OT receives monumental $2 million gift

President John M. Dunn announced Nov. 9 the receipt of a $2 million gift from Kalamazoo residents Frederic “Fred” W. Sammons and Barbara A. Rider, emerita in occupational therapy.

The gift, the largest ever to a U.S. occupational therapy program, will help shape the future of WMU’s nearly 90-year-old OT program—the oldest and most highly ranked such degree program in Michigan.

It is the largest cash gift from individual donors for the College of Health and Human Services and ties for 10th on WMU’s all-time list of cash gifts in the University's 108-year history.

The gift will provide:
- $1.5 million for the Frederic W. Sammons Endowed Chair in Occupational Therapy.
- $250,000 for innovative projects in the OT department, such as development of the Open Journal of Occupational Therapy, which will be the first open-access, online journal in the profession to publish peer-reviewed articles that focus on applied research, practice and education.
- $250,000 for the Barbara A. Rider Endowed Distinguished Professorship in Occupational Therapy.

Sammons and Rider serve as members of the Dean’s Advisory Council for CHHS. Both are longtime supporters of the University.

Sammons, an occupational therapist, founded Sammons Preston Inc., the largest worldwide distributor of rehabilitation equipment and supplies. Rider is a past chair of WMU’s occupational therapy department who retired in 1991.

State research universities establish business network

A collaboration involving WMU and Michigan’s four other research universities will create the first statewide university network in the country to provide a critical new tool for business growth and attraction.

The Michigan Corporate Relations Network, or M-CRN, was announced Nov. 10 in Lansing. It will create partnerships that will connect state industry to critical university assets in a way that will help the Michigan economy grow and prosper.

A total of six of the 15 public universities in the state make up the network. In addition to WMU, they are Michigan State University, Michigan Technological University, Wayne State University and the University of Michigan’s campuses in Ann Arbor and Dearborn.

The campuses were chosen because of their broad research and geographic footprint. Collectively, they represent more than $1.8 billion of research expenditures, which accounted for 98 percent of the academic research done in Michigan in 2009, and 99 percent of all patent activity among state universities.

“Michigan is one of the top states in the nation for research and development with more than $16 billion in industrial R&D and close to $2 billion in university research,” says Michael Finney, head of the Michigan Economic Development Corp. “Companies like Google, Facebook and Dell were born on college campuses, and we want to keep helping our leading universities turn the latest developments into jobs.”

At WMU, the M-CRN will be housed in the Haworth College of Business and will work in collaboration with the Small Business and Technology Development Center, which also is housed in the business college.

New geological survey project set to map Calhoun County

Just weeks after being designated by the state as the home to the Michigan Geological Survey, WMU will launch its first major geological mapping project in neighboring Calhoun County.

The Michigan Legislature recently transferred mapping and natural resource assessment functions to WMU’s Department of Geological Sciences from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Office of Geological Survey.

Alan Kehew, geosciences and director of the survey at WMU, will lead the four-year Calhoun County project. Kehew says this will be the first time the county will be mapped at a detailed scale.

“We’re very excited about this work because the information yielded by these projects will lay the foundation for future land-use planning and economic development for the area,” Kehew notes.

The four-year Calhoun County effort will be funded through two programs administered by the U.S. Geological Survey. Both programs—STATEMAP and the Great Lakes Geologic Mapping Coalition—provide funds to state geological surveys to make maps that benefit the state.
Bamboo flute player to visit campus

Michael “Chikuzen” Gould, a Grand Master of the Japanese bamboo flute, will give a concert and speak about the ancient instrument at 2 p.m. Friday, Nov. 18, in the Dalton Center Recital Hall.

Fashion show benefits local charity

The fall runway fashion show by the WMU chapter of the Merchandising Opportunities Design Association will take place Friday and Saturday, Nov. 18-19, in the Bernhard Center’s East Ballroom. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission. Visit www.modawmu.info for ticket prices, show times and other details.

Opera workshop presents concert

Members of the WMU Opera Workshop will perform duets from some of the world’s most renowned operas at 8:15 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 22, in the Dalton Center Recital Hall. The workshop cast will be joined by WMU voice students.

Pay for health care is talk topic

John Goddeeris from Michigan State University will weigh in on the health care funding debate when he speaks at 3 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 30, in 2028 Brown Hall.

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Talk focuses on success from coach’s perspective

Men’s head basketball coach Steve Hawkins will talk about what constitutes true success as it pertains to basketball on Friday, Dec. 2, as part of the Keystone Community Bank Breakfast Series. The talk, titled “A New Way to Look at Success,” begins with breakfast at 7:30 a.m. in the Dean's Conference Room of Schneider Hall. Reservations are required by calling the dean’s office at (269) 387-5050.

Hawkins is beginning his ninth season as head coach and 11th season at WMU. He has positioned the Broncos among the best teams in the Mid-American Conference and led WMU to a level of success unparalleled in school history. The Broncos have appeared in four of seven post-seasons since Hawkins’ arrival in Kalamazoo and have rattled off 10 consecutive top-three MAC West finishes. Hawkins has been voted the top rookie head coach by Basketball Times as well as Coach of the Year by the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan.

Leading translation prize awarded

Jeffrey M. Angles, foreign languages, has received the Landon Translation Award, America’s most prestigious national prize for the translation of poetry. Angles won this year’s award for “Forest of Eyes: Selected Poems of Tada Chimako,” published in 2010 by the University of California Press.

This is the first time a translation from Japanese was recognized with the award, which goes to the previous year’s best book translated from any language into English. “Forest of Eyes” was selected by the celebrated poet and translator Charles Martin from among 32 finalists translated from 17 languages.

Angles accepted his award during the Academy of American Poets’ annual Poets Forum Oct. 20-22 in New York City. His winning book is the first full-length retrospective of the work of Tada Chimako (1930-2003), a major Japanese poet known for her use of mythological images and beautiful writing.

National association honors researcher

Nickola W. Nelson, speech pathology and audiology, has received a 2011 Honors of the Association Award from the American Speech-Language Hearing Association in recognition of her distinguished contributions to communication sciences and disorders.

The award, ASHA’s highest distinction, will be presented Friday, Nov. 18, during the organization’s annual convention in San Diego. It goes to ASHA members known worldwide for a lifetime of innovative clinical practice, insightful and rigorous research, outstanding teaching, creative administration, effective legislative activity, or other professional contributions.

Nelson, who serves as director of WMU’s doctoral program in interdisciplinary health sciences, focuses her research on school-age language and literacy disorders and has produced six books, dozens of book chapters and articles, and seven tests in child language.

Communicator pens ‘post-racial’ book

Mark P. Orbe, communication, has written a book that examines public perceptions of President Barack Obama’s communication style, race matters and the role of the media in 21st century politics.


The first book of its kind, it draws from a large national qualitative data set generated by 333 diverse participants from 12 different U.S. states across six regions and provides comprehensive, in-depth coverage of the similarities and differences that exist among diverse groups of everyday U.S. Americans.

A WMU faculty member since 1997, Orbe is an expert in interpersonal communication, communication and diversity, and intercultural communication.
Study Abroad implements Internet-based application system

Study Abroad has a new online student application system—Broncos Abroad. The system will manage all study abroad program information and provide a greatly improved online application and approval environment for WMU faculty, staff and students. It is based on the Studio Abroad program designed by the Terra Dotta company that is being used by study abroad offices in more than 140 colleges and universities across the country. The WMU version was implemented with support from the Office of Information Technology and is integrated with the University’s Banner student information system.

Jane Blyth Warren, Study Abroad, says the system will make it easier for students to find information on study abroad programs and to apply for their chosen programs. “It will also help us better support students while they’re abroad by having information about where students are living and traveling so we can quickly make contact in the event of a crisis situation,” Blyth Warren says.

Starting with applicants for short-term summer and semester-long or academic-year programs that begin in fall 2012, Broncos Abroad will provide support such as:
• Registration and tracking of student, staff and faculty travel for credit and noncredit programs, courses and activities.
• An enhanced searchable database of all WMU and non-WMU approved-off-campus programs.
• Easy access to budget information for individual programs.
• A user “dashboard” allowing students to track the processing of their applications.
• Improved online ability for faculty directors to monitor their program’s enrollment and to obtain immediate email confirmation for each application that is submitted.
• A more user-friendly faculty recommendation area that allows faculty to login at anytime to review all requests for recommendations and students to include personal information and notes with their requests.
• An enhanced email function that improves the ability of select faculty and staff members to communicate via a single message with all students enrolled in a program.
• More options for including pre-departure information in the student application process.
• Significantly improved study abroad data and reporting functions.
• The provision of digital records, greatly reducing data-entry and paper and printer toner use.

Research resources event slated

Discussion on funding and other resources for faculty research will be featured at the Research and Desert open house from 1 to 4 p.m. Friday, Nov. 18, in the Fetzer Center.


Faculty members will be able to learn about funding opportunities and strategies, connect with WMU colleagues, and share ideas.

The event will include resource stations and mini-workshops on a variety of topics. Door prizes that support scholarship will be awarded at 4 p.m. P rizes include trips to funding agencies and sponsors and an iPad.

Haenicke Memorial Garden earns national award

WMU’s Haenicke Memorial Garden was recently recognized for outstanding landscape design and construction by the national Professional Grounds Management Society.

The University received an Honor Award for the garden in the Small Site category of the PGMS 2011 Green Star Awards competition, the results of which were announced in late October.

Located near Waldo Library, the memorial garden was designed and planted in fall 2009 in honor of former WMU President Dr. Elmer Haenicke. Conifers, which were a favorite of Haenicke, were planted in the garden to add color throughout the winter.

The garden also consists of lighting as well as benches, on which visitors can relax. “This is a great honor to receive,” says Tim Holsy, director of landscape services. “It not only recognizes the efforts put in by our staff, but also Western Michigan University’s commitment toward enriching its students’, staff’s and visitors’ lives through green spaces.”

Other projects receiving PGMS awards included the Biltmore Estate Historic Gardens.

25 Year Club inductees for 2011

A total of 51 people who began their service to WMU in 1986 will be inducted into WMU’s 25 Year Club during a reception, dinner and program beginning at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 30, in the Bernhard Center’s East Ballroom.

The annual gala event honors employees who have built their careers at the University.

With the new class of inductees in place, the club now has 1,086 members. Of these, 428 are active employees and 678 are retired.

The new inductees are:

Douglas T. Alrick, information technology; Ariel L.H. Anderson, teaching, learning and educational studies; Raja G. Aravamudhan, paper engineering, chemical engineering and imaging; David A. Barnes, geosciences; Pradipkumar N. Bhatt, engineering and imaging; David A. Barnes, learning and educational studies; Raja G. Aravamudhan, teaching, learning and educational studies; Pradipkumar N. Bhatt, engineering and imaging; David A. Barnes, learning and educational studies; Raja G. Aravamudhan, teaching, learning and educational studies; Pradipkumar N. Bhatt, engineering and imaging; David A. Barnes, learning and educational studies; Raja G. Aravamudhan, teaching, learning and educational studies; Pradipkumar N. Bhatt, engineering and imaging.

Shashanta James, student financial aid and scholarships; Jeffrey A. Johns, maintenance services; Lucile M. Johnson, building custodial and support services; Alan Kehe, geosciences; Judith A. Kirk, University Libraries; Edward Khuk, information technology; Nancy A. Kroes, information technology; Hanjoo Lee (retired), marketing; James A. Leja, blindness and low vision studies; Frederick F. MacDonald, social work; Gracie K. Mae, Bernhard Center Dining Services; Parviz Merati, mechanical and aeronautical engineering; Patricia A. Moore, intercollegiate athletics; Todd K. Mosman, Human Resources; Russell F. Norther, power plant; Lonn L. Page, building custodial and support services; Carol J. Patterson, Logistic Services; Leonard J. Petrie, information technology; John Racine, information technology; Robert E. Reck, marketing; Elizabeth Richardson, multicultural affairs; Mark T. Robinson, Valley II Dining Services; Cynthia Runingham-Johnson, foreign languages; Terri Ann Stoken, landscape services; Stacy L. Vallier, intercollegiate athletics; Cindy A. VanderWoude, University Recreation; Cindy A. Walton, building custodial and support services; Paul T. Wilson, special education and literacy studies; Steve M. Woflinbarger, school of music; and Linda J. Young-Woolf, landscape services.

SHOW STOPPER—A solo photographic show by John M. Carney, emeritus in art, is running through Saturday, Dec. 17, in New York City’s Brenda Taylor Gallery, 505 W. 28th St. “Night Light: The Aesthetics of Time By Events in Space” explores the traces of human and astronomical illumination left on landscapes, primarily out West. Carney, of Schoolcraft, Mich., uses hour-long exposures on hand-built, large-format cameras to capture movement in the form of calligraphic marks of light. A former art department chair, he founded the bachelor’s and master’s of fine arts programs in photography, co-established the Design Center and retired in 2000 after 34 years of service.

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 Anonymous online program helps students live healthier

WMU has launched an interactive, Internet-based program that consolidates University health resources into a single location and tailors those resources based on the intent of individual students to change their health-related behaviors.

Launched as a technology research project, Bronco HealthAdvisor was unveiled Nov. 9 during WMU’s Health and Wellness Expo. It provides a secure and anonymous environment in which any WMU student can begin exploring what may become a wide range of health-related modules.

The program is initially focusing on sexual health through spring 2012. During this pilot period, the Bronco HealthAdvisor project team will determine the program’s effectiveness as a behavior-change and resource-referral system as well as its potential commercialization for use at other colleges and universities across the country.

Bronco HealthAdvisor is the result of a two-year collaboration between the eHealth Innovations Group in the WMU Department of Human Performance and Health Education and the Office of Health Promotion and Education in the University’s Sincere Health Center.

The eHealth Innovations Group is spearheaded by Robert J. Bensley, emeritus in human performance and health education who continues to teach and conduct research.

An Internet-based nutrition behavior-change system originally developed by that group and other relevant Web service products created by the group were adapted to help produce Bronco HealthAdvisor.

Cari Robertson, health promotion and education, and her staff provided the expertise needed to develop lesson content for the pilot topic based on the most common barriers to college students making healthy sexual choices. The office’s nationally-certified Sexual Health Peer Educators carefully selected the necessary resource materials.

Now, Sincere is encouraging students to participate in the pilot research project by completing the first online module.

Visit www.broncohealthadvisor.org to directly login to Bronco HealthAdvisor.

Series to feature three alumni

Three alumni will be the next authors featured in the fall Gwen Frostic Reading Series at 8 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 1, in 157-158 Bernhard Center.

Reading from their works will be Elizabeth Knapp, winner of the 2010 De Novo Prize for Poetry; Melinda Moustakis, winner of the 2010 Flannery O’Connor Awards for Short Fiction; and Jason Skipper, author of the novel “Hustle.”