Faculty Senate approves Research II recommendations

Recognizing the University's huge strides in external support for research, the Faculty Senate June 11 approved a series of recommendations from its Research Policies Council to accelerate the University's progress toward Research II status.

We have made outstanding progress in our research efforts in recent years, under the leadership of President Haenicke," said Karim Essani, biological sciences, who is a member of the council. "But there is more we can do to strengthen the research program at WMU.

The senate has endorsed a goal that Haenicke to receive honorary degree during commencement exercises Saturday, June 27

President Haenicke will be awarded an honorary doctor of humane letters degree as he presides over his last commencement exercises at the University Saturday, June 27, in Miller Auditorium.

Haenicke plans to retire July 31 after 13 years as president to return to the faculty. He will receive his degree at the second of two ceremonies.

The 9 a.m. ceremony will be for graduates of the Haworth College of Business, the College of Education and the College of Health and Human Services. The 11:30 a.m. ceremony will be for graduates of the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, the College of Fine Arts and the Division of Continuing Education's General University Studies program.

A total of 1,031 bachelor's, 496 master's, two specialist's and 15 doctoral degrees will be awarded. Students who are completing their degrees at the end of the spring session in June, as well as those who will finish at the end of the summer session in August, are invited to participate in the ceremonies. WMU has no August commencement.

Music for the ceremonies will be performed by organist Gary Forsell. The national anthem and the alma mater will be sung by WMU's chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia professional music fraternity. The graduates will be welcomed as new alumni of the University by Robert G. Miller, president of the WMU Alumni Association.

The Rev. Douglas Johns of the First United Methodist Church in Warsaw, Ind., will give the invocation at the 9 a.m. ceremony. His sister, Jill S. Johnas of Kalamazoo, will be receiving a master of arts degree in counselor education and counseling psychology. The Rev. J. Louis Gilson of the Galilee Missionary Baptist Church of Kalamazoo will give the benediction at the 9 a.m. ceremony.

John Fleckenstein of the Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, who holds his bachelor's and master's degrees from WMU, will give the invocation and benediction at the 11:30 a.m. ceremony.

Tickets are not required for the ceremonies. If guests cannot find seats in Miller Auditorium, they may view the exercises on a large-screen television in 5112 Knauss Hall. Each ceremony will air live on Channel 11 of EduCABLE, the University's cable television system, and on Channel 30 of Kalamazoo Community Access Television.

The University's Office of Video Services is providing an opportunity for persons to purchase videotapes of each of the two ceremonies. Orders may be placed by calling 7-5003. The tapes are $20 each.

(Continued on page four)
BOOKS

Book says customer service means more than a smile

The communication occurring at that critical point when a customer interacts with a firm's employee is the subject of a new book by a WMU faculty member.

"Communicating with Customers: Service Approaches, Ethics and Impact" is the title of a book by Wendy Z. Ford, communication. Published earlier this year by Hampton Press Inc. of Creskill, N.J., the book examines a wide range of communication styles utilized by employees interacting with customers as well as the role customers play in making the contact work.

Ford, who teaches organizational communication classes at WMU, says the book is not a broad "how to" book for people designing their firm's customer service policies. Instead, she says, it is a deeper look at one critical aspect of customer service — the communication behaviors involved when people in business interact with the customers they serve.

"This will appeal to a variety of audiences for whom customer service is a part of business," Ford says. "For customer service trainers, supervisors and consultants, this book will help identify some of the common problems occurring in customer interactions. Even schools might find the information helpful."

Readers familiar with customer service management books will find some major differences in Ford's approach. One unique feature of the work is the applicability of the information to all types of customer service contact. The book, she notes, addresses communication issues relevant to single service transactions as well as the more complex customer service transactions involving multiple interactions, such as food restaurants and grocery stores as well as the more complex customer service transactions occurring in organizations such as health care institutions.

Another unique feature is the book's reliance on solid research to provide evidence of the role and impact of communication behaviors. In working on the project, Ford applied the findings of studies conducted in numerous organizations.

"Another feature is the book is focused on communication within a customer service context. It is a topic for which there has been a gap in the research and literature — even though customer service has been the subject of many popular books written for the general business community. Ford explains that gap by saying customer service has traditionally been viewed as being in the realm of business professionals rather than communication scholars.

"Customer communication is a topic that is much deeper than remembering to smile and say thank you," she notes. "Changing behaviors in communicating with customers can have enormous impact on an organization. The whole topic is one in which communication scholars, especially those now at the graduate level, are becoming very interested. It think it's really the future."

Among areas Ford examines in the book are service courtesy, verbal and non-verbal communication, manipulation, personalized and depersonalized service, ethical issues, the use of deception, racial and gender discrimination, and the impact of service on customers and providers. The close of each chapter focuses on her conclusions and the research still needed on each of those topics.

As a researcher who has spent much of her career in academic settings studying communication behaviors, Ford says the final chapters in the book are the ones she most enjoyed writing. They focus on how communication behaviors can impact the organization.

"So people often look at customer service and communication as it impacts sales or customer satisfaction," she says, "but organizations need to consider the long-term effects of communication practices. Simple communication behaviors can have a powerful impact on customer discretionary behavior. I call customer discretionary behavior.

Customer discretionary behavior, she says, is a wide range of both positive and negative behaviors by customers that could be harmful or helpful to an organization. Their actions by customers might range from positive behavior such as recommending a business to friends to the more negative tactics such as spreading negative word of mouth.

Organizations also must be aware that for the providers, communication practices, or the lack thereof, can lead to increased stress and burnout. Organizations, she says, need to proceed with caution in establishing their climate for service and consider not just the effects of these climates on customers, but the effects of these climates on providers.

In addition to her new book, Ford also is the author of a number of journal articles and conference presentations on customer communication and communication training and education. She also has acted as a consultant and researcher in designing and delivering communication assessments for such organizations as the Whirlpool Corp. and the First of America Bank Corp. In addition, she has worked for universities; national, county and city government units; and health care delivery organizations.

University Dames award new scholarship

A West Michigan artist is the first recipient of a newly established annual scholarship intended for WMU graduate students.

The scholarship was established by Dr. Donald S. Casalotte, president of Rand Dunes native who is working toward a master of fine arts degree in painting, will receive the first University Dames Scholarship this year. The annual scholarship was established by the WMU Women's Association and the University Dames.

The University Dames was founded 85 years ago as an organization for the wives of WMU faculty members. Starting in the 1990s, the organization evolved into the WMU Women's Association which is open to any woman associated with the University. The association, now primarily made up of the wives of retired faculty members, recently returned to the organization's original name of the University Dames.

Casalotte, who expects to complete her degree in December, came to WMU in 1996. She earned undergraduate degrees in fine arts and philosophy from Ball State University and her master's degree in art history in 1992 from the University of Michigan. She received her MFA in painting from the University of Michigan and did free-lance work before coming to WMU to earn a second master's degree in painting. She was selected to receive a 1997 foreign study by President Haenicke to Florence, Italy, to study fresco painting techniques during the winter 1997 semester.

The new scholarship is intended for a graduate student in any degree program offered at WMU, with preference given to female candidates who have completed 15 credit hours of graduate work. The scholarship is administered by the Graduate College.
Several WMU staff members were hon- orationally recognized during the university’s annual award ceremony this spring.

APA honors staff, elects officers for 1998-99

Four members of the Administrative Professionals of the University (APA) were honored during the organization’s annual award ceremony this spring.

Debra R. White, Haworth College of Business advising and admissions, was recognized as APA’s Outstanding Professional and Student of the Year. Her award was named Outstanding New Professional. Debra R. White, Haworth College of Business advising and admissions, was recognized as APA’s Outstanding Professional and Student of the Year. Her award was named Outstanding New Professional.

The other three awards were: Marilyn L. Weller, WMU’s Professional Support Staff Organization, was honored as the winner of the staff MVP Award. The APA Staff Advisory Council Service Award, which was renamed earlier this year to bear the name of the organization’s late leader, was awarded to James W. Barton, alumni and donor records; Mary J. Grant, technical computing services; and Todd T. Hufford, student life.

The recipients and their awards were:

- Mary A. Gardner, a University employee since 1984, received many complimentary letters from the staff of the chapel over the years. She was especially cited for her positive attitude and service to the students financially, socially and emotionally. She is concerned about the health and needs of others, especially those whom the University most directly serves.
- Elaine K. Gaudio was selected by the committee for her outstanding service as a secretary in the languages department. She has worked for the past five of her 11 years at the University.
- One nomination read, "Always with a smile, she tackles each new project enthusiastically, undaunted by the intricate languages used in her department. She prepares exams, newsletters and manuscripts astoundingly, undaunted by the intricacies and peers."
- Gaudio was also commended for her written "The impossible I do immediately, and miracles I take a little longer." Her career at the University in 1988. One nomination read, "Always with a mile, she tackles each new project enthusiastically, undaunted by the intricate languages used in her department. She prepares exams, newsletters and manuscripts astoundingly, undaunted by the intricacies and peers."
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Four employees have been selected to receive the 1998 Staff Service Excellence Awards with a $1,000 prize.

The winners are, along with the employee groups they represent: Mary A. Gardner, building custodial and support services; Elaine K. Gaudio, foreign languages and literatures, clerical/ technical; and Linda L. Wallace, public safety, clerical/technical.

The committee selected the four winners from a pool of nominations for the award said she exhibits a level of care for the chapel that exceeds routine custodial work. She was cited for her assigned responsibilities to give generously beyond her normal job expectations and marking to support study abroad programs. The impossible I do immediately, and miracles I take a little longer." Her career at the University in 1988. One nomination read, "Always with a mile, she tackles each new project enthusiastically, undaunted by the intricate languages used in her department. She prepares exams, newsletters and manuscripts astoundingly, undaunted by the intricacies and peers."

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Book details telecommunications deregulation

A book that details Michigan's leadership in the deregulation of the telecommunications industry has been published by two WMU economists.

Werner Sichel, chairman of economics, and Donald L. Alexander, economics, are the authors of "Promoting Competition in Michigan Telecommunication Markets through Innovative Legislation." "This book describes how Michigan legislators, regulators, industry participants and consumers initiated and shaped significant legislative changes that, in many ways, placed Michigan at the forefront of states seeking to facilitate greater competition in their telecommunications market," Sichel says.

The book is an outgrowth of a 1993 study Sichel and Alexander were asked to conduct by Ameritech. The company asked them to provide telecommunication industry executives with information about the effect of the legislation. The volume begins with an essay written by the two authors focusing on the economic and social changes that were part of the deregulation legislation.

Launched in 1986 with Public Act 305, Michigan has been among the leaders in changing how states regulate the telecommunication industry through experimental or innovative legislation. It was a foregone conclusion that the telecommunications market would eventually be deregulated, but the pace of the changes was faster than anticipated.

"We thought that it would be good to have a record of the important Michigan legislation and the background for that legislation," Sichel says. "It is a record of intentional legislation in this very important area," Alexander says. "There really hadn't been a single source previous to this book to which one could get that history and understand the relationship between what Michigan did and what was done nationally."

The book also contains a copy of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the landmark federal legislation that many observers said was patterned after Michigan telecommunications legislation. "Michigan had vision," Sichel says. "There was an understanding of the importance of competition, that there had been substantial technological change which allowed for competition and that the industry, therefore, needed a lot less regulation."

The book also features an essay by a leader in the passage of the Michigan legislation. State Sen. Dick Posthumus of Alto provides a commentary on the political forces at work during the legislative debates.

The 386-page softcover book is intended for use by professionals and practitioners in telecommunications in Michigan as well as across the country. It was published by the Institute of Public Utilities and Network Industries of the Eli Broad Graduate School of Management at Michigan State University.

Luscombe named winner of volunteer services award

Dean Robert H. Luscombe, fine arts, has been selected to receive the Theodore C. Cooper Award for Distinguished Volunteer Services by the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo.

He will be honored, along with winners of the rest of his Community Medals, on Monday, May 4, at the G. Stolz Auditorium in the Maxella Building.

Luscombe has been dean of the College of Fine Arts, the first university division of its kind in the state, since 1980. A WMU faculty member since 1973, he was co-founder of the Arts Council.

A second piece of legislation, Public Act 305, was passed by the state legislature in 1986 with the goal of allowing for competition and that the industry, therefore, needed a lot less regulation. The volume begins with an essay written by the two authors focusing on the economic and social changes that were part of the deregulation legislation.

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