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Keith Hearit named interim dean of College of Arts and Sciences

by Dr. Timothy Greene, provost and vice president for academic affairs

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Dr. Keith Hearit for agreeing to serve as interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

As many of you are aware, Keith most recently served as an associate dean in the college. But his connection to WMU and the college spans almost two decades. With his long tenure at WMU, Keith brings a strong portfolio of administrative experience to this latest leadership role, including a three-year stint serving as associate dean and then dean of Lee Honors College. He also spent five years as WMU's vice provost for enrollment management.

During the 2013-14 academic year, Keith was an American Council on Education fellow. He spent his ACE Fellowship year working with the chancellor of Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis focusing on initiatives related to student success, retention and budget management.

Please join me in thanking Keith for his continued service and leadership to WMU and to the College of Arts and Sciences in this interim period.

The latest on Academic Program Review and Planning

The Academic Program Review and Planning process continues as the 36-member faculty Observation Committee is engaged in reading the 480 program self-studies submitted by the various academic units.

Each member of the committee will create an individual observation report that will be used to develop a comprehensive observation report as a subcommittee. These subcommittee reports will be used by department chairs, directors and deans during Phase II planning.

There will be two weekend work summits at the end of the month to complete comprehensive report writing. Completed observation reports are scheduled to be posted to the SharePoint site for review by March 6. Academic deans will submit corresponding planning reports to the provost by April 16.

As the APR&P process progresses, among the immediate benefits are the ongoing discussions and planning stemming from the preparation of the self-studies. Many units and departments are beginning to consider program revisions, improvements in program assessments, and the role of interdisciplinary curricula on student recruitment and retention.
In addition, the self-study process has led to: better integration and reporting of curricular changes, defining interdisciplinary programs and courses in a more concise manner, and broader understanding of program capacity.

The APR&P Oversight Committee will meet in March to review the process for implementing the Phase I review and consider evaluation and improvements.

Save the dates—a national expert on general education reform to lead workshops in March

The campus community is invited to attend discussions and workshops focused on liberal education and the revision of general education programs. Dr. Paul Gaston, trustees professor of English at Kent State University, will visit WMU in March to lead discussions with interested members of the community.

Gaston, a leading consultant on general education reform for the Association of American Colleges and Universities, will make a presentation on the state of general education at 3:30 p.m. Thursday, March 19, in the Fetzer Center. On March 20, Gaston will hold several workshops on general education. The workshop schedule will be announced soon at wmich.edu/assessment and in the Feb. 23 edition of Updates in Academic Affairs. Please plan to attend and encourage colleagues to take part as well.

Gaston—who has authored or co-authored several books, including Revising General Education And Avoiding the Potholes: A Guide for Curricular Change—rose through the academic ranks to full professor in the Department of English at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. He has served as a dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Tennessee Chattanooga and provost at both Northern Kentucky University and Kent State University.

Where will you go as a Fulbright Scholar?

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The Fulbright Core Scholar Program offers opportunities to teach and conduct research abroad for two-month to yearlong stints. Grant benefits vary by country, but generally include travel and living expenses for the awardee and accompanying dependents.

Consider applying for a Fulbright Scholar position, especially associated with a sabbatical, as an outstanding opportunity to exercise two of WMU’s three pillars—Learner Centered and Globally Engaged.

Applications are due each year on Aug. 1. For more information, contact Dr. Michelle Metro-Roland, WMU Fulbright Campus Scholar Representative, at (269) 387-3908 or michelle.metro-roland@wmich.edu, and visit cies.org/programs.