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President's Perspective (September 2014)

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President's Perspective – 9/2/2014

Dear Colleagues:

Today is the first day of an academic year full of promise, energy and opportunity. Welcome back to all of you who have been away for the past many months and working on the various scholarly activities that make this the great institution that it is. And, of course, we've spent the past week roundly welcoming both new and returning students.



WMU Medical School

Stryker School of Medicine and WMU Cooley Law School

Our welcome to new students is more expansive than ever this year. Within our academic family, we now have two private professional schools. Both schools now operate under the Western Michigan University name, and both will have a profound effect on our University in the coming months and years.

The WMU Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine welcomed its first class of students two weeks ago. The first class of 54 students includes prospective physicians from 14 states. They earned their undergraduate degrees at 35 colleges and universities ranging from Big Ten schools like the universities of Illinois, Michigan and Minnesota to liberal arts colleges, like

Albion, Calvin and Kalamazoo. Not quite half of the class hails from Michigan, while 15 are from California.

They are studying in a spectacular new setting, the school's W.E. Upjohn M.D. Campus. Please do take advantage of the Sept. 18 grand opening or the Sept. 20 public tours to make sure you have a chance to see this amazing facility.

Meanwhile, the affiliation between our University and the Thomas M. Cooley Law School is now complete and in effect. Over the coming months, many of you will have an opportunity to help us work through some proposed initiatives that will benefit our students and our community. A 3+3 program for undergrads and first-year law classes on our campus are among the most exciting such programs. I am pleased that Dr. Mark Hurwitz, professor of political science, is taking the lead on how best to maximize the benefit of legal education for our students and faculty.

Tobacco Free Inside and Out

Today is our first day of full operation as a tobacco-free campus. As a campus community, the tobacco-free policy makes a statement about our values and commitment to health and sustainability. There will be no shortage of challenges as we move forward with this initiative, but I know members of this University community will exercise the level of respect and collegiality that will see us through to a successful transition.

If you want to know more about the new policy or about how to take advantage of the cessation services available to our University community, [visit our official website](#).



James Bolger

New Trustee

We begin the new academic year with a new trustee as part of our governing board. James Bolger of Whitehall was appointed by Gov. Snyder in June to fill out the final six and a half years of the term of Michelle Crumm, who resigned earlier this year.

An alumnus with several family members who are alumni as well, Trustee Bolger is enthusiastic and eager to get to know our University even better. Please greet him and welcome him to campus when you see him at events or meetings.

Accolades and accomplishments announced over the summer



Sangren Hall

The accolades to WMU did not stop over the summer. Here are just a few of the more recent pieces of news you need to know.

- Our Integrated Supply Management program was named the No. 5 program in the nation by Gartner, the industry's top arbiter of program quality.
- Washington Monthly magazine has once again named WMU one of the country's top 100 national universities and a "Best Bang for the Buck" school in rankings released Aug. 25.
- LEED—Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design—is the national benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings. Over the summer, we learned that Sangren Hall has achieved LEED Gold certification, and the Zhang Legacy Collections Center has achieved LEED Silver certification. WMU now has nine LEED certified buildings and another will be announced soon.
- Also on the sustainability front, the University's submission to the Sustainability, Tracking, Assessment and Rating System—known as STARS—has resulted in a gold rating by that national sustainability network administered by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education.
- WMU's research and graduate-level training capacity in the field of autism was given both an endorsement and a resource boost in June when State Rep. Margaret O'Brien came to campus to announce the new Michigan budget includes \$4 million for critical research and to boost the number of professionals trained to work with children who have autism. Thank you to Department of Psychology faculty members Stephanie Peterson, Wayne Fuqua and Richard Malott for their leadership in this area over the years.

Individual accolades and accomplishments announced over the summer

A number of wonderful honors and accomplishments were in the news over the summer. Our faculty, staff, students and administrators make a real impact on their disciplines and the communities we serve. Here are just some examples that I share to ensure you are aware of them. Many more can be found on the WMU News site under the Year's Top Stories link.

- WMUK's Mark Sahlgren was awarded a Community Medal of Arts award in July for his volunteer work on behalf of the local music scene.
- Comparative religion faculty member Brian Wilson has for weeks now been getting good reviews and raising public interest with his new biography of J.H. Kellogg.
- Honors College Dean Carla Koretsky traveled to Sacramento in June to be honored by the Geochemical Society with that international organization's Distinguished Service Award.
- Sophomore music major Nick Dewyer traveled to Rochester, N.Y., in June to capture the Larry Wiehe Solo Competition at the 2014 International Trombone Festival, held at the Eastman School of Music.



Merze Tate

Still being honored years later

Members of the University community make an impact throughout their lives. I want to share with you some information about one of our most accomplished alumnae who doesn't get nearly the recognition she deserves.

Merze Tate will be honored nearly two decades after her 1996 death when her hometown of Blanchard, Michigan, honors her by renaming the Rolland Township Library, the Merze Tate Memorial Library during a Sept. 11 ceremony.

In 1927, she became WMU's first African American graduate, earning the highest academic record at the time. She went on to be the first African American graduate of Oxford University, a Fulbright Scholar and the first African American woman to earn a doctoral degree from Harvard—and so much more.

[Take a few moments to read more](#) so you know about one of Western Michigan University's most illustrious graduates.

Looking ahead

The coming weeks will bring a number of opportunities for us to come together and celebrate what makes Western Michigan University special.

- The 34th annual Bronco Bash will be held from 3 to 7 p.m. Friday, Sept. 5, on Western Michigan University's Sangren Pedestrian Mall. Don't miss a chance to stroll through this traditional rite of fall.

- The football Broncos will open their home campaign with the annual CommUniverCity Night Saturday Sept. 20 against Murray State University. This is a celebration of the ties between WMU and the communities it serves.
- Academic Convocation will take place at 2 p.m. Friday, Oct. 10, in the Dalton Center Recital Hall. Over the coming weeks, you'll learn more about the faculty and staff who will be honored that afternoon. Save the date and plan to help your colleagues celebrate.
- Homecoming has been scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 25, with the whole week leading up to the Saturday game against Ohio filled with homecoming activities.

I look forward to seeing you at all of these events. Please, don't hesitate to call or write or simply stop me when you see me on campus, if you'd like to chat. And when you're out and about on campus, please extend a special "hello" to new and returning students for choosing to become part of our University. Thank you for all you do to make this the wonderful University that it is.

Continuing best,

John M. Dunn

President