President urges moving forward boldly

Delivering his annual State of the University address Sept. 21, President John M. Dunn urged members of the campus community to continue to be bold and seize opportunities in WMU’s new strategic plan to move the University forward and promote a distinctive learning environment for its students.

The talk, which is posted online at wmich.edu/president, was delivered to a crowd of some 400 people who attended WMU’s annual Academic Convocation. Also during the event, 11 faculty and staff members were formally recognized with Universitywide awards.

In his talk, Dunn pronounced the state of WMU as “vibrant, focused, healthy, efficient and committed to the well-being of our students and our nation.” He noted that his message was being delivered “at a time of incredible energy and accomplishment.”

Dunn also urged the campus to formalize a system that would ensure every student who graduates from WMU would do so having completed an experiential project that would be showcased in a portfolio the student could use as a credential. In addition, he urged members of the University community to support and use the three pillars of the University’s strategic plan—being learner centered, discovery driven and globally engaged.

Another point Dunn stressed is the need for faculty, staff and students to join him in being vocal advocates for higher education.

“At no time in our history there has been a greater need for such proactive outreach,” he said. “Public perception and understanding of higher education is at an all-time low—even as college attendance has become recognized as a necessity.”

Celebration marks end of three important projects

It’s hard to fill a building as large as the new Sangren Hall, but the first-floor lobby was packed wall-to-wall Sept. 28 when well-wishers from the campus and local communities gathered to mark its completion.

The celebration, called “Excellence Renewed,” formally marked the completion of that and two other projects in the heart of West Campus: the new pedestrian mall and renovated Lee Honors College Building.

The event included a Bronco Marching Band performance, brief program, reception and self-guided walking tours with knowledgeable guides stationed at various stopping points. Making remarks were WMU President John M. Dunn and Trustees Larry Tollbert; state Rep. Jase Bolger, speaker of the House; and state Sen. Tonya Schuitmaker, chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education.

Dunn noted that the three projects will transform the heart of campus and benefit not only the University, but also the local community.

“Sangren Hall—the new Sangren Hall—is literally and figuratively at the heart of our campus. This building, the beautiful pedestrian mall and the newly renovated Lee Honors College have transformed our core campus,” Dunn said. “These facilities reflect and enhance all the values we hold dear: intellectual success, discovery, sustainability, excellence and a commitment to both our community and our legacy of transforming lives.”

Both the College of Education and Human Development and Department of Sociology are based in Sangren, which is one of the University’s most heavily used classroom facilities.

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Both the College of Education and Human Development and Department of Sociology are based in Sangren, which is one of the University’s most heavily used classroom facilities. The original building was nearly 50 years old. The new four-story, 230,000-square-foot structure was sustainably designed and built with the goal of achieving LEED gold certification.
Acclaimed pianist opens series

Barbara Lissurean will perform a free solo piano recital to open the Distinguished Alumni Concert Series at 8 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 6, in the Dalton Center Recital Hall. Among other works, Lissurean will perform the compositional tour-de-force “Rhapsodies” by School of Music Researcher C. Curtis-Smith, the first piece ever to be written for bowed piano.

Piano bows are made of monofilament fishing line and allow pianists to stroke rather than hit the strings, creating fresh new sounds. Lissurean is known for her innovation and daring programming.

Panel to address climate change

A panel of WMU professors will address climate change as a moral issue at 4 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 9, in the University Center for the Humanities, 2500 Knauss Hall. The discussion, free and open to the public, is titled “Climate Change: The Greatest Moral Issue of Our Times” and is part of the Center for the Study of Ethics in Society’s fall season. On the panel will be Paul Clements, political science; David Karowe, biological science; and Ronald Kramer, sociology. In part, the trio will examine significant risks associated with climate change and how the global community is failing to take steps needed to avoid the worst impacts.

Light Center schedules lecture

Albert Dien, a Stanford University professor emeritus, will speak on “The Origin of the Xianbei: The Significance of the Gaixianlong Cave” at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 11, in 2028 Brown Hall. The Gaixianlong Cave is an important archaeological site that includes inscriptions dating back to 443 CE.

Journalist to give peace lecture

A veteran reporter, editor, columnist and author will deliver the annual Winnie Veensrea Peoce Lecture at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Oct. 15, in 208-209 Bernhard Center. Bob Koehler from DePaul University will speak on “Peace Journalism.” He is a poet, former Chicago Tribune editor and proponent of the human potential movement.

Democratization focus of lecture

John Ishiyama from the University of North Texas will speak on “Political Parties and Democratization in Developing Countries” at 3 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 17, in 2028 Brown Hall. The talk is part of the Werner Sichel Lecture series, which this year is focusing on “The Political Economy of Good Governance.”

New business speaker series debuts

A new breakfast speaker series devoted to entrepreneurship is unfolding at the Haworth College of Business. Called the Entrepreneurship Forum, the monthly series will bring stories of entrepreneurial success to the greater Kalamazoo community.

The series kicks off at 8 a.m. Friday, Oct. 19, in 2150 Schneider Hall with Jen Randall, president of the Kalamazoo-based firm Maestro. The free event begins with breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Reservations are required and can be made by calling (269) 387-6059. Maestro creates high-impact learning products and apps for mobile learning using the latest 3D, video and animation technologies for its Fortune 1,200 clients.

With the benefit of tuition remission available to a wide swath of the University community, WMU officials urge employees to locate their prospective college students are fully informed about the academic programs and resources available on campus. Early notification will ensure students eligible for such events as the Medallion Program and Campus Open House.

Contact the Office of Admissions at wmich.edu/admissions/freshman or call (269) 387-2000 to share the name and mailing address of a prospective student.

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Legacy Collections Center named for Charles and Lynn Zhang

The soon-to-be-constructed archives facility will bear the names of two of the University's most noted alumni, Charles and Lynn Zhang.

Following formal action by the Board of Trustees Sept. 20, the 16,000-square-foot facility will be known as the Charles C. and Lynn L. Zhang Legacy Collections Center. The $8 million center, officially part of University Libraries, will be built on WMU's Oakland Drive Campus.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the project, attended by donors, was held July 19, and site preparation has begun.

Major benefactors to the Zhang Center include the Irving S. Gilmore Foundation, Kalamazoo Community Foundation and Frederick J. and Katharine D. Rogers.

The WMU Board of Trustees naming policy stipulates that naming opportunities are available when at least half of a facility's construction costs are covered through private gifts. Both Charles and Lynn Zhang are well known in the international financial arena. Charles Zhang is regularly ranked among the top 100 financial advisors in the nation by Barron's magazine, while Lynn Zhang has been quoted in national media including CNBC and Barron's. Both have master’s degrees from WMU.

Trustees approve retirements

The retirements of two faculty members and nine staff members were approved by the WMU Board of Trustees at its Sept. 20 meeting. Trustees also signed off on one faculty promotion as well as the return of three administrators to the faculty.

Both of the faculty members who are retiring are doing so with emeritus status. Their names, positions, years of continuous service and effective dates of retirement are: Nicholas A. Andreas, dean of the Lee Honors College, 16 years, effective June 30, 2013; and John H. Cameron, paper engineering, chemical engineering and imaging, 17 years, effective April 30, 2013.

In addition, the retirement date for Bassam E. Harik, economics, was changed from June 30, 2012, to June 30, 2013.

The staff members who are retiring are: Linda D. Baird, development and alumni relations, 21 years, effective Nov. 30; Marlene M. Bolf, WMU Bookstore, 19 years, effective Dec. 31; Margaret J. Hamilton, College of Fine Arts, 17 years, effective July 31, 2013; and Bethlynn Sanders, English, 14 years, effective Sept. 30; Shirley A. Swift, College of Arts and Sciences, 11 years, effective Aug. 31; Shirley A. Vernia, admissions, 30 years, effective Oct. 31; and Gail A. Walker, educational leadership, research and technology, 10 years, effective Nov. 30.

In another personnel move, trustees approved the promotion of Mingming Feng to assistant professor of accountancy, effective Aug. 20.

The three administrators returning to the faculty, along with their old and new positions, are: Haluk M. Akkan, from chair of civil and construction engineering to professor in the department, effective Aug. 20; Keith M. Hearit, from vice provost for teaching, learning and educational studies to associate professor in the department, effective July 1, 2013.

W Muk launches fund drive; on-air pledging starts soon

WMUK's public radio station, WMUK-FM, will try to “get the story” when on-air pledging begins Wednesday, Oct. 10, in its annual fall fund drive.

As part of the drive, the station will invite listeners who became WMUK members to share their stories about how they became a supporter of the station, while also engaging potential new members.

Brief member stories will be read on the air during the live portion of this year’s campaign.

The fall drive raises funds to purchase programs, such as “Morning Edition,” “All Things Considered” and “From the Top.” Recent successful campaigns have resulted in acquisition of such programs as “Wait, Wait … Don’t Tell Me!” This year’s goal is $175,000.

WMUK, broadcasting at 102.1-FM, also will conduct a drawing for an iPod to be given away on the evening of Friday, Oct. 19. No contribution or pledge is necessary to enter the drawing.

Visit wmu.org for more information about the drive and drawing or to make a donation.

Prizes available to campus

United Way contributors

Faculty and staff members who give any amount to the 2012 campus United Way campaign will be eligible for weekly drawings to be held each Friday afternoon from Oct. 5 through Nov. 9.

Prizes include two tickets to any Spotlight Series event at Miller Auditorium, a $20 gift card from the WMU Bookstore, a $20 Dining Dollars gift card, and two tickets to a home football game, home basketball game or home hockey game.

Contributors whose pledge cards are returned to the president’s office, Mail Stop 5202, by 5 p.m. the Thursday before each drawing will be eligible. Those eligible for the first drawing will continue to be eligible for subsequent drawings, but individuals may only win a weekly prize once.

A grand-prize drawing will be held at 4 p.m. Friday, Nov. 16. Prizes include two tickets to the President’s Box for the last home football game, a $100 gift certificate to any Millennium restaurant and two tickets to the Gold Company’s annual performance at Miller Auditorium Feb. 9.

To be eligible, pledge cards must be received in the president’s office by 5 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 15.

Edwin Ryba, a former staff member, died Sept. 22. He was 84. Ryba retired in 1989 as assistant chief engineer for television in the Division of Academic Services after 24 years of service.

Memorial gifts may be made to Hospice of Southwest Michigan, South Haven.

Jack S. Wood, emeritus in biological sciences, died Sept. 18. He was 80. Wood came to WMU in 1963 and retired in 1991 after 28 years of teaching and research. He is fondly remembered as the founding director of Western’s Office of Public Service and several other public service initiatives on campus and in southwest Michigan.

Memorial gifts may be made to New Hope Church or a charity of choice. Visit farleyestowdwell.com to leave a personal message.

Nita H. Hardie, emerita in political science, died Sept. 23. She was 83. Hardie retired as chair of the Department of Science Studies in 1992 after 27 years of service.

During her tenure, she served in several administrative roles and was involved in numerous pioneering efforts, including helping to initiate race and culture courses in the 1960s and playing an instrumental role in building the Women’s Studies Program in the 1970s.

Ernest Hinton, a former staff member, died Sept. 3. She was 96. Hinton retired as a custodian in 1983 after 10 years of service. She later returned to the University to work at The Oaklands on a periodic basis.

Visit whitleymemorialfuneralhome.com and click Services to make a memorial guestbook entry.

Charles and Lynn Zhang (Photo by John Greenhoe)

Charles Zhang earned a master’s degree in economics while Lynn Zhang, a member of the WMU Foundation Board of Directors, earned a master’s degree in accounting.

Architectural rendering of the Charles C. and Lynn L. Zhang Legacy Collections Center.
Distinguished Faculty Scholar nominations sought

Nominations are due Friday, Jan. 25, 2013, for the Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award, the highest honor WMU bestows on its faculty members.

The award is based on outstanding professional achievements. It recognizes those whose work is widely known beyond campus and constitutes a significant body of achievement, most of which has been accomplished while a WMU faculty member. Wide recognition beyond WMU is essential.

Current, continuing board-appointed full- and part-time employees with faculty rank are eligible if they have at least seven academic years of service to WMU and are not previous winners.

The recipients will be honored during the 2013 Academic Convocation and receive a $2,000 honorarium that becomes part of their base salaries, a plaque, and an opportunity to present a campus lecture, exhibition or performance.

For more information, visit www.wmich.edu/research and click the Awards link or contact Ernst A. Breisach, chair of the Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award Committee and WMU professor emeritus of history, at (269) 344-1734.

Graduate, professional fair set

The 2012 Graduate and Professional School Fair is set for 4 to 6 p.m. Monday, Oct. 8, in the Bernhard Center Ballroom.

The free fair is open to the public, but geared toward junior and senior college students as well as recent alumni.

In attendance will be representatives from WMU and more than 50 other graduate, law or medical schools. Workshops on how to apply to graduate and select professional schools will take place from 3 to 4 p.m. near the fair’s main exhibit hall.

Pre-registration is not required for the fair or workshops. Visit wmich.edu/grad and click Events for more information.

Development funds available

Technology Development Funds of up to $120,000 are available for this fiscal year to help researchers prepare their inventions for commercialization.

A signed printed copy of the completed application must be provided by 5 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 14, to the Office of the Vice President for Research. The office is located in Suite 210 of west Walwood Hall (Mail Stop 5456).

Visit wmich.edu/research and click Intellectual Property and Commercialization for more information. Direct questions to Michael Sharer at michael.sharer@wmich.edu or (269) 387-8218.

Celebration marks end of three important projects (continued from page 1)

The building has 50 classrooms with 2,435 instructional seats, an education library, and a large grants and research center as well as clinical and office space for several programs. It has terrazzo floors and other sustainable materials inside, such as bamboo wood veneer on doors and cork flooring.

The beauty of the new Sangren is echoed just outside the building by an expansive pedestrian mall with walkways and benches created from reclaimed granite, set off by lush grasses. One of the mall’s other striking elements is a cascading water feature.

Just west of the mall is the expanded and enhanced Lee Honors College Building. It now has double its original number of classrooms, which are outfitted with the latest instructional technology, along with a cutting-edge learning lab and seminar room, among other new features. Carl E and Winifred Lee provided $1.1 million in funding for the $1.7 million project.