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Updates in Academic Affairs - 02/23/2015

Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

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Updates in Academic Affairs: February 23, 2015

Inside Updates: Two tapped as arts and sciences interim associate deans, higher ed expert to lead workshops in March, Lee Honors College unveils new student initiative and academic affairs non-bargaining unit staff invited to April meetings.

Bush, Obare tapped as interim associate deans for 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. Jonathan Bush and Dr. Sherine Obare for agreeing to serve as interim associate deans of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Jonathan joined the WMU faculty in the Department of English in 2001 and has served as department chair since 2011. He also is director of the Third Coast Writing Project and coordinator of WMU's developmental writing program. He is co-author of two books on teaching English at the high school and middle school levels, and he has published widely in English education and composition studies.

He currently serves on the College Board's Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Development Committee, and also serves as a public affairs officer in the Navy Reserve.

Jonathan earned a bachelor's degree from Bowling Green State University, a master's degree from Northwestern State University of Louisiana and a doctoral degree from Purdue University. In his role as interim associate dean, Jonathan will oversee a portfolio that includes student and faculty engagement, enrollment management, and curriculum development.

Sherine joined the WMU faculty in the Department of Chemistry in 2004, and serves as associate chair of the department. In 2012, she was the recipient of WMU's Emerging Faculty Scholar Award for demonstrated scholarly or creative accomplishments.

Her research interests lie in the areas of designing nanoscale materials for drug delivery, environmental remediation, improved healthcare and alternative energy. Her research program has been funded by the National Science Foundation, the Department of Defense, the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Education, among others.

She also has served as director of the NIH-sponsored "Bridges to the Baccalaureate Program" at WMU. The program recruits underrepresented minority students from community colleges and supports them as they pursue advanced degrees in biomedical and behavioral sciences. She also is the editor of a new book titled "Green Technologies for the Environment."

Sherine earned a bachelor's degree from West Virginia State University and a doctoral degree from the University of South Carolina before doing post-doctoral work at Johns Hopkins University. As an interim associate dean in arts and sciences, she will oversee the college's efforts in global engagement, diversity and inclusion, and strategic planning.
Please join me in thanking Jonathan and Sherine for their leadership to WMU and the College of Arts and Sciences in this interim period.

**New initiative boosts recruitment of honors-eligible admitted students**

The Lee Honors College is pleased to announce the implementation of the Honors First Initiative. This spring, for the first time at WMU, a select group of the incoming fall 2015 freshmen will be able to register for classes before attending orientation.

Students eligible for the Honors First Initiative competed in the 2015 Medallion Scholarship Competition and are eligible for membership in the Lee Honors College.

Each academic college advising office has reserved time in April to meet with Honors First Initiative students during select times for registration of fall courses. In addition, these students have expressed the importance of access to faculty during campus visits. For this reason, several colleges have made provisions to allow Honors First Initiative students to meet with faculty members during their campus visits by opening up research labs, hosting faculty mixers for students and families, and providing tours of facilities.

For more information, visit the Honors First web page at wmich.edu/honors/priority, or contact Anthony Helms at the Lee Honors College at (269) 387-3233 or anthony.helms@wmich.edu.

**Invited scholar to lead workshops, lecture on general education reform**

The Faculty Senate and the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education are sponsoring a visit by a national expert on general education reform on Thursday, March 19.

Dr. Paul L. Gaston III, trustees professor at Kent State University, will lead a daylong series of conversations and deliver a keynote lecture to inform the discussion about general education at WMU. Gaston’s scholarship focuses on higher education reform, public policy and the humanities.

Three drop-in workshops will be held in the Bernhard Center, room 211:

- "Fifty Potholes to Gen Ed Reform: The Politics and Promise of Campus Change," 9 to 10 a.m.
- "Scaffolding a New Curriculum: Current Best Practices," 1 to 2 p.m.
- "The Classroom Paradigm Shift: From Content Delivery to Facilitating Learning," 2 to 3 p.m.

Gaston will present a keynote address, "One Word Behind Student-Centered Curricula (It’s Not ‘Plastics’)," at 4 p.m. in the Fetzer Center's Kirsch Auditorium.
Members of the campus community are urged to participate in the workshops and to meet with Gaston. For more information about his visit, contact James Dunnigan at james.c.dunnigan@wmich.edu.

**Academic affairs non-bargaining unit staff invited to April 17 meetings**

The Office of the Provost will host meetings for all non-bargaining unit staff members in academic affairs. The sessions are set for Friday, April 17, in the Fetzer Center's Kirsch Auditorium.

Two meeting times will be available to accommodate normal business hours and operations, the first is from 8:15 to 9:15 a.m. and the second is from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m.

Supervisors are encouraged to accommodate staff participation in these meetings. Media Services will live stream both presentations for those staff members who are not able to travel to the main campus in Kalamazoo.

The purpose of these meetings is to provide updates in academic affairs and to answer any questions staff may have in person. Beverages and bakery items will be available before each of the sessions to thank our administrative staff members for their many contributions to keeping our departments running smoothly, and for supporting our students.

Topics of interest may be proposed to the Office of the Provost at the following email address: office-of-the-provost@wmich.edu.