Scholarship supports program for foster-care youth

The members of one of the nation’s most underserved college-age populations will get help making their higher education dreams come true, thanks to a new scholarship and support initiative being launched at WMU this fall.

WMU’s Foster Youth and Higher Education Initiative is an effort being launched in coordination with the Michigan Campus Compact and the Michigan Department of Human Services.

The pilot program is designed to recruit and offer a support structure and financial aid to young people who have aged out of foster care and who qualify for admission or transfer to WMU. While the intent is to target Michigan’s former foster care youth, the program is open to qualified students from any state.

The initiative will create a community of scholars among WMU students who grew up in foster care, such as three-time WMU alumnus John Seita, who has become one of the nation’s foremost experts on and advocates for foster youth.

Seita has published extensively on the topics of foster care and youth development and has a background that includes work with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

He was honored this month with the 2007 Ruth Masing Foster Care Alumni Award through Casey Family programs—an offshoot of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Only one foster care alumnus a year is selected in the United States.

The initiative also will attempt to fill the University’s provost search moves into high gear

The University’s search for a new provost is moving quickly, with more than 40 nominations in the hands of the search committee even before the position was advertised during January in national higher education media outlets.

“We’re very pleased at the response so far, and in the coming weeks, we expect to have twice that number of names to consider,” says Dean Earle Washington, College of Health and Human Services, who chairs the 17-member search committee.

Washington says she and her committee members still want to encourage people to make any additional nominations they have by going to the provost search Web site at www.wmich.edu/provostsearch and locating the e-mail address in the middle of the page that goes directly to Bryan Hanson of Parker Executive Search of Atlanta. That firm is assisting WMU in the search, and the names of nominees may be sent to Hanson for inclusion in the candidate pool.

During January, Washington notes, the provost position was advertised in the Chronicle of Higher Education, Diverse Issues in Higher Education, Women in Higher Education, and Hispanic Outlook, as well as on the careers and jobs sections of the Science and Nature Web sites.

“One of the results from that advertising is that we’re expecting the search to move rapidly,” says Washington. “The search firm has indicated that we’re in a very good position right now, especially in light of the holiday interruption to the process.”

University’s provost search moves into high gear
Ethics film series opens tonight

A screening and post-film discussion of "High Noon" opens WMU's new Ethics Film Series beginning at 6:30 p.m. tonight in 213 Bernhard Center. Admission is free. The series includes three other films through Sunday, April 13, all beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the same room.

English professor to give talk

Christopher Nagle, English, will discuss "Genitality and the Culture of Sensibility in the British Romantic Era" and his new book by the same name in a free, public talk at 7 p.m. tonight on the 10th floor of Sprau Tower.

Copyright issues to be explored

The growing tension between copyright laws and creative license will be discussed in a lecture and film presentation for the WMU community from 12:15 to 1:45 p.m. Friday, Jan. 25, in 3226 Kohrman Hall, Attendees may bring a lunch and are asked to make a reservation by contacting Julie Apker at julie.apker@wmich.edu or 387-3145.

Faculty seminar series continues

The Haworth College of Business Faculty Enhancement Seminar Series continues from 2:30 to 4 p.m. Friday, Jan. 25, in 2145 Schneider with four sessions addressing contemporary content analysis. Presenters include JoAnn Atkin, marketing, and Tim Palmer andisme Kucurkovic, management.

Medallion competition slated

Nearly 500 of the brightest high school seniors in Michigan and nine other states as well as many of their parents will gather at WMU from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 26, for the 24th annual Medallion Scholarship Competition. Most activities will take place in the Bernhard Center.

Japanese films spotlighted

The Japan Foundation Midwest Film Festival is visiting WMU through Tuesday, March 11. Four more films have been scheduled. Next up will be the comedy "Water Boy" on Tuesday, Feb. 5. All screenings are open to the public free of charge and will begin at 7 p.m. in the Little Theatre.

Media's future is lecture topic

Gracie L. Lawson-Borders, director of African-American studies at the University of Wyoming, will speak on "The Future of Media: Convergence, Concentration, Technology and Education" from noon to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 6, in 3512 Knauss. The free public lecture is a visiting scholar presentation sponsored by the Department of Communication.

2,000 expected for Career Fair

The 30th annual Career Fair will take place from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 7, in the Bernhard Center. The event is free for job seekers and open to the public but is tailored for WMU students and alumni. Some 160 employers will be on hand to meet with an expected 2,000 job candidates. More information is posted in the Career Fairs and Events section of the www.broncojobs.wmich.edu Web site.

International office seeks student orientation leaders

Current WMU students interested in becoming a cultural bridge and experience the University's international student orientation program are recruiting students to serve as leaders for the International office.

WMU is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer consistent with applicable state and federal laws.

The Haworth College of Business Faculty Enhancement Seminar Series begins at 12:15 p.m. Wednesday in 3226 Kohrman Hall.
Influenza on the rise at WMU

Seasonal influenza has officially arrived at WMU. Sincendence Health Center clinicians are seeing an influx of students with influenza, and this influx is being seen earlier this year compared to previous years. Students, faculty and staff who are experiencing fever, chills, coughing, headache, sore throat and muscle aches would benefit by seeking medical attention early in the illness, as treatment with antiviral medication is available within the first 72 hours of the illness. For those who miss the 72 hour window, drinking plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration, using acetaminophen or ibuprofen to reduce fever and muscle aches, and avoiding smoking or alcohol are important steps to take for recovery. There is still time to receive flu vaccine through Sincendence. Those interested may call or walk in for a nurse appointment to be vaccinated. Go to www.sincendence.com for more information.

Student award named for retiree; appreciation week slated

Belleville came to WMU in 1967 and retired in 1993 as director of the Student Employment Referral Service, which he founded as a unit within what is now Career and Student Employment Services. CSES encourages all faculty and staff members to submit nominations for the supervisor and student employee of the year awards as well as to thank student workers in some way during Student Employee Appreciation Week. Go to www.broncojobs.wmich.edu and click on “Nominate” for deadlines and other details concerning the week.

Influenza

Public radio’s Iraq correspondent to speak

Deborah Amos, foreign correspondent for National Public Radio and ABC News, will give a public lecture at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 5, in Shaw Theatre. Admission is $5 for the general public and free to students, faculty and staff of WMU and Davenport and Kalamazoo colleges. A valid ID from one of these schools is required.

Amos will speak on the U.S. conflict in Iraq in her presentation, “Iraq: No Exit in Sight.” Her visit is part of the World Affairs Council of Western Michigan’s Great Decisions Foreign Policy Lecture Series and is sponsored by the World Affairs Council, WMU’s Haenicke Institute for Global Education and Kalamazoo College.

Covering Iraq for NPR News, Amos files reports that can be heard on NPR’s “Morning Edition,” “All Things Considered” and “Weekend Edition.” She has returned to work with NPR after a decade in television news, including ABC’s “Nightline” and “World News Tonight” and the PBS programs “NOW with Bill Moyers” and “Frontline.”

Widely recognized for her coverage of the Gulf War in 1991, Amos has won several awards, including an Alfred I. duPont-Columbia Award and a Breakthrough Award. She spent 1991-92 as a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University, and she wrote the 1992 book “Lines in the Sand: Desert Storm and the Remaking of the Arab World.”

Her visit is the first of three programs in Kalamazoo sponsored by the World Affairs Council. Both of the other two events are panel discussions, “Putin’s Long Shadow: Russia’s Future” Tuesday, Feb. 19, in the Fetzer Center’s Kirsch Auditorium and “Philanthropy: Does This New Global Player have the Power to Make a Global Difference?” Tuesday, Feb. 26, in Kalamazoo College’s Stetson Chapel.

Talk to assess Kalamazoo Promise

The first 2008 presentation in the Keystone Community Bank Breakfast Series will be on “The Kalamazoo Promise—Where We Started and Where We Are.”

Robert Jorth, executive administrator of the Kalamazoo Promise, will present the talk at 8 a.m. Friday, Jan. 25, in the Dean’s Conference Room of Schneider.

A complimentary breakfast will be served beginning at 7:30 a.m.

As executive administrator, Jorth has established all of the processes and procedures for implementing this ground-breaking nationally recognized scholarship program. He earned his master’s of public administration degree from WMU and formerly was a quality assurance professional in the aerospace industry for nearly 20 years.

His presentation is free and open to the public. Reservations are required and may be made by writing to Nicole Lockwood at nicole.lockwood@wmich.edu or calling 387-5050.

Dance department sets winter concert

The Department of Dance will present its Winter Concert of Dance at Chenery Auditorium box office at 387-2300.

The concert will feature Anthony Tudor’s “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” choreographed by Doug Varone and Dancers.

Talks and performances are available at the door before each performance or in advance by calling the Miller Auditorium box office at 387-1200.

The programs run from one to eight weeks, provide varying levels of education credit. A few offer scholarship funding.

Most programs have a two to eight weeks, provide varying levels of education credit. A few offer scholarship funding.

WMU is offering 26 short-term study abroad programs this summer.

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Belleville came to WMU in 1967 and retired in 1993 as director of the Student Employment Referral Service, which he founded as a unit within what is now Career and Student Employment Services. CSES encourages all faculty and staff members to submit nominations for the supervisor and student employee of the year awards as well as to thank student workers in some way during Student Employee Appreciation Week. Go to www.broncojobs.wmich.edu and click on “Nominate” for deadlines and other details concerning the week.

Short-term study abroad options abound for faculty, staff

Belleville led by Dean Emeritus Larry Polcari, then Harmon, Lee Honors College, as well as studying art in France, business in Norway, engineering in China or Korea, creative writing in the Czech Republic, and language and culture in Russia.

Summer 2008 study abroad programs run from two to eight weeks, provide varying levels of academic credit and are eligible for financial aid funding.

Some programs offer classes in a broad range of disciplines or qualify for general education credit. A few offer scholarship opportunities.

For more information go online to www.wmich.edu/studyabroad or contact the study abroad office.

Obituary

Borgia De Haan, blind rehabilitation, died Jan. 13 in Kalamazoo. She was 84.

A former administrative assistant, De Haan retired in 1992 after 10 years at WMU. Funeral services were held Jan. 16 in Kalamazoo.
Faculty, staff members leading two Reading Together events

Four WMU faculty and staff members will be featured in two of the programs slated for this year’s Reading Together Series, which focuses on Barbara Kingsolver’s novel “Animal Dreams.”

Both of the programs are panel discussions and free and open to the public.

Stephen Cameron, geography, and Michael Millar, Spanish, will speak at noon Friday, Jan. 25, in the central Kalamazoo Public Library branch on events in Nicaragua as they are portrayed in Kingsolver’s novel. Their talk will address U.S. foreign policy and humanitarian involvement in Latin America and Central America during the 20th century.

Miranda Howard and James Dexheimer, University Libraries, will lead a discussion on the novel from noon to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 6, in WMU’s Stewart Tower, which is attached to Waldo Library. Their themes will center on family, caring for aging loved ones, community, the environment and Hispanic culture.

Scholarship support for foster care

the unique support needs that exist for the students who have no adult mentors and no permanent home outside their college residence and who have specialized legal, medical, counseling and financial needs. The goal will be to help foster youth, who age out of care between the ages of 18 and 20, make the transition to adulthood through higher education.

“We cannot, as a society, afford to lose the potential these young people represent,” says WMU President John M. Dunn. “This University, with its broad range of programs, excellent faculty and strong support systems is well positioned to make success for these young people a reality.”

Chief among the tools WMU will use to support foster youth is the John Seita Scholarship. The scholarship will provide foster youth aging out of care with undergraduate tuition. Recipients will be required to live on campus, and year-round, on-campus housing will be available, thus providing students with the stability of knowing they have a roof over their heads even during semester breaks.

Seita, now an associate professor of social work at Michigan State University, says people unfamiliar with the plight of former foster youths often underestimate the importance of housing stability for a student trying to pursue a college degree.

Before he became a student at WMU, Seita briefly attended a small Michigan liberal arts college. When his fellow students went home for the holidays, he had no place to go. When college administrators could offer him no assistance, he spent his holiday recess sneaking in and out of a residence hall and scrambling to find a way to eat. Annually, more than 500 young people age out of Michigan’s foster care system. Nationally, the figure is about 20,000. While 70 percent aspire to go to college, only about 20 percent actually enroll and only a quarter of those students go on to earn a degree.

For more information about WMU’s foster youth initiative, contact Penny Bundy, director of admissions; Mark Delorey, director of financial aid and scholarships; or Yvonne Unrau, social work.

On Campus with Gary Custer

Most people who’ve been to a WMU hockey game in Lawson Arena know Gary Custer. They just don’t realize it. Custer operates the contraption that smooths the ice between periods—in WMU’s case, an Olympia resurfacer rather than the better known Zamboni.

“I don’t think I’ve missed any games,” he says. “I even have my own kind of cheering section, especially now that I’m back to throwing candy to the students.”

Custer serves as the general maintenance person for Lawson, which is part of Auxiliary Services and as a self-supporting unit, is open year round to students and community members. He does basic maintenance on WMU’s two ice resurfacers, cleans and shaves down the ice as necessary, and mends the bleachers as well as the rink’s flooring and protective glass wall.

A certified ice technician II, Custer has completed enough specialized courses to also be certified by the National Hockey League. The designation, which took five years to obtain, means he’s skilled at making and maintaining ice for rinks such as Lawson and building in all the requisite lines, logos and advertisements.

“I have the ‘coolest’ job on earth. I take pride and ownership in my work. I can’t skate the way the boys do, but I can give them the best surface possible to skate on,” Custer says, noting that keeping Lawson one of the best rinks around is no easy task because it’s connected to Gable Natatorium.

“There’s a lot to think about in terms of temperature and humidity because you’ve got the artic on one side and the tropics on the other. And whether we’re repairing the resurfacer or shutting the entire facility down for a complete overhaul, it takes a lot of people behind the scenes, especially in the physical plant.”

Custer came to WMU in 1989 as a custodian and was temporarily assigned to Lawson in 1995. A few weeks later, he was asked to stay on. He saw the job as a career move and liked tending the ice, so he decided to stay.

Once hockey season is over, the Portage resident goes back to a 40-hour work week, just in time for him and his wife, Judy, to climb on their motorcycles and indulge their passion for social riding and traveling.