Board of Trustees meetings scheduled

The first formal meeting of the WMU Board of Trustees during the 2016 calendar year will be held Thursday, Feb. 11, in Heritage Hall. The remaining 2016 meeting dates are Wednesday, March 23; Thursday, April 21; Tuesday, June 7 (daylong board retreat with formal public session at 11 a.m.), Tuesday, July 12; Monday, Sept. 12; Tuesday, Oct. 11; and Monday, Dec. 12. Most board meetings are held on campus in the Bernhard Center with formal sessions beginning at 11 a.m.

Nominate colleagues for staff award

Nominations for the spring semiannual Make a Difference award are due Sunday, Feb. 28. Make a Difference recognizes staff members for their accomplishments and daily investment of energy and creativity. It features semiannual and annual awards presented to nonfaculty employees who provide exceptional service to the University. For more information, including year-round nomination instructions and forms, visit wmich.edu/makeadifference.

Career development sessions planned

Faculty development is conducting a four-session learning community for midcareer faculty titled “Getting to Full Professor or Master Faculty Specialist.” Meetings are Fridays from 1 to 3 p.m. Feb. 5 and 26, March 18, and April 8 in 2033 University Computing Center. For more information or to register, call (269) 387-0732.

Free employee photo shoots slated

University relations has scheduled numerous free photo sessions during 2016 for employees to have their official WMU portraits taken. All sessions are from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Walwood Hall’s Emeriti Lounge, unless otherwise noted. The next session will be held Wednesday, Feb. 10. Visit wmich.edu/universityrelations/photography for more information.

Chinese research grants available

Applications are being accepted for a research and creative activities grant to support the study of Greater China by faculty members. Friday, Feb. 12, is the deadline to apply for a grant, valued at up to $3,000 each. For details, visit the Light Center website at wmich.edu/chinesestudiescenter.

New center promotes diversity

The Western Regional Area Health Education Center, located at the WMU-Grand Rapids downtown location, is partnering with providers across Southwest Michigan to play an integral role in teaching and training the next generation of health professionals. Operated through the College of Health and Human Services, it aims to promote diversity in primary health care providers, particularly in underserved communities.

Researchers garner $800,000 NSF grant

A WMU education researcher has received a $799,665 grant from the National Science Foundation to develop resources to plan studies that can better assess how well professional development initiatives for science teachers are working.

Jessica Spybrook, educational leadership, research and technology, is heading a team of researchers from WMU, the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study and Alt Associates that will mine a treasure trove of large-scale data sets, analyze them and come up with ways to inform the design of large evaluations of teacher development initiatives.

Too often, large-scale teacher development randomized trials are inconclusive. So it is unknown how well efforts to improve teaching are actually working.

A major impediment to analyzing professional development program effectiveness is designing studies that have the capacity to determine “what works.” Spybrook’s research will give guidance about how many schools need to be studied and how many teachers should be tested within those schools to answer those questions with greater confidence.

“In this particular study, the outcomes of interest are actually teacher outcomes,” Spybrook says. “So we’re interested in science teacher practice and science teacher content knowledge, because we know that by improving these things, ultimately that will lead to improved student achievement.”

In order to figure out how many schools and teachers need to be studied, researchers will examine how much teacher content...

Continued on page 4

WMU, WMU Cooley ink new pacts; start law classes

With the first two law school classes now underway on the University’s Kalamazoo campus, WMU and WMU Cooley Law School officials met in the city Jan. 19 to sign a series of new agreements that will continue the expansion of legal education in West Michigan.

The three new pacts cover facilities use, courses, programs and parking. They were signed by WMU President John M. Dunn and WMU Cooley President and Dean Don LeDuc during a brief public ceremony.

The terms of the pacts are already enabling the delivery this semester of two upper-level law classes on the WMU campus in Kalamazoo. Classes in employment and environmental law—the first law school classes offered at WMU—began Jan. 11. The pacts also will pave the way for a group of first-year law students to begin basic legal education at WMU in fall 2016.

Among new opportunities that are a result of the agreements signed Jan. 19 are such initiatives as:

- Accelerated programs that will allow WMU students to complete both an undergraduate and law degree in a timeframe shorter than the traditional seven years—saving the students time and tuition dollars;
- Cross listing of courses that will allow

Continued on page 4

Revised strategic plan draft released for public comment

The first draft of WMU’s revised strategic plan for 2016-20 has been published online. The document reflects months of discussions by a broad cross-section of the campus community as well as analysis of the Universitywide Strategic Plan Stakeholder Survey that was conducted in December.

This first draft presents priority objectives and strategies that address information gathered by the University Strategic Plan 2020 Transition Team. It serves as the first of many opportunities WMU stakeholders will have to see and react to the revisions being made as the three-year 2012-15 plan transitions to a five-year 2016-20 plan. All students and employees are encouraged to review the draft document, discuss it with colleagues and attend one of the many focus groups to be held by units across campus during February. The draft as well as a calendar of those planned focus group meetings will be posted at wmich.edu/strategic.

A second draft of the revised plan will be presented to the campus community in March for final review. The new 2016-20 University Strategic Plan will be presented to the WMU Board of Trustees in late March for its consideration.

To provide strategic planning input or keep up to date on activities and events, contact Jody Brylinsky at jody.brylinsky@wmich.edu or visit the strategic planning website...
Sabbatical leaves granted to 37 faculty members

Thirty-seven faculty members were granted sabbatical leaves by the WMU Board of Trustees during the governing board’s Dec. 8 meeting.

• A leave for the spring 2016 semester went to James M. Murray, history (change of effective date only).

• A leave for the fall 2016 semester went to Anjali Satterthwaite, communication; Upul Bandara Attanayake, civil and construction engineering; Nancy Emers, English; Paul Farber, teaching, learning and educational studies; Sandra O. Glista, speech pathology and audiology; Vyacheslav G. Karpov, chemistry; and Jane-Jane Lo, mathematics.

• A leave for the 2016-17 academic year went to Ali A. Al-Fuqaha, computer science; Larry Asleson, economics; Peter Blickle, world languages and literatures; James Butterfield, political science; William J. Charland, art; Sally E. Hadden, history; David Huffman, political science; William J. Charland, art; and Victor C. Xiong, history.

• A leave for the spring 2017 semester went to Lori J. Brown, aviation sciences; Bernard T. Han, business information systems; C. James Huang, economics; Jerry G. Kreuse, accounting; Dennis Metz-Rolando, teaching, learning and educational studies; Timothy B. Palmer, management; Robert E. Vann, Spanish; and Elizabeth Whitten, special education and literacy studies.

• A leave for summer I and II 2017 went to Michele D. Behr, University Libraries.

• A leave for fall 2017 went to Donis J. Ravotas, interdisciplinary health systems; C. James Hueng, economics; Jerry G. Kreuse, accounting; Dennis Metz-Rolando, teaching, learning and educational studies; Timothy B. Palmer, management; Robert E. Vann, Spanish; and Elizabeth Whitten, special education and literacy studies.

• A leave for spring 2018 semester went to Jocelyn D. Steinke, communication; Patricia O. Sisay Asefa, economics; Peter Blickle, world languages and literatures; James Butterfield, political science; William J. Charland, art; and Victor C. Xiong, history.

• A leave for the spring 2018 semester went to Lori J. Brown, aviation sciences; Bernard T. Han, business information systems; C. James Huang, economics; Jerry G. Kreuse, accounting; Dennis Metz-Rolando, teaching, learning and educational studies; Timothy B. Palmer, management; Robert E. Vann, Spanish; and Elizabeth Whitten, special education and literacy studies.

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• A leave for spring 2019 semester went to Jocelyn D. Steinke, communication; Patricia O. Sisay Asefa, economics; Peter Blickle, world languages and literatures; James Butterfield, political science; William J. Charland, art; and Victor C. Xiong, history.

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• A leave for spring 2020 semester went to Jocelyn D. Steinke, communication; Patricia O. Sisay Asefa, economics; Peter Blickle, world languages and literatures; James Butterfield, political science; William J. Charland, art; and Victor C. Xiong, history.

• A leave for the spring 2020 semester went to Lori J. Brown, aviation sciences; Bernard T. Han, business information systems; C. James Huang, economics; Jerry G. Kreuse, accounting; Dennis Metz-Rolando, teaching, learning and educational studies; Timothy B. Palmer, management; Robert E. Vann, Spanish; and Elizabeth Whitten, special education and literacy studies.

• A leave for summer I and II 2020 went to Michele D. Behr, University Libraries.

• A leave for fall 2020 went to Donis J. Ravotas, interdisciplinary health systems; C. James Hueng, economics; Jerry G. Kreuse, accounting; Dennis Metz-Rolando, teaching, learning and educational studies; Timothy B. Palmer, management; Robert E. Vann, Spanish; and Elizabeth Whitten, special education and literacy studies.
Grants seek to improve aviation safety

WMU has received three grants totaling $434,690 from the Federal Aviation Administration NextGen Weather Technology in the Cockpit program. Lori Brown, aviation, is principal investigator for WMU on two of the projects while Geoff Whitehurst, aviation, is WMU’s principal investigator for the third.

The grants fund three of four FAA projects that have the goal of using the latest weather technology research to improve pilot decision-making during adverse weather conditions and enhance crew awareness. All four are through a program that seeks to enhance general aviation safety, accessibility and sustainability by partnering the FAA with a national network of world-class researchers, educators and industry leaders.

For one of the WMU projects, Brown and her WMU colleagues are partnering with Purdue University to develop innovative training modules. They will construct interactive, computer-based decision trees that can be used by a broad demographic to improve decision making in unintentional transition into adverse weather conditions. Her second research project, in partnership with Texas A&M University, will look closely at weather technology in the cockpit and weather devices and functions.

Whitehurst, who also is partnering with Purdue University, is overseeing a research team that is investigating the effect of latency or delay due to data transfer rates of NEXRAD information presented to pilots during bad weather. Radar images can be up to 12 minutes old. Whitehurst and his fellow researchers have developed a computer-based training aid which replicates NEXRAD radar imagery that has the delay built into it for flight simulation.

Time to review University’s snow removal policy, winter walking safety tips

Winter hours are in effect for WMU’s snow removal crews, who must plow, shovel, scrape and de-ice more than 26 miles of roads and 120 acres of parking area, 39 miles of walks, hundreds of doorways, and 200,000 square feet of steps and ramps.

Flow schedules cover snow and ice removal activities 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Providing there is not a major storm, most main campus areas will be clear of snow and ice before the majority of students and employees arrive each day.

Snow and ice removal schedules can be adjusted to accommodate special mobility needs as well as weekend and other special activities. Requests should be directed to landscape services at (269) 387-8557. Callers are asked to provide as much advance notice as possible. Questions or concerns after normal business hours should be directed to public safety at (269) 387-5555.

Visit wmich.edu/policies/closure-policy for information about the University’s Closure Policy.

Walking in winter

Environmental health and safety reminds students and employees that slips and falls are some of the most frequent types of injuries that occur on campus during the winter months. For that reason, that office’s Safety Committee has posted a PDF at bit.ly/1lRqqTp that provides helpful hints and guidelines for being safe while traversing campus during this time of year. The PDF covers everything from how to walk on slippery surfaces to what to wear during cold weather.

Spring Convocation slated

The Spring Convocation: Recognition of Discovery, Diversity and Global Engagement will take place Thursday and Friday, Feb. 4-5, in the Fetzer Center.

Major events Feb. 5 include morning presentations by two faculty members who were previously honored during WMU’s annual Academic Convocation and an afternoon ceremony to honor several of this spring’s campuswide award recipients.

John Jelles, biological sciences and the University’s 2014 Distinguished Faculty Scholar, will speak at 11 a.m. on “Heralds of Discovery: Invertebrates Advancing Neurobiology.” Luigi Andrea Berto, history and the 2015 Emerging Scholar, will speak at 11:45 a.m. on “The Image of Muslims in Medieval South Italy.”

WMU’s first Spring Convocation ceremony, set for 3:30 p.m., will honor four faculty members and three organizations.

Extended University Programs’ Innovative Teaching Award will go to the team of Marian Tripplott and Dee Ann Sherwood, both from social work.

Diversity and Inclusion will present four awards during the convocation. An Excellence in Diversity Award will go to the College of Aviation as well as to the team of Jeff Carr, maintenance services, and Mariam Konaté, Africana studies and gender and women’s studies.

The Trailblazers for Diversity Award will go to the LBGT Student Advisory Council. The Rising Star in Diversity Award will go to the Sindecuse Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

For more about Spring Convocation events, visit wmich.edu/research.

Marvin “Geno” Milkovich died Dec. 24, 2015, at age 83. Milkovich came to WMU in 1987 and retired in 1997 as a carpet cleaner in building custodial and support services after 10 years of service.

John J. Pruis died Jan. 15 at age 92. Pruis, a former vice president for administration, speech professor and secretary to the WMU Board of Trustees, came to WMU in 1955. He left in 1968 after 13 years to become president of Ball State University.

Jim Tripp died Dec. 25, 2015, at age 62. Tripp, a painter/glazier in maintenance services, came to WMU in 2001 and at the time of his death had given 14 years of near-continuous service. Survivors include Pam McMakin, longtime companion and WMU retiree. An open house to celebrate Tripp’s life will be held from 3 to 6 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, in the Life Story Funeral Home-Berlitz, 6080 Stadium Drive in Kalamazoo.


Janice S. Weaver died Dec. 30, 2015, at age 68. Weaver came to WMU in 1988 and retired in 2010 as a utility person/cash operations in Dining Services after 21 years of service. Survivors include her husband, Don, a WMU retiree.

Robert “Herb” Williams died Jan. 16 at age 97. Williams retired in 1980 as director of the physical plant after 34 years of service.

Michael “Woody” Woodhams died Jan. 19 at age 63. He came to WMU in 1997 and retired in 2009 as an electrician in maintenance services after 12 years of service.
On Campus with Jenaba Dymovic Waggy

"It’s sort of like walking into a mini U.N. all the time," Jenaba D. Waggy says of her job in the Department of World Languages and Literatures. Waggy, an administrative assistant II who serves as the department’s office coordinator, adds that the number of differences prevalent in the people and activities of her unit make for exhilarating workdays.

“We are sitting at the nexus of the globally engaged concept of Western. There are people from so many countries and cultures to tap into,” she says. “In a single day, I can have seven or more countries represented in my office.”

Waggy primarily deals with money matters, including balancing accounts, handling payroll and making sure departmental grants and contracts have compliance. But she also is responsible for taking care of events, supplies, personnel paperwork, and office and academic files.

“It really is having to be prepared for everything,” she notes. “I’m locked out of my classroom” to “We have federal guidelines of which we weren’t aware.”

Waggy came to WMU in 2010 to earn a master’s degree in medieval studies. While a student, she taught for that program, worked in Medieval Institute Publications and helped world languages and literatures found its Transference journal of poetry in translation.

After graduating in 2013, she accepted her current job, which has her previous post of editorial assistant for Transference built into the list of duties.

“I love working in this department and with these people, and it’s given me the space to figure out what I do want to do as a career,” says Waggy, who is active in her United Methodist church. “I’m applying to seminary schools now. I feel that professional ministry is where I’m being called to help shape the way that we interact.”

The Calalumazoo resident does some freelance proofreading and editing, is a voracious reader, and enjoys knitting and writing as well as visiting college friends in the tri-state area. This semester at WMU, she’s participating in the Women in Higher Education Diversity Learning Community as well as taking an introductory American Sign Language class.

“Everyone should take a foreign language, if only to understand that there are differences and similarities. I’ve taken an alarming number of languages and I’m not fluent in any of them except English,” she says. “But there is no career that I can think of where it’s not helpful to be able to recognize that there’s this whole history and culture behind the way that you think and talk about things.”

Continued from page 1

Researcher garners $800,000 NSF grant

knowledge varies from one school to the next. Does it vary a lot? Do teachers with a high amount of content knowledge tend to be clustered in one school or is there a lot of variation within schools?

“We’re going to analyze these data sets to get an idea of what that variation looks like,” Spybrook says. “After we analyze those data sets, we’re going to write papers and disseminate them so that if you were a researcher and wanted to test the curriculum you set up for teachers, you would then go to our resource and pull these parameters out so you could design your study with the right number of schools and the right number of teachers.”

By taking the data sets and analyzing them, researchers have the tools to design their study effectively. By performing a meta-analysis of studies, the project also will allow researchers to more accurately predict how big of an impact the teacher development