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## Inquiry, April 2001

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# INQUIRY

Investigating Research, Outreach, and Education Activities at Western Michigan University

## INQUIRY

is published monthly by the Office of the Vice President for Research and the Graduate College, for faculty and student researchers and graduate advisers.

## OUR MISSION

- promote the alliance of research and education throughout the University
- nurture the development of research skills throughout the University
- encourage students, staff, and faculty to conduct research that will advance knowledge, learning, and discovery at Western Michigan University
- support outreach programs that use research to solve real-life problems throughout the world – in our community, the region, the state, the nation, and beyond

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# THE THIRD COAST WRITING PROJECT

## Making Winning Teachers

As it enters its eighth year at WMU, the Third Coast Writing Project (TCWP) continues to make a difference in the lives of teachers and students all across southwest Michigan. The project, founded at Western in 1994 by WMU associate professor of English Ellen Brinkley, is one of 167 sites across the country supported by the National Writing Project (NWP), a nationwide professional development program for teachers. The goal of the TCWP at Western is to improve the teaching and uses of writing, from kindergarten through the University level, through a variety of programs that form local and national networks of support for teachers.

One such program is the Invitational Summer Institute, a month-long retreat which brings up to 25 successful teachers from southwest Michigan to WMU, where they lead workshops for each other, read and discuss current theory and research on the best classroom practices, and focus on their own writing.

"At the end of the Institute, many participants are ready to become teacher-consultants, with the confidence to teach other teachers," Brinkley explains. Since 1994, more than 120 teachers have been through the Summer Institute, and the project just keeps growing.

In December 1997, Brinkley and a team of eight TCWP teacher-consultants applied for and won a grant from the NWP and the Annenberg Rural Challenge. This grant, totaling close to \$38,000; funded a new project called "Rural Voices, Country Schools," which allowed TCWP teachers to work with five other teams from NWP sites around the country. At week-long retreats in California, New Mexico, and Michigan, they discussed issues that rural teachers face and "learned how to look at our classrooms and communities as sites for research, where we determine the best teaching strategies through observing what is happening there," explains Pen Campbell, a teacher at Lake Michigan Catholic High School in St. Joseph.

"In other words," adds Renee Callies, who teaches at Gull Lake Middle School, "the project helped us to become not only teachers, but teacher/researchers." (Cont'd on page 2)



From left to right: Renee Callies, Pen Campbell, and TCWP director Ellen Brinkley

*"The Third Coast Writing Project is as much about empowering teachers as it is about the teaching of writing."*

*– Dr. Ellen Brinkley  
director, TCWP*

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## GRADUATE STUDENT HEALTH CARE New Benefit Package Effective Fall 2001



The Graduate College has announced the addition of a health care benefit package for graduate student appointees, effective Fall 2001. According to Dr. William Wiener, senior associate dean, graduate student appointees and doctoral associates will receive a policy underwritten by The MEGA Life and Health Insurance Company, similar to the one currently available for student purchase through the Sindecuse Health Center. Western's policy with MEGA Life is currently undergoing revision, and final details of the policy's provisions and enrollment procedures will be forthcoming as they become available.

"The Graduate Student Advisory Committee (GSAC) has been talking with The Graduate College about the need for health care for graduate assistants with appointments," Wiener explained. "GSAC explained to me that health care is the single most important benefit

we could provide for assistants and doctoral associates."

The University and graduate appointees will share the premium cost (\$646) based on a sliding scale linked to the level of appointment. The scale is as follows:

Appointment Level	University Cost Share	Student Cost Share
1.0	\$496	\$150
0.75	\$496	\$150
0.67	\$421	\$225
0.50	\$346	\$300

The student premium cost share will be charged to student accounts at the beginning of the Fall and Winter semesters, each payment covering a six-month period. Appointees will have the option not to elect this benefit by not enrolling in the program. Dependents and family members of graduate appointees may purchase health care coverage separately.

"It is our hope that the addition of this benefit will increase the competitiveness of our awards and enable the University to attract the best students to our programs," Wiener said. ■

### MAKING WINNING TEACHERS (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

On the heels of the Rural Voices award, Callies and the Rural Voices team won a \$17,850 grant from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs. "We used the grant to bring poets and fiction writers into schools to work with student writers," says Callies. "Then we collected writing from students, community members, and teachers all around south Michigan and compiled a book of 'sense of place' stories and poems." The book, *Home and Other Places*, was published in 1996 by WMU's New Issues Press.

After this experience, Callies found that "the idea of grant writing was no longer so overwhelming." She, along with other teacher-consultants, have subsequently garnered for the TCWP many locally-funded grants from such sources as the Gull Lake Community Foundation, the State of Michigan Academic Service Learning Project Education Initiative, the Leonardelli Family Foundation, the Kalamazoo Foundation, the Guido and Elizabeth Binda Foundation (Battle Creek), and the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo.

"We've just gotten word of continued funding from the NWP for our 2001-2002 programs," Brinkley says. "In addition to our annual renewal grant, we've gotten funding for an exciting new summer institute that will teach K-12th grade teachers a unique process that blends storytelling, writing and digital media. And we've gotten a little funding beyond that to support the Third Coast Writing Project's technology needs." ■

# OUTSTANDING GRADUATE TEACHERS, SCHOLARS HONORED

On Wednesday, April 11, The Graduate College, the Graduate Studies Council, and the Graduate Student Advisory Committee (GSAC) held an awards ceremony/reception to honor the 2000–2001 recipients of the Graduate Student Awards for Teaching Effectiveness and the Graduate Research and Creative Scholar Awards.

“This is our way of thanking these outstanding students for the wisdom they bring to us,” said Dr. Donald E. Thompson, vice president for research and dean of The Graduate College, who was on hand to give out the awards.

Both awards were established by the Graduate Studies Council of the Faculty Senate to acknowledge graduate students’ contributions to the scholarly and artistic productivity and the teaching mission of Western Michigan University.

“It is important to realize that these students constitute only a small proportion of those WMU graduate students whose performance merits high commendation,” said Thompson. “Each department could nominate only one student at each degree level for each award – a difficult decision when there are so many fine students.” The 2000–2001 recipients are:

## The All-University Graduate Teachers

- Amanda Bigelow – Political Science
- M. Lynn Breyfogle – Mathematics and Statistics
- Marcel Brouwers – English
- Pedro Burnay – Electrical and Computer Engineering
- Miguel Centellas – Political Science
- Sarah Dempsey – Communication
- Joseph Duris – Biological Sciences
- Michael Livingston – Medieval Studies
- Catherine Merovich – Biological Sciences
- Douglas Phillips – Music
- Deborah Renard – Counselor Edu. and Counseling Psych.
- Heather Sawyer – Health, Physical Edu. and Recreation
- Susan Snycerski – Psychology
- Mark Worrall – Geosciences

## The Department Scholars

- Amanda Bigelow – Political Science
- Biljana Bujanovic – Paper and Printing Science and Eng.
- Nelson Class-Melendez – Anthropology
- Julian Cox – Art
- Eric Forward – Geography
- Julio Garcia – Foreign Languages and Literatures
- James Gavan – History
- Alketa Hysenbegasi – Economics
- R. Lanai Jennings – Psychology
- Satish Kumar Jeyachandran – Electrical and Computer Eng.
- Stephanie Kerbel – Speech Pathology and Audiology
- Aniruddha Khandekar – Paper and Printing Sci. and Eng.
- Cheryl Lauber – Public Affairs and Administration
- Georgios Loizides – Sociology
- Min Lu – Mechanical and Aeronautical Eng.
- Emily MacDonald – Psychology
- Cynthia Phillips – Educational Studies
- Jason Rapelje – Sociology
- Jana Rowntree – Comparative Religion
- Jonathan Scott – Management
- Julie Stahlhut – Biological Sciences
- Sandra Standish – Family and Consumer Sciences
- William Van Sickle – Geosciences

## The All-University Scholars

- Dalene Allebaugh – Political Science
- M. Lynn Breyfogle – Mathematics and Statistics
- Laurentiu Cucos – Computer Science
- Lori Evesque – Computer Science
- Joseph Horak – Counselor Education and Counseling Psych.
- Kevin Kain – History
- Andrew Kozlowski – Geosciences
- Lydia Melvin – English
- Ryan Olson – Psychology
- Donald Jason Sloane – Comparative Religion
- Erica Wehrwein – Biological Sciences
- Marco Wiedenhoeft – Physics

## The Department Graduate Teachers

- Khaled Abdel-Kader – Economics
- James Atkison – Paper and Printing Sci. and Eng.
- Timothy Bower – Sociology
- Cynthia Foor – Anthropology
- Joshua Foote – Chemistry
- Kimberlee Fountaine – Psychology
- Eric Howe – Science Studies
- Jill Jepsen – Art
- Konstantinos Kokkinos – Computer Science
- Jason Messana – Comparative Religion
- Ernie Morse – Computer Science
- Carmen Muñoz – Foreign Languages and Literatures
- Maureen O’Brien – History
- Kathryn Potoczak – Psychology
- Gayle Rhineberger – Sociology
- Donald Jason Sloane – Comparative Religion
- Gerald Unterreiner – Geosciences

## Calendar

<b>DATE</b>	<b>EVENT</b>
Saturday, April 21	Winter commencement
Monday, April 30	Spring session begins
Wednesday, May 2	Protocol receipt deadline for Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (Contact Vicki Janson, research compliance coordinator, at 387-8293 for more information)
Friday, May 4	Deadline to schedule dissertation defense for June 2001 graduation
Tuesday, May 8	Electronic Thesis/Dissertation workshop, 9:00–10:30 A.M., METL lab, 2nd floor University Computing Center (To register, call 387-8206 or email abigail.letcher@wmich.edu at least 24 hours in advance)
Tuesday, May 15	Deadline to submit nomination for George and Beatrice Fisher Gerontology Dissertation Prize (Call Kevin Vichales at 387-8208 for information)
Friday, May 18	Last day for doctoral students to hold dissertation defense for June graduation
Friday, May 25	Defended dissertations and theses due in The Graduate College for June graduation
Monday, May 28	Memorial Day recess (University closed)



Lynn Breyfogle, a 2000–2001 recipient of both an All-University Scholars Award and an All-University Graduate Teachers Award, talks with Dr. Jay A. Wood, chair of the department of mathematics and statistics.

### *Just A Reminder:*



- Detailed reports of all externally funded awards approved by the Board of Trustees can now be viewed at the OVPR Data Central Web site, located at <http://research.wmich.edu/datacentral>. On-line reports from June–December 2000 are now available.
- *Inquiry* is going on summer hiatus, and publication will resume next fall.

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