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## Connections, 06/2016

College of Health and Human Services

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June 2016

[Introducing the Department of Speech, Hearing, and Language Sciences](#)

Starting this fall, the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology will officially change its name to the Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences.



[Professor emerita receives 2016 Outstanding Alumni award](#)

**Sandra Edwards**, professor emerita in occupational therapy, has been named the 2016 Outstanding Alumna by the School of Occupational Therapy at the University of Florida. The award is given annually to an outstanding alumni as decided by the faculty in the OT school.



[Paula Andrasi named new coordinator of Holistic programs](#)

Associate professor **Paula Andrasi** has been named the new program coordinator for the Integrative Holistic Health and Wellness programs in the School of Interdisciplinary Health Programs at WMU.



### [School of Social Work earns accreditation reaffirmation](#)

At its June meeting, the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) accreditation commission reviewed undergraduate and graduate-level social work programs in the School of Social Work at WMU. The accreditation for both programs was affirmed for eight years, without conditions or progress reports, the maximum period available from the CSWE.



### [OT student competes in annual Maddak Awards program](#)

WMU occupational therapy student, **Erin Webster-Flynn**, competed in the 42nd annual Maddak Awards, where OT professionals and students to submit products they have invented or adapted to assist people with disabilities or recovering from illnesses and injuries.



### [AHEC provides gas cards to support rural clinical rotations](#)

The Western Regional Area Health Center (AHEC) is helping CHHS students get to clinical rotations in rural and underserved areas of Michigan. AHEC purchased \$1800 in gas cards to help students in clinical rotations in rural areas where health care services are often difficult to access.



### [WMU program brings value to Southwest Michigan](#)

On any given day there are many jobs going unfilled in Michigan's Great Southwest. The team at Western Michigan University's Southwest regional location in Benton Harbor are working hard to make sure that some of the jobs of the future won't meet that same fate.



### [CHHS in Social Media](#)



**Dr. Nicki Nelson** at her WMU retirement ceremony. We'll also be having her IHS retirement ceremony at the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Research Conference on July 29th.

We're looking forward to seeing everybody again !!!

[Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Health Sciences](#) via [Facebook](#)

In other news

Here are some other WMU news articles you might be interested in:

- [WMU research team wins grant to study impact of speed on crashes](#)
- [New Michigan budget includes WMU funding for new geologic mapping](#)
- [Newly revamped Western Wellness effort takes fitness and wellbeing to new heights](#)

[New Facebook page](#)

The College of Health and Human Services has a Facebook page! Please take a moment to "like" our page to stay in the loop.



## Introducing the Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences

Starting this fall, the [Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology](#) will officially change its name to the **Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences**.

The change has come about for a number of reasons, according to associate dean, **Dr. Ann Tyler**. "The current name reflected the professions, which are speech-language pathology and audiology, but omitted the component devoted to language development and disorders," she said. "The new name not only includes language, but also better reflects the disciplinary foundation of the professions in the sciences."



*Audiology research assistants in action*

According to research conducted by the department, only about 5% of similar programs across the country are still called Speech Pathology and Audiology. The majority are now called "Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences" or "Communication Sciences and Disorders."

The degrees offered in the department remain unchanged, as do the curricula of those programs. Both the audiology and speech-language pathology graduate programs are ranked in the top 50 such programs by [U.S. News & World Report](#).

The new name was selected by faculty in the department in May 2015. The name change will be official on Sept. 6, the first day of the fall 2016 semester.

# Professor emerita receives 2016 Outstanding Alumna award

**Sandra Edwards**, professor emerita in occupational therapy, has been honored as the 2016 Outstanding Alumna by the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of Florida. The award is given annually to an outstanding alumni selected by the chair and faculty in the occupational therapy department in the College of Public Health and Health Professions.

Professor Edwards was nominated for the prestigious award based on her "excellence in professional practice and exceptional leadership in the advancement of the public health and health professions," according to a letter from Michael Perri, Ph.D., dean of the College of Public Health and Health Professions.

"It is an amazing honor to receive this from the University of Florida's Occupational Therapy Department," said Professor Edwards. "I am quite humbled by this validation of my work."

After graduating from the University of Florida in 1965, Edwards worked at Boston's Beth Israel Hospital, and El Portal del Sol School for Cerebral Palsied and Orthopaedically Handicapped Children in San Mateo, California. She became certified in Ayres' sensory integration theory and the Bobath concept of neurodevelopment and also earned a master's degree in special education before joining the OT faculty at Western Michigan University.

Professor Edwards enjoyed an international and national reputation for her clinical research primarily in the area of pediatrics and interdisciplinary health care. She received the CHHS Faculty Teaching Excellence Award in 2005. In 1996, she became a Fellow of the American Occupational Therapy Association (FAOTA) for creative activities, clinical practice, research and scholarly activities.

She taught numerous graduate and undergraduate courses for 32 years at WMU until she retired in 2006. Faculty, students and friends established the Sandra J. Edwards Scholarship in 2006, and later, she and her husband, Al Garcia, contributed to the [Sandra J. Edwards Endowed Scholarship](#) for occupational therapy students in 2009.

Professor Edwards will travel to Gainesville for an awards ceremony in September.



# Paula Andrasi named new coordinator of holistic program

Associate professor **Dr. Paula Andrasi** has been named the new program coordinator for the integrative holistic health and wellness program in the School of Interdisciplinary Health Programs at WMU. She assumed the position at the beginning of the summer I session.

Dr. Andrasi has been on faculty with the integrative holistic health and wellness program at WMU since 2011 and, before that, at the University Counseling and Testing Center since 1994. She received her bachelor's degree in psychology from Michigan State University and her master's degree, SPADA certificate and doctorate in counseling psychology from WMU.



*Dr. Paula Andrasi*

Paula and the holistic health faculty continue to work on enhancing the undergraduate minor and graduate certificate. "I'm working with the rest of the faculty to evaluate our current courses," she said. "We need to make sure we're meeting objectives and have clear assessment criteria so we can effectively demonstrate the academic rigor of our programs."

The School of Interdisciplinary Health Programs has long contemplated the expansion of the integrative holistic health and wellness program to include an undergraduate major. In addition, Dr. Andrasi hopes to expand the programs in other ways, like partnering with other departments across campus to offer courses that complement their core academic programs.

The integrative holistic health and wellness program was established in 1982, making it one of the first programs of its kind in the nation. Since then, the program has evolved, responding to new discoveries in the discipline and to emerging health care trends. Learn more at [wmich.edu/holistic](http://wmich.edu/holistic).

## School of Social Work earns accreditation reaffirmation

At its June meeting, the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) accreditation commission reviewed the undergraduate and graduate-level social work programs in the [School of Social Work](#) at WMU. The accreditation for both programs was affirmed for 8 years, without conditions or progress reports, the maximum period available from CSWE.

The announcement capped a three-year process which entailed countless hours of research, preparation and documentation from the school.



"There were many individual and collective contributions made towards the re-accreditation process," said **Dr.**

**Hector Diaz**, director of the School of Social Work. "Dean Washington was especially supportive, personally reviewing all of our documentation before submission."

Since the last time the programs were accredited, the CSWE updated their criteria, requiring curricula to be competency-based. Previously, the social work curricula were based on course objectives, necessitating the revision of curricula of all 56 social work courses offered at WMU.

In addition to curriculum changes, the School of Social Work's accreditation task force also developed a project timetable and an entirely new system for evaluating student outcomes.

"We look forward to eight more productive and prosperous years," said Dr. Diaz. "Now we can now focus on creative activities such as strategic planning, fundraising and development, curriculum revision and refinement, and program creation."

#### **About Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Accreditation**

CSWE's Commission on Accreditation (COA) has developed accreditation standards that define competent preparation and ensures that social work programs meet them. In accordance with the requirements of CSWE's recognition body, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the CSWE Office of Social Work Accreditation (OSWA) administers a multistep accreditation process that involves program self-studies, site visits, and COA reviews. For more information, visit [cswe.org](http://cswe.org).

## **OT student competes in annual Maddak Awards program**

WMU occupational therapy student, **Erin Webster-Flynn**, competed in the [42nd annual Maddak Awards](#) at the 2016 AOTA Conference, held in Chicago last April.

The Maddak Awards Program, held in conjunction with the AOTA Annual Conference & Expo, invites OT professionals and students to submit products they have invented or adapted to assist people with disabilities or recovering from illnesses and injuries. Entries are



*Erin Webster-Flynn and Dr. Debra Lindstrom*

judged by a panel of volunteer OT professionals and cash prizes are awarded.

Erin submitted a device that she developed as part of the Therapeutic Use of Technology class. Her device, the Foot Buddy, positions the foot to make it easier for patients to cut their own toenails. And while she didn't win in the competition, she still found the experience to be very valuable.

"I received more than I bargained for," said Erin. "Not only was I able to showcase my invention, The Foot Buddy, but I also had the opportunity to network with and learn from other students and seasoned occupational therapists."

**Dr. Debra Lindstrom**, Erin's instructor in the technology class at WMU, was also pleased with Erin's experience. "Erin is the first WMU student that I know of who has ever entered a device into the contest. OT practitioners are always inventing and adapting to make things better for their clients. Erin's work here is an excellent example of that sort of innovative thinking."



*The Foot Buddy*

At the competition, Erin was able to interact with contest judges and conference goers. Their questions and feedback allowed her to think critically about her invention.

"This whole experience was very informative, inspiring and encouraging," Erin said. "I am excited about the opportunities that await me in this profession. I look forward to creating products to improve quality of life and allow individuals to live their lives to the fullest!"

## **AHEC provides gas cards to support rural clinical rotations**

The [Western Regional Area Health Center \(AHEC\)](#) is helping CHHS students get to clinical rotations in rural and underserved areas of Michigan.

AHEC purchased \$1800 in gas cards to help physician assistant students who are on clinical rotations in rural areas where health care services are often difficult to access. These locations are 20 minutes to two hours away from WMU's main campus in Kalamazoo, which can present a tremendous financial burden on traveling students.

"One of our goals at AHEC is connecting health care students with underserved populations," said **Lisa Brennan**, executive director of the Western Regional AHEC, located in WMU's downtown Grand Rapids location. "The financial relief provided by these gas cards obviously helps the students, but it also helps deepen the relationship between the College of Health and Human Services and these smaller, rural communities in West Michigan."

The funds to purchase the gas cards came from a Health Resources and Service Administration grant through AHEC. The program aims to introduce students to clinical positions in rural areas in need of health care professionals, in hopes that they may return to practice in these areas after graduating. Twelve WMU physician assistant students have participated in the program so far.

#### About AHEC

The Western Regional Area Health Education Center at Western Michigan University offers programs to enhance health care provider knowledge and to introduce health care careers to students. AHEC is administered by the College of Health and Human Services through the School of Interdisciplinary Health Programs. In April, AHEC and CHHS [announced a new Health Sciences Summer Program](#) to introduce CHHS programs to high school graduates from underserved communities in West Michigan.