Western News
For and about WMU faculty and staff

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Wisconsin educator to lead HHS college
Ron A. Cisler, interim dean of the College of Health Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, has been named the new dean of the College of Health and Human Services, effective Aug. 1.

Cisler is a professor of health informatics and administration at UWM and an affiliate professor of population health sciences at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health.

He will replace Earlie Washington, who has served as dean since 2006. She plans to return to the social work faculty after a yearlong administrative leave that will begin Aug. 1.

WMU Interim Provost Susan Stapleton calls Cisler “a wonderful match” for the dean position. “He brings with him extensive experience in the areas that reflect this university’s strongest commitments—teaching and mentoring, research, service, and community engagement,” Stapleton says.

Cisler earned a bachelor’s degree from UW-La Crosse and master’s and doctoral degrees from UWM. He did postdoctoral work in addiction and behavioral health at UWM, where he has served in teaching and research positions since 1984.

His primary research interests are in population health disparities, behavioral health risk factors, and alcoholism and alcohol-related illnesses. Cisler is widely published in his discipline and internationally known for his expertise in assessing recovery outcomes for alcohol treatment clinical trials.

He has been a reviewer for numerous federal grant programs, and his own research has attracted strong federal and foundation support. In recent years, he has been in demand as a researcher and a widely quoted expert on the topic of improving urban infant mortality rates and reducing health care disparities.

WMU preparing for switch to consolidated dispatch
A 30-year effort to centralize public safety dispatch activities across Kalamazoo County will finally be implemented before the end of this year, and WMU officials are busy preparing for a smooth transition.

In fact, campus officials say the transition will be so smooth, most people in the WMU community will never notice it. “This is consolidated dispatch, not a consolidated police force,” notes Chief Scott Merlo, public safety. “It means 911 calls from around the county will be answered in one central location, and it will improve response time and prevent emergency calls or texts made on cellphones from being forwarded from one department to another.”

But campus calls for assistance will still lead to responses by WMU’s public safety officers, Merlo says. And nonemergency calls for an officer or other assistance will still see the same level of service campus community members have come to expect.

The consolidated dispatch effort will bring all five county police departments’ dispatch operations together in one center to ensure efficiency, quick response times and a high level of cooperation among the county’s police departments during emergency situations.

Two geological research efforts garner rare national recognition
The Geological Society of America has recognized two strands of WMU’s geological research with the rare publication of two special papers—each focused on an area of faculty expertise.

The publications are among just over 500 such writings in the GSA’s 130-year history—a publications average of less than four per year. Both WMU-related volumes were published this April, making the recognition even more unusual. The two publications each contain multiple papers or “chapters” focused on a single topic. They are:

• “Paleozoic Stratigraphy and Resources of the Michigan Basin,” co-edited by WMU’s Alan Kehew, geological and environmental sciences, and B. Brandon Curry from the University of Illinois. The work focuses on new developments in glacial geology, with three of the 12 papers written by WMU authors. It was published April 3.

• “Fourth Glaciation of the Great Lakes Region,” co-edited by WMU’s Alan Kehew, geological and environmental sciences, and Brandon Curry from the University of Illinois. The work focuses on new developments in glacial geology, with three of the 12 papers written by WMU authors. It was published April 3.
Help select WMU’s top four staffers for 2017-18

Fifteen staff members are in the running for the Make a Difference Award. Members of the campus community have through Thursday, May 31, to submit documentation in support of the nominees. This prestigious award is reserved for only four of the winners of the 2017-18 Semian-annual Make a Difference Award—the best of the best. The four will receive a cash prize of $1,200 (before taxes) and be honored at WMU’s 52nd annual Make a Difference Awards banquet on June 24. They may sign up at the Poker Walk or, online by Friday, May 25. A form for tracking activity to accumulate points is available online. For details, visit wmich.edu/wellness/programs.

Service anniversaries

The following faculty and staff members are recognized for 45, 40, 30, 20, 15, 10 and five years of service during May.

45 years—Carol A. Omlstead, information technology.

40 years—Betty J. McKain, grants and contracts.

30 years—Lorrie A. Racine, admissions.

20 years—Robert T. Kakuk, Human Resources, and Tina Lynn Thompson, education and human development.

15 years—Edmund Clayton Bates, intercollegiate athletics.

10 years—Myra L. Currie, public safety; Tonja R. Iocca, philosophy; Deanne C. Puca, university relations; Eric S. Schipper, maintenance services; Sara Volmeyer, University Libraries; and Lisa M. Wales, theatre.

Five years—Bethany W. Gauthier, Miller Auditorium, and Anastasia L. Whaling, building custodial and support services.

Correction

The last name of Jeff Stone, intercollegiate athletics, was incorrectly printed in the April 18 Western News story announcing the spring Make a Difference winners. (See Page 2 above for more Make a Difference news.)

Jobs

Current job opportunities at WMU are announced daily on the Human Resources website at wmich.edu/hr/jobs. Please note that applications must be submitted online by the stated deadline. Complete application procedures are included with each posting.
WMU and KCC announce signing of major transfer agreement

WMU and Kellogg Community College have signed a major agreement that will create a smoother process for KCC graduates who transfer to the University.

The institutional articulation agreement signed by representatives of KCC and WMU facilitates the transfer of students who complete an associate degree at the community college into a degree program at the University. The agreement, which outlines how credits earned at one school will transfer to another, helps students save time and money by minimizing the loss of credits and duplication of coursework.

“T:his partnership between two robust institutions is a victory for the many students who begin their college careers at KCC and intend to finish at WMU. Currently, most KCC students who intend to transfer go on to WMU,” KCC President Mark O’Connell said. “Never before have the pathways from KCC to WMU been better designed, and never before has it been easier for a Bronco to become a Bronco.”

“This is all about the student experience and ensuring that every class taken advances the student along a pathway to success,” said Susan Stapleton, WMU’s interim provost. “We’ve had a close working relationship with KCC for many years, and our partnership has led to successful degree completion for hundreds of students. With this carefully structured agreement, we’re making sure that pathway is absolutely seamless and every step they take puts them closer to their goal.”

The agreement between KCC and WMU is a solution locally for what is a national challenge. According to a U.S. Government Accountability Office report in 2017, students who transferred from one college to another between 2004 and 2009 lost, on average, an estimated 43 percent of their credits. In many cases, the underlying problem is the absence of a comprehensive articulation agreement between the schools.

Stay involved with South Neighborhood planning

Work to redevelop part of the South Neighborhood subcampus kicked off recently with community input sessions and the launch of a student survey. The survey seeks views on what amenities should be included within and surrounding new housing and a student center in the South Neighborhood.

It and the input sessions are the first steps in an initiative announced last fall to transform the area of campus adjacent to Stadium Drive into a new campus gateway. Additional input mechanisms will be scheduled for the projects as they evolve.

David Dakin, planning, space management and capital projects, says websites for the various projects are under development and will include online feedback mechanisms for the campus community. Information being gleaned will be used to help develop new housing and a student center as well as a subcampus master plan.

To take the student survey or learn more about improvements planned for the South Neighborhood, visit wmic.edu/news/2018/04/46677. To follow progress on work in the neighborhood, visit the webpages for capital projects, wmic.edu/capitalprojects; student center, housing and dining planning, wmic.edu/students/planning; and WMU Build Facebook, facebook.com/wmubuild.

Donations for paver spots at Heritage Hall due May 24

The deadline for donations to install the remaining engraved brick pavers at Heritage Hall this summer is Thursday, May 24. There are fewer than 150 12-inch-by-12-inch spaces remaining, and all of the 2,700 4-inch-by-8-inch brick pavers on the Heritage Hall portico have sold out.

The expected donation for the larger paver is $500. There is a limit of 189 characters total, including nine lines of text and 21 characters per line. All letters will be capitalized, and only letters and basic symbols found on a keyboard are permitted.

For more about this chance to “cement your legacy,” visit mywmu.com/acbricks.
On Campus with Debbi Hands Kreps

As a graphic designer for university relations, Debbi Hands Kreps is part of the creative team that produces high-quality materials that support WMU’s brand. This involves staying on top of design trends and adapting to new technology.

In the case of the University’s most-recent GOLD Campaign, that translated into a design that added radiating lines around the W and incorporated dynamic photography and infographics, she says.

“The audience we’re primarily talking to is in the 14-to-22-age range,” she explains. “We need to stay on top of trends and quickly adapt to new technology. With Generation Z, authenticity is key, and quick online interactions are the norm.”

In her role the past five years, she has had a hand in art direction, print and digital design, copywriting and editing, multimedia presentation, photography and project management. Video work and digital publications also have become more prevalent in that time, according to Kreps.

In addition, she was on the team that redesigned WMU’s website in 2014. That project involved reinventing the look and user experience on the website, as well as adding website landing pages for all of the colleges.

Besides her work for university relations, Kreps has served on the Western Wellness committee the past two years as an advocate for the program through her communication and marketing efforts.

In her spare time, she is a soccer player and soccer coach, as well as a runner. A member of the Southwest Michigan Area Printmakers, she also teaches printmaking at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts.

She graduated from WMU with a Bachelor of Science in graphic design and previously worked locally at several advertising and marketing firms. Kreps is a lifelong resident of southwest Michigan. She and her husband, Marcus, have four children and live in Portage, Michigan.

Medievalists flock to WMU for annual congress

Medieval scholars from around the world are in Kalamazoo through Sunday, May 13, for the 53rd celebration of WMU’s International Congress on Medieval Studies.

The event, which has become a rite of spring in the Kalamazoo community, has drawn some 3,000 scholars from 47 nations, 49 states and the District of Columbia.

Kalamazoo County residents and those with a valid Bronco Card may attend the congress at no cost. Local attendees may register on-site in the Eldridge-Fox Residence Hall lobby if they have not preregistered.

Among this year’s attractions are more than 550 sessions, including one with an outdoor learning demonstration showing how the plans of great cathedrals were laid out using stakes, string and measuring rods.

To mark the 1,100th anniversary of the death of Æthelflæd, daughter of King Alfred the Great, activities will include screenings of the BBC trilogy “King Alfred and the Anglo-Saxons.” BBC celebrity Michael Wood, who created this television series, will be a speaker during one of the congress’ many sessions.

In addition, a new annual lecture series on the reception of the classics in the Middle Ages will be launched, while the many sessions.

Example of cathedral architecture (Stock photo)

Middle Ages will be launched, while the exhibits hall, a favorite gathering place for Kalamazoo residents, will return. For more details about the 2018 congress, visit wmich.edu/medievalcongress.

Open house, commencement to honor inaugural med school grads

A community open house Saturday, May 12, and a commencement ceremony Sunday, May 13, will mark and celebrate the graduation of the first class of physicians to earn their degrees at the WMU Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine.

Four years after beginning their studies in fall 2014, 48 students are successfully completing their time as the inaugural medical school class and moving on to the next step as physicians, entering residency training in programs around the nation.

Saturday’s open house will be held from 1 to 3 p.m. at the W.E. Upjohn M.D. Campus in downtown Kalamazoo. Brief comments are planned for 2 p.m. The commencement ceremony will take place at 2 p.m. the following day in WMU’s Miller Auditorium.

Both events are open to the public without the need to make a reservation.

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Consolidated dispatch

WMU has a self-imposed summer deadline to have all infrastructure changes ready for the late fall anticipated activation date.

Consolidated dispatch means campus 911 calls and calls from the 118 campus “blue light” emergency call boxes will go directly to the dispatch center and be conveyed to WMU officers. Campus calls for police assistance will continue to result in the dispatch of WMU public safety officers.

Calls to (269) 387-5555, the normal public safety contact number, will result in an automated answer that prompts callers for next steps. Requests about facilities and nonpolice matters also can be made to a 24-hour automated phone line, (269) 387-8514.

More consolidation details are available at wmich.edu/news/2018/04/46694.

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Two geological research efforts

cant role the Michigan Basin has played in understanding geological processes as well as outlines the distribution of natural resources in the basin. It was published April 25.

Kehew says the publication of a single special paper by GSA is considered a major accolade for both a researcher and his or her department. The fact that two from the same unit have been published at the same time is considered extraordinary.

“This is a big deal for geologists,” says Kehew, who worked on his publication for some three years.