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Student earns awards from national, state recreational sports groups

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—A master's degree candidate at Western Michigan University is one of only 12 graduate students from across the country to receive a 2018 NIRSA-William N. Wasson Student Leadership & Academic Award.

Justine Morneau, a graduate assistant for facilities in WMU’s University Recreation department from Bad Axe, will be presented with the honor Sunday, March 4, by the NIRSA: School of Collegiate Recreation organization during its annual conference in Denver.

Morneau is enrolled in WMU's master's program in educational leadership, with a concentration in higher education and student affairs leadership, and expects to graduate in April. She also received the 2017 Robert W. England-MIRSA Outstanding Student Award in November from the Michigan Intramural Recreational Sports Association.

"Although I view these awards as me just following my passion and doing what I love, I am honored and humbled by the recognition," she says. "It warms my heart to know others appreciate my hard work and dedication to making a positive impact on the places I work and the people I interact with."

ABOUT THE AWARDS

The Wasson Student Leadership & Academic Awards recognize outstanding students who are actively involved with the recreational sports unit on their university or college campus. The
award goes to exceptional undergraduate and graduate students who set the standard on campuses through their participation or employment in recreational sports. This year, 22 undergraduate and graduate students from NIRSA's seven regions earned the award. Along with Morneau, just four were selected from Region III, which encompasses Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin.

The **Robert W. England-MIRSA Outstanding Student Award** is presented annually to the student who demonstrates outstanding leadership and service in MIRSA and to recreational sports in Michigan. The award goes to a student who has shown dedication to pursuing a career in campus recreation as well as making a commitment to MIRSA.

**MORNEAU**

Morneau intends to pursue a career in collegiate recreation, and she earned her educational leadership program concentration's 2017 Outstanding 1st-Year Student Award in the area of diversity and inclusion.

As WMU's graduate assistant for facilities, she assists in overseeing the Student Recreation Center and its facilities-related student employees. Morneau says interacting with those workers and helping them to develop their professional skills are some of her favorite aspects of the job.

She, too, takes opportunities to get out of her comfort zone and advance her skill set. As an example, she became an instructor for F45, a new fitness program the Student Recreation Center introduced last fall.

In addition, Morneau served as a student coordinator in 2017 for the annual NIRSA Region III Student Lead On, a student-led, student-run conference for students and professionals in collegiate recreation that is aimed at fostering opportunities for leadership, teamwork, networking and professional development. In that role, she planned, organized and executed the event, which is NIRSA’s second largest conference.

Morneau reports that she made the decision to pursue collegiate recreation as a career after attending her first Lead On five years ago.

"I enjoy being able to give back to the association that helped me find my path in life. I want to thank those people who have mentored me thus far and shared their insights," she says. "I also want to thank my academic cohort, and the advisors and faculty members in the Department of Educational Leadership, Research and Technology for their unconditional support, both educationally and on a personal level."

**For more WMU news, arts and events, visit [wmich.edu/news](http://wmich.edu/news).**

**Business pitch competition open to WMU student entrepreneurs**
KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Students from across the Western Michigan University campus are invited to present their business pitches for cash prizes totaling $5,000 at the K.C. O'Shaughnessy Business Pitch Competition and Showcase Friday, March 23.

Members of the public are welcome to view the event, which will take place from 1 to 3:30 p.m. in Schneider Hall on WMU’s Main Campus. Free parking will be available nearby in parking Lot 72R.

The competition is open to all current WMU students. Those planning to participate must apply by midnight Sunday, March 18.

ABOUT THE COMPETITION

Students present a three-minute pitch about an innovative business idea they have to an audience of potential investors. The aspiring entrepreneurs are then evaluated in progressive rounds by panels of judges comprised of area entrepreneurs and business community members as well as WMU faculty members.

Cash prizes are awarded to the top four finishers: $2,000 for first place, $1,500 for second place, $1,000 for third place and $500 for the people's choice/most entertaining pitch. All student participants will have a chance to demonstrate their products or illustrate their services at the competition showcase, an expo of all of the entries from this year's competition.

"The competition is a great way for students to develop their business ideas, looking into their own experiences and at the marketplace for viable ideas that they can successfully sell to an audience," says Dr. Robert Landeros, chair of WMU’s Department of Management and director of the University's Haworth College of Business Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

"The professional environment of the competition pushes students to think through their business concepts. The three-minute pitch is a test run for an authentic pitch to investors. Students get valuable feedback about what it would take to launch products and services, which will set them up for success if they refine their ideas and move them forward."
Engineering deans bring ideas and issues to Capitol Hill

Deans from engineering colleges across the country met in Washington, D.C., in early February at the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) to share ideas and discuss common concerns. Some 150 deans from both public and private universities participated. They also spent time with legislators and legislative staff to talk about education issues impacting the state. Dean Toutanji, from WMU’s College of Engineering and Applied Sciences -- along with the deans from Michigan State University and Michigan Tech -- met with the legislative assistants to Senators Debbie Stabenow (D) and Gary Peters (D), and the staff of representatives Fred Upton (R), Jack Bergman (R) and Mike Bishop (R).

Toutanji said discussions were focused on federal student aid, ways to strengthen the STEM pipeline, national manufacturing initiatives, and concerns about future funding for the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy Office of Science and the National Institute of Standards and Technology. The impact of the proposed travel ban was also discussed.

“Our meetings with legislative staff were very valuable,” Toutanji said. “They understand the crucial role of engineering schools and our economic impact on the state, as well as our importance in educating a new generation of inventors and innovators.”
Japanese musician to perform on campus during second U.S. tour

CONTACT: KOREY FORCE
MARCH 5, 2018 | WMU NEWS

KALAMAZOO Mich.—On his second U.S. tour, Sato Michiyoshi will perform a unique blend of traditional and modern styles on the "shamisen," a Japanese three-stringed banjo, at 7:30 p.m. Monday, March 12, at Western Michigan University. The free, public event will take place in the University's Dalton Center Lecture Hall on main campus.

Michiyoshi is an award-winning performer of "Tsugaru-jamisen," a dynamic style of music played on the shamisen. In his performance, Michiyoshi will focus on demonstrating the range and flexibility of the instrument. The program will begin with introductory remarks from Dr. Joshua Solomon of Hirosaki University, who will be Sato's interpreter during his tour.

Michiyoshi challenges the categorization of the Japanese shamisen as a "traditional" instrument by blending old and new styles in his performance and incorporating improvisation, singing and comedy.

While in Kalamazoo, he will also be performing at the Kalamazoo Public Library at 3 p.m. Saturday, March 10. During this event, a limited number of audience members will be able to try the instruments. Doors open at 2:30 p.m. and seating is limited.

Michiyoshi is hosted by WMU's Soga Japan Center and School of Music and sponsored by the Japan Foundation of New York Grant for Arts and Culture and the Japan Business Society of Detroit Foundation.
WMU’s Soga Japan Center is an interdisciplinary unit designed to promote knowledge of Japan to the University community, the city of Kalamazoo and all of southwest Michigan. The center regularly brings scholars, artists and writers to campus to give Japan-related lectures, demonstrations and readings to the community. The Soga Japan Center also hosts film series, displays, musical performances and other events related to Japanese culture.

Learn more about the Soga Japan Center at wmich.edu/japancenter.

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit wmich.edu/news.

Climate change and its relationship to natural disasters to be discussed

CONTACT: DEANNE PUCA
MARCH 7, 2018 | WMU NEWS

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Preparing for future natural disasters by responding to and anticipating changing climates is the topic of a lecture at 3 p.m. Friday, March 16, on the campus of Western Michigan University.

Dr. Carol P. Harden, former president of the Association of American Geographers, will give a free, public talk on "More Disasters or a More Sustainable Future? Challenges and Opportunities of Climate Change" in 2119 Wood Hall.

Dramatic environmental changes have demonstrated that the future once thought of as distant is approaching more rapidly than expected. In particular, extreme events continue to surprise mankind and cost us dearly, Harden argues. Specifically, she will examine several recent natural disasters through a lens of natural hazards geography and consider ways in which the challenges
of disaster reduction may differ in the future. A major challenge is accepting the need to prepare for a future that differs from the past. This approach presents opportunities to fix other problems, too.

By integrating natural and social science, and through many forms of geospatial and geographical analysis, geographers have much to contribute to new visions of and pathways toward a more sustainable future, she says.

HARDEN

Harden's field-based research, primarily in the Ecuadorian Andes and the southern Appalachian Mountains, has examined human agency in geomorphology and explored feedback between anthropogenic and geomorphic systems, including the effects of land-use change on soil moisture and soil carbon. Much of her research has focused on watershed processes, particularly soil erosion, landslides and the movement of water and sediment through mountain watersheds.

Harden is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a former Fulbright researcher. She served as president from 2009 to 2010 of the Association of American Geographers, has been editor-in-chief of Physical Geography since 2011, and currently chairs the Geographical Sciences Committee of the U.S. National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine. Her work has been recognized with career awards from the Mountain Geography specialty group, the Geomorphology specialty group, and the Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers, as well by as the University of Tennessee. She holds a bachelor's degree in environmental studies/ecology from Middlebury College and master's and doctoral degrees in geography from the University of Colorado, Boulder.

For more information, contact Dr. Chansheng He, professor of geography, at he@wmich.edu or (269) 387-3425.

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit wmich.edu/news.

Criminologist tapped for his expertise on video games and violence

CONTACT: CHERYL ROLAND
MARCH 7, 2018 | WMU NEWS
KALAMAZOO, Mich.—In the wake of recent high-profile mass shootings, Western Michigan University's Dr. Whitney DeCamp has been serving as an expert for media nationwide on the question of whether such violence is linked to teen video game use.

The answer to the question, he says, is that there is no real relationship between the two. The real predictors of violent behavior, his research shows, are whether a child comes from a safe home and whether a child has experienced violence in the home.

DeCamp, associate professor of sociology, an expert on criminology and director of WMU's Kercher Center for Social Research, has been reporting the results of his own extensive research on the topic, which includes five studies on video games, three of which focus on the relationship between violent video game content and behavior. His findings contradict views expressed by some politicians, including the nation's president, who attribute an increase in mass shootings to the propensity of young men to play violent video games.

In recent weeks, NBC, Michigan Radio, Cleveland's CBS outlet and the publication PC Gamer have been among news outlets turning to DeCamp for data. Closer to campus, southwest Michigan arts and culture magazine Encore included a feature in its March issue detailing DeCamp's past and current research on the topic. That story can be found at encorekalamazoo.com/good-works/do-video-games-spark-violence.

DeCamp's past research has focused on students in the eighth-to-11th grades. He has a current study underway that looks at parental influences on whether a child plays violent video games. The parent-child relationship is critical, he says, to predicting violent behavior.

"People who have close positive relationships with their parents are a lot less like to engage in violence—regardless of whether they play video games or not," he told Encore.

Title IX issues are focus of new WMU training modules, student survey

CONTACT: CHERYL ROLAND
MARCH 8, 2018 | WMU NEWS
KALAMAZOO, Mich.—A new online training module and a new campus climate survey—both focused on sexual misconduct—are on tap for the Western Michigan University campus community when students and faculty return Monday, March 12, from spring recess.

Some 6,000 randomly selected students are set to receive an email invitation from President Edward Montgomery to take an anonymous online survey designed to gauge the campus climate and assess student experiences, perceptions, attitudes and behaviors when it comes to addressing sexual violence or sexual misconduct on campus. The survey also asks students about their awareness of campus resources available to help students when it comes to reporting incidents.

"The experience of every student is important to the goal of keeping our campus safe," says Montgomery in his prepared invitation that urges students to complete the survey.

This month's survey marks the second time WMU has opted to become one of about 60 campuses nationwide using Education Advisory Board to assess the campus climate and gauge how it compares to other schools and what issues need the most focus moving forward. WMU enlisted EAB to first do a campus climate survey in 2016—a year after the campus revised and adopted a new campuswide sexual misconduct policy.

The overwhelming majority of students in that 2016 survey said they felt safe and supported by faculty and administrators when it came to addressing sexual violence and other types of misconduct. Results from the newest EAB survey will be available in the fall.

Also in March, a new training module for the WMU community will go live on GoWMU, the University’s portal, replacing a module that has been in place for several years. The new online training module has just been updated and strengthened to reflect WMU’s policies, procedures and resources and give employees the tools they need to respond when they learn of sexual misconduct and become effective advocates should the need arise. The newest version of the WMU online module is called "Harassment and Discrimination Prevention." The University also offers in-person training several times each semester. To learn more, go to wmich.edu/sexualmisconduct/education.

In addition during March, a training module mandated by the NCAA will become available to WMU student-athletes and intercollegiate athletics staff.
Poet, advocate for undocumented writers is next Frostic speaker

CONTACT: CHERYL ROLAND
MARCH 12, 2018 | WMU NEWS

KALAMAZOO, Mich—Poet Marcelo Hernandez Castilo will read from his works at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 15, as part of the spring 2018 Gwen Frostic Reading Series at Western Michigan University.

Castilo, the author of "Cenzontle," "Dulce" and "Children of the Land," will read during a free public event in 2452 Knauss Hall. In addition to being an essayist and award-winning poet, Castilo is an advocate for undocumented writers.

CASTILO

Born in Mexico, Castilo emigrated with his family to California at age 5. He earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Sacramento and became the first undocumented student to graduate from the Master of Fine Arts program at the University of Michigan.

In 2015, he became a founding member of the Undocupoets campaign, which protested and was instrumental in eliminating publishers' exclusion of undocumented writers from eligibility for most first-book contests.

Castilo noted in an essay about his own writing that in his early career he wrote "safe" poems as part of his attempt to remain invisible. His activism, he said in the same Buzfeed essay, came from wanting other young writers to know that "what they have is beautiful and that their work is important because it stems from them and not from what they read in the white canon."
Castilo has won fellowships from CantoMundo, the Squaw Valley Writer’s Conference and the Vermont Studio Center, and he has taught at the Atlantic Center for the Arts. His chapbook "Dulce" was the winner of the 2017 Drinking Gourd Poetry Prize. He also won the 2017 A. Poulin, Jr. Prize and a Barnes and Noble Writers for Writers Award.

FROSTIC READING SERIES

The Gwen Frostic Reading Series presents acclaimed creative writers from across the nation and beyond. Every year, a diverse range of readings that encompasses poetry, fiction, nonfiction and drama attract both campus and off-campus audiences.

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit w mich.edu/news.

Success@WMU initiative seeking students to serve as peer mentors

CONTACT: DEANNE PUCA
MARCH 13, 2018 | WMU NEWS

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Western Michigan University is now hiring motivated, supportive students to serve as peer mentors for its new Success @ WMU initiative.

Positions pay $10.25 an hour for five to 12 hours per week. The application deadline is Sunday, March 18.

LEARN MORE OR APPLY

WMU faculty and staff are encouraged to nominate students they feel would be positive guides for new students. All nominees will receive an email invitation to apply prior to the application deadline.

NOMINATE A STUDENT
The Success @ WMU initiative will provide a peer mentor to all new first-year, transfer and international students during their first year at WMU. Peer mentors will work with one or two groups of 22 students who are part of the same academic program or college. Some mentors will provide course-specific support with in-class assistance and study sessions.

Specific peer mentor responsibilities include sharing academic success strategies, promoting campus resources, encouraging campus engagement, and helping new students develop a sense of belonging at WMU. Ultimately, peer mentors coach their students on the skills, techniques and strategies for navigating University life in and out of the classroom.

VOLUNTEER TO HELP HIRE SUCCESS @ WMU PEER MENTORS

Faculty and staff interested getting involved with the Success @ WMU initiative are invited to help hire peer mentors. Options to help include conducting interviews or evaluating applications with a rubric. Interviews are currently being planned for Friday through Sunday, March 23-25.

VOLUNTEER

For more information, contact Laura Darrah at laura.darrah@wmich.edu.

For continued updates on the Success @ WMU initiative, visit wmich.edu/president/transformational-initiative-fund/success-wmu.

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit wmich.edu/news.

Regional counseling psychology conference being held at WMU

CONTACT: JEANNE BARON
MARCH 16, 2018 | WMU NEWS
KALAMAZOO, Mich.—The 31st annual Great Lakes Regional Counseling Psychology Conference will be held Friday and Saturday, April 13-14, in Sangren Hall on Western Michigan University's Main Campus.

Those planning to attend may preregister at wmich.edu/greatlakescp or register on-site. The deadline for early registration is 11:59 p.m., EST, Friday, March 23. Early registrants receive a discounted price.

Community members as well as WMU students and employees may attend the 2018 conference, which will include paper presentations, roundtable discussions and poster presentations. This year's theme is "Respectful Dialogues and Beyond: What Are We Doing?"

The theme celebrates counseling psychology's role in engaging in difficult conversations, often around challenging topics and in times of controversy and great need. It also echoes an initiative of the American Psychological Association's Division 17 president, Dr. Arpana G. Inman, who will be a keynote speaker.

KEYNOTE TALKS

- "LGBT Well-Being: The Importance of Research-informed Public Policy Advocacy" will be presented Friday by Dr. Judith Kovach, project director of the Michigan Project for Informed Public Policy. Kovach's address will be in honor of Dr. James M. Croteau, a WMU faculty member who died in 2016 and had been nationally known for his research, training, clinical work and publications that focused on such areas as racism awareness; racial healing; and lesbian, gay and bisexual issues in the workplace and on college campuses.
- "Respectful Dialogues: Holding the Tension" will be presented Saturday by Inman, president of the American Psychological Association's Society of Counseling Psychology. Inman is a professor of Counseling Psychology and chair of the Department of Education and Human Services at Lehigh University.

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Two concurrent pre-conference workshops will be offered Friday. Those planning to attend may register at wmich.edu/greatlakescp or on-site.

- "Reflections on Ethical Dilemmas in Therapy and Supervision" will be presented by Dr. Sharon L. Bowman, professor and chair of counseling psychology, social psychology and counseling at Ball State University.
- "Please Don't Box Me In! Exploring the Importance of Identity and Intersections of Identity in Counseling Relationships" will be presented by Dr. Shannon Chavez-Korell, professor of psychology at the Michigan School of Professional Psychology.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Great Lakes Regional Counseling Psychology Conference is the longest-running annual regional conference of the Society of Counseling Psychology. This year’s event is being hosted...
by WMU’s counseling psychology program. Drs. Kelly McDonnell and Beverly Vandiver, professors in the Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology, are co-chairing the conference.

Prospective attendees may register for one preconference workshop, the conference only, or one preconference workshop and the conference. To register or obtain more information, visit wmich.edu/greatlakescp. Direct questions to Vandiver at beverly.vandiver@wmich.edu or (269) 387-0709.

Free parking will be available behind Sangren Hall in Lot 41. For directions to WMU or a campus map, visit wmich.edu/maps/print.

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit wmich.edu/news.

Saeed honored with distinguished research award

Dr. Fahad Saeed recently received the Distinguished Research and Creative Scholarship Award given by WMU’s Office of the Vice President for Research. Saeed is an assistant professor in the both the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering and Department of Computer Science. He also is the director of the Parallel Computing and Data Science Laboratory and the co-director of the Center for High Performance Computing and Big Data.

Saeed joined WMU in January 2014 after serving as a research fellow at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). He has become an expert in the design and development of algorithmic and high performance computing. His work is expected to have broad impact that will lead to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases with genetic predisposition including cancer, obesity, diabetes, heart disease and mental illness.
“Although still early in his career, Dr. Saeed already has had remarkable accomplishments in bio-medical computation,” said Dr. Houssam Toutanji, dean of the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences. “He has earned a national and international reputation matched by very few researchers at this stage of their career. We greatly appreciate the university recognizing him and the important research he is doing in his field.”

Speaker discusses how families deal with incarceration of other members

CONTACT: DEANNE PUCA
MARCH 23, 2018 | WMU NEWS

CUNNINGHAM

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Dr. Dana Cunningham, licensed clinical psychologist and author, will speak at a pair of events in Kalamazoo Thursday, April 5, on how families deal with the incarceration of family members.

Her presentation, "Beyond the Bars: The Impact of Parental Incarceration," is sponsored by the University-Community Empowerment Center at Western Michigan University, AARP and Northside Ministerial Alliance. Lectures are free and open to the public.

She will speak at 11 a.m. in 4010 Health and Human Services Building on WMU’s East Campus and will follow with a discussion with students, faculty and community members. No registration is required.

Later that day, she will visit the same topic at 6 p.m. at the Kalamazoo County Juvenile Home, 1424 Gull Road. Cunningham will lead a panel of University and community leaders in a discussion about the impact of incarceration on a community, specifically the impact on children. More information and registration are available at wmich.edu/empowerment/bridges.
Cunningham is a licensed psychologist with more than 16 years experience providing therapeutic services to children, adolescents and families. In 2016, she published "A Day I'll Never Forget," a children's book which tells the story of a young boy whose father was suddenly incarcerated. Since 2006, Cunningham has served as the program director of the Prince George's School Mental Health Initiative, which provides intensive school-based counseling and support services to students in special education.

She graduated from J.W. Sexton High School in Lansing and attended Spelman College in Atlanta before obtaining her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT CENTER

The University-Community Empowerment Center at WMU is a research, consultation, and training center that collaborates with individuals, groups and organizations to empower communities to reduce poverty.

Employing research, evaluation, policy analysis, consultation, training and advocacy, the overall goal of the UCEC is to empower distressed communities by assisting them in creating social and economic opportunities through the engagement of community residents, service providers and other stakeholders in collaborative action to reduce poverty.

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit wmich.edu/news.

Kalamazoo's commitment to education topic of panel at WMU

CONTACT: DEANNE PUCA
MARCH 27, 2018 | WMU NEWS
KALAMAZOO, Mich.—The evolution of the Kalamazoo region's commitment to educational equity is the focus of a panel discussion Monday, April 2, on the campus of Western Michigan University.

"Educational Equity: From the 'Kalamazoo Case' to the Kalamazoo Promise and Beyond," is the topic of the event at 6 p.m. in 204 Bernhard Center. The free, public event is part of the Center for the Study of Ethics in Society's lecture series. It is co-sponsored by the WMU Cooley Law School and the College of Education and Human Development.

Co-moderators Dr. Kathy Purnell, WMU instructor of political science, and Dr. Ashley Atkins, assistant professor of philosophy, will facilitate the panelists' discussion of Kalamazoo's educational past all the way to its present. Discussion on the past will include the "Kalamazoo Case" authored by Thomas M. Cooley in 1874 in his role as Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court. This case stood for the principle that communities can opt to use their tax dollars for investments in secondary education. Talk on the present will include the Kalamazoo Promise scholarship program and its commitment to postsecondary education.

The panel will also discuss potential future paths, contemplating what it may mean to embrace a "right to literacy" and an expanded commitment to pre-kindergarten youth to ensure educational equity and access. Panelists will share their thoughts on what a commitment to educational equity means and engage in dialogue on how to map a common future to expand equity and access. Panelists will include:

- **James D. Robb**, general counsel and associate dean of external affairs, WMU Cooley Law School
- **Cyekeia Lee**, director of community collaboration, Kalamazoo Promise
Campus hosts annual Lavender Graduation

KALAMAZOO, Mich.–Western Michigan University's Office of Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgender Student Services will host its annual Lavender Graduation ceremony at 6 p.m. Wednesday, April 18, at the Wesley Foundation.

The free and open celebration recognizes LGBTQ students’ contributions to the University and acknowledges their achievements throughout their college experience. Students are recognized for their leadership, success and achievement. This is also an opportunity to recognize faculty, staff, or WMU groups who have made a significant contribution to the LGBTQ community at the University.

Lavender Graduation was created in 1995 by Dr. Ronni Sanlo at the University of Michigan and has since grown to be celebrated at universities nationwide. Studies have shown that LGBTQ students have a disproportionate rate of attending or completing college if there is a lack of support in their respective communities, families, or universities. Lavender Graduation acknowledges that disparity, celebrates LGBTQ students' identities, and recognizes their academic achievements.
KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Chinese-American poet and novelist Dr. Xuefei Jin will speak on "Displacement as Opportunity" at a lecture at 4 p.m. Thursday, April 5, in 1910 Sangren Hall at Western Michigan University.

Jin, who uses the pen name Ha Jin, is the winner of the prestigious National Book Award and a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. He is director of the creative writing program at Boston University.

His visit is being organized by WMU’s Timothy Light Center for Chinese Studies, and co-sponsored by the WMU Department of English, Haenicke Institute for Global Education and University Center for the Humanities.

For more information, contact Dr. Wei-Chiao Huang, WMU professor of economics, at huang@wmich.edu or (269) 387-5528.

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit wmich.edu/news.
KALAMAZOO, Mich.—It took planes and snowmobiles to get there, but an intrepid group from Western Michigan University recently visited four rural Alaskan villages and prepared 300 tax returns for local residents.

The group, headed by Dr. Fritz Allhoff, professor of philosophy, included four WMU students from Michigan. This was the fourth year Allhoff has led a tax-assistance delegation to remote villages in western Alaska.

The students participating this year were:

- **Kayla Combs**, a senior from Three Rivers majoring in accountancy.
- **Nick Labadie**, a senior from Davison majoring in accountancy.
- **Kayla Poole**, a senior from Jackson majoring in aviation management and operations.
- **Kaylee Ronn**, a junior from Negaunee majoring in finance.

WMU's Department of Philosophy participates in the Internal Revenue Service's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program with help from the University's Haworth College of Business.

In 2018, the group from WMU spent five days working with 300 individuals and families in the villages of Kaltag, Koyuku, Napaskiak and Nulato. Numerous other volunteer groups worked with people in other locations around Alaska.

"Overall, the tax-assistance program services 150 native villages and does about 7,000 returns," Allhoff reports. "Those returns generate about $8 million in refunds for the villagers. Part of the point is that they get their withholdings back because their income is so low."
He adds that the tax preparations take place in rural, indigenous villages that can only be accessed by small planes and snowmobiles, or snow machines, as they're known throughout Alaska.

"It's certainly a great experience, but also an important service project that brings tax support to those in need and who lack resources," Allhoff says. "It’s also a great opportunity for our students to go through pretty comprehensive training and to have a new experience."

In addition to support from WMU’s Haworth College of Business and Department of Philosophy, the program is co-funded by the federal government, Alaska Business Development Center and various native corporations.

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit wmich.edu/news.

WMU to host regional steel bridge, concrete canoe competitions

CONTACT: KARA KUCHINIC
MARCH 29, 2018 | WMU NEWS

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Students from 10 universities in Michigan and Ohio will test their engineering skills during two challenging regional contests Friday through Sunday, April 6-8, at Western Michigan University.
Members of the public are invited to watch as teams compete to build a steel bridge and a concrete canoe as part of the American Society of Civil Engineers North Central Regional Competition. The teams will be competing in a variety of categories in both contests in hopes of advancing to the national finals.

This year's key public events kick off at **9 a.m. Saturday, April 7**, and run throughout the day in Floyd Hall on the University's Parkview Campus. Concrete canoe races will take place from **9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, April 8**, at Ramona Park in Portage.

WMU engineering students participate each year in the ASCE regional competition and have the opportunity to host the event every 10 years. Industry professionals will judge the nine concrete canoe teams and nine steel bridge teams participating for 2018.

"The concrete canoe and steel bridge competitions have a long tradition of fostering teamwork and camaraderie," says Dr. Osama Abudayyeh, WMU professor and chair of civil and construction engineering. "The event provides students with a chance to gain hands-on, practical experience and leadership skills while dealing with real-world engineering issues."

**STEEL BRIDGE TEAM**

The steel bridge team designs, fabricates and constructs a scale-model bridge based on criteria established by the American Society of Civil Engineers and the American Institute of Steel Construction.

The competition involves building a 1:10 scale bridge that is evaluated on lightness, stiffness, construction speed, construction economy, structural efficiency and overall performance. An award is also given for display. WMU’s bridge must be 17 feet with a clearance of 7.5 inches and be able to hold 2,500 pounds.

"We're a relatively young group, but we feel like we've learned a lot from last year," says Jacob Zahm, steel bridge team captain. "We've specifically been focused on making the bridge easier to fabricate and assemble, and we've been making good progress so far. And we're looking forward to the competition this year especially since it's being held at WMU."

**CONCRETE CANOE TEAM**

WMU’s entry in this year's concrete canoe competition is named Golden Opportunity, and for the second year, was produced using a "female" mold rather than the typical "male" mold. The concrete was troweled inside the Styrofoam mold, rather than the outside.

"We have a relatively young team this year, with a lot of newcomers," says Ethan Carpenter, team captain. "We are pushing hard to win this year and get the new team prepared for the future."
The team's canoe will be judged in categories such as hull design and aesthetics as well as its performance in a number of different races. The competition also involves a display and presentation of the concrete canoe, as well as a separate technical paper.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For directions to WMU and campus maps, visit w mich.edu/maps/print. More information about the ASCE regional competition is available from the WMU students spearheading the event. Matthew Moulton, competition chair, may be reached at matthew.d.moulton@wmich.edu. Zahm, steel bridge team captain, may be reached at (616) 438-8771. Carpenter, concrete canoe team captain, may be reached at (616) 401-5503.

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit w mich.edu/news.

Take advantage of global engagement opportunities in April

CONTACT: KOREY FORCE
MARCH 29, 2018 | WMU NEWS

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Western Michigan University and the extended Kalamazoo community will offer numerous global engagement opportunities in April. Highlights include art exhibits, CELCIS conversation circles, jewelry making, family concerts and a choreography showcase.

Opportunities to get globally engaged are published weekly at w mich.edu/global/events by WMU’s Haenicke Institute for Global Education.

SIGN UP FOR A WEEKLY UPDATE
Monday, April 2

- **African American and African studies open house**—11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in 1115 Moore Hall, hosted by the College of Arts and Sciences. Learn about the reinstated major and minor in African American and African studies. Free and open to the public.

- **CELCIS conversation circle**—2 to 3 p.m. in the fourth-floor reception area of Ellsworth Hall, hosted by the Center for English Language and Culture for International Students. Join students learning English in relaxed conversation about local and social topics. Free and open to the public.

- **"Education Equity: From the 'Kalamazoo Case' to the 'Kalamazoo Promise' and Beyond" lecture**—6 p.m. in 204 Bernhard Center, hosted by the Center for the Study of Ethics in Society. Join this lecture series discussion with panelists Jim Robb, general counsel and associate dean of alumni and public relations, WMU Cooley Law School; Cyekeia Lee, director of outreach and partnerships, Kalamazoo Promise; Michael Evans, executive director, Kalamazoo Literacy Council; and Sandra Standish, executive director, KC Ready 4s. Free and open to the public.

- **Introduction to Arabic Language**—6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Kalamazoo Public Library Oshtemo Branch Community Room, 7265 W Main St., Kalamazoo, hosted by the Kalamazoo Public Library. This six-week course is a basic introduction to the Arabic language for beginners. All materials are provided; registration is limited.

Tuesday, April 3

- **"International Research: Opportunities and Challenges," Discover Discovery research workshop**—12:30 to 1:45 at the Fetzer Center, hosted by Research at WMU. This session will provide an overview of some of the opportunities that are available for international partnerships and conducting research. Registration is required by the Friday prior to each workshop.

- **CELCIS conversation circle**—2 to 3 p.m. in the Bernhard Center Bronco Global Lounge, hosted by the Center for English Language and Culture for International Students. Join students learning English in relaxed conversation about local and social topics. Free and open to the public.

Wednesday, April 4

- **"Healthy Relationships" Lyceum Lecture Series**—noon in the Lee Honors College lounge, hosted by the Lee Honors College. Talk given by Dr. Gary Bischof, dean of the Lee Honors College, and Dr. Jou-Chen Chen, family and consumer services. Free and open to the public.

- **CELCIS conversation circle**—2 to 3 p.m. in the fourth-floor reception area of Ellsworth Hall, hosted by the Center for English Language and Culture for International Students. Join students learning English in relaxed conversation about local and social topics. Free and open to the public.

- **"Interviews in Fieldwork" research briefing in global studies**—3 to 4 p.m. in 3025 Brown Hall, hosted by the global and International Studies Program. This talk features Chien-Juh Gu and Greg Veeck. Free and open to the public.

- **Meg Tang Jewelry**—4:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the Kalamazoo Public Library Alma Powell Branch Douglass Community Center, 1000 W. Paterson St., Kalamazoo, hosted by the Kalamazoo Public Library. Make jewelry using found items, wire, and more with local artist Meg Tang. Registration is free.
Thursday, April 5

- **CELCIS conversation circle (women only)**—2 to 3 p.m. in the Bernhard Center Bronco Global Lounge, hosted by the Center for English Language and Culture for International Students. Join students learning English in relaxed conversation about local and social topics. Free and open to the public.

Friday, April 6

- **"Cuba: Culture and Society" lecture**—11 a.m. to noon at the Fountains at Bronson Place, 1700 Bronson Way, Kalamazoo, hosted by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. The lecture will be given by Dr. Kristina Wirtz, professor of Spanish at WMU. Registration is $30 for lecture series; open to the public.

Saturday, April 7

- **Exhibition Opens: Vibrant Bounty, Chinese Folk Art**—11 a.m. at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, 314 S. Park St., Kalamazoo, hosted by the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts. Journey through the Shaanxi Province through folk paintings and artifacts of rural China. Free and open to the public.

Monday, April 9

- **CELCIS conversation circle**—2 to 3 p.m. in the fourth-floor reception area of Ellsworth Hall, hosted by the Center for English Language and Culture for International Students. Join students learning English in relaxed conversation about local and social topics. Free and open to the public.
- **"Classified: Who in the World is Merze Tate?" discussion**—6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Kalamazoo Public Library Eastwood Branch Community Room, 1112 Gayle Ave., Kalamazoo, hosted by the Kalamazoo Public Library. Come hear Sonya Bernard-Hollins as she walks us through her new book and tells us about Merze Tate, the first African American graduate of Western Michigan Teachers College. Free and open to the public.

Tuesday, April 10

- **"Salsa, Soul and Spirit in a Multicultural Age" diversity program**—9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. at Chenery Auditorium, 714 S. Westnedge Ave., Kalamazoo, hosted by Kalamazoo County. Juana Bordas, president of Mestiza Leadership International, is the featured speaker for Kalamazoo County's 20th annual Respecting Differences program, which seeks to illustrate the richness and wisdom that diversity brings to the workplace.
- **"Photographing Potawatomi Regalia" artbreak talk**—noon to 1 p.m. at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, 314 S. Park St., Kalamazoo, hosted by the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts. Photographer Sharon Hoogstraten speaks about her photographic portraits of Potawatomi Indians, with special focus on the designs and meanings of their regalia. Free and open to the public.
- **International Ladies Sports Club**—2 to 3 p.m. at the Student Recreation Center, hosted by International Student Activities. Bond with women from all over the world through sports and exercise. Free and open to all women in the community.
- **CELCIS conversation circle**—2 to 3 p.m. in the Bernhard Center Bronco Global Lounge, hosted by the Center for English Language and Culture for International Students. Join students learning English in relaxed conversation about local and social topics. Free and open to the public.
Wednesday, April 11

- **CELCIS conversation circle**—2 to 3 p.m. in the fourth-floor reception area of Ellsworth Hall, hosted by the Center for English Language and Culture for International Students. Join students learning English in relaxed conversation about local and social topics. Free and open to the public.
- "**Environmental Justice**" talk—6 to 8 p.m. in the Trimpe Building Multicultural Center, hosted by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. The talk will be given by Laura Donders, intern coordinator in the Office for Sustainability. Free and open to the public.
- **Contemporary Religious Art in Ethiopia art league**—6:30 p.m. at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, 314 S. Park St., Kalamazoo, hosted by the KIA. Learn about Ethiopian religious art from Dr. Raymond Silverman, the founding Director of the University of Michigan's Museum Studies Program. Open to the public; $12 for the general public, $10 for KIA members, and $3 for students.
- "**America Divided**" film festival—7 to 9 p.m. at the Bernhard Center North Ballroom, hosted by the Walker Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations, FemiNOW, FOCUS Kalamazoo, and Sincerely From. Attend a film festival focusing on inequality in everyday lives with "A House Divided" a movie about New York City's affordability crisis. Doors open at 6:30 p.m; Free and open to the public.

Thursday, April 12

- **CELCIS conversation circle (women only)**—2 to 3 p.m. in the Bernhard Center Bronco Global Lounge, hosted by the Center for English Language and Culture for International Students. Join students learning English in relaxed conversation about local and social topics. Free and open to the public.
- "**Inequality, Citizenship and the Promise of Education** talk—7 p.m. in 2452 Knauss Hall, hosted by the University Center for the Humanities. The talk will be given by Daniella Allen, professor of government and in the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University and director of the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics. Free and open to the public.

Saturday, April 14

- **Kalamazoo Color Run 5k**—10 a.m. at Arcadia Creek Festival Place, 145 E. Water St., Kalamazoo, hosted by the Kalamazoo Color Run. Bringing people together and make the world a happier, healthier place by creating an experience that’s more about the memories you make than your mile per minute, we made running feel accessible to a broader demographic. Registration costs may vary.
- **Spring Choreographer Showcase**—6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Rootead Enrichment Center, 1501 Fulford St., Kalamazoo, hosted by Rootead. Witness movement arts from Kalamazoo and surrounding communities. Tickets are $8 to $10; open to the public.

Monday, April 16

- "**Michigan, My Michigan: A History of the State- British Control to Territorial Michigan**" discussion—7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Kalamazoo Public Library Van Deuesen Room, 315 S. Rose St., Kalamazoo, hosted by the Kalamazoo Public Library. Join Lynn Houghton for a multisession journey looking at all aspects of Michigan's growth. Free and open to the public.
Thursday, April 19

- **American Promise Panel Discussion**—7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Kalamazoo Public Library Van Deusen Room, 315 S. Rose St., Kalamazoo, hosted by the Kalamazoo Public Library. Watch clips from the "American Promise" documentary and hear from a panel of community members on these issues, moderated by Jacob Pinney-Johnson of the Fatherhood Network. Free and open to the public.

Friday, April 20

- **"Nomadic Forms: Sculpture Inspired from Tibetan Plateau" lecture**—11 a.m. to noon at the Fountains at Bronson Place, 1700 Bronson Way, Kalamazoo, hosted by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. The lecture will be given by Patrick Wilson, sculpture-area coordinator in the Gwen Frostic School of Art and assistant professor of art. Registration is $30 for lecture series; open to the public.

Saturday, April 21

- **Chasing Chopin concert**—7:30 p.m. at the Little Theatre, hosted by the Gilmore Keyboard Festival. Alpin Hong performs a daring mashup of autobiographical storytelling and dazzling piano performance. Tickets are $5 for adults and kids are free; open to the public.

Sunday, April 22

- **Vibrant Bounty: Chinese Folk Art from the Shaanxi Region public tour**—2 to 3 p.m. in the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts galleries, 314 S. Park St., Kalamazoo, hosted by the KIA. Explore the KIA's collection of Chinese Folk Art art on a docent-led tour. Free and open to the public.

Thursday, April 26

- **Christian Sands Trio Concert**—at 6:30 and 9:30 p.m. at Bell's Brewery, 355 E. Kalamazoo Ave., Kalamazoo, hosted by the Gilmore Keyboard Festival. Listen to jazz pianist Christian Sands fuse swing, bebop, progressive, Brazilian, and Afro-Cuban styles. Tickets are $30; open to the public.

Sunday, April 29

- **Daniil Trifonov concert**—2 p.m. in the Dalton Center Recital Hall, hosted by the Gilmore Keyboard Festival. Listen to Russian pianist Daniil Trifonov play the music of Bartók, Prokofiev, Messiaen, and more. Tickets are $35, $25, and $15, reserved seating.

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit [wmich.edu/news](http://wmich.edu/news).