Freshman enrollment soars by 18 percent to set University record

Beginning freshman enrollment at WMU this fall hit 4,426, shattering the University’s previous record freshman enrollment figure, set last year, by 18 percent.

The University closed its freshman class in May after receiving a record number of applications for spots in the fall freshman class. Since the closure—the first in WMU’s history—record numbers of students took part in summer orientation sessions, leading University officials to expect a large increase in freshman numbers this fall. This year’s beginning freshman class has 668 more students than last year’s previous record class of 3,758 students.

“The size of this record freshman class is a huge tribute to the work of our faculty and staff,” said President Floyd of the news. “The figures show that the quality academic experience the University offers is proving very attractive to a large number of high quality students. Our enrollment numbers also reflect substantial gains in such important areas as the Graduate College.”

Total fall enrollment at WMU stands at 27,744, an overall increase of 4.4 percent over last year’s total of 26,575 students. The fall 1999 figure reflects the second highest enrollment figure in University history. The previous record class of 3,758 students, which was announced in May after receiving a record number of student credit hours. Transfer enrollment remained steady.

WMU Dean of Admissions John Fraire noted that an important ingredient to the freshman class size was the number of top students who have enrolled in the University’s Lee Honors College.

“Joseph Reish, dean of the Lee Honors College, has informed me that this year’s incoming class is the second largest in that college’s history and it is the class with the highest academic profile,” said Fraire. “The average GPA and ACT of the Honors College entering class are 3.9 and 28 respectively. Clearly we are attracting not only more students, but better students as well.”

Fraire also noted that the increase in graduate enrollment reflects the traditional wisdom that during times of strong economic growth, prospective graduate students choose to remain working rather than seeking an advanced degree.

“Much credit for the increase in graduate enrollment must be given to the Division of Continuing Education and the directors of Western’s various regional centers,” he said.

University’s first black alumni gathering set for Sept. 23-25; will include career expo, history symposium

A career expo and a historical slide show and symposium are just two of the activities that are attracting black graduates to campus for WMU’s first Black Alumni Reunion Thursday through Saturday, Sept. 23-25.

Major speakers include President Floyd, who will address a Saturday breakfast gathering, and Roy M. Roberts, a 1970 graduate who is a top General Motors executive and a former WMU trustee. He will be the Saturday dinner keynote speaker.

The WMU Alumni Association and its Onyx Society are sponsoring the three-day event, which has as its theme, “Making the Connection, Keeping the PACE.” The acronym stands for “Progression of African Americans in the 21st Century through Higher Education.”

The reunion features a wide range of activities, including a Career Information Expo and a Historical Slide Presentation and Pioneer Symposium. Both are open to the public.

“In keeping with the theme, this reunion offers something for everyone,” says Sharon S. Russell, assistant director of alumni relations. “We encourage all members of the University community to participate in as many of these activities as possible.”

Major activities planned for the Black Alumni Reunion are:

A RECORD EVENING FROM START TO FINISH—Record crowds of community members filled the Sept. 11 Comm/UniverCity tailgate above, then stayed on to become the largest football crowd in Waldo Stadium and Mid-American Conference history. It was standing room only as 35,874 fans cheered the Broncos on to a 46-28 win against Youngstown State, then were treated to a finale enrollment and 6 percent increase in the Bring the Broncos, marching band and fireworks. (Photos by Neil Rankin)

Viji Murali named vice president for information technology, effective Nov. 1

A computer specialist with a research background in organic chemistry will take charge of the University’s computing structure as vice president for information technology. Vijji Murali, currently director of systems management and user support in the Center for Computer Information Technology at the University of Arizona, will assume her new role Nov. 1, subject to the approval of the WMU Board of Trustees. Her appointment is the culmination of a national search for an information technology specialist to fill the newly created vice presidential post.

Murali was one of four candidates interviewed on campus for the position during June and July. Her appointment was announced earlier this week by President Floyd.

“We were looking for the right combination of experience, vision, service orientation and technical skills for this critically important role,” Floyd said. “We have found that and more in Vijji. She brings a strong technical background to this challenging new role and she also brings a unique sensitivity to the needs and culture of a research university.”

Murali, who will serve as the University’s chief information officer, will become a member of the president’s leadership team and advocate for the development and use of technologies that will help WMU fulfill its teaching, research and service missions. As vice president, Murali will oversee academic and administrative computing, networking and telecommunications. She also will oversee the final phases of the Y2K readiness project.

Murali has been in her current position since 1997. She is responsible for numerous campus computing initiatives and academic systems as well as its data center and customer support center. Before assuming her current position, she was manager of systems programming in Arizona’s Computing Center for five years. She also worked as a systems programmer in the center and as research assistant in that university’s Information Technology.

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CMS Energy Corp. CEO to launch series

William T. McCormick Jr., chairman and chief executive officer of CMS Energy Corp., the parent company of Consumers Energy, will launch this year’s Haworth College of Business Distinguished Speaker Series with a presentation Tuesday, Sept. 21.

McCormick will speak on “CMS Energy’s Role in International Energy Development” at 5:30 p.m. in Schneider Hall’s Brown Auditorium. He is expected to address the increasing role of American energy companies around the globe.

CMS Energy, the nation’s fourth largest electric utility, is a $10 billion international energy company operating in the United States and in 20 foreign countries. McCormick, who has a doctoral degree in nuclear engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has been with CMS since 1985. Prior to that he held positions in the American Gas Association, the Energy Policy Office of the White House, the U.S. Office of Management and the Budget, the U.S. Energy Research and Development Administration and with American National Resources Company.

The Distinguished Speaker Series brings business, education and government leaders to campus to discuss a variety of topics related to the University and Southwest Michigan. It is coordinated by Christopher M. Korth, finance and commercial law.

Business and community leaders from Southwest Michigan, as well as WMU faculty, staff and students, will attend the event. Those wishing to attend, should reserve a spot by calling 7-5068.

(Continued on page four)
A year of progress has put our University on solid footing for even more achievement in the future

It is difficult for me to believe that we have already completed our first full year together. And what a year it has been.

Your unwavering support throughout this past year has meant we’ve been able to make some giant strides toward achieving the goals we’ve set for this University. I have every confidence that in the coming months, even more progress will be made toward those goals.

We are embarking on a new academic year that will be full of challenges and opportunities, but because of the strength of our students, faculty, and staff, we head into that year in the best possible circumstances. We have a record number of freshmen—a generation in state funding, wonderful and scarce faculty resources in areas most appropriate and central to the faculty’s knowledge and the University’s next provost and vice president for academic affairs, a position that has retained the services of Heidrick & Stroupe as co-editors of Comparative Drama. Professor Timothy Light announced in May that he would step down from the post June 30, 2000. He will return to the faculty to teach and do research after a one-year leave of absence. He has been provost and executive director, A. C. McLaughlin, professor of the Administrative Professional Association; and Dean James A. Visser last year. Pritchard says he expects that candidate could start July 1. President Floyd has named Michael S. Pritchard, senior associate dean of the Graduate College, to head the search for the University’s next provost and vice president for academic affairs, a position that has retained the services of Heidrick & Stroupe as co-editors of Comparative Drama. Professor Timothy Light announced in May that he would step down from the post June 30, 2000. He will return to the faculty to teach and do research after a one-year leave of absence. He has been provost and executive director, A. C. McLaughlin, professor of the Administrative Professional Association; and Dean James A. Visser last year. Pritchard says he expects that candidate could start July 1. President Floyd has named Michael S. Pritchard, senior associate dean of the Graduate College, to head the search for the University’s next provost and vice president for academic affairs, a position that has retained the services of Heidrick & Stroupe as co-editors of Comparative Drama. Professor Timothy Light announced in May that he would step down from the post June 30, 2000. He will return to the faculty to teach and do research after a one-year leave of absence. He has been provost and executive director, A. C. McLaughlin, professor of the Administrative Professional Association; and Dean James A. Visser last year. Pritchard says he expects that candidate could start July 1.
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Bonds drive is going on now through Thursday, Sept. 30. For the first time, the University is able to offer I Bonds through payroll deduction, in addition to the traditional EE Bonds. I Bonds, which are designed to protect your investment from inflation, are purchased for face value and have two parts to their total return: a fixed rate and an inflation-adjusted rate, which is calculated twice a year based on the Consumer Price Index. Once your investment guarantees you returns over and above the rate of inflation for up to 30 years. Both I Bonds and EE Bonds offer attractive tax benefits, as well.

Buying U.S. Savings Bonds through payroll deduction helps and helps you save, even if you can only set aside a small amount each pay period. For more information, please take a moment to review the material that was sent employees this week, or check out www.savingsbonds.gov on the Web.

Jobs

The following list of vacancies is current and being posted through the Job Opportunity Program by employment services in the Department of Human Resources. Interested benefits-eligible employees should submit a job opportunity transfer application during the posting period, and notify employment services staff member for assistance in securing these positions.

Falls and Winter Semesters

(R) Pharmacy Technician (Recommend), S-06, Sindecuse Health Center, 99/00-902, 9/14-9/29/99
(R) Dean (Tenure Track; FY), Z College of Education, 99/00-888, 9/14-9/20/99
(R) Administrative Assistant I, P-01, College of Arts and Sciences, 99/00-884, 9/14-9/20/99
(R) Assistant Professor (Tenure Track; Fall and Winter Semesters), I-30, Sociology and Anthropology, 99/00-900, 9/14-9/20/99
(R) Assistant Professor (Tenure Track; Fall and Winter Semesters), I-30, Comparative Religion, 99/00-888, 9/14-9/20/99
(R) Assistant Professor (Tenure Track; Fall and Winter Semesters), I-30, Computer Science and Information Technology, 99/00-890, 9/14-9/20/99
(R) Chairperson, Arts & Sciences (Tenure Track; Fall and Winter Semesters), I-30, History, 99/00-892, 9/14-9/20/99
(R) Assistant Professor (Tenure Track; Fall and Winter Semesters), I-30, Geography, 99/00-893, 9/14-9/20/99
(R) Assistant Professor (Tenure Track; Fall and Winter Semesters), I-30, History, 99/00-893, 9/14-9/20/99
(R) Assistant or Associate Professor (Tenure Track; Fall and Winter Semesters), I-30, 200, Biological Sciences, 99/00-894, 9/14-9/20/99
(R) Assistant Professor (Tenure Track; Fall and Winter Semesters), I-30, Anthropology, 99/00-895, 9/14-9/20/99
(R) Assistant Professor (Tenure Track;
Presidential envoy Wolpe to visit campus Sept. 24, talk about post-Cold War Africa

Howard Wolpe, a former U.S. congressman and WMU faculty member who is now President Floyd and Ariel Anderson, president of WMU's Great Lakes Region, will speak on campus Friday, Sept. 24.

Wolpe will present a lecture on "The United States and Africa: After the Cold War" at 7 p.m. in 1010 Fetzer Center. His lecture, sponsored by the Diether H. Haenicke Center for International and Area Studies' African Studies Program, is free and open to the public.

Wolpe, who was a member of the political science faculty from 1967 to 1972, served in the United States House of Representatives from 1979 to 1993. An expert in Africa and a member of the House Africa Subcommittee while in Congress, Wolpe is the co-author of "The United States and Africa," a book recently published by W.W. Norton.

For more information, persons should contact the Haenicke Center for International and Area Studies at 7-3907.

Calendar

The monthly calendar maintained by the Office of University Relations in Western News is available through WMU’s home page on the World Wide Web. Select WMU News and then look for Calendar of Events. You can also link directly to the calendar at <www.wmich.edu/wmu/news/events>.

Thursday, Sept. 16
An exhibition of Oct. 15, "Major Works — Full Scale 1969-1999" by Kansas City artist Robert Stackhouse, Gallery II, Sangren Hall, weekdays 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; reception, Friday, Sept. 17, 5-7 p.m. (Photo by Neil Rankin)

Visiting Scholars and Artist Lecture, "Secret Sewers of Vice": Disgust, Bodies and the Law, the artist Robert Stackhouse, Gallery II, Sangren Hall, weekdays 10 a.m.-5 p.m. (Continued from page one)

Emerging Scholars in American Studies Lecture Series and March to the Millennium Ten Years After the Wall lecture series, "Free Art in a Free Society?: The Dilemma of WMU's Support Fund, 242 Bernhard Center, 10-11:30 a.m.

Saturday, Sept. 25
*Volleyball vs. Bowling Green, University Arena, 7 p.m.

*Time management workshop, Franklin Covey's "What Matters Most," session for undergraduate special populations, 204 Bernhard Center, 7-8:30 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 27
Art exhibition (through Oct. 1), Photography Group Show, Branden Morkut and Ryan Flathau, Rotunda Gallery, East Hall, and SACI Florence Study Abroad Exhibition, South Gallery, East Hall; reception, Friday, Sept. 24, 5-8 p.m.

Workshop on the workings of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, 204 Bernhard Center, 10-11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, Sept. 28
"Richard has my heartfelt appreciation for the wonderful work he has done over the past several years," Floyd said. "I am confident that as WMU's interim vice president for information technology, he will continue in the tradition of excellence that has been synonymous with WMU."