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## College of Arts and Sciences E-News Issue 09: January 2014

College of Arts and Sciences

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# College of Arts and Sciences

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*E-News Issue 9: Jan. 2014*



Global international studies program transfers to the College of Arts and Sciences.

## *CAS News*

Global and international studies program transfers to the College of Arts and Sciences  
Early graduation for Chris Boes '13 wins Grand Rapids' Most Inspiring Story of 2013  
WMU hosts Islam in Global Perspectives speakers series  
Science and Mathematics Program Improvement unit receives grants totaling \$529,000  
WMU mourns loss of faculty member Anthony Ellis

## *Alumni Profiles*

Journalism alumna, Lucia Rios '02 wins national video contest  
Public relations graduate, Carol Hurley '88 celebrates 25 years with Grainger

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Update your  
information



# Global and International Studies Transferred to the College of Arts and Sciences



The Haenicke Institute for Global Education and the College of Arts and Sciences are pleased to announce the transfer of the Global and International Studies program to the College of Arts and Sciences. Following a period of significant growth in the Haenicke Institute, all aspects of the administration of the GIS program now reside in the college, including advising, scheduling and curricular development and assessment. The institute and the college will work together to ensure a smooth transition and to provide students with a quality interdisciplinary education. Dr. Cathryn Bailey, associate dean, will serve as the GIS interim director during the transition with

Dr. Laura Hastings, assistant professor of political science, providing additional leadership as the GIS assistant director.

## WMU student's early graduation ceremony wins Grand Rapids' 'Most Inspiring Story of 2013'

[http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2013/12/wmu\\_students\\_early\\_graduation.html](http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2013/12/wmu_students_early_graduation.html)

# Islam in Global Perspectives

The Islam in Global Perspectives speaker series calls together experts from a range of scholarly and activist backgrounds to examine how people use Islam as a globalized moral, legal, and cultural system in situations of plurality, minoritization and social change. The goal of the series is to spark campus and community-wide discussion on themes critical to understanding contemporary Muslim cultures and societies, as well as to foster a network of scholars, activists and leaders who are located in and around Michigan.

All lectures are free and open to the public. They will take place on Thursdays from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the WMU Multicultural Center in [Trimpe Hall](#), 1081 Knollwood Avenue. Parking is free to all in lots 39 and 100. Light refreshments will be provided. For any questions, please contact [Alisa Perkins](#).

See a complete list of our [upcoming speakers](#).

## *Sponsors*

This series is sponsored by the Department of Comparative Religion at Western Michigan University. In addition, partner sponsors are:

- Center for African Development Policy Research, WMU
- Center for the Study of Ethics in Society, WMU
- College of Arts and Sciences, WMU
- WMU departments of Anthropology; Educational Leadership, Research and Technology; Gender and Women's Studies; Sociology; Spanish; and World Languages and Literatures
- Department of Religion, Kalamazoo College
- Graduate students of comparative religion
- Barbara Hasan, in memory of Zamir Hasan
- KNOW: Kalamazoo Non-Violent Opponents of War
- Lee Honors College, WMU
- Muslim Student Association, WMU
- Office of Diversity and Inclusion, WMU
- Office of the Provost, WMU
- Parking Services, WMU

# WMU office lands two NSF grants to boost teaching of science

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by Mark Schwerin  
December 13, 2013 | WMU News



*The grants will assist with the study of teaching of STEM disciplines.*

KALAMAZOO—Western Michigan University's **Science and Mathematics Program Improvement** unit has received two grants totaling \$529,000 from the National Science Foundation to enhance teaching and help retain students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics—the STEM disciplines.

The grants will fund two portions of a common project called Automated Analysis of Constructed Responses III. Prior work under the common project also was funded by the NSF.

## ***Six-university team***

WMU will be part of a team consisting of faculty from six universities across the country carrying out research intended to assist science, technology, engineering and mathematics faculty in understanding and responding to student thinking and misconceptions regarding major concepts covered in their undergraduate coursework. WMU's Science and Mathematics Program Improvement will serve as external evaluators for the project.

Michigan State University is the lead institution. In addition to WMU and MSU, partners include the University of Southern Florida, the University of Colorado Boulder, the University of Maine and the State University of New York at Stony Brook. WMU's Science and Mathematics Program Improvement is entirely grant-funded, and the two grants will give a big boost to SAMPI's bottom line.

"A huge percentage of students drop out of science majors after their first year," says Dr. Mary Anne Sydlik, SAMPI director and head of WMU's evaluation team. "STEM undergrads struggle, for a number of reasons, which in turn can lead to low grades and the impulse to transfer into non-STEM majors."

Part of the problem is that the multiple-choice tests used in large classes do not always reflect whether a student fully understands the underlying concepts represented in individual questions. Faculty using multiple-choice questions do not get the feedback on student thinking, particularly misconceptions, needed to support students' mastery of the subject. The NSF-funded initiative is designed to allow faculty to use an automated system that analyzes students' written answers to questions and then provides a report documenting where the class as a whole needs more assistance with difficult topics or concepts.

## ***Project goals***

The project has two main goals. One is to continue creating and validating questions for use in introductory biology, chemistry, chemical engineering and statistics courses and to develop a Web portal to analyze students' written answers to homework, quizzes and test questions. The second goal is to form discipline-based learning communities for biology, chemistry, statistics and engineering faculty interested in new methods of assessment and using automated analysis to inform their teaching. The research team will determine the extent to which participation in the faculty learning community impacts a sustained adoption of the new assessment tools and changes in how participating faculty address student difficulties and misconceptions.

WMU Science and Mathematics Program Improvement will work closely with project team members as they develop and implement the effort. SAMPI's evaluation work will focus on documenting the initiative's impact on the project team and participating faculty, whether the project is carried out as intended, the strengths and limitations of the initiative, and the project's potential impact on prevailing models of undergraduate STEM education.

# **Faculty member Anthony Ellis dies, campus memorial service planned**

by Cheryl Roland

January 8, 2014 | WMU News



**Dr. Anthony Ellis**, associate professor of English and an expert on Renaissance literature died **Jan. 7** in Worcester, Mass. He was 46.

A private burial has taken place and a celebration of his life is being planned for Ellis, who battled leukemia for the past two years. A campus memorial service will be held later this semester.

## ***Anthony Ellis***

Ellis, who joined the WMU faculty in 2005, taught courses on Shakespeare and the history of drama. Until shortly before his death, he served as associate editor of the journal *Comparative Drama*. He is the author of the 2009 book "Old Age, Masculinity and Early Modern Drama," and he published and lectured internationally. He received a Folger Shakespeare Library Maccioli Fellowship and a WMU faculty research grant for his work

on early Venetian drama.

Ellis earned a bachelor's degree from Stonehill College, a master's from the University of Richmond and a doctoral degree in English literature from Loyola University.

## ***Services***

A campus memorial service is planned for **2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 25**, at WMU's Kanley Chapel.



Lucia M. Rios (*BA '02, Journalism*) has always dreamed of writing a book, and she is now one step closer to that goal — as the winner of the National Disability Institute's third annual My American Dream Video Contest.

Rios, a community access specialist at Holland's Disability Network Lakeshore and a freelance journalist, was one of five national finalists in National Disability Institute's video contest encouraging persons with disabilities to highlight their American dreams to show that working toward your dreams is something all Americans share.

Rios's video received the most votes on the contest website, making her the grand prize winner of \$1,000, a digital tablet of her choice, and sessions with a mentor to help her move toward her dream. Rios, who has spina bifida, shared in her video her dream of writing a book about the disability experience and her life as a person with a disability.

While at Western Michigan University, Rios majored in journalism. "Writing is something that was always important to me," she says. "I found my voice through writing."

Rios will be mentored by National Public Radio News Investigations Correspondent Joseph Shaprio, a 31-year industry veteran and author of the award-winning *NO PITY: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement*.

## Giving Back with Grainger

12/17/2013

Carol Hurley (*BS '88, Public Relations*) will celebrate 25 years of service with Grainger next April, but she's done more than just serve her employer, she's been serving her local community at the same time.



"My education at Western Michigan University laid the foundation for a successful career and I believe strongly in the 'giving back philosophy.' I've never forgotten the advice and guidance I was given along the way as I struggled to pay for my own four-year education," said Hurley. "I was not given an education—I earned my education."

"Within three months of graduation, I started working for Grainger, in April 1989, when they opened up a new branch location in Kalamazoo," Hurley said. "My first position with the company was a customer service phone agent and I soon moved up to a supervisory position. In 1993, I became a Customer

Service Manager and in 1996, was named the Branch Manager. I became the second woman branch manager for Grainger in the state of Michigan."

Grainger is a business-to-business distributor of products used to maintain, repair, or operate facilities. Millions of businesses and institutions worldwide rely on Grainger for pumps, motors, hand tools, janitorial supplies, fasteners and much more. These customers represent a broad collection of industries including healthcare, manufacturing, government, and hospitality. More than 4,000 manufacturers supply Grainger with more than 1 million products that are stocked in Grainger's branches and distribution centers or sourced through a network of suppliers.

"Grainger has always been a champion of its local communities, and our people are committed to making a difference by utilizing their time and talents. We make a difference locally by using our resources and expertise to partner with and support communities where we operate," said Hurley. "In 2007, I was a member of the Grainger Community Grant Program pilot working with The Grainger Foundation with the national roll-out of the Grainger Community Grant Program to address local community needs throughout the United States."

The Grainger Foundation is an independent private foundation that was established in 1949 by William W. Grainger, the Company's founder. Under the Program, Grainger's branch managers identify charitable organizations in their local communities and make recommendations to the Foundation for grants ranging from \$1,000 up to \$10,000. As a result of recommendations submitted by branch managers in 2012, the Foundation made over 850 grants totaling \$6.6 million to a wide variety of health and human services, civic, and educational organizations.

"The overall need in every community is great," Hurley commented. "Over the last few years, the needs have steadily increased while tough economic times in Michigan persist. Grainger team members live and work here and with the partnership of The Grainger Foundation we can truly make a difference and an impact in people's lives here in Kalamazoo. So, personally and professionally, I believe it is important to be a conduit of change by providing support to our local community."

"I can truly say that being a part of the Grainger Community Grant Program pilot and now seeing the impact not only here in Kalamazoo but all across the country is one of the highlights of my Grainger career," said Hurley. "I'm grateful to have played such a small role in a giant endeavor that is making such a difference in people's daily lives in those communities where Grainger team members live and work."

As someone who has enjoyed a successful and fulfilling career, Hurley (*at left in the image above*) wanted to offer the following advice to current students:

*Absorb everything you are learning at WMU because it will be the catapult to a long and successful career. Graduating with a Public Relations major I thought I'd be working in a large PR firm. I've taken the skill sets of everything I learned with writing, public speaking, broadcasting, and organizational communication and transferred those skills into the business environment where I communicate daily with customers, Grainger sales and branch team members, vendors, and community partners. My education and time with WMU was an investment that has multiplied in dividends and I'm proud to re-invest some of those returns back to the WMU School of Communication.*