A new study from Southwest Michigan First and WMU has found that the University annually has a $1.6 billion economic impact on the local region.

“The University’s local economic impact is an excellent return on investment for Michiganders,” says President Edward Montgomery. “The University’s return of $1.6 billion to its local community is 15 times greater than the state’s investment in WMU. In fact, our total impact is greater than Michigan’s entire budget line for all state universities.”

In fiscal year 2016-17, the year of the study, the state invested $1.4 billion in all state universities. “The study also determined that WMU supports 16,690 direct, indirect and induced jobs in the local area. “Imagine the home side of Waldo Stadium with every single seat filled. That’s how many jobs we’re talking about,” says Ron Kitchens, chief executive officer of Southwest Michigan First and a WMU trustee.

“I believe that if our region is to thrive in the future, we must grow the portion of our workforce that has earned a bachelor’s degree. We are currently 20 percent below the national average. WMU is an enormous help. It can enable us to attract young professionals here, and we can entice them to stay,”

Students have an impact during their time in Kalamazoo. Each WMU student adds $11,500 to the local economy. “It’s wonderful to see students in local businesses,” Kitchens says. “They bring vitality to our community. But they also bring resources. When you see four students

Esports initiative garnering widespread interest

They came, they saw, they conquered—or tried to. That was the game plan for many eager members of the campus and local community attending the Oct. 5 grand opening of the state-of-the-art WMU Esports Arena. The event was held in two stages, with invited guests and news media swarming the facility for a morning gathering and members of the public filtering in during the afternoon open house.

Most of the visitors were as impressed by the arena’s colorful lights, pro-quality sound system and spacious auditorium seating for 190 spectators as they were by its sophisticated gaming computers and related technology.

“We heard about this through one of the University’s tweets after we got out of class in Battle Creek and decided to check it out,” one senior aviation student said from behind the gaming PC he was test driving at the open house. “I didn’t expect this, especially because it’s an old-style theatre. But the arena is definitely amazing.”

Unified Clinics receives $1.5M state appropriation

WMU is slated to receive a $1.5 million state appropriation for its Unified Clinics, a multispecialty group practice that annually serves more than 5,000 patients in southwest Michigan and beyond and operates under the auspices of the College of Health and Human Services.

State Sen. Margaret O’Brian, who was instrumental in securing the funding, formally announced the allocation during a news conference Oct. 2.

“WMU’s Unified Clinics provides invaluable health care services to some of southwest Michigan’s most underserved,” O’Brian says. “I advocated for needed funding to ensure the University can provide the best possible care for its clients, many of which are children. Kalamazoo area residents should be proud to have such a great organization in our backyard.”

The Unified Clinics is a collective of 10 specialty teaching clinics that provide an array of services, including autism evaluation, behavioral health services, child-trauma assessment, hearing treatment, low-vision services, occupational therapy, speech therapy and women’s health services. WMU student practitioners and supervising professionals provide the care and treatment. Affordability is a major need for the clinics’
Arts & Culture

The Roselle Havens Artifacts Collection will be dedicated Sunday, Oct. 14, in the Zhang Legacy Collections Center. The event will include a showing of the film that inspired the collection, “The Abandoned Bricks.” Refreshments will be served at 2 p.m., the dedication will take place at 2:30 p.m., and the film will be shown at 3 p.m.

Free campus shredding event

WMU students, faculty and staff are encouraged to “get their shred on” by participating in a free campus-wide shredding event Friday, Oct. 19, on campus. All professional or personal documents and media are properly destroyed and recycled.

The event is set for 10 a.m. to noon in Lot 41 near Sangren Hall. A truck with several 95-gallon containers will be provided by Data Guardian for drop off. If documents are in recyclable containers such as paper or cardboard, the entire container can be placed into the bins or directly on the truck.

All plastic and metal must be removed, but there is no need to remove rubber bands or paperclips. CDs, DVDs, VHS and floppy disks will also be accepted but must be placed in a separate container. No hard drives will be accepted. For disposal of hard drives, or more than 15 boxes of documents, contact Data Guardian directly.

For those with questions or who are unable to make the event and have materials to be disposed of, contact Data Guardian at (269) 327-8555.

Western Wellness events scheduled

Several events are taking place this fall to help WMU employees stay fit and healthy. Registrations are due on varying dates by visiting the Events page on the Western Wellness website at wmich.edu/wellness.

A Mason Jar Salad Workshop has been set for 11:15 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Oct. 16, in 3015 Student Recreation Center. In addition, a Movement Matters Challenge will run from Oct. 28 to Dec. 1. Registration for two- to four-person teams will be open from Oct. 17 to 28.

The event will be open to the public. Registration is $125 for general admission and free for WMU employees and students. Registration includes a continental breakfast and buffet lunch. The event is hosted by the Department of Business Information Systems. To register, visit wmich.edu/itforum.

If conference to be held in November

Government, industry and academic leaders in information technology and marketing will headline a conference focused on “E-Commerce and Digital Marketing” on campus beginning at 7:15 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 15. The Western Michigan IT Forum will be held in the Fetzer Center with sessions for industry, academic and student participants.

The event is open to the public. Registration is $125 for general admission and free for WMU employees and students. Registration includes a continental breakfast and buffet lunch. The event is hosted by the Department of Business Information Systems. To register, visit wmich.edu/itforum.

Counselor reelected state board chair

Pat Munley, professor and chair of counselor education and counseling psychology, has been reelected as the Michigan Board of Counseling. Munley is in the fourth year of a second four-year term on the board. He was appointed to the body by Gov. Rick Snyder in 2011 and has been serving as its chair since 2013.

The Michigan Board of Counseling has regulatory and disciplinary responsibility for professional counselors in the state. It licenses and oversees the practice of Michigan’s more than 9,200 professional counselors.

Munley is a licensed professor and counselor psychologist and fellow of the American Academy of Counseling Psychology and the American Psychological Association.

English professor pens poetry book


In the age of the wide but often shallow lens of new technology, Olsen takes a nod from Robert Frost and Gary Snyder, laying bare people’s need to return to the roots of things, where the poems find their voice. He revels in language that is intensely authentic ruminations on human isolation. Olsen teaches creative writing and literature courses and is the author of five collections of poetry. His work has appeared in numerous prestigious journals, and he has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts creative writing fellowship and many other honors.

Staffer recognized for leadership

Diana Hernández, multicultural affairs director, received El Concilio’s 2018 Quetzalcoatl Award in recognition of her stature as a professional Latinx leader who has been working, contributing, supporting and advocating for the well-being of the Latinx community in Kalamazoo.

Hernández received the accolade during an award ceremony as part of the Nuestra Raíces Gala Sept. 28. During the ceremony, U.S. Rep. Fred Upton read a state legislative proclamation passed in her honor.

In announcing its award, the nonprofit El Concilio, formerly the Hispanic American Council, cited Hernández for her passionate support of the area’s Latinx community as well as advocating for WMU’s Latinx students so they can succeed in college. Under her leadership, WMU recently secured a federal College Assistance Migrant Program grant worth more than $2 million to support five- and six-generation undergraduate students who are migrant or seasonal farmworkers.

In addition, Hernández has been selected as one of the Top 50 Latinas in Michigan by the governor-appointed Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan.

Service anniversaries—October

The following faculty and staff members are recognized for 35, 30, 20, 15 and 10 years of service during October.

35 years—Sue T. Murray, multicultural affairs; Robert R. VanDyke, Dining Services; and Lonnie Westeling, Lawson Ice Arena.

30 years—Juanita Snell and Art S. Williams, both building custodial and support services.

20 years—Kate Hennessy, information and Lonnie Wesseling, Lawson Ice Arena.

15 years—Muralidhar K. Ghantasala, mechanical and aerospace engineering.

10 years—Diana C. Blouin, arts and sciences advising; Paul DeVries, intercollegiate athletics; Diana Berkshire Hearit, research; Eric L. Leen, Sindecuse Health Center; Lee A. Ryder, Haennicke Institute; and Erasmo J. Salinas, development and alumni relations.

Five years—Grant K. Allers, public safety; Dawn M. Burghardt, registrar’s office; Aleks Janis Copeland, College of Aviation; Alex Goreish, information technology; Lashonti Delacy Holloway, custodial and support services; Jennifer Jean Johnson, family engagement; Andrew M. Martin, West Hills Athletic Club; Mary Elizabeth Osborn, Davis Dining Services; and John A. Yelich, geological and environmental sciences.

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.
University trustees approve retirements of six faculty, 22 staff members

The WMU Board of Trustees acted on numerous personnel matters Sept. 12.

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: Christine Browning, mathematics, effective April 30, 2019 (change in date only); Linwood Cousins, social work, effective June 30, 2019; Donald Meyer, economics, effective May 1, 2024; Shaila Rao, special education and literacy studies, effective Aug. 31, 2021; David Smith, music, effective Aug. 31, 2018; and Huizhong Zhou, education and literacy studies, effective Oct. 1, 2018.

Staff retirements
William Adams, building custodial and support, effective April 1, 2018; Barbara Banks, Bronx Express, effective Sept. 1, 2018; Thomas Cook, maintenance services, effective Aug. 1, 2018; Terri Culver, accounting services, effective July 1, 2018; Debra Demeny, landscape services, effective Aug. 4, 2018; Ruth DeYoung, Valley Dining Service, effective Sept. 1, 2018; Lucia Dixon, Student Financial Aid, effective Aug. 1, 2018; Timothy Enders, information technology, effective Sept. 1, 2018; Francis Frazier, building custodial and support, effective Aug. 1, 2018; David Gehman, accounts receivable, effective July 1, 2018; Lasena Jennings, Human Resources, effective Aug. 1, 2018; Nancy Kros, information technology, effective Aug. 7, 2018; Judith Medendorp, special education and literacy studies, effective Oct. 1, 2018; Betty Merrifield, Barnum Dining Service, effective Aug. 23, 2018; Delores Minshall, information technology, effective Aug. 1, 2018; Charles Overberger, College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, effective Aug. 11, 2018; Johnny Paige, Bernhard Center, effective Aug. 1, 2018; Allan Posse, information technology, effective Sept. 1, 2018; Julie Rickert, fine arts academic advising, effective July 29, 2018; Eric Schipper, maintenance services, effective Aug. 11, 2018; Sharon Stoken, building custodial and support, effective May 1, 2018; and Leah Wiser, Suehle Health Center, effective July 1, 2018.

Faculty resignations
Joseph Fernandez, interdisciplinary health programs, effective Aug. 14, 2018; Hisao-Chin Kuo, special education and literacy studies, effective Aug. 21, 2018; Nora Lewis, music, effective Aug. 14, 2018; Laura Pawuk, music, effective June 30, 2018; and Sally Thelen, Center for English Language and Culture, effective June 22, 2018.

Other personnel matters
Promotions were granted to Lauren Foley, political science, effective Aug. 15, 2018; and Hyun Bin Kang, statistics, effective Aug. 15, 2018. In addition, a sabbatical leave was granted to Hector Diaz, professor of social work, effective fall 2018.

Gold Standard’s priority strategies for 2017-18 ready for review

The Gold Standard 2020, WMU’s five-year strategic plan, is now completing the second year of implementation. End-of-year reporting for its 2017-18 priority strategies has been completed and is available for review at wmich.edu/strategic/reports.

President Edward Montgomery has raised awareness about three areas of transformational priorities—student success, diversified revenue and becoming a school of choice—that are achievable through the Gold Standard’s five goals, 24 objectives and 108 strategies.

Gold Standard 2020 goals by category are:
• Learner success—Ensure a distinctive and supportive learning experience that fosters success.
• Academic excellence—Promote innovative learning, discovery and service.
• Discovery and collaboration—Progress as a Carnegie-classified higher research doctoral university that advances new knowledge and value-added discovery.
• Inclusive excellence and equity—Promote a diverse, equitable and inclusive University culture to ensure social sustainability and accessibility.
• Sustainable stewardship—Advance economic and environmental sustainability practices and policies.

Unified Clinics receives $1.5M state appropriation

Patients. Through this practice, thousands of Michigan residents receive treatment that is, in some cases, unavailable elsewhere, may not be covered by insurance or is unaffordable through other providers.

The services help children and families struggling with often chronic physical and psychological conditions that negatively affect health and quality of life.

“We have been recognized by our patients in the community as a safety net,” says Carol Sundberg, Unified Clinics director.

For recent stories about several Unified Clinics’ patients and practitioners, go to wmich.edu/magazine and read the winter 2018 issue of the W Magazine.

Unified Clinics receives $1.5M state appropriation

The institute “is truly far beyond anything we ever imagined it would become,” Jim Richards says.

“Just a few weeks ago, Lois and I had the honor of touring the building, which included getting a detailed description of each area and how students will use this creative layout, working independently and in groups on design projects.”

The Bachelor of Fine Arts in product design draws its curriculum from fine arts, engineering and business to develop professionals who will specialize in designing products that combine form, function and manufacturing.

Launched in fall 2017 with its first cohort of students, the program was created to meet current and future design and manufacturing needs in southwest Michigan and beyond.

“From my first days on campus five years ago, it was apparent that our local corporations had a great need for design talent,” says Daniel Guyette, College of Fine Arts dean.

“There were dozens of positions they could not fill, and this was impacting their ability to compete and thrive. As a state university, it’s our responsibility to meet the needs of our state and region by providing quality programs to educate our young adults for promising careers. That’s why we created the product design program and the Richmond Institute for Design and Innovation, and the response from students and the corporate community has been exceptional.”

In addition to their University-based studies, students in the program are placed within industry settings during summer residencies with the anticipation that those positions will become permanent jobs after graduation.

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The way people exercise, who they exercise with and even the ease by with they can choose their activities has changed significantly since Amy Dominguez was a student employee at West Hills Athletic Club in the late 1990s.

Members today prefer a wide variety of classes and small-group training, all of which can be registered for online, says Dominguez, the club’s administrative assistant. Communications are primarily done through email, making follow up to membership and class questions much quicker and efficient.

As the trends have evolved, so have the facility’s offerings. The club now includes more than 80 fitness classes, and numerous small-group training and competitive tennis programs.

“People are looking to do more activities in groups, and our offerings have really grown,” she says. “There’s something for everyone.”

Dominguez started working at West Hills as a student in 1998, and she continued there after her graduation in 2001. She earned two degrees from WMU: a bachelor’s degree in recreation with a minor in management and a master’s degree in educational leadership. She worked in several areas at the facility before becoming director of marketing and membership in 2004. She left that job in 2016 to take care of her newborn twins, Gabby and Joshua, now almost 3, who were born prematurely and required extensive medical care. With the aid of a welcoming and supportive staff, she returned to work at West Hills part time in July 2017.

Now, Dominguez is responsible for entering and updating the status of employees, tracking overdue accounts, assisting in some advertising for the club, giving tours when needed, and attending local health fairs. In addition, she assists in compiling and promoting member success stories to publish on the club’s website and in promotional materials.

“Everyone has a story, and it’s interesting to hear about them,” Dominguez says. “A lot of their stories are very inspirational, and these stories help inspire others.”

She not only helps promote these programs but enjoys attending many of them, specifically the Body Pump group fitness class. Dominguez also participates in a small-group training program with a personal trainer.

Outside of work, her young children keep her and her husband, Nate, busy. She enjoys reading and spending time with her family and friends. A resident of Mattawan, Dominguez joins her father, a sister and two brothers as WMU alumni.

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Esports initiative garnering broad interest

Esports at WMU

The WMU Esports Arena is located on the corner of Oakland Drive and Oliver Street in what was previously known as the Little Theatre. The facility, which had been rented out periodically for the past several years, now serves as home base the Esports Club at WMU.

The club grew out of the University’s League of Legends registered student organization and is one of WMU’s formal sports clubs. But instead of donning uniforms and taking to the court or turf, players don headsets and sit behind gaming machines, going head to head in the virtual world of online competitive video gaming.

Although quickly gaining in popularity, esports has yet to become ingrained at U.S. colleges and universities like football, basketball and other traditional sports have. So

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WMU’s economic impact

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WMU’s economic impact

Having brunch, that’s not just a $46 tab, it’s $46,000 each year in rent, groceries, checking accounts and entertainment. They contribute handsomely to our community as individuals and as citizens.”

Also, though not from the study, WMU students contribute 235,000 hours of engagement with the community each year.