WMU gets $3.2 million education grant

WMU will receive more than $3.2 million from the U.S. Department of Education to use the unique opportunities afforded by the existence of the Kalmanovitz Promise to build an institutional culture focused on increased access and degree completion for underrepresented, underprepared or low-income students.

The new grant is one of a small number of awards announced Sept. 30 by the DOE and meant to create and validate through ongoing research, student success programs that can tackle the problem of low rates of degree completion. The goal is to create programs that other universities can adopt, knowing there is sound research data behind the strategies embraced and replicated.

“Each grantee demonstrated a high-quality, creative and sound approach to expand college access and improve student outcomes,” U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said in announcing the recipients of the first in the World grant being funded for the first time this year.

Andrea Beach, educational leadership, research and technology and director of faculty development, will co-direct the effort with Charles Henderson, physics and the Mallinson Institute for Science Education. Together, the pair recently launched the Center for Research on Instructional Change in Post-secondary Education.

For WMU, the four-year project will focus on building a campuswide culture that

Enrollment down slightly; gains seen in key areas

The fall student body is substantially more diverse and international, and it includes more transfer, honors and doctoral students.

Overall, 23,914 students were counted during the fall census, and as officials had forecast, small entering classes from earlier this decade resulted in an enrollment decrease of 1.6 percent.

The tally does not include students enrolled in two private entities affiliated with the University: the WMU Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine and the WMU Thomas M. Cooley Law School.

The largest enrollment increase was a 10 percent jump in international students to 1,854. WMU now enrolls more international students than at any time in the past decade, and they comprise nearly 8 percent of the student body.

Other statistics and trends show:
• A boost in transfer students of 6 percent, which is expected to be one of the largest such increases this year at any Michigan public university.
• A significant increase in Asian students that helped push up minority student enrollment by more than 5 percent, making the student body nearly 21 percent minority.
• An overall 2.6 percent decrease in the number of students classified as freshmen, but a continued upward trend in the average high school GPA and composite ACT score of incoming freshmen.
• Continued growth for online education (up 16.4 percent) and the Lee Honors College (up 4 percent) as well as in the number of out-of-state students (up 6 percent) and doctoral students (up 3.1 percent).

Two to receive Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award

WMU will present its 2014-15 Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award to E. Rozanne Elder and John Jellies.

The honor is the highest annual award WMU bestows on faculty members and goes to individuals whose work constitutes a significant body of achievement that is widely recognized within the national and international academic communities.

Elder and Jellies will be recognized during this year’s academic convocation at 2 p.m. Friday, Oct. 10, in the Dalton Center Recital Hall. The event also will feature WMU President John M. Dunn’s State of the University address and presentation of four other prestigious campuswide awards.

Elder is a professor of history and the director of what is now the Center for Cistercian and Monastic Studies. She has directed the center and organized its Cistercian Studies Conference since 1973 as well as been the primary editor for Cistercian Publications since 1979.

Nominators lauded Elder for elevating the University’s international reputation in the fields of Cistercian and monastic studies, along with related fields. In addition, they praised her for her remarkable work bringing some 300 texts to publication, as well as for participating fully in teaching and research and contributing to the ongoing development of the Medieval Institute’s academic program.

Continued on page 4

Proposals sought from employees

The Campus Climate for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is seeking proposals from faculty, staff and administrators interested in implementing transformational diversity change initiatives derived from internal assessments and recommendations. The application deadline is 5 p.m. Friday, Oct. 3. Visit wmich.edu/diversity/initiatives for details.

Time to apply for faculty exchanges

WMU invites applications for a short-term faculty exchange at the Kazakh Agro-Technical University in Kazakhstan and the University of Passau in Germany. Visit wmich.edu/international/exchange-spotlight for details. Direct applications and questions to Michelle Metro-Roland at michelle.metro-roland@wmich.edu or (269) 387-3908.

Event focuses on assistive devices

A conference intended to introduce do-it-yourself assistive devices and iPad apps for individuals with disabilities is set for 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, Oct. 20, in the Fetzer Center. Registration is required. Sign in and register at http://bit.ly/1pEFWkk.

WMUK begins fall drive Oct. 18

The University’s public radio station, WMUK, will kick off its annual fall campaign Saturday, Oct. 18, and hopes to cut on-air pledging in half. The drive’s goal is $160,000.

WMUK encourages members to take a lead role in supporting the programs they value by sending in their gifts, contributing online at wmuk.org or calling in a pledge during the live portion of the pledge campaign.

The radio station, broadcasting at 102.1 on the FM dial, uses membership contributions and additional gifts to produce local programs and purchase programs such as “Morning Edition,” “All Things Considered,” “Wait Wait...Don’t Tell Me” and “From the Top.”
The Office of LBGT Student Services, in conjunction with the Office of University Relations, has planned its activities for National Coming Out Week, which will be observed Sept. 22-26. The week is sponsored by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force’s HRC Foundation.

“Coming Out Week provides the opportunity for the University to recognize and celebrate the diversity of our student body and to emphasize the spirit of inclusiveness,” said Student Director of the Office of LBGT Student Services, Rhonda Collier. “This year’s theme, ‘Lives Are Beautiful,’ speaks to the richness of our community and the pride we take in being ourselves.”

The University of Michigan has been designated as a founding heretaic and LGBTQ ally campus. The University’s designation, which took effect in 2014, comes as a result of a letter of support signed by U-M President Mark Schlissel and U-M Interim Provost Patricia E. Hill in response to a similar letter signed by the Vir- ginia Tech leadership. The University of Michigan, Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University are the only founding higher education institutions in the state to have received the designation.

Faculty and staff members who give any amount toward the 2014 campus United Way campaign’s goal to raise $282,335 will be eligible for weekly drawings to be held each Friday afternoon beginning Oct. 10 and ending with a grand prize drawing Nov. 14.

Graduate-level information fair set
A leading West Michigan business and communications firm, will be the next Entrepreneurship Forum speaker. Kay will speak at 8 a.m. Friday, Oct. 17, in 2150 Schneider Hall. The event is free and open to the public and begins with breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Reservations are required and can be made at wmich.edu/business/e-rsvp or (269) 387-6059.

Entrepreneur scheduled to speak
Cynthia Kay, founder of Cynthia Kay and Co., a leading West Michigan video and communications firm, will be the next Entrepreneurship Forum speaker. Kay will speak at 8 a.m. Friday, Oct. 17, in 2150 Schneider Hall. The event is free and open to the public and begins with breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Reservations are required and can be made at wmich.edu/business/e-rsvp or (269) 387-6059.

Jazz orchestra presenting free concert
The University Jazz Orchestra will present an evening of jazz big band music at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 9, in the Dalton Recital Hall. The free concert will feature music by composers Clare Fischer, Joe Henderson, Thad Jones and Charles Mingus. WMU’s award-winning jazz orchestra is directed by Scott Cowan.

United Way campaign prize drawings announced
Faculty and staff members who give any amount toward the 2014 campus United Way campaign’s goal to raise $282,335 will be eligible for weekly drawings to be held each Friday afternoon beginning Oct. 10 and ending with a grand prize drawing Nov. 14.

Names of eligible contributors whose pledge cards are returned to the president’s office, mail stop 5202, by 5 p.m. the Thursday before each drawing will be included. Eligibility is cumulative, so eligible for the first drawing will continue to be eligible for subsequent drawings. There is a limit of one weekly prize per person. Once a person wins a weekly prize, that person will be ineligible for subsequent weekly drawings.

Weekly prizes are for tickets to Bronco athletic games as well as gift certificates to Miller Auditorium shows, the Sport Shoppe and any Millennium restaurant. Grand-prize drawings will be held Friday, Nov. 14.

Contributors whose pledge cards are received in the president’s office by 5 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 13, will be entered into the grand prize drawing. Grand prizes are for two tickets to the President’s Box for the Nov. 28 football game, four tickets to a WMU home volleyball game, a $100 gift certificate to any Millennium restaurant, and two tickets to the Gold Company concert in February.

Direct questions to campaign organizers at wmu-united-way@wmich.edu.

Appointment required for flu shots
The Sinceldean Health Center is now offering seasonal influenza vaccinations by ap- pointment to WMU employees, students and retirees, along with their eligible dependents. Visit wmich.edu/news/2014/09/18286 for details.

Jobs
Current job opportunities at WMU are announced daily on the Human Resources website at wmich.edu/hr/jobs. Please note that applications must be submitted online by the stated deadline. Complete application procedures are included with each posting.

Around campus and beyond

Western News
Volume 41 Number 3

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DEADLINE: Items are to be considered for publication should be submitted to the Office of University Relations by 5 p.m. Friday, the week preceding publication. Publication dates for the fall semester are Sept. 4 and 18, Oct. 2, 16 and 30, Nov. 13 and Dec. 4. Items may be submitted to Jeannine Baron via email: jeannine.baron@wmich.edu, mailing address: Campus Mail Stop 5433, phone: (269) 387-8433, or fax: (269) 387-6422.

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

Western Michigan University
WMU earns its sixth consecutive ‘military friendly’ designation

One of the leading publishers of magazines for veterans and their families has named WMU one of the nation’s most Military Friendly Schools for the sixth consecutive time.

The annual Military Friendly Schools list was announced Sept. 25 by Victory Media, which produces such publications as G.I. Jobs and Military Spouse and has placed the University on its military friendly list since launching the annual assessment six years ago.

The military friendly designation is awarded to the top 15 percent of colleges, universities and trade schools “that are doing the most to embrace military students and to dedicate resources to ensure their success in the classroom after graduation.”

The annual survey upon which the designation is based captures more than 50 leading practices used to support military students. These practices include on-campus veterans programs, credit for service, military spouse programs and participation in a variety of military support offerings, such as the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the Montgomery GI Bill and the Yellow Ribbon Program—all of which the University participates in.

WMU is the school of choice in Michigan for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, enrolling more of those men and women than any four-year college or university in the state.

For many years, WMU has had an advocacy unit, the Office of Military and Veterans Affairs, specifically empowered to work on behalf of veterans and help them transition from their active duty roles to the life of a student.

In addition, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in 2012 named WMU, along with its partner schools Kellogg Community College and Kalamazoo Valley Community College, the site of Michigan’s first VetSuccess on Campus program. That move brought an array of additional services to help ensure the success of veterans.

Military stories sought for reading

WMU student military veterans from any country are invited to submit a short narrative by Friday, Oct. 17, about their military service for consideration to be considered during a Veterans Day event at noon Tuesday, Nov. 11, in the Lee Honors College. For more information or to submit a narrative, contact wmu-international@wmich.edu.

New police chief named

A WMU graduate and longtime former officer with the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety is WMU’s new top law enforcement official.

Scott B. Merlo began his first day at his new WMU post on Sept. 29. His appointment was approved by the WMU Board of Trustees at its Sept. 5 meeting. He replaces Robert Brown, who is on a one-year leave of absence and plans to retire in January 2015. Blaine Kalafut has been serving as interim chief during the search for Brown’s replacement.

Merlo comes to WMU from the police department at Grand Rapids Community College, where he was a lieutenant for two years. Previously, he spent 22 years with KDPS. Merlo served as an executive lieutenant and acting captain from 2007 to 2012. He began his tenure as a public safety officer in the Operations Division and also served as a detective in the Criminal Investigation Division, and as a sergeant and detective sergeant.

University continues earning additional impressive accolades

WMU has received a 2014 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity—HEED—award, marking the second consecutive year the University has been honored with this national award by INSIGHT Into Diversity, the nation’s oldest and largest publication that focuses on diversity in higher education.

In addition, an international transportation news source ranks WMU as one of the nation’s best places to go to college if students have an electric car.

The HEED award, announced Sept. 16, recognizes U.S. colleges and universities “that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion.” WMU will be featured along with 82 other recipients in the magazine’s November 2014 issue.

In Michigan, WMU and three other public schools were honored: Central Michigan, Grand Valley State and Michigan Technological University.

“The HEED award recognizes the accomplishments in the areas of diversity and inclusion, and we never stop adding new accomplishments and finding new ways to ensure we have a campus that feels welcoming to every individual,” says Martha Warfield, WMU vice president for diversity and inclusion.

“According to INSIGHT, WMU was selected for the award based on its "exemplary diversity and inclusion initiatives and ability to embrace a broad definition of diversity" that includes gender, race, ethnicity, veteran status, and people with disabilities as well as members of the LBGT community.

In the area of electric vehicles, WMU placed fourth on the list of the most "EV friendly" colleges released in September.
It’s easy to find yourself smiling after spending even a little time with Gary and Sherry Sandlin. The husband and wife have an upbeat sense of humor, positive attitude and faith in God that have helped them gracefully weather life’s professional ups and downs.

In recent years, both have bounced back from downsizing. Sherry, now a Salad Maker, had been working in campus dining halls for only three years in 2010 as a fill-in custodian and now is assigned full time to Moore Hall.

Gary, a production line worker for most of his adult life, permanently lost his job with a local manufacturing company. He began working at the University on a temporary basis in 2010 as a fill-in custodian and now is assigned full time to Moore Hall.

“Some times you’re so busy that all you’re worried about is getting your food out on time,” she says. “But I work with the best crew of girls. They’re so good to me and so patient. And I find the work interesting because we have student employees from so many countries. They share with you their lifestyle. A lot of them call me their American mom. I could take them all home with me.”

The Sandlins have two grown sons and live in Paw Paw. They both grew up in that town but didn’t meet until Gary was out of high school. “We met on a blind date and that’s all I’m saying,” Gary quips. “Now we’ve been married for 37 years.”

The couple are big Bronco football fans and enjoy bike riding, spending time with their children and grandchildren, and volunteering with the Full Gospel Apostolic Church. Gary prefers to be outdoors, working in the yard, riding his bike and hanging out at a Lake Michigan beach. Sherry can be found indoors, designing appliques and patterns that complement a sewing tool she and her sister patented. The two have built a craft business called JesSab at perfectbox.bottom.com that’s based on the tool, with Sherry indulging her love of sewing while her sister takes care of the business end.

Continued from page 1

Western News

On Campus with Gary and Sherry Sandlin

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Research university resources being brought to degree-completion compact for Grand Rapids

A Grand Rapids community initiative to double the rate at which Grand Rapids Public Schools graduates earn college degrees has attracted the commitment of WMU.

The effort, championed by Grand Rapids Mayor George E. Heartwell, will identify barriers to degree completion and put community resources to work to overcome those barriers. WMU President John M. Dunn was one of seven college and university presidents who traveled to degree completion and put community resources to work to overcome those barriers. WMU, and Grand Valley State University.

Those credentials, but also to ensure that every citizen has the access and support necessary to earn credentials, and to fulfill their potential as part of a professional workforce.”

You’re like your own boss here, and I’m at a time in my life when I like cleaning.”

Sherry, who happily adds that she has “the best housekeeper in the world,” confides that she’d rather interact with people than run a vacuum cleaner. “Sometimes you’re so busy that all you’re worried about is getting your food out on time,” she says. “But I work with the best crew of girls. They’re so good to me and so patient. And I find the work interesting because we have student employees from so many countries. They share with you their lifestyle. A lot of them call me their American mom. I could take them all home with me.”

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WMU gets $3.2 million grant

uses mentoring relationships for first-year students to transform WMU’s culture and structures to be more supportive of student persistence. The work will be done with the input of students for whom the problem of affordability has been largely eliminated—Kalamazoo Promise students.

“This is about connecting all the disparate initiatives aimed at student success that every institution has and turning them into one strong and successful effort,” Beach says.

Continued from page 3

University accolades

by Transport Evolved, a news site based in Great Britain. It centers its rankings on data from ChargePoint, a nationwide network that tracks the availability of EV charging stations.

The top five schools and the number of charging stations they support are the University of California-Davis, 38; Towson University, 36; Santa Clara University, 25; WMU, 22; and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 21.

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