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Updates in Academic Affairs: 06/20/2016

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Updates in Academic Affairs: June 20, 2016

Inside Updates: College leadership changes to take effect in July, students have a new online option for obtaining textbooks and a recent call center arrangement intends to boost financial aid and Bronco Express customer service.

Baas to lead honors college as interim dean

Longtime professor and associate dean Jane Baas has been named interim dean of the Lee Honors College, effective July 1. The current dean of the college, Dr. Carla Koretsky, will begin her term as College of Arts and Sciences dean the same day.

A search committee will be formed to identify a new honors college dean, with initial meetings to begin in the fall. Dave Powell, College of Aviation dean, will chair the committee.

Baas, who has a Master of Fine Arts in Dance from Case Western Reserve University, comes to the interim position with more than two years of experience helping to lead the college as its associate dean. She is veteran of the WMU community, having joined the faculty in 1981.

In 2007, she was honored with the College of Fine Arts Dean’s Teaching Award and in 2014, earned an Excellence in Service Award. Baas also has served several stints as dance department chair, most recently from 2012 until 2014.

New “Buy Books” link added to GoWMU

A new online feature was recently implemented to help students view and purchase textbooks and other course materials. A “Buy Books” link has been added to the bottom of the Concise Student Schedule and the Student Detail Schedule in GoWMU.

The link allows students to see all required and recommended course materials by semester in one convenient location during the registration process.
In collaboration with the Follett Corp., this feature was added to assist students in identifying the correct course materials adopted by faculty members specific to their individual schedules. Students have the option of purchasing materials from the site and can select from rental, used, digital or new textbook options.

Students may also elect free in-store pick up at the Textbook Alley in the Bernhard Center, or to have items shipped to a mailing address.

To comply with the Higher Education Opportunity Act, information about required and recommended textbooks must be made available to students during the registration process. Therefore, it is critical for all instructors of record to submit their textbook plans to the WMU Bookstore Shops by established deadlines to allow students to view accurate and complete course material information.

Textbook ordering due dates are available from the Registrar’s Office at w mich.edu/registrar/faculty-staff/textbooks.

**New call center arrangement to boost customer service, convenience**

To manage their call center, the Student Financial Aid office and Bronco Express are enhancing their services by entering into a partnership with a Baltimore company called CMD Outsourcing Services.

On-campus representatives will continue to be available at the Bronco Express office in the Bernhard Center for questions about financial aid, billing, payments and other services currently provided via phone by Bronco Express.

But the partnership with CMD Outsourcing will allow calls to bypass internal WMU phone trunk lines, significantly reducing extended wait times and limited service access during high-volume periods.

CMD brings to WMU 25 years of experience working with higher education and financial-aid customer service. Led by an experienced manager, the team of CMD employees answering WMU calls is receiving extensive training and supervision in the general areas of financial aid and in information specific to WMU. The latter includes information compiled in an online knowledge base built specifically for WMU and based on hundreds of questions answered in preparation for the switch.
Training in Federal Educational Rights Privacy Act and related privacy laws and regulations, a host of security measures, and a formal quality assurance program by CMD will ensure that students are provided with accurate, accountable, Bronco-friendly service.

For calls that go beyond what CMD representatives can provide, a referral process is in place for CMD to make referrals to campus offices, just as Bronco Express staff do currently.

The phone number for Bronco Express will remain the same during this transition, (269) 387-6000. Internal access to direct dial phone contacts for Bronco Express team members also will remain the same. And the schedules for walk-in visits and current service hours also have not changed. That information is available from the Bronco Express website at wmich.edu/broncoexpress.

Questions regarding this initiative may be directed to Dr. Terrell Hodge, interim director of student financial aid and scholarships, at (269) 387-6037 or terrell.hodge@wmich.edu.