Public invited to participate in conference

The ethics of enhancing human capabilities with such technology as bionic limbs and neural chip implants will be the focus Saturday and Sunday, March 28-29, when the Nanoethics Group holds a long-awaited conference at WMU.

The event begins each day at 8:45 a.m. in WMU’s Fetzer Center and concludes at noon on Sunday. In an unusual move for an academic conference, organizers are welcoming interested members of the public to attend without charge.

The conference will focus on the ethical and social impacts of human enhancement technologies that may give significant advantages to individuals in sports, the military, academia and other employment areas.

“Who wouldn’t want to be stronger, smarter and healthier—which is what we strive for now through exercise, academics, diet and medicine?” asks Dr. Fritz Allhoff, philosophy.

“But using new, powerful technologies to achieve the same result seems to push our bodies and minds beyond their natural limits, opening the possibility of unintended or unforeseen results and harms.”

The conference is being organized by faculty from WMU, California Polytechnic State University, Dartmouth College and the University of Delaware. Allhoff, who co-founded the Nanoethics Group, is the event host and a co-organizer.

The conference caps off a three-year nanoethics initiative funded by the National Science Foundation. Allhoff and Dartmouth’s James Moor were 2006 recipients of $250,000 of foundation funding for a series of studies and events culminating in the WMU conference.

They are expected to issue a report on their recommendations to the foundation this coming fall.

Go to the conference Web site at www.humanenhance.com for registration information and the full lineup of speakers.

Nobel Peace Prize winner slated to speak at WMU

Nobel Peace Prize winner Jody Williams is the featured guest at this year’s Great Lakes PeaceJam Conference Friday, March 27, at WMU.

Williams, the 1997 co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize for her work in the banning and clearing of landmines, will give a public address at 7:30 p.m. in the South Ballroom of the Bernhard Center. Tickets to attend are $10 at the door and $5 for students.

Her talk, "Creating True Human Security," will kick off the conference, which continues with other events Saturday and Sunday, March 28-29, that are not open to the public.

Serving as the chief strategist for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, Williams wrote and spoke exclusively on the need for a total international ban on landmines. In a little more than five years, she and the ICBL achieved their goal of creating public awareness about landmines and affecting a landmine ban. In recognition for their efforts, the Norwegian Nobel Committee named Williams and the ICBL as co-recipients of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize.

Following her March 27 talk, hundreds of high school-aged children throughout Michigan, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio will spend two days with Williams during the PeaceJam conference.
Red Cross executive to give talk

Catherine McNulty, chief executive officer of the Greater Kalamazoo Area Chapter of the American Red Cross, will be the featured speaker Friday, March 27, as part of the Keystone Community Bank Breakfast Speaker Series. McNulty’s talk on “Your American Red Cross Today” begins at 7:30 a.m. in the Dean’s Conference Room of Schneider. Call 387-5050 to make reservations, which are required.

Environmentalist slated to speak

Josh Dorfman, author of “The Lazy Environmentalist,” will speak on “It’s So Easy Being Green” from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, March 27, in 2304 Sangren. “Not everyone can harvest rainwater and brew their own biofuels, but there is no reason each of us couldn’t take a few small, easy steps to help the environment,” says Joe Orchamian, chair of Students for a Sustainable Earth, which is sponsoring the program.

Cool Special Olympics fund-raiser set

The WMU community is invited to take the plunge into the icy waters of a makeshift glacial pool in Lawson Ice Arena to raise money for Special Olympics Michigan. Participants in the Law Enforcement Torch Run Polar Plunge will plunge into a four-foot-deep pool Saturday, March 28, to meet a fund-raising goal of $10,000.

Registration begins at 11 a.m., and the plunge begins at noon along with a costume parade. Swimmers are encouraged to wear their favorite costume, with the winner of the best costume taking home the Golden Plunger Award. An award and post-plunge party will begin at 12:45 p.m.

A registration fee of $30 is required to plunge, and plungers are encouraged to seek pledges from family and friends. WMU President John M. Dunn has issued a challenge this year for Broncos to raise $5,000 and compel him to take his own plunge. A Web page has been set up for his challenge at www.firstgiving.com/presidentdunn. Go to www.somi.org to register for the event.

Talk to focus on banking industry

James H. Duncan Sr., retired chairman and CEO of First National Financial Corp., will discuss “Banking’s changing face: A former CEO’s insights on growth, credit cards and career” at 5 p.m. Tuesday, March 31 in Schneider. Those planning to attend are encouraged to register by Friday, March 27, at monique.haley@wmich.edu or 387-5050.

IT Forum registration deadline nears

The registration deadline is approaching for the eighth annual Information Technology Forum. The forum will run from 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Friday, April 3, in the Fetter Center, and the registration deadline is Tuesday, March 31.

This year’s forum will explore the next generation of IT education and student career opportunities for the 21st century. Go to www.wmich.edu/business/itforum to register or obtain more information.

Emeritus to give presentation

Frank Wolf, emeritus in industrial and manufacturing Engineering, will present “Personal Thoughts on the Past and the Future of the College of Engineering” at 2 p.m. Wednesday, April 8, in Walhalla Hall’s Heining Emeriti Lounge.

Around Campus

McNulty

Artists’ work selected for exhibition

Indrani Gall, art, is one of about 30 artists worldwide to have her work accepted for inclusion in the sixth annual exhibition “Eras SMGing Borders: Passport to Contemporary Indian Art of the Diaspora.” The exhibition, which incorporates support from the Indian American Arts Council, explores the contributions of artists whose origins can be traced to the Indian Subcontinent. It began touring New York’s boroughs, New York State and other parts of the country in February and will be on tour through October.

Gall

Marketing prof receives service award

Frank M. Gambino, marketing, has received the Distinguished Service Award from the Michigan Food and Beverage Association, an organization that represents more than 21,000 businesses employing more than 160,000 people.

Gambino

Researchers tackle ‘orphan disease’

Charles Ide, biological sciences and environmental studies, is working with colleagues at Vanderbilt University to help those suffering from multiple system atrophy or MSA, a rare degenerative neurological disorder.

Ide

Exchange

For sale—Enjoy privacy and nature out every window in this single setting with only seven other condos. Seven minutes from WMU and two miles from Meijer on West Main. This 4-year-old condo features an open floor plan, two bedrooms, three full baths, two outdoor decks, three-sided Ventilator fireplace, ceramic floors, two-car attached garage, walkout basement already stuffed and insulated, and large deck. Priced to sell at $195,000 with low monthly maintenance fees. Call 267-7855. For sale—One story, two-bedroom home located at 530 Commonwealth two miles from main campus. Finished basement, 1.75 baths, 1,200 finished square feet, newly finished hardwood floors, 1.5-car garage, fenced back yard with new deck, high-efficiency gas heat and hot water, new windows. All appliances stay; recently inspected. $90,000. Call Thom Myers at 349-4576.

WMU job opportunities

WMU is an equal opportunity affirmative action employer consistent with applicable state and federal laws.
Faculty, staff encouraged to attend diversity lecture

Issues related to Asian stereotypes in Hollywood, Asian-American parental pressure and the “model-minority myth” will be addressed during Kalamazoo’s 11th annual “Respecting Differences” program Tuesday and Wednesday, March 31-April 1.

This year’s program is a lecture titled “Exclusion to Inclusion” and features BD Wong, who is known to millions of TV viewers as Dr. George Huang, the forensic psychiatrist on NBC’s “Law and Order: Special Victims Unit.” The lessons Wong has learned in order to survive and excel in a vocation filled with racism and rejection give him a keen perspective on diversity.

All WMU employees are encouraged to attend his free talk, which will be presented from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Tuesday, March 31, and repeated from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Wednesday, April 1. Both presentations will include on-stage American Sign Language translators and be held in Chenery Auditorium, 714 S. Westnedge Ave. in Kalamazoo.

A shuttle will provide transportation to and from Chenery. The shuttle will be in front of the Seibert Administration Building and picking up riders at about 12:45 and 1 p.m. on Tuesday and 8:45 and 9 a.m. on Wednesday. For those who will be driving, ample parking is available behind Chenery and on adjacent streets.

WMU launches campuswide Girl Scouting initiative

Students as well as faculty and staff members with current or former connections to Girl Scouting are being asked to lend their insights and consider becoming involved in a campuswide initiative to strengthen the ties between WMU and Michigan’s Girl Scouts.

To learn more about the initiative, those with Girl Scouts’ connections are invited to an information session and pizza party from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Monday, March 31, in 208 Bernhard Center.

Staffers to be recognized

Eleven staff members have been selected to receive WMU’s 2008-09 Make a Difference award for spring, along with $250 and a commemorative certificate.

The semiannual awards are given out each fall and spring. The latest round of recipients will be honored during an awards reception at 2 p.m. Monday, April 20, in the President’s Dining Room of the Bernhard Center.

Members of the University community are invited to attend the reception and help recognize these exceptional staffers.

The employees being honored for spring are: William Arbogast, Sincude Health Center; Douglas Carney, Division of Student Affairs; Linda Comrie, Graduate College; Marilyn Duke, Center for Academic Support Programs; Cheri Edgar, digital information systems; Deveta Gardner, Career and Student Employment Services; Deborah Goostrey, College of Health and Human Services; Wayne Pushie, physical plant-maintenance services; Penelope Schellenberg, University Ombuds Office; Kristi Schutter, university budgets and financial planning; and Kevin Wesel, College of Fine Arts.

The Make a Difference awards program is a campuswide, peer-to-peer program that recognizes University staff members for their outstanding accomplishments and daily investment of energy and creativity.

Summer camp enrollment open

Students, employees and the public are invited to enroll children in the 2009 Campus Kids Summer Theme Camp offered by WMU’s Children’s Place Learning Center.

The camp will run from June 15-Sept. 4. To register or obtain more information, go to www.wmich.edu/childrensplace or call 387-2277.
The president of the American Psychological Association will be on campus Monday and Tuesday, April 6-7, for a series of events open to members of the public.

James H. Bray, who became APA president this past January, will be presenting a communitywide lecture as well as two clinical training programs and two colloquia. His visit is part of WMU’s Visiting Scholars and Artists Program.

The events featuring Bray are free, but seating may be limited, so those interested in hearing Bray are asked to go to www.wmich.edu/coe/cecp and preregister for each event they plan to attend.

An internationally acclaimed researcher, author and lecturer, Bray is an expert in developmental, family and peer influences on adolescent alcohol use. His role gives him a unique opportunity to continue advocating for families from his position as one of America's most influential mental health public policy leaders.

Bray's communitywide lecture, titled "Adolescent and Young Adult Drug and Alcohol Abuse: Parents, Teens and Propaganda," will take place from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Monday, April 6, in the Fetzer Center. He also will lead two three-hour clinical training programs that start at 9 a.m. The program on "Screening and Brief Interventions for Substance Abuse" will take place April 6 while the program on "Love, Marriage and Parenting in Stepfamilies" will take place April 7.

In addition, Bray will present a colloquium from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. April 6 on "The Future of Psychology Practice" and a research colloquium from 3 to 4:15 p.m. April 7 on "Developmental, Family and Peer Influences on Adolescent Alcohol Use."

Government mandate necessitates new ethnicity survey of WMU students, employees

This coming fall, WMU employees will be asked to take part in an ethnicity survey that students registering for the fall 2009 semester are already being asked to complete. As they register through GoWMU, students are being asked to complete an ethnicity survey to comply with a U.S. Department of Education mandate that colleges and universities all use the same specific language and categories to report ethnicity.

Surveys of faculty and staff members will take place in the fall, allowing WMU to meet the 2010-11 federal requirement for collecting and reporting ethnicity using the new format.

1. The first question asks if the respondent is Hispanic or Latino.
2. The second question asks respondents to identify all of the following categories that they fit into: American Indian or Alaska native, Asian, black or African American, native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and white. Students are urged to take the short amount of time needed to answer the survey questions.

Psychology association president visiting campus

The president of the American Psychological Association will be on campus Monday and Tuesday, April 6-7, for a series of events open to members of the public.

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On Campus with Gail Kurtz

This year marks several 30-year milestones for Gail Kurtz, investments and endowment management.

For the past three decades, she’s been married to her husband, Jim, lived in Michigan, served WMU in the investments office, and even worked in the same campus building.

As the University’s investment officer, Kurtz has weathered numerous ups and downs in the financial markets during her career. Her office monitors and manages the bank and investment accounts for everything from the University’s operating cash, to donors’ gifts to the foundations’ endowments.

It’s a job that keeps her and co-worker Nancy Johnson busy throughout the year in their two-person office on the first floor of the Siebert Administration Building. Besides keeping track of WMU’s operating balances and 53 investment portfolios.

A native of a small town north of Indianapolis, Kurtz grew up on her parent’s farm. Her dad is still farming about 1,000 acres, growing soybeans and corn.

“I love farming, the planting, the harvesting and taking care of the livestock. It’s a great life,” she says.

Her love for the land was the reason she and Jim bought a house in Oshtemo that sits on 10 acres, including eight acres of woods.

The couple has two grown children. Amanda is a graduate assistant at WMU, and Christopher will be studying through the Frostick School of Art this coming fall.

“I like being at a point in my life where I have more free time now that our children are raised. I’m very comfortable with growing older,” she says. “I have loved every phase because you get so much out of each one. Sometimes there are different challenges, but it all works out.”

Kurtz is an avid softball player who enjoys traveling. She has been active with WMU’s Administrative Professional Association the past 28 years, serving on the executive board as secretary, treasurer and vice president.

“The APA is a great way to meet people, make new relationships and support colleagues and the University,” she says.