Nominations due for annual awards

The nomination deadline is Monday, April 1, for some of WMU’s most prestigious faculty and staff awards presented during the annual Academic Convocation: the Distinguished Service Award, Distinguished Teaching Award and Emerging Scholar Award. Visit wmich.edu/provost and click 2013 Faculty and Staff Awards for eligibility, criteria and nomination guidelines.

Campus urged to take library survey

All students and employees are encouraged to participate in the 10-minute, online LibQUAL+ survey being conducted by University Libraries through Monday, April 8. Respondents may enter a random drawing to win an iPad4 or one of three $100 prepaid Visa cards. Visit wmich.edu/library/libqual for more information and to take the survey.

WMU plans first Lavender Graduation

Nominations are being accepted through Friday, April 5, for campuswide awards that will be presented during the Lavender Graduation ceremony, set for 8 to 8 p.m. Thursday, April 25, in the Fetzer Auditorium, and there will be a pre-concert talk at 7 p.m. The employee discount is not accessible online. Discounted tickets may be ordered from Miller Auditorium in person or by calling (269) 387-2300 or (800) 228-9858 and providing the discount password, which is “2013.” Visit thegilmore.org/events/mitsuksuchida to learn more about Uchida and her program. Direct questions to Mary McCormick at mmccormick@thegilmore.org, (269) 342-1166 or (855) 845-1768. 

Cousins, Hearit named to prestigious fellows program

Linwood Cousins, director of the School of Social Work, and Keith M. Hearit, communication, have been named American Council on Education Fellows for 2013-14. They were among just 50 senior faculty members and administrators from around the nation named to be part of the prestigious program. Fellows are nominated by their presidents and chancellors and selected in a rigorous application process. The only schools having two of its faculty members selected are WMU, Purdue and Ohio State universities, and the University of Texas at Arlington.

EACH Fellow will focus on an issue of concern to his or her home institution while concurrently with the vice provost position until early 2010.
Event to benefit honors students studying off campus

Honors students studying abroad or in locations around the nation will benefit from the Scholar Scamper Thursday, April 4.

The event features a 5K run and walk at 6 p.m. and a 1K kids’ fun run at 5:30 p.m., all of which will start in front of the Lee Honors College building and follow courses laid out to showcase the WMU campus.

To intended as an annual event, the scamper will raise funds for scholarships to help defray costs for students who study abroad or take part in the honors college’s Study in the States experience, which takes students on learning excursions to U.S. points of significant historical and cultural interest.

A prereregistration deadline of 5 p.m. Tuesday, April 2, allows participants to register at reduced rates. Four-person teams may register by the April 2 early registration deadline only. The 1K run is free and open to children ages 10 and under.

For registration forms and more information, visit signmeup.com/site/online-event-registration/90012.

Correction

The years of continuous service were incorrectly reported in the March 14 issue of the Western News for Darryl Salisbury. He will retire after 18 years of service to the University.

Jobs

Current job opportunities at WMU are announced daily on the Human Resources website at wmich.edu/hr/careers-at-wmu.html. Please note that applications must be submitted online by the stated deadline. Complete application procedures are included with each posting.

Professor receives Google grant

Pnina Ari-Gur, mechanical and aerospace engineering, has won a grant from Google to teach skills in 3-D computer modeling and game design to high school computer science instructors. Equipped with these new skills, the high school instructors can then teach the computer applications to their own students.

The $13,500 award is from Google’s Computer Science for High School program, or CS4HS, an initiative to promote computer science and computational thinking in high school and middle school curricula.

As principal investigator, Ari-Gur will lead a team of three other WMU faculty members. They will offer two- to three-week workshops July 1, 2 and 8 on campus to 25 high school computer science instructors from around the country.
Cumming named to lead Registrar’s Office

Carrie Cumming has been named to the position of registrar, effective March 11. Cumming has held the post on an interim basis since late 2010. As head of the Registrar’s Office, she is responsible for the accuracy and security of all student records as well as course registration, class and facility scheduling, graduation audits, the preparation of transcripts and oversight of federal student privacy law compliance.

Cumming already has been leading efforts to increase the use of new technology in areas that the Registrar’s Office oversees. That includes providing mobile technology that allows students to access their schedules, grades and University catalogs on a smartphone; developing a new textbook requisition process; and implementing a new electronic transcript processing system that allows 24/7 online transcript requests and tracking.

She also helped select a new diploma vendor offering more options and reduced costs and helped implement reverse transfer agreements with seven community colleges. She is currently leading the implementation of Degree Works, a Web-based tool that helps students monitor progress toward degree completion. That large project is scheduled to go live in May.

Cumming, who earned her bachelor’s degree from WMU in 1994, is currently working on a master’s degree. She joined the University as a staff member in the Registrar’s Office in 1993 and became a supervisor of academic records in 1996. She was named associate registrar in 2003 and senior associate registrar in 2007.

Dinosaurs, spaceships part of Children’s Place camps

The Children’s Place Learning Center is enrolling school-aged children for its 2013 Campus Kids summer theme camp that begins June 3 and continues through Aug. 30. WMU employees who sign up children until Sunday, March 31, will receive 10 percent off summer tuition.

Parents may sign up children by the week, or for the entire summer. Weekly rates are $188. Enrollment is limited, so those interested are urged to register early while space is available. Children who have completed kindergarten through age 9 are eligible.

Campus Kids focuses on a different theme each week. During the week, the children work on projects related to that theme.

Film, discussion focus on sexual assault in military

WMU will host a free screening and panel discussion of “The Invisible War,” a documentary about sexual assault in the U.S. military, at 6:30 p.m. Monday, April 15, in the Little Theatre.

It is being spearheaded by WMU Trustee Mary Asmonga-Knapp and Angela Moe, sociology, and is part of the local observance of April as National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

Counselors will be available on site throughout the evening, and informational displays and literature along with complimentary refreshments will be available in the theatre lobby.

WMU’s showing of “The Invisible War” will be followed by a short intermission and a panel discussion featuring Asmonga-Knapp, manager of the Family Advocacy Program for the Department of Defense’s Defense Logistics Agency in Battle Creek, Mich.; Joetta Carr, a WMU counselor specializing in sexual assault recovery; and Monica Marson, U.S. Air Force Vietnam veteran and retired civilian contractor for the USO.

Kelle Brooks, aYWCA crisis response volunteer and army veteran, will also participate.

Time fading to respond to Chronicle survey

With the Chronicle of Higher Education relying on faculty and staff feedback to determine which of the nation’s schools are “America’s Great Colleges to Work For,” WMU employees who have been invited to weigh in have until April 15 to share their views about the University as a workplace.

An anonymous email survey was sent to a randomly selected number of employees the week of March 16-17. Those invited to participate in the survey have until April 15 to reply. This is the fifth year the University has participated in the survey.

The Chronicle’s Great Colleges to Work For program recognizes small groups of colleges (based on enrollment size) for specific best practices and policies, such as compensation and benefits, faculty-administration relations, and confidence in senior leadership. The Chronicle bases its assessments on the random survey as well as an institutional audit that captured demographics, and workplace policies and practices.

In 2009, the first year the University participated in the Chronicle initiative, WMU was named one of the top-10 large colleges in the nation in five separate categories: providing health care benefits, tuition remission, life insurance, disability insurance and post-retirement benefits.

Graduate, faculty research showcased at daylong event

Graduate students and faculty members who have previously received a Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award will showcase their scholarly work Friday, April 5, in the East Ballroom of the Bernhard Center as part of the seventh annual WMU Research and Creative Activities Poster Day.

The free public event includes poster presentations of research from 9 to 11 a.m. Keynote addresses will follow from 11 a.m. to noon from 2012 Emerging Scholars Award winners Jeffrey Angles, world languages and literatures, and Sherine Obare, chemistry.

Lunch begins at noon with an awards presentation from 12:45 to 1 p.m. Awards recognizing the outstanding graduate student poster presentations will be announced.

For more information, contact alison.weiner@wmich.edu or (269) 387-8376.

Obituaries

J. W. "Bill" Armstrong

emeritus in education and professional development, died Feb. 23. He was 85. A memorial service will be held Saturday, June 22, in Portage, Mich. Memorial gifts may be made to the memorial garden at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1515 Helen Ave., Portage, MI 49020.

Wendellin S. Ashbrook

retired assistant baker in Burnham Dining Services, died Jan. 2. She was 77. Memorial gifts may be made to the Bad Israels Scholarship Fund or Portage-Schoolcraft Eagles #3531 and payable to FOE 3531 Scholarship Fund, 11611 Shaver Road, Schoolcraft, MI 49087.

Ruth M. Davis

emeritus in health, physical education and recreation, died Dec. 16, 2012. She was 89.

Clyde Gillette

retired assistant manager in building custodial and support services, died March 5. He was 81.

Jerome G. Manis

emeritus in sociology, died Feb. 23. He was 99. Memorial gifts may be made to the Kokuca Council, c/o Harris Methodist Church, 20 S. Vineyard Blvd., Honolulu, HI 96813.

Jane Nichols

retired finance clerk for the WMU Bookstore, died Jan. 8 at age 89.
On Campus with Kathy Gilbert

Making a Home Away from Home

There is no typical day for Kathy Gilbert, as she and the staff at the Children’s Place Learning Center care for WMU’s youngest learners on campus, from toddlers to preschoolers.

Gilbert has been director of the center since day one of its opening in 1996, and she has grown the center from serving just 12 preschool children to now close to 55 families with both preschool and toddler rooms. Family activities include Family Fun nights each semester and frequent parent support group meetings held at the center.

As the center has grown, Gilbert has helped with its expansion to two rooms and accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Services are available to all students, faculty, staff and the greater community, but a large population of Children’s Place families are international students, Gilbert says.

“I think about our parents who are raising a child while attending college and have to do an assignment or project, or perhaps also have a job,” she says. “I’m proud of the flexibility we offer and the support we give to parents. We nurture student success.”

Gilbert joined WMU in 1996, shortly before the center opened. At that time, it was a preschool program with about a dozen children. In 2003, Children’s Place added the toddler room for younger children. It is licensed for 38 children but, because many of the slots used are part time, the center can serve more children and at present, has up to 55 families. The center’s future vision includes expanding into infant care.

The best part of her job is getting to know a wide variety of people, she says. “I definitely enjoy creating the relationships and bonds with the children and their families, meeting people from all over the world and all walks of life,” she says. “We help prepare children for life-long learning, and also learn about different cultures and ways of life.”

Originally from Indiana, Gilbert has a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Indiana University and master’s degrees in early childhood education and educational technology from WMU. She taught kindergarten in Indiana, then moved to Michigan and later to Kalamazoo with her family.

She has a daughter, Cassie, who graduated from WMU this past December in anthropology, and the two live in Parchment, Mich. Besides spending time with her daughter, she is planning her wedding for April 2014 that will take place on a cruise ship in New Orleans. The newlyweds will then travel to Mexico.

Semiannual Make a Difference award recipients to be honored at reception

Twelve staff members will be honored as outstanding employees during a reception at 2 p.m. Monday, April 15, in 157 Bernhard Center.

The University community is invited to attend the event, which recognizes the spring 2013 recipients of WMU’s semiannual Make a Difference award. They are:

- Donna DeVries, landscape services
- Jeannine Hamilton, Registrar’s Office
- Faizan Haq, University Libraries
- Feizan Haq, University Libraries
- Karen Lamos, Residence Life

Trustees OK changes to academic programs, names

Several academic-related actions were taken by the WMU Board of Trustees during its Feb. 27 meeting.

Two new programs were approved. They are: a Graduate Certificate Program in Bioinformatics and a Master of Science Program in Aerospace Engineering.

Also, six existing programs were deleted. They are: aviation flight science major—option A to aviation management and operations major; aviation flight science major—option A to aviation science and administration major; aviation science and administration major to aviation management and operations major; and aviation flight science major to aerospace engineering major.

In addition, three department or program name changes were approved. They are: Department of Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering to Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering; Gender and Women’s Studies Program to Department of Gender and Women’s Studies; and Department of Military Science to Department of Military Science and Leadership.

Talent Unveiled: A Festival of WMU Adjuncts’ Creative Work is free and open to the public. It will feature 15 performers presenting literature, drama and music.

Among those making presentations will be Joe Sanders, English, who will direct a performance of his short play “Fly-Over State,” and Philip E. Kaldon, physics, who will read his science fiction work, “Your First Real Rocket Ship.”

Other participants will read from and autograph their poetry as well as display their musical and multilingual abilities.

More Talent Unveiled events are being planned for fall 2013, with the addition of artwork. Those interested in participating may contact Janet Heller at janetheller@wmich.edu or Hedy Habra at hedy.habra@wmich.edu.