Grand opening set for Confucius Institute

WMU will celebrate its new “bridge” to China during a grand opening for the WMU Confucius Institute, set for 3 p.m. Monday, Nov. 23, in the Dalton Center Recital Hall.

The Confucius Institute was founded to provide new Chinese language and cultural studies options for WMU students and faculty and dramatically expand international opportunities for area K-12 schools and local businesses.

Its opening follows closely on the heels of a Nov. 17 joint announcement issued by China and the United States that the two countries will be more vigorously promoting cultural exchanges between the two nations, and sending more students to each other’s country to study.

A small campus delegation traveled to China in July 2009 to finalize a set of agreements that established the Confucius Institute and cemented a partnership between WMU and Beijing Language and Culture University, China’s premier international institution for language instruction.

The related five-year renewable agreements make WMU a formal partner in an international effort to expand the teaching of Chinese language and culture. The effort is under the auspices of the Office of Chinese Language Council International of China’s Ministry of Education, known more commonly as the Hanban.

Carbon storage research garners $600,000 grant

Armed with more than $600,000 in new federal funds, a WMU-led effort to store greenhouse gas emissions deep below the ground is picking up steam.

The effort is helping to position Michigan in the forefront of states exploring carbon capture and geological sequestration and is providing the geological background for tens of hundreds of millions of dollars in grants to the state.

WMU researchers, led by Dave Barnes with Bill Harrison and Duane Hampton, and graduate students and staff in the Department of Geosciences and the Michigan Geological Repository for Research and Education, have been actively pursuing the security and validation of this new technology since mid-2004.

Their efforts were greatly enhanced by the recently awarded federal earmark of $601,158, which was sponsored by U.S. Rep. Fred Upton. Previous and subsequent grants from the U.S. Department of Energy are contributing to the effort to help Michigan actively address greenhouse gas emissions from stationary emission sites, such as electric power plants, ethanol production plants and chemical and refining operations.

Offices relocate in wake of Bernhard Center project

Several offices have been reshuffled, making room for 35 student groups to take up residence in the new Student Organization Center next to the public cafeteria on the Bernhard Center’s main floor.

The SOC complex includes a pass-through hallway to allow access from the building’s back parking lot and main entrance. To free up space for SOC, Auxiliary Enterprises has moved to Moore, receiving visitors in Room 4046. Plans call for Student Activities and Leadership Programs to relocate to Bernhard’s second floor from the Faunce Student Services Building yet this fall.

In preparation for that move, the Advocacy Office for Transfer Students and Military Affairs has moved to 1333 Ellsworth, while the Office of the Ombudsman is housed temporarily in 2104 Sangren until its new space is completed in Faunce.

In a related action, the Bernhard programming office, located on Bernhard’s lower level, has been renamed the Resource and Graphic Design Center. The office is now more clearly focused on assisting student organizations, and graphic design students will be available weekdays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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Landscape services team earns national award

For the second time in recent years, the Facilities Management—landscape services team has been honored for its work by the Professional Grounds Management Society. Tim Holysz, the unit's manager, accepted a 2009 Green Star Honor Award from the society Oct. 11 on behalf of the team. WMU was recognized for the quality, challenge and level of maintenance of its grounds.

The Green Star awards bring national recognition to grounds maintained with a high degree of excellence. Tom Sauber, landscape projects manager; Steve Root, Steve Keto, Tim Holysz; Steve Root, Steve Keto and Durrell Junkins, grounds supervisors; Tom Sauber, landscape projects manager; Carl Delong, Ammon Lake/environmental research coordinator; and Paul MacNellis, landscape services director.

WMU's submission included photos of the campus grounds, along with descriptions of various sites and landscape challenges.

Women focus of art exhibition

A vibrant collection of oil paintings depicting women at various stages in life is on display through Friday, Dec. 18, in the Health and Human Services Building's second-floor art gallery. It features area artist Launda Wheatley.

Festive chapter to hold fundraiser

The student chapter of Habitat for Humanity will hold its 13th annual Shantytown fundraiser from 9 p.m. Friday, Nov. 20, to 7 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 21, on the lawn in front of Kenley Chapel. The event has been opened up to the public this year. Go to www.wmich.edu/wmu/news/2009/11/1048.shtml to learn how to participate or donate.

Emeriti group sets final fall program

The Emeriti Council's final Wednesdays II program for 2009 will take a festive turn when musical theatre majors perform a sampling of numbers from their upcoming "New York Showcase." The showcase is presented in New York during each spring break by agents and casting directors. The preview program will take place at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 9, in Walwoed's Heinitg Emeriti lounge.

Frostic Reading Series

Frostic Reading Series. Go to www.etsu.edu/frostic for costs and other details.

Gwen Frostic School of Art

The Annual Gwen Frostic School of Art Faculty Exhibition opened today and will continue through Friday, Dec. 18, in the Richmond Center for Visual Arts. A free opening reception is being held from 5:30 to 7:30 tonight in Richmond.

Russia Week events continuing

Among the WMU-related events taking place during Kalamaazoos Russia Week is a free Department of English talk at 6 tonight in 208 Bernhard Center. The event is part of the Gwen Frostic Russian Series. Go to www.wmich.edu/english and click Creative Writing then Events to obtain details about the series.

PROFESSIONAL NEWS

Staffer tapped as nationwide trainer

George Esko, Career and Student Employment Services, is one of six people chosen to be national Student Employment Essentials Trainers. National SEE Trainers lead a train-the-trainer seminar for members of the National Student Employment Association.

The NSEA members selected for that honor must be qualified to lead a two-day course on student-employment essentials for student-employment administrators in all four of the association’s regions. As part of their duties, they also serve on the committee that reviews NSEA’s training materials, serve as mentors for Regional SEE Trainers and review applications from candidates who wish to become Regional SEE Trainers.

Eskro was approached in June by the NSEA Executive Board to be a national trainer. He has been a regional trainer for eight years and has led the two-day SEE course for members of the Midwest Association of Student Employment Administrators.

Administrator elected to arts board

Jim Hopfenperger, senior associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, has been elected to serve a three-year term on the Board of Directors of the National Council of Arts Administrators, which is an affiliate organization of the College Art Association.

The council promotes communication among institutions and provides meaningful collaborative opportunities for arts administrators within and across institutions with leaders in related arts organizations.

It primarily serves and supports chairs, deans, directors and provosts in the arts by creating and maintaining a vital network of administrators in higher education.

Prof chairs neuromuslocology event

Edward Roth, music, chaired an institute in San Diego Nov. 11 that pulled together some of the world’s most prominent researchers in the neurosciences and music. Roth coordinates WMU’s clinical studies in music therapy. The institute on Clinical Neuromusculology: The Neuroscience of Music, From Perception to Clinical Practice was held prior to the American Music Therapy Association’s 2009 conference.

During the event, neuromusologists presented state-of-the-art brain research examining the interaction between music and attention, learning, memory, speech and language, motor functioning, emotion and spirituality.

Institute participants had the opportunity to present therapeutic challenges faced in clinical or educational settings to neuroscientists and discuss appropriate research designs that test for and contribute to the development of effective treatment methodologies.

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WESTERN NEWS

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Applications for MLK grant proposals due Dec. 14

Organizers of the 2010 Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration at WMU will be accepting applications for sponsored programs and activities through 5 p.m. Monday, Dec. 14. WMU departments, offices, individuals and organizations, including student organizations, are invited to apply for funding grants as well as publicity assistance to support projects that they would like to schedule during the spring 2010 semester.

The University will be celebrating King’s life and work from Jan. 11-April 23 and be using the same theme as the greater Kalamazoo community: “The Strength to Love.” Grant proposals submitted for WMU activities and programs should relate to that theme, which encompasses King’s legacy of loving thy neighbor in the face of hate. Applicants will be notified as to whether they have been awarded funding assistance.

Regardless of whether members of the WMU community are seeking funding support, those planning to hold MLK-related events during spring semester are asked to submit proposals for each of their events so that they can be included in the University’s publicity for the 2010 celebration.

The upcoming celebration is being organized by WMU’s MLK Planning Committee under the auspices of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Tony Dennis, associate director of diversity and inclusion, is serving as committee chair. An application form for proposals, along with submission guidelines, is available online at www.wmich.edu/mlk and from the diversity and inclusion office, located in 1003 Temple Building. Those wishing to have these materials faxed to them should call 387-6313.

For more information about submitting proposals related to the University’s MLK celebration, contact Dennis at tony.dennis@wmich.edu or 387-1247 or Jamesha Quick in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at jamesha.k.quick@wmich.edu or 387-6313.

United Way campaign surpasses goal—again

WMU students, faculty, staff and retirees came together again this year to show their support for the Greater Kalamazoo United Way, ultimately surpassing their $240,000 campaign goal.

“I attribute this year’s success to good leadership and a strong committee of people who really went to work,” said President John M. Dunn at a Nov. 12 victory celebration.

“People here get it,” he continued. “This is a caring, giving University, with people who recognize that there are many, many needs in the community.

Employees and retirees gave $260,000 and counting this year. Of the 1,160 contributors, 262 were people who have never made such a commitment before, and nearly 400 increased the amount of their gifts compared to one year ago. Even students stepped up their involvement this year, selling United Way T-shirts to raise money.

Although this year’s campaign has officially ended, the president’s office will continue to collect donations of any amount. Employees and retirees who have not already turned in their pledge cards are encouraged to do so now. Contact www.wmu-united-way@wmich.edu for information on making a gift.

Amazing GeoRace scheduled

WMU students will be competing in a timed event testing their geography skills as they race across campus from noon to 2 p.m., Friday, Nov. 20, during the Amazing GeoRace 2009. The event is part of National Geographic Awareness Week.

The University’s two non-bargaining employee groups, the Administrative Professional Association and Professional Support Staff Organization, have signed up for holiday get-togethers. The Administrative Professional Association is sponsoring an out-of-this-world gathering at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum Planetarium from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 3.

The family-friendly event will feature a social hour with appetizers followed by a 50-minute planetarium show called “Seasons of Light.” The gathering will showcase the recently remodeled KVM Planetarium, which now has some of the most sophisticated digital projection technology in the world.

WMU employees and their guests do not need to be members of APA to attend the event, which costs $5 for APA members, $7 for youth age 12 and younger, and $10 for non-members. Register online at www.wmich.edu/apa by 5 p.m. Monday, Nov. 30, and pay at the door. The admission fee will be charged for registrations not canceled by 5 p.m. Nov. 30.

The PSSO has planned a “Happy New Year” holiday social from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 11, in the Bernard Center Ballroom.

The event will feature a speaker, an optional ice-breaker game and a delicious lunch/selection. This year’s community service emphasis is Kairos Dwelling, a hospice house.

The cost is $10 for PSSO members and $12 for non-members. Go to www.wmich.edu/pseo to download a registration form and a list of suggested donation items for Kairos.

The form and payment are due by Friday, Dec. 4. No refunds will be given for cancellations made after Monday, Dec. 7. Contact Jessica Hutchinson at jessica.hutchinson@wmich.edu for more information.
Two student researchers earn Frostic Doctoral Fellowships

Two doctoral candidates, Petra Kohler and John Panos, are the fall 2009 recipients of the Gwen Frostic Doctoral Fellowships.

Kohler, a biological sciences student, was awarded $3,000 for her dissertation, titled “Role of the Inositol and Rhizopine Catabolic Pathways During the Competition for Establishment and Maintenance in the Sinorhizobium meliloti—Alfalfa Nitrogen Fixing Symbiosis.” Her project focuses on rhizopines as inositol compounds, a subject of interest in agriculture around the world.

Kohler also received a 2009-10 Dissertation Completion Fellowship. Her dissertation chair is Silvia Rossbach.

Panos, a psychology student, was awarded $3,000 for his dissertation, titled “Neurochemical Effects of Amyloid-beta Oligomers in Rats.” He hopes his project, a collaborative effort involving contributions from several of the world’s leading neuroscience researchers, will contribute to the understanding of possible causes of neurological disorders such as Alzheimer’s disease.

Panos also received a 2009 George and Beatrice Fisher Dissertation Prize in Gerontology. His dissertation chair is Lisa Baker.

The Frostic Fellowships are given annually by the Graduate College and made possible by an endowment from the estate of the late poet, artist and naturalist Gwen Frostic, a 1929 WMU alumna. The competitive awards assist doctoral students in all fields with dissertation expenses, including tuition and fees, materials, and travel.

Nine staff members have received WMU’s fall semiannual Make a Difference Award for 2009-10, along with $250 and a commemorative certificate.

The University community is invited to honor the recipients during an awards reception at 2 p.m. Monday, Dec. 7, in 157 Bernhard Center. The honorees are: Virginia Bowlby, Graduate College; Teresa Cleveland, Online Education; Douglas Gray, Facilities Management—building custodial support services; Nancy Johnson, investments and endowment management; Darrell Junkins, Facilities Management—landscape services; Robin Lenkart, chemistry; Patricia Nelson, philosophy; Kenny O’Connor, Facilities Management—maintenance services; and Paige Warner, First Year Experience.