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Undergraduate Programs Receive Accreditation

Following rigorous review and evaluation, the 13 undergraduate programs that were evaluated by the ABET accreditation team all received re-accreditation. “This is great news for our college – and for our university,” said Dean Houssam Toutanji. “It demonstrates the strengths of our programs and our ability to provide a solid educational foundation for our students and ensure their success in the field of engineering.”

ABET is a nonprofit, non-government accrediting agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. The ABET accreditation team made two 3-day visits to the college in September 2017. The Engineering Accreditation Commission evaluated nine engineering programs. A separate Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission visited to evaluate three engineering technology programs, and the Computing Accreditation Commission evaluated the college’s computer science program.

“While the ABET accreditation process is lengthy and time consuming, the positive outcome would not have been remotely possible without the hard work by department chairs, faculty and staff,” Toutanji said.
The programs that received accreditation include:

- Aerospace Engineering
- Chemical Engineering
- Civil Engineering
- Computer Engineering
- Computer Science
- Construction Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- Engineering Design Technology
- Engineering Management Technology
- Industrial and Entrepreneurial Engineering
- Manufacturing Engineering Technology
- Mechanical Engineering
- Paper Engineering

The next comprehensive review for accreditation will be in six years, with the ABET visits in fall 2023.

Welcome to new faculty

The College of Engineering and Applied Sciences is pleased to welcome our new faculty for the 2018-19 academic year.

Dr. Zach Asher

Dr. Zach Asher joins the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering as assistant professor. He received a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from Colorado State University, a master’s degree in mechanical and aerospace engineering from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, and a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from Colorado State University. His research interests include mathematical modeling, control, optimization of mechanical systems and engineering education.

Dr. Jim Burns
Dr. Jim Burns joins the Department of Industrial and Entrepreneurial Engineering and Engineering Management as assistant professor. He received his bachelor’s degree, master’s degree and Ph.D, all in industrial engineering from WMU. His research interests include resilience in supply chains and investigating how organizations should leverage digital technologies, collectively known as Industry 4.0, to advance their operations.

Dr. Shameek Bhattacharjee

Dr. Shameek Bhattacharjee joins the Department of Computer Science as assistant professor. He received his bachelor’s degree in computer and information science and technology at West Bengal University of Technology in India. He received both a master’s degree and Ph.D. in computer engineering from the University of Central Florida. His research interests include cyber and information security, trustworthy and secure computing in smart connected communities, and secure and energy efficient next generation wireless networking.

Jia Guo

Jia Guo joins the Department of Computer Science as faculty specialist. He received his bachelor’s degree in bio-technology from Mudanjiang Normal University in China and master’s degrees in computer science and educational technology from WMU. His interests include computer science education, system programming, operating systems, embedded system design, and the Internet of Things.

Dr. Joe Licavoli
Dr. Joe Licavoli joins the Department of Engineering Design, Manufacturing, and Management Systems as assistant professor. He received a bachelor’s degree and Ph.D. in materials science and engineering from Michigan Technological University. His research interests include alloy design (ferrous, non-ferrous, high entropy alloys), deformation processing, cast metals, welding, additive manufacturing and engineering education.

Dr. Hexu Liu

Dr. Hexu Liu joins the Department of Civil and Construction Engineering as assistant professor. He received his bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from Northwest A&F University in China and his master’s degree in bridge and tunneling engineering from Chang’an University in China. He received his Ph.D. in construction engineering and management from the University of Alberta. His research interests include application of building information modeling, discrete-event simulation, virtual reality cloud computing, sensor technology, computer vision, and other emerging technologies to advance the knowledge and practice of construction planning and management.

Dr. Mariko Ago

Dr. Mariko Ago joins the Department of Chemical and Paper Engineering as assistant professor. She received her bachelor’s degree in science education (chemistry) and her master’s degree in organic chemistry, both from Hiroshima University in Japan. She received her Ph.D. in material science from Kyoto University in Japan. Her research interests include multiphase systems, polymer composites, colloidal behaviors, emulsions, foams, dispersions, surfactant chemistry, and surface sensitive analytical techniques.

Pete Thannhauser: Honored for distinguished service to WMU
Pete Thannhauser, senior laboratory supervisor in the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, is the recipient of the WMU 2018 Distinguished Service Award.

“This is a great and well-deserved honor,” said Dean Houssam Toutanji. “Pete’s significant contribution to our college and WMU as a whole makes a huge difference in the lives of our students, faculty and staff. We are fortunate and delighted to have someone like Pete as a colleague.”

Thannhauser joined WMU in the Department of Mechanical Engineering in 1984. During his nearly 35 years in the college, he has contributed to the research efforts of many faculty members in several departments, assisted many undergraduate students with their senior design projects, and worked with graduate students on projects, theses and dissertations. He was instrumental in upgrading the Applied Aerodynamics Lab, in particular, in wind tunnel control and instrumentation. In addition, Thannhauser has been a Sunseeker team member since 1990, supporting students in the registered student organization. Outside of Western, he also has served as a devoted mentor to the national award-winning Stryke Force First Robotics team from 2014-2017, mentoring high school students from throughout the county from five different school systems.

Thannhauser was chosen from nominees across campus who have demonstrated exceptional service in areas that reflect innovative and effective programming, increase WMU’s stature or extend WMU’s impact and presence into the larger community.

He will receive a recognition plaque inscribed with his name and a check for $2,000 at Fall Convocation on Friday, Sept. 14. A second plaque in his name will be added to the 2018 Distinguished Service Award recipient collection at the Bernhard Center.

Harry Potter is the theme at annual Passport Day
Browse through the pictures from our annual “Passport Day” – this year’s event featuring a Harry Potter theme -- when new students had a chance to get to know the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences before the start of classes.

Students visited a variety of labs with hands-on activities, learned about how to get involved in Registered Student Organizations, and met new classmates, faculty and staff. Those attending were issued a “passport,” and received a stamp for each activity they attend as a way to earn them prizes. Welcome, students!

PHOTOS

Mallak named Fellow of ASEM

Congratulations to Dr. Larry Mallak, professor of engineering design, manufacturing and management systems, who will be receiving the 2018 American Society for Engineering Management (ASEM) Fellow Award. This award represents the highest level of membership in ASEM and is presented annually to selected candidates who have eight years of continuous membership in the organization with significant service, demonstrated engineering management accomplishments, and continuing distinguished service and contributions to the society.
Mallak will receive the award during the society’s Honors and Awards Banquet Oct. 19 during the American Society for Engineering Management’s International Annual Conference in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho.

Options for cybersecurity training expands

Western Michigan University is expanding educational opportunities in cybersecurity under a new collaboration with Merit Network Inc. to offer noncredit, online professional development courses in cybersecurity training.

The partnership draws on faculty expertise in the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences and WMU’s Haworth College of Business as well as the advanced Michigan Cyber Range, a virtual network environment developed by Merit Network Inc. to facilitate safe cybersecurity training.

The courses combine online learning modules with lab-based experiential learning. Using the Michigan Cyber Range Secure Sandbox, students can practice their skills on real threats without putting their own personal or business network at risk.

The Michigan Cyber Range prepares cybersecurity professionals to detect, prevent and mitigate cyberattacks in a real-world setting. Like a test track or a firing range, the cyber range enables individuals and organizations to conduct "live fire" exercises—simulations that test the detection and reaction skills of participants in a variety of situations.

The cybersecurity courses are open to anyone in the growing field of information security and cybersecurity throughout Michigan and beyond. With the addition of the new noncredit courses, WMU now offers a full range of education and research opportunities for information security and cybersecurity professionals and employers.

Professionals interested in the cybersecurity courses can learn more and register online at wmich.edu/professional/cyber.

Please join us!
Please join us for our next Custer Talk, as the Custer Office Environment Lecture Series kicks off for the 2018-19 academic year. Custer Talks feature a variety of speakers throughout the year focusing on engineering-related topics. Talks are open to all students, faculty and staff, as well as the general public.

Faculty receives Best Paper award

Kudos to our faculty -- (l to r): Dr. Bob White, Dr. Azim Houshyar and Dr. Jim Burns -- who received an award for the Best Paper in the Engineering Economy Division at the American Society for Engineering Education annual conference in Salt Lake City. Our college appreciates their dedication to the profession and efforts to stay abreast of innovative approaches to engineering education.

Student soars high with aircraft demonstration
Soaring high this summer was aerospace engineering sophomore Ashleigh Heath who performed at the EAA AirVenture event in Oshkosh, Wisc. -- the largest annual gathering of aviation enthusiasts in the country, with more than 600,000 attending. She flew three demonstration flights with a giant scale radio-controlled airplane as part of twilight and nighttime air shows, alongside many professional aerobatic pilots.

More than 10,000 aircraft were at the event, including homebuilt aircraft, vintage planes, warbirds, seaplanes and aerobatic aircraft, among others.