Connections, 04/2018

College of Health and Human Services

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Public health students, faculty present at annual meeting
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Each year at this time, Dean Earlie Washington invites administrative staff to a special off-campus luncheon to show her appreciation for all the work they do to support the activities of the students and faculty at the College of Health and Human Services.

HHS on Social Media

Bronco Brain Break! Free ice cream treats and dogs to pet and scratch. It's just the best day to be in our building.
From the College of Health and Human Services via Instagram

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

- State's first lady announces fall summit to be at WMU
CHHS welcomes second HCCP cohort to campus

In April, the college proudly welcomed the 2018 cohort of students in the Health Careers Connection Program to the campus of Western Michigan University. Several members of the inaugural cohort, along with staff and faculty welcomed 18 students to campus for their first two class sessions at WMU.

2018 marks the second year of the Health Careers Connection Program, which was started by CHHS Dean Earlie Washington in 2017. The program, operated in conjunction with the Western Regional Area Health Education Center, is designed to help disadvantaged, underrepresented and high-achieving high school students from counties in West Michigan succeed at WMU, with the aim of returning to their communities to practice...
after graduation. All students who participate receive a scholarship that completely covers the cost of tuition, books, room and board, etc. during the summer program.

This year's cohort is made up of 18 students, up from 12 last year. The group includes students majoring in audiology, nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, social work and speech-language pathology.

Students arrived early to check in and meet their fellow students, as well as some CHHS staff and faculty. The program officially began with the first class session, HSV 2250 - Growth, Development and Aging, taught by Dr. Dori Ravotas.

The students then broke for lunch, which gave them the opportunity to meet several members of the inaugural HCCP cohort from 2017. They also met staff, faculty and graduate assistants who will be working with them this summer.

Lunch was followed by the first meeting of their second class, HOL 1000 - Choices in Living, which will be taught again this year by Katie Fitzgerald. "I'm so happy to be instructing in the HCCP program again this year," says Fitzgerald. "The students last year were wonderful and, of course, the goal of the program is something that means a lot to me, personally and as an instructor at WMU."

Students will return to campus on June 10, when they will move into a residence hall to begin their 2 1/2 week stay on campus, which will be filled with face-to-face learning in classes as well as off-campus learning activities. Until then, students will complete online coursework, interacting virtually with their instructors and classmates.
The 2018 Health Careers Connection Program will conclude on June 27 with a formal celebration dinner held at the College of Health and Human Services.

2018 Interprofessional Education Expo highlights CHHS successes

The 2018 Interprofessional Education Expo was held April 13 at the College of Health and Human Services. The theme was Dementia in Aging and the day featured grand rounds with an interdisciplinary group of CHHS faculty and guests, followed by student research presentations on a variety of interdisciplinary topics.

The 2018 expo was the third annual installment of the event. The grand rounds were better attended and there were many more student presenters than in previous years.

"I was thrilled to see students from different disciplines learning from one another about professional roles and their scope of practice as they discussed poster topics," says Dr. Ann Tyler, associate dean of the college and IPE committee chair. "Faculty in all disciplines were very helpful in weaving the topic into their coursework and encouraging their students to participate in today's events."

In recent years, interprofessional educational activities have become more commonplace at the College of Health and Human Services, as the various disciplines in the college work together to reflect the increasingly interdisciplinary approach to health care and human services in professional and clinical settings.

Grand rounds

The team that led grand rounds this year featured faculty members as well as professionals from the community. The event included an overview of the various types of dementia, followed by a simulated video case of care providers attempting to bathe a nursing home resident who was confused and agitated.

Those present at the event were asked to work with others, particularly from different disciplines, to consider individual factors, communication styles and the broader environment that were exacerbating the situation. They were also asked to reflect on what could have been done differently to reduce the resistance to care from the nursing home resident. A panel presentation followed, with an overview of the scope of practice related to dementia care for each discipline. The panel included:

- Cassidy Ardelean, program coordinator from Michigan Great Lakes Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association
- Dr. Robin Criter, assistant professor in the Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences
- Dr. Suma Devanga, assistant professor in the Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences
- Micahaela Hanzaker, occupational therapist from Centracare
- Dr. Maureen Mickus, gerontologist and associate professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy

"Alzheimer’s is the most expensive disease in the US and projections indicate the prevalence will triple from 5.7 to 15 million persons by 2050," says Dr. Mickus. "I’m pleased we had the opportunity to increase awareness of the disease among our colleagues and students. Our IPE team specifically focused on the difficult task of..."
bathing, an activity of daily living which requires expertise from all disciplines for reducing resistance from persons with the disease."

**Student research poster presentations**

Graduate and undergraduate students, including a large number of students from the Grand Rapids OT graduate program, presented research posters in the CHHS atrium. Presenters were approached by students, staff and faculty from all disciplines in the college. They had to tailor their presentations for those who shared basic knowledge about their areas of study as well as with those unfamiliar with their disciplines.

"It's a great exercise for students," says Dr. Michelle McGrady, assistant professor of integrative holistic health and wellness and IPE committee member. "They are forced to develop a premise and then discuss it from a number of different angles to accommodate various audiences. It truly helps prepare them for their professional lives, where they won't always be speaking with other experts in their field."

**WMU public health students and faculty present at annual meeting**

A group of faculty and students from the School of Interdisciplinary Health Programs traveled to the annual meeting of the Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) in Columbus, Ohio, in April. A total of seven undergrads, two graduate students and five faculty from WMU public health programs attended the two-day event.
Drs. Amos Aduroja, Robert Bensley, Cassie Jeng and Shannon McMorrow presented a total of seven projects or research papers, two of which were presented with students. MPH students Jozzlyn Richards and Chad Atwood presented with Dr. McMorrow, while undergraduate student Alexa Allen presented a session with Drs. Aduroja and Bensley that pertained to food deserts surrounding university communities.

Alexa Allen, Kristen Heggie and Miranda McDowell placed third in the National Public Health Case Study competition. All three students are in the Bachelor of Science in Public Health program at WMU. Additionally, Kristen Heggie was selected as Western Michigan University's representative for the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing Health Education Major of the Year.

“It’s remarkable that we have so many graduate and undergraduate students in this discipline engaged and presenting at this annual meeting,” says Dr. Bensley. “Our undergraduate students placed third in the case study competition and Kristen was recognized as a national health education student of the year. I think that says a lot about the quality of our students at WMU.”

WMU Eta Sigma Gamma health education honorary was selected from 100 university chapters to exhibit alongside the National Eta Sigma Gamma office at the annual meeting. Eta Sigma Gamma is aligned with the public health program in the School of Interdisciplinary Health Programs. Drs. Aduroja and Bensley serve as chapter sponsors.

About public health at WMU

The Master of Public Health program launched in 2015. It's a hybrid program that meets face-to-face in WMU's Downtown Grand Rapids location one or two times each semester, with the bulk of the coursework taking place online. It is a generalist degree designed to prepare leaders for this
exciting field, including core areas in public health: biostatistics, environmental health sciences, epidemiology, health services administration and health education and health behavior.

The Bachelor of Science in Public Health began in the College of Health and Human Services and School of Interdisciplinary Health Programs in the fall of 2017. Previously, it was the Community Health Education program in the College of Education and Human Development. The program prepares students for careers in government-based public health agencies, nonprofit organizations, managed care organizations, medical and hospital centered education settings and corporate health promotion settings. In addition, the program is appropriate for students interested in pursuing a master’s degree in public health (MPH), community health (MS) or health promotion (MS).

**CHHS takes service event to AACORN Farm**

Students, staff and faculty participated in a college-wide volunteer opportunity at AACORN Farm on Friday, March 30. At the facility, AACORN provides enrichment and experiential opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities. In conjunction with United Way, volunteers worked on a number of projects, inside and out, to prepare the facilities and grounds as the new home for the animals and growing season.
Around 50 CHHS students, staff and faculty volunteers arrived at the facility armed with rakes, shovels and brooms. For a facility that employs a staff of five, the size and energy of the CHHS workforce provided a much-needed wave of assistance in cleaning up the large property and preparing it for spring and summer activities.
"We were very happy to have so many volunteers for this inaugural Day of Caring," says Nancy Cretsinger, director of academic and student services at the college. "It's incredibly gratifying to see the college providing a service for such a worthy organization. And the staff was clearly grateful for the manpower."

Volunteers received t-shirts, as well as a free lunch and plenty of bottled water. Toward the end of the day, AACORN staff brought out their baby goats for holding and feeding. This seemed to be enjoyed by both the volunteers and the goats. In March, AACORN brought their baby goats to WMU as a treat for clients at Senior Day Services.
Neither a date nor a venue has been selected for next year, but the college does plan to organize a second annual Day of Caring in 2019.

About AACORN

AACORN was formed by several parents of individuals with autism in 2011. By 2013, young adults with developmental disabilities were coming to the ranch to learn about animal care, gardening, arts and crafts, and to participate in outdoor activities that emphasized fitness, teamwork, and positive responses to others. The program has quickly grown to serve more individuals, as well as classes from the KRESA young adult program. Culinary activities, sewing, and making goat milk products have been added to the curriculum. Participants connect to the community by making regular deliveries of fresh eggs and hand-tied fleece blankets to Kalamazoo’s YWCA. aacornfarm.org

WMU students moved to retirement home as part of intergenerational study

CONTACT: PAULA M. DAVIS
APRIL 25, 2018 | WMU NEWS

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—For more than a year, three graduate students have made their home in a special communal setting off campus.

It’s similar to a college dorm—single rooms, common areas for socializing and a dining center under one roof.

But, in this case, the students are sharing their meals, their time and their personal lives in an assisted-living facility with residents who are in their 80s and 90s, an unusual arrangement anywhere in the country.

“It’s not like being on campus, and it’s not like being at home,” says Colette Chapp, a 23-year-old from St. Clair, who moved in having had many past experiences as a volunteer or visitor in assisted-living and nursing homes.

“But this was very unique,” she says. “I wasn’t volunteering and leaving. This was my home. I was here to stay. There was no out if things got weird.”

Not at all weird, she and the other students have found, but enlightening and heartening.

BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR

As part of a study examining intergenerational interaction and relationship building, the students are cohabitating with about 40 elders to live and engage as side-by-side residents.

“The students are essentially trying to be good neighbors,” explains Nancy Hock, one of two occupational therapy faculty members leading the study set at Clark on Keller Lake, a retirement community in suburban Grand Rapids.
After learning from a previous Clark administrator that the facility had unused rooms, she pitched the idea for this project inspired by a similar intergenerational community in the Netherlands.

Hock, coordinator of WMU’s occupational therapy program in Grand Rapids, says the arrangement has been a win-win for students and for Clark’s traditional denizens.

“The residents have the opportunity to interact with younger people. They hear about their lives. They hear about what’s happening with them on a daily basis. And it’s also a win for the students because they have a decrease in the expenses that a typical graduate student would have” because they’re not paying for housing.

After going through a rigorous interview process, the students chosen for the project moved into Clark in August 2016 and move out in April 2018. Throughout that period, researchers have conducted interviews and collected data from both the seniors and the students. They will present their study findings at the World Federation of Occupational Therapists’ World Congress in Cape Town, South Africa, in May 2018.

By living in close quarters with seniors, the students—all studying to be occupational therapists—say they have gained insights they might not have gotten easily any other way, insights proving to be beneficial for their personal knowledge and for their development as aspiring professionals.

This collegiate trio—Chapp, Corey Youngs and Lori Johnson—have observed, for instance, resiliency in the face of persisting frailty, the comfort that comes with long-lived relationships, but also individuals dealing with social isolation toward the end of life.

“They’ve learned the people in this facility are facing loss, loss of function, loss of independence,” Hock says. “So, that’s difficult for them to witness.”

**MAKING CONNECTIONS**

The graduate students live in the home full time and are encouraged to spend at least 30 hours a month with their neighbors. So, between going to class and other aspects of their personal lives, students make time to eat meals, play games, watch television and movies, or simply hang out talking with their older neighbors.

The arrangement is so unusual, however, some of the seniors, though they knew students would be among them, didn’t quite know what to make of their new cohorts. Were they at the facility to work? Volunteer? Be occupational therapists? It took time for students to fit in as simply friends.

“When the students first came here, I felt perhaps it would be loud and busy,” says Jean Hoover, a retired teacher who has lived at Clark for more than seven years.

“You never know what young people are going to do at night. But it’s been wonderful,” she says.

“For me, mostly it’s been the students popping into my room and talking to me, and we just relax and enjoy. Then the other part is the students will sit with us at mealtime and that’s enjoyable.”

Senior resident Charlie Lundstrom bonded with Johnson.

“I’m computer illiterate,” confides the retired attorney. “Lori was my teacher for probably 10 or 12 weeks. Once a week, we’d have a meeting where she taught me how to use a computer. I enjoyed that. That was helpful.”
But, from what students have experienced, getting some of the older residents to open up and talk with them—and even with one another—has been no small thing. And the difficulty has been one of their take-home lessons from the project.

“It might be partly the culture of a retirement home; it can be very isolating,” says Youngs, a 26-year-old from Trenton.

“The people who were really thriving are the ones who have family who are consistently showing up, and that is giving them a sense of belonging and purpose.”

For people who did not have that consistent family connection, “that’s where we as students have a lot of utility. A lot of the times, I have felt like I was a surrogate family member,” he says.

**ENGENDERING EMPATHY**

Empathy across difference is one of major hoped-for outcomes of this project. At age 23, Chapp hadn’t known the pain and disorientation of losing multiple friends and family members due to infirmity or age. But that’s often a consequence of living into your 80s and 90s.

Since the students moved in, 15 of the assisted-living center’s residents have passed away, including several people the WMU students considered friends.

“That’s been one of the major challenges,” Chapp says. “They did warn us that was a very likely possibility when we moved in, but I don’t think I was prepared for the extent of it. We lost a lot more people than we ever would have guessed, and I never realized how close I would be to the people we’ve lost.”

As hard and as unwelcome a lesson as that has been, it put some of the seniors’ hesitation to connect in a new light.

“The residents have sort of commented that they are reluctant to start new relationships because there is always the possibility they could lose that person pretty quickly,” Chapp says. “And once you put yourself out there so many times, it’s hard to convince yourself to try again.”

Project organizers also see the arrangement as a way to help shatter stereotypes older and younger generations may harbor for one another in a society in which, typically, very young and very old people don’t live together or have other meaningful engagement.

“Some of the consequences of that are, in my opinion, quite serious,” says Dr. Maureen Mickus, an associate professor of occupational therapy, a gerontologist and Hock’s partner in the research project.

“Aging is a natural part of the human condition, and when we are not exposed to older people, this may create stereotypes, misunderstandings, or perceptions that are not always positive.”

According to a 2017 Generations United/Eisner Foundation survey titled “I Need You, You Need Me” and focused on age segregation in the United States, 61 percent of young adults age 18 to 34 have a limited number of acquaintances who are much older or much younger. And 53 percent of all the survey’s respondents, 2,171 adults over age 18, reported that outside of family members they spend little time with people who are much older or younger.

“I think it’s very easy to overlook this population,” Youngs says of older generations.
“Getting to old age is always a far-off idea, and nobody thinks that eventually they’re going to end up there. And the fact of the matter is, these are all normal, functioning human beings.”

He adds that getting to old age also can be a “great equalizer because everybody ends up in the same place, and everybody has the same need to be in the presence of others.”

**Read more about WMU’s distinctive people and programs in the winter 2018 issue of W Magazine, a publication of WMU’s Office of University Relations.**

**Dean Washington treats administrative staff to lunch**

April 25 was Administrative Professionals Day here in the US. Each year at this time, **Dean Earlie Washington** invites administrative staff to a special off-campus luncheon to show her appreciation for all the work done by this group to support the activities of the students and faculty at the College of Health and Human Services.

As Dean Washington said in her State of the College address in December, "I’m so proud of the way our staff here serve the college and the University, but most of all, how they serve the needs of our students. We could not do what we do without [them] and I don’t get enough chance to thank our staff for their hard work."

This year's luncheon was held at the Kalamazoo Country Club.