U.S. News ranks seven health programs offered by WMU among best in nation

U.S. News & World Report’s recently published rankings of graduate programs puts six WMU health programs among the best in the nation, with three of them—occupational therapy, physician assistant and speech-language pathology—rated both the highest in Michigan and among the top 50 nationally. The 2013 edition of U.S. News & World Report’s Best Grad Schools includes new rankings in seven health fields, including occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, audiology and social work. Rankings of other health fields, including physician assistant and rehabilitation counseling, are based on earlier surveys conducted in 2011. In all, six of WMU’s programs in the health disciplines garnered top-50 ratings, while a seventh was included in the top-100 of such programs.

Staff awards deadline approaching

Members of the campus community have until Thursday, May 31, to submit supportive information to help select the four winners of this year’s Make a Difference annual award. In the running are the 23 winners of this year’s semiannual Make a Difference awards.

All 23 are now eligible to win one of the four annual awards, each of which comes with a $1,200 pre-tax prize. Visit wmich.edu/hr/make-a-difference to find the candidates’ names and instructions for submitting supportive information.

University common read launched

WMU has launched a campuswide common read program that starts this summer for all employees as well as all incoming and current students. The book chosen for University Common Read 2012-13 is “The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks,” by Rebecca Skloot.

The award-winning, 384-page book has garnered attention from ethicists and the public at large. WMU students and faculty and staff members are invited to join in reading Skloot’s book this summer or fall, individually or in groups.

A 90-minute session on the basics of leading a group book discussion has been scheduled for 1:30 to 3 p.m. Wednesdays, June 6 and Sept. 5, in Waldo Library’s Meader Rare Book Room. To register for one of the training sessions, call (269) 387-5166.

New name approved for program

The WMU Board of Trustees has approved a new name for the holistic health care program in the College of Health and Human Services. The new name, integrative health and wellness, better reflects the mission of the program as health care moves to a more integrative model.

The program, which offers a graduate certificate as well as a minor, is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year and was one of the first programs of its kind in the nation. Its recent surveys were included in the 2013 edition of Best Grad Schools includes new rankings in seven health fields, including occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, audiology and social work. Rankings of other health fields, including physician assistant and rehabilitation counseling, are based on earlier surveys conducted in 2011. In all, six of WMU’s programs in the health disciplines garnered top-50 ratings, while a seventh was included in the top-100 of such programs.

Faculty Senate announces 2012-14 leadership roster

WMU’s Faculty Senate has elected its 2012-14 Executive Board.

Except for the immediate past president, members of the board will serve two-year terms beginning this month. The new officers are:

• President, William G. Ranzi, aviation science
• Vice president, C. Dennis Simpson, physician assistant and director of the Specialty Program in Alcohol and Drug Abuse
• Past president, Peter W. Krawutschke, foreign languages
• Director, Osama Abudayeh, civil and construction engineering and the engineering college’s associate dean for research and graduate programs
• Director, Susan F. Ayers, human performance and health education
• Director, Richard A. Gerishon, communication and co-director of the telecommunications and information management program
• Director, Alan Rea, business information systems
• Director, Delores D. Walcott, interdisciplinary health programs

The Faculty Senate shares in governing WMU by formulating, reviewing and providing advice on policies and other matters of institutional concern. In addition to its governing members on the Executive Board, the organization’s membership includes faculty senators and representatives from departments across campus as well as some administrators.

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Ohio family gives WMU newly raised funds to support finding cure for rare disorder

Former Fairborn, Ohio, city councilman Frank Cervone knows he’s dying from multiple system atrophy—MSA—but before he goes, Cervone wants to do all he can to make sure the disease’s days are numbered. Cervone and his family traveled to WMU May 11 to present a check to a University research team that has spent much of the past decade focusing its efforts on finding a cure for the rare neurological degenerative disease.

“The MSA project is the Holy Grail for our work over the past few years,” says Ide, whose longterm research has focused on applying genomic-based methods to a variety of human health problems related to the ecosystem and other factors. “We’re trying to help people who suffer debilitating equivalent to that seen in the worst neurological diseases and who retain full understanding of what is happening to them.”

MSA afflicts about 100,000 people and is called an “orphan disease” because only a small percentage of the population suffers from the extremely debilitating conditions and its treatment is not a high priority for either federal agencies or pharmaceutical companies.

The cause of MSA is unknown and no specific risk factors have yet been identified.

Ide says his team’s current research is focused on some similarities found in the brain cells of both multiple sclerosis patients and MSA patients.

“We’re trying to rush this for MSA patients,” Ide says. “There could be a drug that is already in use for MS that will be effective on MSA.”

Cervone’s wife, Susan, says they did their homework before selecting WMU as the recipient of this year’s race funds.

“We narrowed it down to two universities, and the response we got from WMU was just so much more personal,” she says.

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Campuswide initiative encourages bystanders to get involved

Giving members of the campus community the confidence to step forward and help when they see bad behavior is the goal of a new initiative at WMU.

The program is being launched by the Division of Student Affairs’ Bystander Initiative Committee to counteract the Bystander Effect, which holds that the greater the number of people present during an emergency, the less likely it is that any of them will actually intervene.

Faculty, staff and administrators who would be interested in participating in the Bystander Initiative are invited to learn more by contacting Christine Iaderosa, commit tee co-chair and coordinator of Theatre for Community Health in the Sincicue Health Center’s Office of Health Promotion and Education.

“People often see someone in need of as- sistance, yet don’t get involved. They believe they can’t make a difference or that someone else will intervene,” she says. “We hope to educate our community about when and how to intervene safely. If we can galvanize the campus population to stand up and help in varied situations, from dangerous drinking to dehumanizing behaviors, we can make WMU a safer and more secure place for all.”

The Bystander Initiative campaign, dubbed Western HEROES, gets its name from what it calls on people to do:

• Notice when something is happening;
• Evaluate the situation to see if assistance is needed;
• Assume responsibility to step in and help;
• Obtain the education necessary to know what to do; and
• Step up and make a difference.

The program will kick off this summer with posters and a video depicting various members of the campus community as everyday heroes. The posters will be put up around campus in mid-August as student leaders return to campus, and the film will be shown to students in late August during Fall Welcome.

Campaign organizers are seeking addi tional people who are willing to be featured on the posters and in the video, as well as people willing to facilitate workshops that are being planned this fall to educate the campus community about effective inter vention techniques.

Some of the WMU employees featured in the initial part of the campaign include Diane K. Anderson, vice president of student affairs; Carol Eddy, director of the Sincicue Health Center; Carolyn “Cari” K. Robertson, director of the Office of Health Promotion and Education; Laura Darral, assistant director of residence life; Jeremy C. Ynclan, assistant director of student conduct; Nicole C. Mills, assistant director of Student Activities and Leadership Programs; and Jennifer L. Bailey, University Recreation’s coordinator of fitness programs.

For more information about participating in the Bystander Initiative, contact Christine Iaderosa at christine.iaderosa@wmich.edu or (269) 387-3126.

New head coach announced

Shane Clipfell, previously associate head coach of women’s basketball at Michigan State University, has been named the sixth head coach of WMU’s women’s basketball program.

Clipfell has strong ties in the state of Michigan and the Mid-American Conference and has worked at every level of women’s basketball.

He has been at MSU for the past five years, but began as an assistant at Eastern Michigan University during the 1998-99 season. Prior to that, he spent five seasons at Glen Oaks Community College, including three as head coach, and 11 years as the varsity head coach at Colon (Mich.) High School.

College of Aviation to induct third class of honorees

Three aviation professionals who have made a lasting impact in their fields will be inducted into the College of Aviation Hall of Honor for 2011.

This third class of Hall of Honor inductees will be celebrated during an induction ceremony and dinner Friday, June 15. The deadline for the required advance registration has been extended to Friday, June 8. The event costs $25 and starts with a social hour at 6 p.m. in the Aviation Maintenance Education Hangar on the College of Aviation campus at the W.K. Kellogg Airport in Battle Creek, Mich. For a registration form or more information, visit wmich.edu/aviation.

Obituaries

Ida Mae Cutshaw, a retired staff member, died May 10. She was 75. Cutshaw was a finance clerk in accounting. She joined the staff in 1979 and retired in 1995 after 16 years of service.

Memorial gifts may be made to Kains Dwelling or a charity of choice. Visit lange lands.com to make a memorial guestbook entry.

Charles H. Ludlow, trustee emeritus, died May 8 in Kalamazoo. He was 90. Ludlow retired as vice president and treasurer of the Upjohn Co. in 1984 after 34 years. He and his wife, Marion, founded one of the University’s prestigious Medallion Scholarships.

Ludlow was a member of the WMU Board of Trustees from 1967 to 1987, serving as chair twice and vice chairman five times. He also supported the University in a variety of other leadership roles, including chairing the 1985 presidential search committee and serving as executive director of the 1997 presidential search. A former member of the WMU Foundation, he was named 1991 Volunteer of the Year.

Memorial donations may be directed to the charity of choice. Visit lange lands.com to make a memorial guestbook entry.
Kevin West started his career at WMU two decades ago as a student employee in the School of Music, a career path that included working as a stage manager for the first Gilmore International Keyboard Festival.

Now the school’s director of concerts, West is responsible for scheduling the school’s numerous concerts and guest artist, faculty and student recitals, producing two festivals that bring hundreds of high school students to campus annually; and serving as the on-site coordinator for the Gilmore and the Michigan Youth Arts festivals.

After graduating with his undergraduate degree in 1991, West worked in the private sector until returning to WMU three years later as concerts assistant. From 1994 to 2010, he also worked as a registrar for Seminar, the University’s high school summer music camp offered to high school students. He’s been the camp’s director since 2010, the year he was named to his current position, replacing his mentor, Carl Doubleday, who retired.

During the past year, the music school has been transitioning from a paper-based calendar system to an electronic one, West says. “It’s the challenges of balancing that schedule, along with working with a variety of students, faculty, staff and external performers and presenters that makes his job rewarding, he adds.

“I meet and interact with a lot of people,” West says. “What is so attractive to me about the University is that I feel we can give everyone the support they need, but they also have all the opportunities of a major research university.”

West lives in Texas Township with his partner, Mike, and their two dogs. He grew up on a farm in Webberville, Mich., and has lived in the Kalamazoo area for 18 years. He earned a bachelor’s in business administration and a master’s in public administration from WMU.

As an undergraduate student, West was a member of both instrumental and choral ensembles in the School of Music. He enjoys watching movies and is active in his church, Milwood United Methodist, both as a member of the fine arts committee and as a tenor in the church choir.

University relations promotes one, hires two

Tonya R. Durlach, university relations, has been promoted to director of electronic communication.

In addition, two people with long-time WMU ties have been hired to help expand the University’s editorial and marketing functions. Paula M. Davis was named editor of the WMU Magazine, effective May 21, and Christopher A. Hunt was named marketing communication manager, effective June 4.

Durlach, assistant director of electronic communication since 2009, is responsible for content on WMU’s website, mass email, social media and other forms of electronic communication. She replaces Thom Myers, who is set to retire in December and will devote his remaining time at the University to implementing WMU’s new Web content management system.

Davis, a longtime Kalamazoo resident, previously spent 13 years at the Kalamazoo Gazette. For seven of those years, she covered higher education and wrote extensively about WMU. She will edit the University’s recently reprised quarterly magazine and do editorial work on a number of other publication projects.

Hunt, a Kalamazoo native, earned a bachelor’s degree in advertising and promotion from WMU in 2003. He has worked at several advertising companies in Michigan and Florida. He will become an integral part of the University’s overall marketing efforts, charged with overseeing market research and helping to guide the creation and production of print, electronic and Web-based marketing materials for recruitment and raising the institutional profile.

BRCC invests $250,000 in breakthrough research

The Biosciences Research and Commercialization Center has invested $250,000 in a Kalamazoo company that is doing early-stage work on a revolutionary approach to treat and restore function to people who have suffered major damage to their peripheral or central nervous systems.

The BRCC award to Axonia Medical is part of $2 million in seed financing the company assembled to advance technology its founders believe can transform medical care for people who suffer a debilitating nervous system injury, such as stroke, and spinal cord, traumatic brain and peripheral nerve injuries.

“The technology Axonia is developing is precisely the kind of innovative, early-stage work our center is designed to support,” says Stephen J. Haakenson, BRCC executive director. “This is technology developed in a university setting that has great potential in the marketplace to address unmet medical needs.”

Axonia is a Kalamazoo startup that is leveraging groundbreaking discoveries on nervous system growth and repair by Douglas H. Smith at the University of Pennsylvania.

The company’s products are expected to bridge lost nervous tissue and jump-start regenerative mechanisms that will allow levels of functional recovery not now possible.

The company was an early participant in a Penn program called UPstart that focuses on the transfer of technology from higher education to the commercial arena.