Scores of transformative ideas under review

With a final tally of 61 ideas submitted for funding from the Transformational Initiative Fund that President Edward Montgomery announced Oct. 6, vice presidents and other senior executives have begun the task of identifying projects and ideas that could make a difference to WMU’s future.

Kahler Schuemann, secretary to the Board of Trustees and assistant to the president, says the submissions represent a wealth of good ideas, as well as a number of important themes that emerged and could result in new campus initiatives that grow out of a series of proposals, rather than just one.

“The leadership team reviewing submissions appreciates the creative depth emanating from the proposals and is working diligently to best strategize a prioritized plan that captures the campuswide creativity and commitment represented throughout the proposals,” he says.

Ideas for funding were due Nov. 1, and funding decisions will be announced in early January. Senior staff are charged with doing an initial screening and prioritization of the ideas proposed in the competitive process. Transformational Initiative Fund proposals needed to be focused on one or more of three goals Montgomery outlined in his original narrative. Proposals must improve retention and graduation rates, identify alternative revenue streams, or make WMU the school of choice for students, faculty, staff and community organizations.

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The men’s soccer team has received a top-16 seed as an at-large bid to this year’s NCAA Tournament. Picked as the No. 10 seed overall, the Broncos receive a first-round bye and will host a second-round NCAA tournament game.

They will face the winner of the Nov. 16 first-round game between Maryland and Albany at 1 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 19, at the WMU Soccer Complex.

It will mark the first time the Broncos have hosted an NCAA tournament game. Plus, it will be the second-ever appearance for WMU in the NCAA tournament, and first since receiving an automatic bid after winning the Mid-American Conference Tournament in 2003. It’s an unbelievable feeling and a well-deserved honor for a terrific regular season,” says head coach Chad Wiseman. “I couldn’t be more proud of our group of guys for being recognized as one of the very best teams in the nation. Each year we have made steps as a program and now we are here. We’re ready to go out there and see what we can do.”

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Emeritus continues to be key figure in sea’s resurrection

Philip Micklin, emeritus in geography, has been keeping busy as a researcher and an ecologist. The expert on the Aral Sea continues to be a key figure in the sea’s resurrection.

Micklin has studied the once-large sea that is located among the deserts of Central Asia. Since the 1960s, the Aral has suffered unprecedented drying, and ecological and economic damage due to large-scale withdrawals of water for irrigation from the two rivers feeding it. Among his most recent activities was being interviewed this fall by a science writer for NASA who was preparing an article on the current state of the Aral Sea for the organization’s online newsletter Earth Observatory.

Much of Micklin’s recent notoriety stems from his participation earlier this year in an...
Faculty engineers garner funding
Masswood Atashbar, electrical and computer engineering, and Pavel Ikonomov, computer engineering design, manufacturing and management systems, are among five innovators around the state to win new funding from the Michigan Economic Development Corp. to develop early-stage technology projects.

The two were announced Nov. 8 as winners of support from the MEDC’s ADVANCE Proof of Concept Grant Fund in its first round of funding of nearly $335,000 to five early-stage technology projects within universities across the state of Michigan.

Their work focuses on a football helmet capable of assessing concusive-strength impact and the 3-D printing of complex machined parts.

Atashbar won support for his Impact Sensor and Rigid-flex Reusable Electronic System. Ikonomov won funding for his 3-D Metal Device and Process.

Spanish instructor earns state award
Michael Braun, Spanish, is WMU’s first recipient of the Michigan World Languages Association—MIWLA—Barbara Ort-Smith Award, the most prestigious distinction an educator in the field of world languages can receive in the state.

Braun was commended by the association for his leadership in the field of language education. He received his award during the MIWLA 53rd Annual Conference in Lansing Oct. 12.

As the state’s highest honor for educators in the field of world languages, the Ort-Smith Award recognizes those who have shown a strong commitment to the profession.

MIWLA selects and honors the professional who best demonstrates leadership and the promotion of excellence in world language education.

Sociologist receives new honor
Ronald C. Kramer, sociology, was presented with the Charles Horton Cooley Award for Distinguished Scholarship in Sociology by the Michigan Sociological Association during its annual meeting Oct. 28 in Grand Rapids.

One of Kramer’s former doctoral students, Elizabeth B. Bradshaw, associate professor of sociology at Central Michigan University, presented the award.

This is the second award he has received from the Michigan Sociological Association. He was given the Larry T. Reynolds Award for Outstanding Teaching in Sociology in 2012. Additionally, Kramer received the WMU Alumni Association Teaching Excellence Award in 1981 and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Society of Criminology’s Division on Critical Criminology in 2004.
I think the goat ate my conservation management homework

Figuring out better ways to bring distressed plots of land back to their natural state is one goal behind a new University course. BIOS 4970, Biology, Conservation and Management of Natural Features, began this fall to test the efficacy of restoring land by methods that use humans only, goats only and a combination of humans and goats. Three distressed sites representing different pre-settlement vegetation types on and around the WMU campus will serve as outdoor laboratories where these methods can be studied.

Some of the techniques being employed studied on those ecosystems will be discussed during a mini-conference from 1 to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 6, in D-132 Floyd Hall. The conference is free and open to the public but registrations are required by Dec. 1. It will feature talks by guest speakers as well as short presentations by BIOS 4970 students and be followed by a reception. Guest speakers will talk on native and restored landscapes, prescribed fire in restoration plans, invasive species management on conservation lands from the nonprofit perspective and ecological management from a business perspective.

The conference is being organized by students in BIOS 4970 and their two co-instructors, Todd J. Barkman, professor of biological sciences, and Steve Keto, WMU’s natural areas and preserves manager. It will serve as the final meeting day for students in the class. To register, send an email message to todd.barkman@wmich.edu or steve.keto@wmich.edu or call (269) 387-5610. Free parking will be available near Floyd Hall’s east wing in lot P2.

BIOS 4970 is a six-hour weekly special investigations course with revolving topics. Barkman and Keto intend to teach their section every fall as a rigorous scientific study that collects and analyzes land management data over a period of years.

“To do the study right, we needed to get students outdoors where they can methodically measure the effects of our restoration efforts,” Barkman says. “The idea is to take land that has been disrupted by human activity and invasive species and test ways to bring it back to its natural state.”

Art on display for Native American Heritage Month

Displays of Native American culture in Waldo Library are being highlighted now for Native American Heritage Month. Much of WMU’s Native American art is centered in the library, and the University’s libraries have many resources to research Native American history and culture.

President Emeritus Dwight B. Waldo in the 1930s supported a movement to establish a museum collection at the school. He had a career-long interest in historical and antiquarian materials and began assembling pieces for that collection.

He and Mrs. Waldo ended up securing an unusual collection of rock specimens, American Indian items, and Alaskan pieces. Today, Native American culture may be viewed in several locations in Waldo Library.

A permanent display of Native American artifacts shows the artistry of glass beadwork on leather in clothing and is located on the first floor near Classroom A.

On the second floor, more than 18 paintings and three weavings are part of the Dwight B. Waldo Collection, while The Kiowa Five Painters are mentioned in a wall display near stairwell 3.

An exhibit case with books, prints, pottery and other artifacts of Native Americans is located on the third floor near the rotunda.

Human Resources news

• A pre-retirement planning workshop presented by the Social Security Administration will be held from noon to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 29, in 157-159 Bernhard Center. Attendees may bring their lunch. For suggested actions to take prior to attending, visit wmich.edu/hr/resources/training.

• The HelpNet Work Life Web provides WMU employees with information, articles and resources on such topics as family and work-life balance, health and fitness, and other services. Access it here: wmich.edu/hr/resources/training.

Obituaries

Martin E. Ging erich, emeritus in English, died Oct. 19. He was 84. Ging erich joined the faculty in 1968 and retired in 1990 after more than 21 years of service to the University.

Betty A. Kocher, former secretary to the WMU Board of Trustees, died Nov. 2. She was 84. Kocher retired in 2015 after 42 years of service. A celebration of her life and reception are planned for 3 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 20, in Heritage Hall.

June Mochizuki, emeritus of counseling, died Oct. 29. She was 92. Mochizuki joined the faculty in 1966 and retired in 1985 after 22 years of service. She is survived by her husband, Min Mochizuki, an emeritus in general studies and social science.

James E. Riley, emeritus in mathematics, died Oct. 28. He was 84. Riley retired in 1998 after 38 years of service. A memorial service followed by a reception will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 18, in Kanley Chapel.

Board of Trustees approves retirements of 14 employees

The retirements of nine faculty members and five staff members were approved by the WMU Board of Trustees at its Nov. 1 meeting. Trustees also signed off on three retirements.

Faculty retirements: All of the faculty members who are retiring are doing so with emeritus status. Their names, positions, and effective dates of retirement are: Debra Berkley, human performance and health education, effective June 30, 2018; Denise Bowen, physician assistant, effective June 30, 2018; W.发热 Burt, educational leadership, research and technology, effective Aug. 30, 2018; Thomas Carey, management, effective May 14, 2023; Alice DeYoung, nursing, effective July 31, 2018; Bryce Dickey, family and consumer sciences, effective April 30, 2023; James Gilchrist, budget and personnel as well as communication, effective July 31, 2018 (change in date only); William Kern, economics, effective Dec. 31, 2022; and Niloufer Mackey, mathematics, effective April 30, 2023.

Staff retirements: Stephanie Armstrong, Center for Academic Success Programs, effective Oct. 1, 2017; Connie Black-Pond, social work, effective Oct. 15, 2017; Stefan Z. Bladen Sr., public safety, effective Oct. 20, 2017; James Davis, building custodial and support services, effective Sept. 30, 2017; and Daniel Miller, maintenance services, effective Oct. 1, 2017.

Scores of transformative ideas
best ideas,” Montgomery said in establishing the initiative during his first State of the University address. With his announcement, he set up a $1 million fund that would be used to support the winning proposals.

The initial screening now underway is focused on whether a proposal addresses one of the three established goals in a measurable way, whether the idea is truly transformational, and whether the proposal can be sustained, is scalable and represents a true collaborative effort.

Emeritus aids sea’s resurrection
international forum in Kyzyl-Orda, Kazakhstan, devoted to discussing and planning the sustainable development of the near Aral Sea region. During the event, Micklin received a medal awarded for significant contributions toward solving the major problems of the Aral Sea and surrounding region. Only two other individuals from countries outside the former Soviet Union received this honor.

The invitation-only forum had participants from Kazakhstan governmental and scientific organizations as well as agencies of the United Nations, European Union and other countries around the globe. After the event, Micklin spent time doing further Aral Sea research.

Seita Program honored for promoting degree completions
WMU's celebrated Seita Scholars program was honored Nov. 11 as one of five finalists for the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities’ 2017 Project Degree Completion Award.

This year’s award winner was the University of Hawaii at Manoa. It and the other finalists were recognized at the APLU Annual Meeting Nov. 12-14 in Washington, D.C. Ronicka Hamilton, Seita Scholars Program director, and Alexis Lenderman, a Seita Scholar, represented WMU at the event.

The degree completion award is designed to identify, recognize and reward public universities across the country for their work in employing innovative approaches to improve retention and degree completion.

Men’s soccer will go to the dance, host NCAA round
in the conference championship, WMU’s body of work during the season was beyond impressive, resulting in the at-large bid, also a first for WMU.

The Broncos enter the NCAA tournament with a 16-3-1 overall record and finished the regular season ranked No. 4 nationally in the United Soccer Coaches poll.

They spent nine consecutive weeks ranked, including seven in the top-10. WMU also produced a school-record eight all-conference selections, including five on the first team, and bailed the MAC Player of the Year in senior Brandon Bye as well as the MAC Coach of the Year in Wiseman.

Two of WMU’s three losses this season came against top-10 ranked teams that also fill out this year’s NCAA tournament field: No. 7 seed Michigan State and No. 5 seed Akron.

Forty-eight teams comprise the NCAA Tournament bracket. Third-round games are Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 25-26, while the quarterfinals are Friday and Saturday, Dec. 1-2. The four-team 2017 College Cup finals will be played Friday through Sunday, Dec. 8-10, in Pennsylvania.