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College of Health and Human Services

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College of Health and Human Services



January 2018

CHHS dean search underway

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Washington announced her retirement to the Board of Trustees in June 2017.



College gathering volunteers for Day of Caring

Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to save the date for a college-wide volunteer opportunity at AACORN Farm on March 30. Volunteers will work on projects, inside and out, to improve the property and prepare for the summer season.



College plans retention activities to increase enrollment

During the 2017 State of the College event, **Dean Earlie Washington** discussed plans aimed at improving the college's retention of second year students. Activities are already underway to further engage our students and help them succeed in their education.



Blind alum interviewed about voice recognition technology

Bill Boules was recently featured in an article in PC Magazine regarding voice recognition technology in devices like the Amazon Echo. Bill holds master's degrees from WMU in vision rehabilitation therapy and orientation and mobility.



Art installation at CHHS brings attention to hidden pain

Artist **Cathy Gernay** was born with a rare, incurable, genetic disorder which causes abnormal blood vessel formation in the skin and organs. Her work, currently on display in the college, is autobiographical and explores experiences living with her disorder, dealing with surgeries and living with chronic pain.



Now enrolling: KG Bound Kids

The Occupational Therapy Clinic at the Unified Clinics is now enrolling children ages 4-5 for the new KG Bound Kids kindergarten readiness program. KG Bound Kids meets once per week for 12 weeks.



HHS on Social Media



Fred Sammons celebrated his 90th birthday with friends and family this past weekend. Our very own **Carla Chase** and **Deb Lindstrom** celebrated with him!

From the [Department of Occupational Therapy](#) via [Facebook](#)

In other news

Here are some other WMU news articles you might be interested in:

- [Public career fairs bringing hundreds of employers to WMU](#)
- [WMU trustees approve naming BTR road for the late Robert Jones](#)
- [Free virtual reality space open for students, faculty](#)
- [Alumnus Matt Giraud joins Gold Company's 40th-anniversary show](#)

CHHS on Facebook and Instagram

The College of Health and Human Services is on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)! Please take a moment to "like" and "follow" us to stay informed on what's going on throughout the college.



CHHS dean search underway

The [Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs](#) is currently conducting a nationwide search for the next dean of the College of Health and Human Services. Current dean, **Dr. Earlie Washington**, announced her retirement to the Board of Trustees in [June 2017](#). Her retirement will be effective July 31, 2018.

In December, Interim Provost **Sue Stapleton** announced the active national search. **Gary Bischof**, dean of the Lee Honors College, is the chair of the [search committee](#), which is largely comprised

of faculty and staff from the college, but does include student and community members as well.

The University has also engaged the services of an executive search firm to assist with the search.

The search committee hopes to hold off-campus interviews by March and on-campus interviews in early April. And if all goes to plan, a chosen candidate will begin Aug. 1.

More information about the ongoing administrative search, visit [the provost's website](#). Candidate interviews and presentations will be posted when available.



Dean Washington with OT instructor Chelsey Langley at the 2017 State of the College

ABOUT THE DEAN

Earlie M. Washington became dean of the College of Health and Human Services in 2006, shortly after the college moved into its new building. Before that, she was director of the schools of social work at WMU (2000-06) and the University of Southern Mississippi (1994-2000).

College gathering volunteers for Day of Caring

Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to save the date for a college-wide volunteer opportunity at AACORN Farm on March 30. In conjunction with United Way and Tillers International, volunteers will work on a number of projects, inside and out, to improve the property and prepare for the summer growing season.

AACORN sees adults with developmental disabilities as valued members of a diversely-abled community. The organization allows participants to work with others to build social skills while engaging in meaningful activities.

Volunteers will receive free lunch and a free t-shirt!

Rain or shine, volunteers will work inside and out, cleaning up the house and yard, building raised garden beds, painting, building a chicken coop, etc. Participants are encouraged to bring tools like rakes and shovels, or cleaning and painting supplies. **Exact times are still TBD.**

Anyone interested in volunteering should contact [Juliana Cizek](#) in the CHHS Office of Student Engagement and Success at (269) 387-8468.

ABOUT THE HOSTS

- **AACORN** sees adults with developmental disabilities as valued members of a diversely-abled community. The organization allows participants to work with others to build social skills while engaging in meaningful activities. This cooperative model creates a sense of community among peers who are typically marginalized due to communication challenges. aacornfarm.org
- Founded in 1981, **Tillers International** is dedicated to improving the lives of people in rural areas throughout the world. Tillers works with farmers and artisans to create effective, innovative and sustainable solutions to a variety of problems. The organization specializes in draft animal power, blacksmithing and woodworking. tillersinternational.org

College plans retention activities to increase enrollment

During the [2017 State of the College](#) event, **Dean Earlie Washington** discussed plans aimed at improving the college's retention of second year students. A number of activities are already underway to help keep students engaged and successful in their education.

Last year, the college's sophomore retention rate was slightly lower than the University's. As a result, Dean Washington commissioned a task force to study ways to increase degree opportunities for undergraduate students in the college without adding costs. "I am convinced," she said in the State of the College address, "that given the number of undergraduate courses we currently offer, there may be ways of repackaging courses that can result in viable, employable bachelor's degrees." That task force has already submitted a number of creative, executable recommendations that may lead to new undergraduate degrees in the college in the near future.

Another priority is directly targeting retention rates. In 2017, the college received a Provost Retention Grant to increase retention by 10% next fall. Three major activities are planned to achieve this goal:

Anatomy classes are required for pre-professional students, and success in this challenging class can be an indicator of overall academic success. The college has hired student **peer coaches** to work closely with Biology 1910 students, to help them achieve success in the course. Along with individual attention, peer coaches will use the college's [Anatomage table](#) -- a new piece of virtual reality technology that allows students to explore anatomy with unprecedented detail in a fully digital environment -- to provide additional instruction to small groups of students.



Anatomage Table

- Faculty and staff were encouraged to take part in a **common read** of a book about the growth mindset - a new way of training our minds to view failures or setbacks as opportunities for growth. Faculty and staff were invited to serve as student retention advocates, reading the book, receiving training, and facilitating student discussions. The goal is to move the college to a strength-based perspective of student engagement.
- All of the units in the college have been asked to develop **orientation programs** for our pre-professional students. The programs will center on professional behavior, professional ethics and other professional standards.

Improving retention rates will remain a priority for CHHS and WMU in coming years. The steps being taken now are sure to be the first of many that will lead to better metrics and, more importantly, more successful CHHS graduates working in health care and human services careers in the future.

Blind alum interviewed about voice recognition technology

Bill Boules was recently featured in an article in PC Magazine regarding voice recognition technology in devices like the Amazon Echo. Bill holds master's degrees from WMU in vision rehabilitation therapy and orientation and mobility.

Being blind, Bill discusses the ways technology, specifically voice recognition devices, impact his daily life. He also incorporates the technology in his work at the [Vision Center of Excellence](#), part of the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, where he helps veterans and military members who have lost their eyesight.



Bill Boules, via Twitter

The following is an excerpt from [the piece that features Bill in PC Magazine](#).

Why Amazon's Alexa Is 'Life Changing' for the Blind

Bill Boules, blind since birth, has three Amazon Echos at his home in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. and says they've been "life changing."

Boules, 42, bought the smart speaker as soon as it came out and found that right away it helped him more easily access audio content on the web. Previously, he had to use a screen reader, which is software that orally announces the contents of a web page.

"The Echo is definitely a game changer," Boules tells PCMag. "You can get the information much faster, at least 10 times faster."

Now, Boules begins his day by asking his Echo Dot to play the news from NPR and sports highlights from ESPN before heading to work as associate director of rehabilitation and re-integration at the [Vision Center of Excellence](#), an office within the US Navy that assists members of the military and their families who have lost their eyesight. As part of his job, Boules helps clients install and use the Echo. His audio podcast on assistive technology, [The AT Junkie](#), devoted three episodes to reviewing different models of the Echo.

Like other blind people, Boules says he "watches TV" even though he's only listening to it. Before he got an Echo, Boules depended on sighted family members to help him find something to watch on his cable TV's on-screen guide. "I'm blind, I can't see the on-screen guide," says Boules. "But I can [access it] independently now. I no longer have to depend on someone else to help me find something to watch."

Read more on [PC Magazine's website](#).

Art installation at CHHS brings attention to hidden pain

Artist **Cathy Germay** was born with a rare, incurable, genetic disorder called Hereditary Hemorrhagic Telangiectasia (HHT), which causes abnormal blood vessel formation in the skin and organs. 15 years ago she underwent surgery to remove part of a lung that contained one of these formations. As a result of that procedure, and the multiple surgeries and procedures that followed, Cathy lives with daily chronic pain.

Her artwork, currently on display in the CHHS second floor art gallery, is autobiographical and explores her experiences living with her disorder, dealing with surgeries and living with chronic pain.

"My artwork is an attempt at making invisible pain, visible," says Germay. "It is my hope, that my paintings will foster a greater understanding of what it's like to live with chronic pain and an incurable illness."

Cathy's artwork will be **on display in the CHHS second floor art gallery until spring break** - the first week of March.

The gallery is open to the public [during normal hours](#).



Figure Two-thirds of a series called "Bare Bones"

For more information about Cathy

Germay: artistcathygermay.com | facebook.com/artistcathygermay

KG Bound Kids

KG Bound Kids is a program within the occupational therapy clinic, part of the Unified Clinics, at Western Michigan University. This program is appropriate for typically developing children age 4-5 who will be going to kindergarten within the next year. Each child is paired with a graduate level occupational therapy student at Western Michigan University.

Activities target gross and fine motor skills, pre-academic skills, attention and regulation.

KG Bound Kids runs for 12 weeks meeting once per week. Capacity is 16 children each session and costs \$120 for the semester.

For more information regarding this program, please email ot-clinic@wmich.edu.