Superintendents band together to boost K-12 school achievement in two states

WMU and school superintendents from two states are collaborating to identify educational practices that can address the needs of school districts with large numbers of students who perform below their states' achievement norms.

More than 30 Michigan members of the Superintendents' Leadership Alliance, which is funded by a $132,634 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, will meet on campus. This marks the third year of the project that began last spring. The alliance is a coalition of two groups, the Michigan Association of African-American Superintendents and the Mississippi Delta Area Association for School Improvement, which are the largest state organizations of African-American school superintendents in the nation. The associations include more than 60 educators. Members of the alliance and WMU researchers working on the pilot project hope to compile information that could transform educational leadership programs in universities nationwide to respond to changing circumstances and increasingly urgent demands for reform, says Donald E. Thompson, WMU vice president for research and the project director. The project is designed to: identify the best educational practices in districts with heavy concentrations of students performing below the norm; foster interaction among the leaders of such districts and provide them with the training and information they need to strengthen academic achievement; and give voice to a group of superintendents that is uniquely qualified to contribute to the educational debate and the formation of educational policy.

"It is significant to note that the alliance membership is responsible for the education of large numbers of minority students, including 75 percent of Michigan's minority students and 25 percent of those in Mississippi," Thompson notes. "It is vital, therefore, that these leaders have a greater collective voice in educational reform efforts."

The pilot project is based on the premises that all children can achieve under the appropriate circumstances and that a strong academic achievement in every school district — even those with large numbers of students who face great challenges to their education. "In all of these districts there are challenges, but there are also some successes." (Continued on page four)

Alavi and Cornish to be honored for expertise with 1996 Alumni Teaching Excellence Awards

Two WMU faculty members will be recognized for their superior classroom skills with 1996 Alumni Teaching Excellence Awards. Presented by the WMU Alumni Association, the awards will go to Yousef Alavi, mathematics and statistics, and Wendy L. Cornish, dance. They will be honored at the 17th annual Academic Convocation at 3 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 22, in the Dalton Center Recital Hall.

In addition to a plaque, the winners will receive a $2,000 cash award and $2,000 will be added to their base salaries. Since the Alumni Teaching Excellence Awards were established in 1986, more than 100 faculty members have been recognized with them for superior teaching skills and professional excellence. Recipients are selected by an Alumni Association committee from nominations by alumni, students and departmental colleagues.

Alavi has been a faculty member since 1982 and served as chair of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics from 1989 to 1992. He has taught a full range of both undergraduate and graduate classes during his 38 years at the University. Those who nominated him for the award cited his dynamic approach to teaching and his boundless energy in the classroom. "Those who have followed his way of teaching have meaningfully experienced a rich learning process," wrote one of his colleagues. "... he thrives for all to follow, saying, while we have to inspire the good ones, we must reach deeply in the midst and lift the level of the average student at least a notch or two."

Alavi's dedication to his students has gone beyond his work in the classroom. He has served as the department's chairperson of graduate programs and as a graduate adviser, directing numerous doctoral projects and independent studies. In addition, he has instigated a colloquium program, presented seminars, directed honors projects, established a Mathematics Club, developed new degree programs and updated existing ones, established a departmental newsletter and instituted an awards program. In 1980, he was selected as the first recipient of WMU's Distinguished Service Award.

Despite all these activities, Alavi is noted for the extra time he takes outside the classroom to make sure students understand the material. "I remember well, dozens and dozens of times, his holding special classes and extra problem sessions in many courses, when a number of students needed additional help — never tending, however, to spoonfeed the students," wrote a colleague. "Indeed, his excellence as a teacher at all levels and for all students gives him hand in hand with a rare sensitivity to

Homecoming culminates with festivities this weekend

As detailed in last week's Western News, Homecoming festivities culminate this weekend with a variety of events for students, alumni, faculty and staff. The events include:

- A display by the University archives and regional history collections highlighting the historical aspects of Homecoming on the third floor of Waldo Library (see page two)
- A "Friday Festival" from noon to 5 p.m. Oct. 4 near the Goldsworthy Valley Pond. Activities include the Mid-American Derby, Fritter Fest and Western Olympics. In addition, WIDR-FM will be staging its Barking Tunesfest during this time. Another special attraction will be the unveiling of the new Metro Transit Bronto Bus on at 4 p.m. tomorrow.
- A concert by WMU band alumni at 6 p.m. Friday in the Dalton Center Recital Hall.
- The annual Alumni Association Brunch at 10:30 a.m. Saturday in the East Ballroom of the Bernhard Center.
- The Homecoming football game, pitting the Broncos against Mid-American Conference rival Souix State at 1 p.m. Saturday in Waldo Stadium.
- The National Pan-Hellenic Council Mardi Gras at 8 p.m. Saturday in Miller Auditorium.
- The 33rd annual Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner at 6 p.m. Saturday in the East Ballroom of the Bernhard Center honoring Mary Rawlinson Creason, a 1944 graduate who is an aviation consultant in Grand Haven, and Neil Smith, a 1977 graduate who is president and general manager of the National Hockey League's New York Rangers.
- A campuswide dance at 9 p.m. at the Student Recreation Center.

For more information about Homecoming activities, contact the McKee Alumni Center at 787-777 or the Office of Student Life at 7-2115.

(Continued on page four)

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Volume 23, Number 6

October 3, 1996

Did you know?

- WMU's first celebration of Homecoming was on Nov. 10, 1923. The first Homecoming queen was selected in 1948, while the first Homecoming king did not reign until 1976.
- Homecoming festivities in the 1920s and '30s included bonfires and parades. Activities were curtailed in the mid-1940s when students' attention shifted toward World War II. The Fritter Fest and Soap Box Derby have their origins in the 1970s as students looked for new traditions to replace popular rituals of the 1960s, such as the now-defunct Moonshovel.
- The first celebration of Homecoming coincided with the observance of Armistice Day on campus. The gridiron contest that day pitting WMU against Earlham College was characterized as "one of the hardest games on Western's football schedule."

As noted above, the Homecoming weekend this year may be the most colorful ever. Classes and extra problem sessions in many courses, when a number of students needed additional help — never tending, however, to spoonfeed the students," wrote a colleague. "Indeed, his excellence as a teacher at all levels and for all students gives him hand in hand with a rare sensitivity to

Alumni Association has fall meeting on campus

In connection with Homecoming, the WMU Alumni Association Board of Directors will be conducting its fall meeting on campus Thursday and Friday, Oct. 3-4, in Walwood Hall. The 26-member board is led this year by: President Robert G. Miller, a 1972 graduate who is sales manager for K-Lift Inc.; Vice President Richard Duke, a 1964 graduate who is president and chief executive officer of Hospital Network Inc.; Secretary Alavi Alavi, a 1968 graduate who is vice president of provider and professional relations and administration at Blue Cross & Blue Shield in Southfield; and Past President Robert Ehrtridge, who earned his bachelor's degree in 1962 and his master's degree in 1970 and is associate vice president for equal opportunity at Emory University in Atlanta.

CONNECTIONS TO THE PAST — Sharon L. Carlson, University archives and regional history collections, was busy last week assembling photographs, publications and other memorabilia in preparation for an exhibit on Doherty in Waldo Library from now through Oct. 13 in conjunction with Homecoming. Titled "The Changing Images of WorldWide Western," the exhibit keeps with the theme of this year's celebration, "WorldWideWestern: Get Connected," by highlighting the expanding boundaries of the University through the years. For example, the small book Carlson holds is a directory from 1923 — the year Homecoming was first celebrated at WMU — containing the names of all 1,972 students enrolled that year. Unlike today's more than 25,000 WMU students from around the globe, almost all of those came from Southwest Michigan. The exhibit is located on the third floor rotunda and is open during regular library hours.
CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS — Area college students had a chance to take a comprehensive look at more than 100 organizations and agencies from the campus and Greater Kalamazoo communities during the annual Volunteer Opportunity Fair Sept. 25 in the University Arena. Sponsored jointly by WMU's student volunteer services in the Lee Honors College and the Voluntary Action Center, the fair is designed to help students make volunteer connections in the community. From left, Nicole E. McDonald, a senior from Kent City, and Curt W. Fisher, a senior from Kalamazoo, discuss opportunities at the student volunteer services booth with Deanna F. Burton, a junior from Kalamazoo. McDonald helps coordinate WMU's Best Buddies program, which pairs students with persons ages 18 to 26 who are mentally impaired, while Fisher is the co-chairperson of Alternative Spring Break, a program that provides volunteer opportunities at various sites across the country for students during their breaks.

C. Curtis-Smith wins 19th ASCAP Award

C. Curtis-Smith, music, has been selected for the 19th time to receive an American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers Award. The awards, valued at $1,300, are presented annually by ASCAP to assist and encourage composers of serious music. Curtis-Smith, a faculty member since 1968, has received some 75 grants, awards, commissions and prizes. An accomplished pianist, he has earned national and international acclaim for his unusual and imaginative pieces. He has written more than 100 compositions for a variety of instruments.

During the past year, the work of Curtis-Smith has been featured on two compact disks. One disk, “The Composer Performer,” contains 40 years of recordings of his compositions performed by other artists. The other disk features his own performances of his piano works.

C. Curtis-Smith

CURTIS-SMITH

Trustees OK appointments of financial aid director and chairpersons

The appointment of a new director of student financial aid and scholarships was part of personnel action taken Sept. 13 by the Board of Trustees.

Susan O'Flaherty, formerly acting director of financial aid at the University of Colorado at Boulder, was named to the position, effective Aug. 19, 1996. She replaces John A. Kendall, who resigned in August.

O'Flaherty has worked in the financial aid field since 1973. Before becoming acting director of financial aid at Colorado in 1994, she served as associate director there for six years. She also has held financial aid positions at universities in California, New York and Connecticut.

A member of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, O'Flaherty was program chairperson for the group's national conference in 1995. She also has served in leadership positions in regional and state level financial aid associations.

The trustees also approved the previously announced resignation of Nancy S. Barrett, provost and vice president for academic affairs, effective Aug. 5, 1996, and appointment of Timothy Light as acting provost and vice president for academic affairs, effective Aug. 12, 1996.

In addition, the board approved the appointments of an associate dean and several department heads. They are: Richard L. Hodges as interim associate dean of the School of Public Affairs and Administration, effective Aug. 15, 1996, to June 30, 1997; Peter Kobrak, as interim director of the School of Political and Social Science, effective July 1, 1996, to June 30, 1997; and Vladimir V. Tsukruk, as interim chairperson of the Department of Biological Sciences, effective July 1, 1996, to June 30, 1997.

Jones

Peterson

The retirement of three faculty members and three staff members was approved Sept. 13 by the Board of Trustees.

The faculty members grant retirement with emeriti status, along with their years of service and effective dates, are: Darrell G. Jones, business information systems, 35 years, effective Dec. 31, 1996; and Thomas W. Straw, geology, 28-1/2 years, effective Jan. 1, 1997.

Phillips

Straw

Jones was dean of the Haworth College of Business from 1974 to 1992. Straw has served as chairperson of the Department of Geology since 1983.

The staff members retiring are: James A. DeBellis, physical plant-management supervisor, 30 years, effective July 16, 1996; Robert H. Peterson, residence hall facilities, 31 years, effective Aug. 31, 1996; and Eleanor R. Samson, WMU Bookstore, 19-1/2 years, effective Sept. 27, 1996.
Writer, activist, performance artist to discuss diversity issues in Visiting Scholars addresses

An award-winning writer, activist and performance artist who speaks widely on racism, anti-Semitism and homophobia will present a lecture at the University Thursday, Oct. 10.

Jill Lynn Feldman, adjunct professor of women's studies at City College of New York and an international expert on diversity, will present a free public lecture, "Navigating the Higher Education World: Sexism, Racism, Homophobia and Anti-Semitism," at 7 p.m. in 208 Bernhard Center.

Earlier in the day at 9 a.m. on the fourth floor of Moore Hall, she will address faculty and students in the College Classroom: Sex, Race, Class and Gender." The lecture promises to be especially valuable for faculty who teach multiculturalism in the classroom.

In both presentations, Feldman will address the issue of multiculturalism through personalized expression and dramatic readings. A writer of short-stories, plays and essays, Feldman has been the recipient of numerous writing awards. In 1994-95 she was named a Five College Women's Studies Research Associate at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts. She also has been a writer in residence at the Berkshire Franklin Film Center.

Feldman has earned both a master of fine arts degree in creative writing and a law degree. She is a high demand as a public speaker and is regularly invited to read from her work and present conferences on multicultural issues. Feldman's lectures are part of the Visiting Scholars and Artists Program and are being coordinated by the School of Social Work.

For more information, persons may contact Susan Weinger, social work, at 7-3196.

Renowned mathematician to speak on campus

On Monday, Oct. 7, the University's Great Expectations Commission will open its sixth season with performances for audiences on campus and throughout the state. Great Expectations 1996 is a thought provoking theatre production that brings to life mathematical concepts for elementary school students to young adults confronted with sexual decisions in a world of seduction, substance abuse and premature pregnancy. The power of imagination, the cast helps audiences explore myths and realities of sexual activity and enhance their thinking and reflection skills that reduce the likelihood of substance abuse and unwanted, regretted sexual experiences.

Great Expectations is the result of a shared partnership between the Office of Health Promotion and Education in the Sindecuse Health Center and the Department of Theatre. It has been created through the collaborative efforts of Robert Shor, director of the Michigan Interscholastic Forensic Association Drama/Theatre Program at Eastern Michigan University and Mary Jo Bridges, manager of Performing Arts Company and chairperson of the Department of Visual and Performing Arts.

Great Expectations is produced by Christine G. Zimmer, Office of Health Promotion and Education.

There is no charge for admission. Although some performances have been scheduled for residence halls and for specific student groups, all shows are open to the entire University community.

Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to bring their friends and faculty and staff to bring their high school students to see this production that helps young adults make choices that will help them respect and protect themselves and others," Zimmer said.

For more information regarding show times and locations, call the Office of Health Promotion and Education at 7-3263.

Improvisational theatre troupe takes to the road

On campus

PAVING THE WAY

Keeping this working smoothly in the Office of the Dean of the College of Education is the job of Amy L. Kampen. The administrative assistant to the dean, she advises administrative and secretarial support for the department and assists the coordinator of financial and administrative services and associate dean. She establishes priorities and directs the work flow in the office to maintain maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

She makes sure committee documents, reports, and personnel financial and payroll documents are completed by deadline. Working with the college's departments, she keeps up on professional data of faculty and staff and produces and analyzes data for potential recognition and compensation activities. She also helps coordinate the promotion, tenure and appointment process for some 150 faculty and staff in the college. In addition, she assists the college's scholarship committee. "I enjoy the association with people at the University," Kampen says. "I have a lot of contact with many departments and I like that." Kampen has been at the University for 16 years. She started out as a student oriented operator for the former Information Center, then moved to the Office of Conferences and Institutes in the Division of Continuing Education before taking her current position. When not at work, Kampen enjoys spending time with her two daughters, 8 and 5, as well as going bowling and walking. In fact, she spends her lunch hour just about every day taking a little hike around campus.

Committee seeks service award nominations

The Selection Committee of the Staff Service Excellence Awards program invites your nomination of a peer, supervisor or support person for the second quarter Staff Service Excellence Awards that will be presented for outstanding service during July, August and September.

Nominations may be submitted to Anne E. Thompson, human resources, until Tuesday, October 15.

"On campus" ideas welcome

Is there a University staff member you would like to see featured in "on campus" stories? Call Ruth A. Sonnichsen, news service, at 7-8411 with your ideas or e-mail her at ruth.sonnichsen@wmich.edu.

Payne reappointed to post

Veron Payne, University recreation programs and facilities, has been reappointed by President Edward H.enger to the Higher Education Facilities Commission.

The commission provides advice on the preparation and administration of the state plan for participation in the federal grant program under the provision of Title I of the Higher Education Facilities Commission Act.

Payne, whose term expires in 2000, represents public colleges and universities on the board.

Human resources

Open enrollment for health-medical insurance begins Monday, Oct. 7, and runs through Friday, Oct. 18. During open enrollment, which occurs once a year, benefits-eligible employees have the opportunity to make changes to their health-medical plans and dental insurance to meet their current needs and circumstances.

Open enrollment deadline is Oct. 17.

• Open enrollment, employees can:
  • Check health-medical insurance plans. The University offers a choice of three health-medical plans to its eligible faculty and staff: the University Plan (administered by John Hancock); and two health maintenance organizations, Blue Care Network and Physicians Health Plan.
  • Add eligible dependents to their coverage.
  • Change primary care physicians if they have coverage through one of the HMOs.

A table containing all the necessary change forms will be located outside the human resources benefits office, 1310 Seiber Administration Building. Employees may stop by at their convenience to complete the forms if they wish to take advantage of open enrollment.

All open enrollment changes will be effective Nov. 4, and any change in payroll deduction will be reflected beginning on the Nov. 26 paycheck.

Exchange

FOR SALE — Tickets to bus trip to Mall of America, Nov. 8-10. Cost for bus, $75. Includes discount coupon book to mall stores. Call Jane at 7-8822.

Thursday, October 3
(thru 11) Exhibition, Homecoming photos, memorabilia and promotional materials, third floor, Waldo Library.
(thru 23) Exhibition, paintings by the late Sebastian Buffa, 1978 WMU graduate, showing in Alumni Hall, weekdays, 7 a.m.-10:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 6 a.m.-10:30 p.m.; and Sundays, noon to midnight.
(6 p.m.-8 p.m.) Concert, University Jazz Orchestra, Dalton Center Recital Hall, 8 p.m.
(through 31) Exhibition, mixed media sculpture by Margaret Wharton, Chicago artist, Space Gallery, Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
(through 23) Exhibition, graphic design for book, "Transcendence," by Gary Koepke, Koepke International, Gallery II, Sangren Hall, weekdays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
(through 30) Visiting Scholars and Artists Program lectures, Jyl Lynn Felman, writer, cultural activist, Center for the Study of Ethics in Society lecture, "Is Racial Preference Naked?" Thursday, Oct. 3, 3-4:30 p.m.; advance registration required by calling 7-3569.
(through 7) "Enhancing Teaching with Technology" program, "Building Power Presentations in PowerPoint," Judy A. Yaeger, business information systems, clock tower conference rooms, Mondays thru Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; noon-1 p.m.; and Mondays, noon to 8 p.m.
(through 30) Visiting Scholars and Artists Program lecture, "String-Theory, Elliptic Curves and Globalization and Transformation," Scott Whiteford, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, University Computing Center, noon-1 p.m.; to register call 7-5430.
(through 31) "Gathering ofWomen," Faculty Dining Room, Bernhard Center Public Cafeteria, noon-1 p.m.
(through 31) Faculty Senate, Fetzer Center, 5:30 p.m.
(through 7) "Enhancing Teaching with Technology" program, "PowerPoint," Judy A. Yaeger, business information systems, clock tower conference rooms, Mondays thru Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; noon-1 p.m.; and Mondays, noon to 8 p.m.
(through 30) Visiting Scholars and Artists Program lecture, "Attention vs. the Traditional Lecture for Academic Success," Dr. Mary Lou Thompson, psychologist, Jyl Lynn Felman Center for the Study of Ethics in Society lecture, "Is Racial Preference Naked?" Thursday, Oct. 3, 3-4:30 p.m.; advance registration required by calling 7-3569.
(through 30) "Enhancing Teaching with Technology" program, "Comparing Presentation Software," Pamela S. Rupp, international technology consultant, University Computing Center, noon-1 p.m.; to register call 7-5430.
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4th Annual WMU-CMU College Student Debating Championship, Fetzer Center, noon-8 p.m.
5th Annual WMU-CMU College Student Debate Conference, Fetzer Center, noon-8 p.m.