Board OKs $1 million for alumni center

At its Oct. 11 semiannual meeting, the WMU Alumni Association Board of Directors approved a measure to add $1 million in association funds to help turn the core of East Hall into a new alumni center and return historic East Campus to everyday use.

The decision comes on the heels of an Oct. 1 announcement by Mark Jackson, board president, that each of the board’s 22 directors also has made a personal financial commitment to the renovation effort. Earlier this year, the board unanimously approved a measure offering its support for the University’s decision to focus all of its East Campus redevelopment efforts on renovating East Hall, the original building that was the birthplace of the University.

“As a board, we’re committed to making sure the WMU Alumni Center is a world-class facility that provides a home for all alumni when they’re on campus, honors our University’s heritage and triggers a ‘wow’ reaction from everyone who visits it,” Jackson says.

The renovation of the core of East Hall into an alumni center was announced in December 2012 by the University. WMU has borrowed $15 million to transform the 34,000-square-foot core of the building, but has said any amount spent above that figure must come from other sources, such as private donors. The core renovation, for which the Alumni Association funds will be used, is scheduled for completion in mid-2015.

Jackson notes that the board began looking last April at ways to leverage the University’s commitment to East Hall. During the board’s April meeting, the finance committee was asked to study the issue and bring a resolution back to the full board. The committee’s recommendation, made during the previous year and pointed to a number of challenges in the coming months and years. In addition, he explored campus enrollment trends and how they impact allocation of resources as well as assessed the current status of the University.

The State of the University address is a major element to WMU’s annual Academic Convocation, which also includes recognition of faculty and staff members who have won campuswide awards for service, teaching and scholarship.

The text of the address can be found online at wmich.edu/president. To listen to the address, visit campus radio station WMUK at http://wmuk.org/post/wmuk-state-university-address.

Coming year will fundamentally change WMU, Dunn says

By this time next year, WMU will be an institution that is “a fundamentally changed organization,” President John M. Dunn told a campus audience during his annual State of the University address Oct. 4.

Citing major initiatives that include a new medical school, a law school affiliation, new areas of research collaboration, the push to be a tobacco-free campus and reorganization of residential living, Dunn pointed to the University’s ability to embrace change and its positive impact as one of its enduring traditions.

During his 30-minute speech, Dunn also outlined an extensive list of achievements during the previous year and pointed to a number of challenges in the coming months and years. In addition, he explored campus enrollment trends and how they impact allocation of resources as well as assessed the current status of the University.

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Zhang Legacy Collections Center dedication slated

A spectacular new home for the historical records of southwest Michigan will be formally introduced to the community during a Friday, Oct. 18, dedication of WMU’s Charles C. and Lynn L. Zhang Legacy Collections Center.

The ceremony is set for 4 to 5 p.m. at the new facility, which is located at 1650 Oakland Drive, just north of the intersection of Howard Street and Oakland Drive on the grounds of the former Kalamazoo State Hospital. The 16,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility is the new home to the WMU Archives and Regional History Collections.

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Around campus and beyond

Editor's note: Visit umich.edu/news/events for details and more event news.

Readings to launch poetry anthology
A series of four readings across Michigan will mark the publication of a new anthology that has won high praise and features the work of 90 Michigan poets and 48 works of art by Michigan artists. The book, “Poetry in Michigan/Michigan in Poetry,” is being released by WMU’s New Issues Poetry and Prose.

A book launch event and reading is set for 2 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 20, at Bell’s Eccentric Café, 355 E. Kalamazoo Ave. in Kalamazoo. Subsequent readings in November and December will be held in Portage, Lansing and Ann Arbor, with additional readings in the works in Traverse City and Detroit. All of the readings will feature a assortment of poets whose work is included.

Poe Dr. Paul LaPook, Philip Levine, the former U.S. Poet Laureate, Jim Harrison, author of “Legends of the Fall,” and Thomas Lynch, whose books of essays inspired the television show “Six Feet Under.” Eight WMU faculty members contributed poems for the book, including its co-editors, William Olsen from WMU and Jack Rull, formerly from Hope College.

The handsomely assembled and illustrated book was designed by WMU’s Paul Sizer. Visit wmich.edu/news/2013/10/0100699 for details about the book and upcoming readings.

Light Center slates fall lectures
The Timothy Light Center for Chinese Studies has organized three lectures. They are: “Managing Hegemony in East Asia: China’s Rise in Historical Perspective” by Yuen-kong Wang, sociology, 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 23, in 2730 Sangren Hall; “Magical and Religious Seals and the Sources of Chinese Buddhism” by Paul Copp, University of Chicago, 3:45 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 7, in 2028 Brown Hall; and “China and China in a World of Globalization” by Tse-Kang Leng, Institute of Political Science of Academia Sinica and National Chengchi University, 4:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 21, in 2028 Brown Hall.

Dow Chemical executive to give talk
Bo Miller, global director for corporate citizenship at the Dow Chemical Co. and president and executive director of the Dow Chemical Co. Foundation, will speak on global citizenship, sustainability and globally responsible citizenship at 3:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 24, in 2150 Schneider Hall.

Next Frostic series presentation set
Award-winning poet and novelist Deb Olin Unferth will read from her work at 8 p.m. Friday, Oct. 25, in 157-159 Bernhard Center. Unferth wrote “Revolution: The Year I Fell in Love and Went to Join the Sandinistas,” a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and a New York Times Critics Choice award.

Yousef Alavi to be remembered during symposium
The late Yousef Alavi, emeritus in mathematics, will be remembered during the Department of Mathematics’ 2013 Emeriti Day celebration Thursday and Friday, Oct. 24-25.

The day is traditionally marked by a colloquium and dinner honoring retired colleagues. This year, it has been expanded to a symposium to memorialize Alavi, who died in May and directed the International Graph Conference held at WMU every four years from 1968 to 2000. Personal reminiscences of Alavi will be shared during a by-invitation-only dinner.

The symposium will focus on technical mathematics but is free and open to the public. Those interested may register at wmich.edu/math to attend both days, Thursday only or Friday only.

Talks will be held in Everett Tower’s Alavi Commons Room and the Fetzer Center’s Putney Auditorium.

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Upjohn Center takes top international honor for map product

A cutting-edge WMU center has been honored for developing 2013’s most outstanding map product or service in North and South America.

The W.E. Upjohn Center for the Study of Geographical Change received the award from the International Map Industry Association (Americas) during its annual conference Sept. 10 in Cambridge, Mass. The association selected the center as the winner of its gold award for Best Digital Map Product of the year as well as its Americas Society and U.S. Geological Survey. In earning the overall award, the Upjohn Center was recognized for its Authoritative U.S. Toppers map initiative, which includes a Topographic Maps series and a hybrid sub-series called GeoChange maps. The hyper-accurately geo-referenced maps in the two series can be used with GPS-enabled mobile devices and software based on Apple’s iOS and Google’s Android. Each map is self-contained in the tablet or smartphone, so no wireless connection is required. This means the maps can be used in wilderness areas and on large water bodies out of range of cell towers. They can also be used for navigation and location finding, because a blue dot displays the user’s location on the maps and moves across the maps as the user moves.

Users can collect information in the field and attach this information as well as photos to points on the maps. The new data can then be emailed back to base or transferred by Wi-Fi, and can be used immediately with Google Earth.

The GeoChange maps series combines older USGS topographic maps with recent aerial images of the same areas, so it is easy to see where changes such as road construction, river diversions and urban sprawl have occurred.

This capability will be a boon to businesses, government agencies and researchers. But casual users will also find the capability valuable for personal uses, such as tracing family histories and recording vacation travels.

Maps cost between 99 cents and $1.99 in the topographic series and $2.99 in the GeoChange series. They can be downloaded with Avenza Inc.’s free PDF Maps app, which is available from Apple’s App Store and comes with built-in tools to customize maps as well as to add and export data. Once downloaded, PDF Maps has its own map store, where individual maps from the Upjohn Center and many other vendors may be purchased.

For more information, visit wmich.edu/ upjohn or contact the Upjohn Center at eabreisach@gmail.com or (269) 344-1734.

In honor of Breisach’s many years of service as head of the committee, WMU President John M. Dunn unveiled an award during the 2013 Academic Convocation that recognizes Breisach for his contributions.

Sustainability day events set

A range of free public events have been planned for WMU’s Campus Sustainability Day, Tuesday and Wednesday, Oct. 22-23. The day is being celebrated nationally Wednesday, Oct. 23, at colleges and universities across the country. WMU’s events begin with the Community Sustainability Roundtable at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 22, in Schneider Hall’s Brown Auditorium featuring President John M. Dunn, Kalamazoo Mayor Bobby Hopewell and others.

Additional events include an open house and project showcase in the WMU Office of Sustainability and a sustainability slam. Visit wmich.edu/sustainability for event details.

Obituary

George O. England, emeritus in speech pathology, died Oct. 3. He was 104. England joined the faculty in 1954 and retired in 1972 after 18 years of service.

Meet the map project’s professional staff team, from left: Marilyn Johnson, administrative assistant; Kevin Agema and Katy Moharter, GIS technicians; Gregory Anderson and Margaret-Rose Spiky, GIS analysts; Caitlin Prior, GIS technician; and David Dickason, Upjohn Center founding director. (Photo courtesy of the Upjohn Center)
Summer definitely isn’t a slow time for Adrienne Fraaza, coordinator of Fall Welcome in First-Year Experience. Held over four days just before each new academic year, Fall Welcome assists first-year students with their academic and social transitions to college life.

The huge program requires months of planning and depends on numerous employee and student volunteers as well as five undergraduate students who serve as project managers for various Fall Welcome events.

“It’s a lot to manage a program that has hundreds of faculty and student volunteers and almost 3,000 participants,” says Fraaza, a WMU alumna. “But when things come together and you can see students getting a lot out of it, the blood, sweat and tears pay off.”

Fraaza, who works out of an office in Ellisworth Hall, double majored in French and broadcast and cable productions, graduating in 2005 after studying abroad in France.

While a senior, she also worked the 11 a.m. to 5 a.m. shift as an associate producer for News Channel 3 as well as served as a student-coordinator for Bronco Days, which was the precursor to Fall Welcome. She landed her current job five months after graduating.

“This year, we incorporated new things to meet the needs of this generation of students. It’s great being able to welcome students and solidify that they made the right choice and see that they’re excited and ready to be a Bronco,” Fraaza says. “All of us in FYE are committed to student success. We want to help students figure out who they are, and we encourage them to become who they want to be. But it’s really a team effort across the board. We appreciate the campus community for collaborating with us and making Fall Welcome a positive experience for the students.”

Fraaza lives in Mattawan with her husband and two children, ages 3 and 5. She loves to cook, garden and read, and takes a whole-foods approach to homelife. Fraaza spends hours cooking from scratch, keeps chickens and hopes one day to expand into beekeeping. She doesn’t have time to maintain her cake decorating business, but rather spends hours cooking from scratch, keeps chickens and hopes one day to expand into beekeeping. She doesn’t have time to maintain her cake decorating business, but rather spends hours cooking from scratch, keeps chickens and hopes one day to expand into beekeeping.

At the Oct. 11 meeting, was to devote $1 million from the association’s funds to the effort are available online donation to the effort are available online the project and information about making a scholarship assistance, an increase of 30 scholarships over last year’s number. Preliminary design work on the core of East Hall is underway, and the first of a series of community input sessions was held Oct. 1. At that event, design ideas and parameters were presented by Tower Pinkster, the design firm leading the effort. Material from that session, other details of the project and information about making a donation to the effort are available online at mywmu.com/alumnicenter. The center was built to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design—LEED—silver certification standards and features numerous other “green” attributes, such as a geothermal heating and cooling system. The center is named for major donors Charles and Lynn Zhang, who both earned graduate degrees from WMU and who run a Kalamazoo financial planning and investment firm. Additional donors for the more than $8 million project include the Irving S. Gilmore Foundation, Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Frederick J. and Katharine D. Rogers and many others. The Zhangs are supporters of many University programs, including the Haworth College of Business, the Department of Economics and the Academically Talented Youth Program in the Lee Honors College. Lynn Zhang also serves as a member of the WMU Foundation Board of Directors.