
Beginning Jan. 1, the maximum allowable work hours for student employees was reduced to better align with regulations related to IRS taxation, the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Affordable Care Act.

Students may now work up to 25 hours a week for all student positions during fall and spring semesters, breaks and periods of non-enrollment. They may work longer during the summer I or II sessions, but should stay below 40 hours each week.

A list of the changes, by student employee type, is posted at wmich.edu/career/campus. Direct questions to Career and Student Employment Services at (269) 387-2745.

Departments are responsible to monitor their own student employee hours. Ideally, a WMU student employee will work an average of 25 hours per week over a year’s time. Additional PeopleSoft reporting options are being investigated to help supervisors track student hours worked.

On Campus with Tom Comer

Examining and evaluating the adequacy and effectiveness of the University’s governance, risk management, and internal processes is the job of Tom Comer, director of internal audit.

It’s a job that keeps him busy year round as he and information technology auditor Joan Belfl fear that University units are compliant with external regulation and internal policy, and offices are working at their greatest efficiency.

“I work with strict numbers much less than most would think,” he says. “Much of our time is spent on compliance activities and technology controls.”

Comer is a certified public accountant and joined WMU two years ago after working 12 years as an auditor at Plante & Moran, where the University was one of his clients.

That experience helped him with his transition to WMU, as he was already knowledgeable about the policies and operations of the institution. His office reports to the audit committee of the University’s Board of Trustees and to President John M. Dunn.

Despite the anxiety that sometimes is associated with “being audited,” Comer says his position is as an advocate for the University and its employees.

“We’re not out trying to get anyone in trouble,” he says. “We like to try to help the University, and be of assistance to anyone on campus.”

A native of Alma, Mich., Comer graduated from Alma College, which his wife, Heather, also attended. The couple lives in Mattawan, Mich., and has two children, a son, Grant, and a daughter, Jillian.

Comer is pursuing a Master of Business Administration at WMU. He enjoys football, skiing and golfing and is an avid hunter and angler. Active in the community, he is a board member of Junior Achievement of Southwest Michigan, the local chapter of Ducks Unlimited, a wetlands conservation organization; and the BC Cal-Kal Inland Port Development Corp.