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College of Health and Human Services

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College of Health
and Human Services



JUNE 2018

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[Major gift supports adult wellness lab](#)

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[University invited to two celebrations on July 27](#)

On July 27, the College of Health and Human Services will host one event to celebrate two momentous occasions - the grand reopening of the renovated second floor of the **Ernest Wilbur Building** and **Dr. Earlie M. Washington's** celebrating 12 years as dean of the College of Health and Human Services.



[Creating a functional therapy space with giant blocks](#)

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[Inaugural MPH cohort included in June 2018 commencement](#)

Nearly 1300 students walked across the stage of Miller Auditorium to receive diplomas on June 23. Among those graduates were 15 individuals from the first cohort of the **Master of Public Health** program, which officially launched in the fall of 2016.



[AHEC summer newsletter](#)

The AHEC summer 2018 newsletter provides information about upcoming conferences, CHHS Immersion Day, the Health Careers Connection Program, an MPH program update and more.



HHS on Social Media



Sara Clark, OT academic fieldwork coordinator, visits with physician assistant and occupational therapy students presenting research posters in the CHHS atrium.

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:

- [Mending the mind with music](#)
- [Cheatham appointed associate provost for budget and personnel](#)
- [Jazz students continue winning streak in DownBeat competition](#)

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.



Advanced technology enhances learning at CHHS

Human anatomy remains one of the key courses for students in the College of Health and Human Services. Knowledge of human anatomy is integral for many of the health-related programs in the college. Students' mastery of the class is a reliable indicator for their continued success here at Western Michigan University and beyond. [CHHS acquired an Anatomage Table](#) in the fall of 2017 to further support and enhance anatomy education at the college.

This new piece of technology is a high-definition imaging system which offers real human anatomy, pathology cases and thousands of scans that can be viewed from virtually any angle and any cross-section for optimal visibility and understanding. The number of images available on the device make it an amazing resource for students and faculty.



Retention activities

As part of its retention efforts, the college hired several student peer coaches to use the Anatomage Table during one-on-one coaching sessions and with groups of anatomy students to help them study and reinforce what they were learning in class.

"It was great to see these students using the Anatomage Table to learn," says **Cassie Watts**, CHHS retention project coordinator. "You could tell that they were responding to the technology and were excited about this new learning tool."

In addition to coaching sessions, the Anatomage Table is also [available during open hours](#), when student coaches use the table with students, one-on-one.

While it is too soon to quantify the impact of these activities on student success in their anatomy class or on overall student retention, Watts said there is anecdotal evidence that the Anatomage table has already had a positive impact for some students.

"We look forward to having more meaningful data on student success and retention after a few more semesters of the peer coaching project," Watts said.

Graduate anatomy

Physician assistant students have become the most regular users of the device. **Phil Walcott**, master faculty specialist in the PA department, teaches the advanced clinical anatomy classes, which include a cadaver lab. He has found the new technology to be extremely useful.

"It definitely won't replace cadaver-based anatomy," says Walcott. "But there are so many images and so much detail available on the Anatomage table that I do think it is a wonderful ancillary to the other work my students are doing."

During his labs, Walcott will send small groups of students from the cadaver lab to the Anatomage room where a graduate assistant is there to walk students through screens and test them on structures and systems they're studying.

"The Anatomage Table allows anatomy students to view structures in a different way than what the cadavers may show," says **Alex Christmas**, PA graduate assistant. "It can also be beneficial when students want to test their knowledge."

"There has been a bit of a learning curve," says Walcott. "But it gives the students more examples to look at and learn with. And I also think they really like the high-tech approach, as well."



PA graduate assistant Alex Christmas works on the Anatomage Table with Phil Walcott and a group of PA students

Major gift supports adult wellness lab

President Edward Montgomery and his wife, **Kari**, joined the College of Health and Human Services and WMU Development & Alumni Relations for a special dinner at the Gilmore House to thank the Ishler family for their significant gift to name the Ishler Adult Wellness Laboratory in the soon-to-be remodeled Center for Disability Services Adult Wellness building.

Tim Terrentine and **Kyle Herm** from the Office of Development and Alumni Relations helped Dean Earlie Washington and Sandy Glista welcome and thank **Gretchen Ishler**, who made the gift in the name of her husband, **Dr. George Ishler**.



Top row (L to R): Kari Montgomery, President Edward Montgomery, Kyle Herm, Tim Terrentine, Sandra Glista; Bottom row (L to R): Justin Ishler, Gretchen Ishler, and Dean Earlie Washington

Early in his career, Dr. Ishler joined the U.S. Army, serving in Ft. Sill, Oklahoma; Da Nang, Vietnam; and Washington, DC. Later, the family moved to Michigan and George joined The Upjohn Company, where he eventually retired as corporate vice president of pharmaceutical regulatory affairs.

At dinner, Gretchen and her son, **Justin Ishler**, shared memories of George, and Dean Washington presented them with a photo of staff, faculty and students who will teach and learn in the space, thanking the Ishlers for their philanthropy.

The Ishler Adult Wellness Laboratory will serve as an interdisciplinary space for students and faculty to work with adults who have cognitive or functional impairments that need special assistance as well as providing a wellness curriculum for adults in the community.



Dean Washington presents the Ishlers with a photograph of CHHS students, faculty and staff.

University invited to two celebrations on July 27

On July 27, the College of Health and Human Services will host [one event to celebrate two momentous occasions](#). The first is the grand opening of the renovated second floor of the Ernest Wilbur Building, which will house the new Doctor of Physical Therapy program. The second is celebrating Dr. Earlie M. Washington's 12 years as dean of the college.



Artist's rendering of the updated west entrance to the EWB.

[RSVP here](#)

Date: July 27, 2018

- EWB Grand Reopening: 2 to 4 p.m., short program at 2:30 p.m.
- Dean Washington's Celebration: 4 to 6 p.m.

Location: Ernest Wilbur Building, 1101 Oliver St., Kalamazoo MI 49008

Grand reopening - 2 to 4 p.m.

In the past months, CHHS newsletters have included information about the [development of the Doctor of Physical Therapy program](#) and the [construction on the second floor of EWB](#). Much of that work is beginning to pay off as the program is about to officially begin accepting applications and the renovations on the building that will house the program are nearing completion. CHHS is pleased to host an **open house from 2 to 4 p.m, with a short program at 2:30 p.m.**

Dean Washington - 4 to 6 p.m.

Dr. Earlie Washington came to Western Michigan University originally as the director of the School of Social Work in 2000, and has been dean of the College of Health and Human Services since 2006. At the end of July, she will end her tenure as dean and start a yearlong administrative leave. To celebrate Dr. Washington's time and successes as the dean of CHHS, the college will host an **old fashioned, outdoor barbecue from 4 to 6 p.m.**

Creating functional therapy space with giant blocks

Occupational therapy students and faculty worked with staff at the Unified Clinics to create a unique new space in the Occupational Therapy Clinic to be used for working with children who have sensory disorders. The space was constructed with large, plastic, interlocking bricks called [EverBlocks](#).



Fueled by pizza and soda, volunteers worked late to assemble the structure, which provides privacy and quiet for working with the clinic's young clients.

The project was led by **Dr. Carla Chase**, OT department chair, and **Dr. Michelle Suarez**, associate professor and director of the [Finicky Feeders program](#). The room was designed to encourage creative play, like pretend mail deliveries and puppet shows, through small openings in the walls. More focused tasks are staged at small tables and chairs inside.

"The main objective was to give our young clients a place with fewer distractions so they can focus on tasks," says Suarez. "Of course the fact that the space is made out of giant blocks just makes it even cooler for them."

The OT department displayed great creativity with the project, creating additional useful clinical space in a very flexible (and inexpensive) way.

Inaugural MPH cohort included in June 2018 commencement

Nearly [1300 students](#) walked across the stage of Miller Auditorium to receive diplomas on June 23. Among those graduates were 15 individuals from the first cohort of the [Master of Public Health](#) program, which [officially launched](#) in the fall of 2016.



"It's always exciting to see an inaugural cohort finish their program," says **Dr. Vivian Valdmanis**, professor in the School of Interdisciplinary Health Programs. "These students faced many challenges that come with a brand new program, and they overcame them with great tenacity and grace. I am very proud of all of them."

"We are delighted to recognize this accomplishment of the first MPH Cohort at WMU," says **Dr. Mark Kelley**, director of the School of Interdisciplinary Health Programs and co-coordinator of public health programs. "We look forward to seeing the wonderful ways in which they will impact the health of the communities in which they live and work. Our program will continue to grow and develop as we learn from their experiences."



The MPH program at WMU is offered in a hybrid format with coursework done primarily online and several face-to-face meetings at the [WMU-Grand Rapids Beltline](#) location throughout the year. The initial cohort included students from as far away as Wheeling, Illinois; Marquette, Michigan; and Metro Detroit; in addition to a number from the Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo areas.

