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**INSIDER**

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Greetings alumni and friends of the College of Arts and Sciences!

This has been a particularly eventful and successful fall for the College, and I am pleased to introduce the winter 2010 edition of the Insider. Over the past few months, our College has witnessed its students and faculty embark on new initiatives, establish cutting-edge research projects, and make great contributions to their chosen fields of scholarship. Students and faculty are breaking new ground across a wide spectrum of areas—from a WMU faculty member performing new atomic research to a National Book Award for Fiction, the College has many reasons to celebrate the fabulous accomplishments of its members.

To complement these wonderful achievements, this fall we added four very talented faculty to our family. We eagerly await their future successes at WMU. In addition, I am excited to report that WMU’s enrollment surpassed 25,000 students this academic year, thus demonstrating that interest in the University and the College is stronger than ever.

Along with these student and faculty accomplishments, this issue of the Insider has a special focus on the achievements of our outstanding alumni, both recent and past graduates. As a College, we place great value on our alums and believe it is important to keep in touch with our graduates, and for good reason: our alumni have not stopped studying and contributing to the world around them. I invite you to read about some of our outstanding alums in the “Our Alumni Write…” and the “Distinguished Alumni” sections starting on page 24.

As Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, I am very grateful for the generous support of our donors, alumni, and friends who help ensure the continued success of the College. Because of these contributions, many of our outstanding students and faculty have access to numerous grants and awards allowing them to further enhance their education, expand their research opportunities, and become involved in the communities around them.

As the College of Arts and Sciences grows and continues to thrive, our accomplishments highlight our university, making Western Michigan University—once again named a Top 100 university by World News and Reports—one of the best institutions in the nation.

Thank you Bronco students, faculty, staff, and friends for your support and commitment to life-long learning!

Alex Enyedi, Dean,
College of Arts and Sciences
Meet our newest faculty members

Dr. Susan K. Freeman received her B.A. in French and Political Science from Furman University, S.C., in 1993 and her M.A. in Women's Studies from the University of Cincinnati in 1995. In 2002, Freeman earned her Ph.D. in History from The Ohio State University. In 2000, she was awarded the Women's Health Dissertation Grant by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, and was granted the Fulbright-Hays Seminar Abroad by the Women in Contemporary India in 2005. Freeman maintains professional memberships to the National Women's Studies Association, the American Historical Association (AHA), and the Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History of the AHA. She held a postdoctoral fellowship in women's studies and history at Florida International University and, most recently, served as associate professor of gender and women's studies at Minnesota State University.

Thisbe Nissen obtained her B.A. in English with a focus on creative writing from Oberlin College, Ohio, in 1994, and followed with her M.F.A. in Fiction from the Iowa Writers' Workshop in 1997. In addition to having published a collection of short stories, “Out of the Girls' Room and into the Night,” in 1999, she has also published three books of fiction, “The Good People of New York,” in 2001; “The Ex-Boyfriend Cookbook,” in 2002; and “Osprey Island,” in 2005. Her work has appeared in “Vogue,” “Chrysler,” and “Glamour” magazines, as well as the “Iowa Alumni Magazine.” In 2002, Nissen appeared on such programs as “The Today Show,” “The WB Morning Show,” “Good Day Oregon,” and “AM Northwest.” She gained experience teaching English at the secondary and post-secondary levels, for Columbia University, N.Y.; the Iowa Writers’ Workshop; Brandeis University; and Eugene Lang College, N.Y.

Dr. Sally E. Hadden received her B.A. in History and Political Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1984 and her M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1985 and 1993, respectively. She received her law degree from Harvard Law School in 1989. A member of Phi Beta Kappa in 1983, she was awarded the Certificate of Distinction in Teaching from Harvard University in both 1991 and 1992. Her book “Slave Patrols: Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas,” was published by Harvard University Press in 2001. She currently is working on a new book, titled “Legal Cultures in Early American Cities: Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston,” and also is co-editor for the forthcoming “Blackwell Companion to American Legal History.” At present, Hadden is a member of the board of directors of the American Society for Legal History, and became secretary of the organization this year.

Dr. Staci Perryman-Clark received her B.A. in Creative Writing and Literature from the University of Michigan (U-M) in 2004. She earned her M.A. in English from Eastern Michigan University in 2006, before going on to receive her Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Writing from Michigan State University in 2010. Perryman-Clark has published several articles in such journals as Composition Forum, Composition Studies, Writing Program Administration Journal, and Issues in Writing. She has earned several major awards and fellowships from MSU and U-M, as well as the national Dream Travel Award from the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) and an honorable mention for the Ford Foundation Predoctoral Diversity Fellowship from the National Academy of Sciences, both in 2008. Fluent in French, Perryman-Clark retains memberships to the Modern Language Association; the CCCC; the National Conference for Teachers of English; the Black Caucus, National Council of Teachers of English; the National Writing Project; and the Council of Writing Program Administrators.
Dr. Michael J. Barcelona, professor of chemistry and a veteran researcher whose work has focused on analyzing the impact of environmental pollution and designing remediation efforts to address it, has been named Western Michigan University’s 2010 Distinguished Faculty Scholar.

He was honored with the highest accolade awarded to a WMU faculty member during the University’s annual Academic Convocation in September.

In receiving the award, Barcelona joins just 46 other faculty members who have been so honored during the award’s 32-year existence. The award carries with it a $2,000 cash prize and is designed to honor outstanding achievement that is widely recognized within the academic community.

Barcelona first joined the WMU faculty in 1989 as a full professor and director of the Institute for Water Sciences. He returned to WMU in 2001 after serving for more than seven years at the University of Michigan as operations director for the National Center for Integrated Bioremediation and Development.

Shortly after returning to WMU, he accepted the position of chair of the Department of Chemistry, and helped make the case for, and oversaw, the construction of a new instructional building for that discipline.

“He never gives up. He gives everything he has,” said a WMU colleague in nominating Barcelona for the award. “...He embodies for me the scholar-scientist.”

An official with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency praised Barcelona’s ability to marry the principles of science with the need to apply those principles to real-world problems. She also lauded his ability to empower students to do the same.

“Based on Dr. Barcelona’s track record thus far, and the environmental problems we must undoubtedly face in the coming decades, I can come to no other conclusion but that he will continue to contribute significantly to the solution of emerging environmental problems as well as produce students who will carry on far into the future,” she said.

A researcher at a university on the Eastern seaboard noted that Barcelona’s career has been remarkably broad and his work has led to progress both in oceanic environments that face problems triggered by acid rain and in fresh groundwater environments in which officials combat pollution from motor fuels and chlorinated hydrocarbons.

“...Dr. Barcelona has remained a tireless advocate for quality and creativity in science and engineering research and education, often volunteering to work out innovative strategies to solve down-to-earth interdisciplinary problems,” the researcher noted in a letter of nomination. “He is one of the most respected researchers in the groundwater contamination field. Ever since I met him, he has been an inspiration to me. I know he is also an inspiration to many others. Is that not the true distinction of scholarship?”

Barcelona earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Chemistry in 1971 from St. Mary’s College in Winona, Minn., a Master’s Degree in Organic Chemistry in 1974 from Northeastern University and a Ph.D. in Marine Chemistry and Chemical Oceanography in 1977 from the University of Puerto Rico. He served for three years as a postdoctoral research fellow at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, which is located at the California Institute of Technology.
An anthropologist known for her ethnographic field research in Kenya and a chemist involved in hardcore theoretical development have been recognized as emerging faculty scholars by Western Michigan University. Dr. Bilinda Straight, associate professor of anthropology, and Dr. Yirong Mo, associate professor of chemistry, were presented the Emerging Faculty Scholar Award during WMU’s annual Academic Convocation ceremonies.

**Dr. Bilinda Straight**

Straight joined the WMU faculty in 2000, and her work over the past 15 years, especially since her arrival, has centered on her ethnographic field research in Kenya and attracted international professional recognition. A prolific writer, her work has appeared in the top journals in the field of anthropology, and her book, “Miracles and Extraordinary Experience in Northern Kenya,” has received high praise.

A review in American Anthropologist compared the work to that of accomplished anthropologist Paul Stoller and said it makes an important contribution to the field. American Ethnologist said it “is one of the most original, compelling and thoughtful ethnographies in years.”

“Dr. Straight’s anthropological research is deeply philosophical and theoretical,” writes a colleague at the University of York. “While she has explored diverse subject material ranging from religious beliefs to material culture and the health consequences of various social conditions, her work has a unifying theme of engaged research about the human condition and concerns some of the core fundamentals of human existence.”

Straight received her Bachelor’s in Women’s Studies and English Literature from Lake Erie College in 1987; her Master’s in Anthropology from the University of Michigan (U-M) in 1990; and her Ph.D. in Anthropology and graduate certificate in women’s studies from U-M in 1997.

**Dr. Yirong Mo**

Mo joined the WMU Department of Chemistry in 2002. As an adept and highly experienced computational chemist, he wasted no time launching independent research by assembling a cluster of computers and recruiting graduate students.

Mo has developed two very successful lines of research involving hardcore theoretical development, mostly in electron transfer theory, and computational biochemistry, a burgeoning interdisciplinary field. During the past seven years, he has excelled in both areas and has been well recognized by colleagues. He received coveted invitations to speak at the 2005 and 2008 Congress of the World Association of Theoretical and Computational Chemists, and the Sixth Congress of the International Society for Theoretical Chemical Physics, both held every three years.

Since 2003, he has published more than 50 papers in top peer-reviewed chemistry journals, one of which was selected as a “Hot Paper” in 2004 by Angewandte Chemie, while two others were recognized as “Most Accessed” and “Most Cited” by the Journal of Physical Chemistry and Accounts of Chemical Research.

Mo received his bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees in physical chemistry from Xiamen University in China in 1986, 1989 and 1992, respectively. He also has been a research associate at the University of Minnesota and State University of New York at Buffalo, a research fellow at Bonn University, and a visiting fellow at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg in Germany.
Three from College promoted

Clark Appointed Chair of Political Science

John A. Clark joined the WMU faculty in 1998 after beginning his teaching career at the University of Georgia. He is a graduate of Wabash College and received his Ph.D. from The Ohio State University in 1992. Clark’s research deals with American politics generally, with an emphasis on political parties and southern politics in the United States. He is co-editor of Southern Political Party Activists (2005) and Party Organization and Activism in the American South (1998), which won the 1999 V.O. Key Award as the best book on southern politics. He has authored or co-authored more than 30 book chapters and articles in scholarly journals including the American Political Science Review, the American Journal of Political Science, and Political Research Quarterly.

Clark’s teaching interests include courses on political parties, political behavior in the U.S., and legislative politics. He is a frequent commentator on political topics for local and national news organizations.

Clark is past president of the Michigan Conference of Political Scientists. In 2006, he was recognized by the College of Arts and Sciences for outstanding achievement in research and creative activities.

Freudenburg Named Interim Graduate Dean

Dr. Gene Freudenburg, chair of Western Michigan University’s Department of Mathematics, has been tapped to serve as the University’s interim dean of the Graduate College for the 2010-11 academic year.

Freudenburg joined the WMU faculty in 2006 when he was appointed department chair and professor of mathematics. He will lead WMU’s extensive graduate programming while the University searches for a permanent replacement to Dr. Lewis Pyenson, who returned to the faculty July 1.

“Dr. Freudenburg has great familiarity with our graduate college, is highly respected by his colleagues, and brings a wonderful background in research and graduate education to this role,” says Dr. Timothy J. Greene, WMU provost and vice president for academic affairs. “His leadership will allow the University to continue to build its reputation in graduate education while we take the time necessary to assess and set our future directions in that arena.”

Freudenburg came to WMU from the Pott College of Science and Engineering at the University of Southern Indiana (USI), where he was professor of mathematics and assistant dean. He was named that university’s 2004 Distinguished Professor, which is the school’s highest recognition for faculty. A member of the USI faculty from 1995 to 2006, he previously served as a faculty member at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind.

Spitsbergen Named Chair of Biological Sciences

Dr. John Spitsbergen obtained his B.S. and M.S. in Biology from Michigan State University ('83 and '86, respectively), as well as his Ph.D. in Pharmacol/Toxicology and Neuroscience ('91). He served his post-doctoral at University of Virginia in Neuroscience.

The long-term goal of Spitsbergen’s research is to understand the processes controlling expression of glial cell line-derived neurotrophic factor (GDNF) in skeletal muscle, and to determine the consequences of altered skeletal muscle GDNF expression with age and disease. If GDNF expression in skeletal muscle is controlled by physical activity, then decreases in the level of physical activity, which are commonly observed in aging individuals, may lead to decreased GDNF expression. Decreased GDNF supply could result in alterations in motor neuron structure and function.

A better understanding of the relationship between physical activity, GDNF expression and motor innervation will aid in understanding how these processes become disturbed with aging, injury or in neurodegenerative diseases. Findings of these studies may help to identify potential sites for therapeutic intervention to help slow or reverse changes occurring with aging, injury or disease.

Since arriving at WMU, Spitsbergen has been dedicated to working with undergraduate students on research projects in his laboratory. During his tenure at WMU he has hosted 65 undergraduate students in research projects resulting in 38 presentations at local and national scientific conferences. The majority of these undergraduate researchers have gone on to professional schools (medical, dental, etc); however, seven joined Spitsbergen’s laboratory as graduate students and five entered graduate programs at other institutions. He also has trained 16 graduate students (12 M.S. and four Ph.D.) in his laboratory at WMU. He is Co-PI on a Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) grant funded by National Science Foundation and is a participant on a Bridges to the Baccalaureate grant funded by the National Institute of Health.
brandão gains multiple research grants

Dr. José António Brandão, a specialist in New France and First Nations history, has been awarded several prestigious research awards in support of his current work on the French Michilimackinac Research Project (FMRP).

The FMRP, of which Brandão is a co-director, aims to identify and translate French language materials related to the early history of Michigan, especially the Straits of Mackinac region. The first award, which totals $129,000 over five years, was given directly to Mackinac State Historic Parks by the Florence Gould Foundation. This grant will cover travel and research support for Brandão, but also provides funding to acquire additional materials for the French Michilimackinac Research Project Collection and pay for other researchers working in Canadian archives on behalf of the project. The FMRP Collection, which is housed at Western Michigan University, represents one of the largest collections outside of France and Canada of French language documents related to the French presence in North America.

While he was hoping for sabbatical funding, Brandão was pleasantly surprised to learn that the Mackinac Parks and Gould Foundation had provided support for the entire FMRP. The next award, however, came as an even bigger surprise.

Brandão learned in late April that he had also been awarded the Lester J. Cappon Fellowship in Documentary Editing from the Newberry Library in Chicago, home to collections that are central to his research. This award provides up to $5,000 to support historical editing projects based on Newberry sources, including photocopying, digitization, copyright fees, publication subventions, and other costs associated with the publication of an edited document or collection of edited documents. The Cappon grant, which also provides for three months of residency at the Newberry, came as a surprise to Brandão because he did not apply for the grant. Rather, as Dr. Marion (Buddy) Gray, Chair of the Department of History, notes, “the grants committee of the Newberry, at their own initiative, placed Brandão into this category in recognition of his outstanding reputation as a scholar of New France” and the strength of his grant proposal.

With these prestigious grants in tow, Brandão is on sabbatical during the 2010-11 academic year, spending time at the Newberry and working on the forthcoming book, “Mémoires of Michilimackinac.” The proposed project is a book of translated documents related to the French presence in the straits region of Michigan in the years up to 1718. The book will offer corrected, unabridged, and properly annotated and edited versions of three important documents related to the French presence and French-Native relations in the Great Lakes Region. The introduction will serve to place all of the documents in context, summarize their major findings about Michilimackinac, Native cultures, French imperial ambitions in the Great Lakes Region, and possibly resolve the vexing historical question about Louis La Porte de Louvigny’s lost mémoire and Antoine Laumet de Lamothe Cadillac’s lost map. The book will be the fourth volume in the series of publications growing out of the French Michilimackinac Research Project, which Brandão co-directs with Steven Brisson of Mackinac State Historic Parks. Brandão is the FMRP’s academic director.

Geography professor earns national teaching award

A Western Michigan University associate professor is the 2010 recipient of the Higher Education Distinguished Teacher Award, an honor given annually by the National Council for Geographic Education for those who have made extraordinary commitments to the teaching and learning of geography at the post-secondary level.

Dr. Lisa DeChano-Cook, associate professor of geography, is the first person from WMU to receive the award. A faculty member since 2001, she joined the WMU faculty as an assistant professor and became associate professor in 2006. For the past three years, she has coordinated Michigan’s National Geographic Bee, the statewide competition that brings up to 100 middle school students to campus to vie for the opportunity to become Michigan’s representative at the national bee in Washington, D.C.

Prior to coming to WMU, she was an assistant professor at California State Polytechnic University, a teaching assistant and research assistant at Southwest Texas State University, and a public service associate at Ohio University.
Western Michigan University recently presented its 2010-11 Distinguished Teaching Award to Dr. Grace C. Tiffany, professor of English. Being named a Distinguished Teacher is the highest honor the University bestows on faculty members for their work with students.

Tiffany’s distinguished career includes teaching a wide range of courses from Renaissance poets and playwrights to American travel narratives. A novelist as well as an educator, her work in and out of the classroom, teaching Shakespeare, stands out with both her students and her colleagues. The accomplishments for which she was lauded include her field trips to Chicago each year to the Shakespeare Theatre on Navy Pier and being chosen by the Modern Language Association to co-edit a guide to teaching one of Shakespeare’s comedies.

Tiffany has been a faculty member at WMU since 1995 and teaches Shakespeare, non-Shakespearean Renaissance drama, and Renaissance literature at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Predominantly a Shakespearean, she has authored a number of scholarly articles, book chapters, and books which analyze Shakespearean drama as both literature and stagecraft. Her most recent book, “Love’s Pilgrimage” (University of Delaware Press), concerns Renaissance representations of holy pilgrimage and the altered pilgrimage tradition in Reformed England. For 12 years she also has been a contributing editor to the international quarterly The Shakespeare Newsletter.

Tiffany earned a bachelor’s degree from Duke University in 1979 and her master’s and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Notre Dame in 1985 and 1989, respectively. Prior to joining the WMU faculty, she taught at Fordham University and the University of New Orleans.

WMU’s Distinguished Teaching Awards program was launched in 2006 to honor up to three full-time faculty members each year.
English professor Jaimy Gordon is winner of 2010 National Book Award in fiction

Western Michigan University English Professor Jaimy Gordon is the winner of the 2010 National Book Award for fiction. “Lord of Misrule” was selected for the coveted annual prize that USA Today calls “publishing’s version of the Academy Awards.”

Gordon accepted the award after it was announced Nov. 17 at the gala 61st National Book Awards Benefit Dinner and Ceremony in New York City. The prize in fiction has been won previously by such literary giants as William Faulkner, Saul Bellow, and John Updike. It comes with a $10,000 cash award and bronze statue, but literary prestige and increased book sales are among the benefits as well.

Gordon’s novel, her fourth, was published just this month by McPherson & Co. Set in the world of West Virginia horse racing in the early 1970s, the book was praised by the judges as a “vivid, memorable and linguistically rich novel” about the rock-bottom end of the sport of kings.

Gordon, who has taught at WMU since 1981, based the novel on a world she learned about fresh out of college in the late 1960s when she took a series of jobs intended to boost her life experience. She worked for a period as a groom and hot-walker at Charles Town Race Track in West Virginia. That experience served as background as well for her short story about horseracing, “A Night’s Work,” which was chosen for “Best American Short Stories” in 1995.

This is the second time in as many years an author with WMU connections has been among the National Book Award finalists. Kalamazoo native Bonnie Jo Campbell, a student of Gordon’s in the 1990s who earned three degrees from WMU, was named a finalist last fall for her book of short stories, “American Salvage.”

Gordon, a Baltimore native, earned degrees from Antioch College and Brown University. She has published three other novels—“Bogeywoman,” “Shamp of the City-Solo” and “She Drove Without Stopping.” The latter, often described as a woman’s road novel, was an American Library Association Notable Book for 1990; in 1991, Gordon won an Academy-Institute Award for her fiction from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. “Bogeywoman” made the Los Angeles Times list of the Best Fiction of 2000.

Gordon also has published a novella, poetry, masques, short stories, and essays. She has won a number of other awards for her work. They include grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and being named a fellow at both the Provincetown Fine Arts Work Center and the Bunting Institute of Radcliffe College.

Established in 1950 by publishers, editors, writers and critics, the National Book Awards were conceived as an award given to writers by writers. The American Book Publisher’s Council, the Book Manufacturers’ Institute, and the American Booksellers’ Association jointly sponsored the Awards, bringing together the American literary community to honor the year’s best work in fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. The awards quickly established a reputation for recognizing literary excellence.

For 2010, there were more than 300 books submitted for the National Book Award in the fiction category. To learn more about the competition and judges and to read an extended interview with Gordon about her book, visit the National Book Foundation online [www.nationalbook.org](http://www.nationalbook.org).
Can YouTube make you smarter in biology?

Western Michigan University’s Dr. John R. Geiser, associate professor of biological sciences, has been selected for a yearlong national scholars program to find out if popular media can help students better relate to course subjects. As a 2010 resident in the American Society for Microbiology-National Science Foundation Biology Scholars Program, he and 22 other biology educators from across the country will investigate their theories on student learning and share their results.

Geiser’s research topic considers numerous studies that have shown that motivation and relevance can be a strong influence on students. His study will establish whether student outcomes can be improved by providing students with examples of popular media (YouTube videos, Scientific American articles, etc.) that present the content material in such a way as to provide relevance to student lives. The goal is to use non-science or popular literature or media in a pre-lecture environment to allow students an opportunity to see the overall picture related to a specific concept in a context that is simply more interesting for most students.

In the past, changes to lectures to engage students have been made in an introductory biology lecture course for freshman majors. That has not, however, produced substantial improvement in students’ test scores or engagement in course content.

A WMU team of biological sciences and chemistry faculty and science educators from WMU’s Mallinson Institute for Science Education, Office of Faculty Development and University Libraries collaborated to discuss possible options for improving student motivation and performance. Geiser’s study is an offshoot of one of those team discussions. He will conduct his research at WMU and present his findings in May at the national ASM conference. Results will be tracked for five years by the organization.

A WMU faculty member since 1999, Geiser began his WMU career as an assistant professor, and he became associate professor in 2005. From 2003 to the present, he also has been a consultant for AureoGen Biosciences Inc. in Kalamazoo. He earned his Bachelor’s Degree in Microbiology from the University of Pittsburgh and his Ph.D. in Biochemistry from the University of Washington.
Understanding the path of viruses that originate in animals and spread to humans is key to preventing the transmission of infectious diseases between species, according to a Western Michigan University researcher.

Dr. Maarten Vonhof, WMU associate professor of biological sciences, and a team of researchers from the University of Georgia, the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control studied samples from 23 species of North American bats for a paper published in early August in the journal Science. Their study on the transmission of rabies between similar species of bats can ultimately provide insight into other emerging viral diseases that may affect humans, such as the flu or SARS, and disease mitigation strategies that may target future viral cross-species transmission (CST).

Their research provides some of the first estimates for any infectious disease of how often CST occurs and the likelihood of disease to become established in a new host species.

"Bats have had the finger pointed at them as many emerging viral diseases in humans appear to have originated from a bat host," Vonhof says. "From a public health perspective, it is vital to understand how often viruses can make the transition to a new host."

The team’s research shows that viruses are more likely to jump between closely related host species than more distantly related species. The key is to find out how viruses make the bigger leap between species that are not similar, such as between wildlife and humans.

“We need to do this for other viral diseases, not just rabies. If general patterns emerge, we can then target intervention and mitigation. We can avoid future veterinary or public health issues,” he says.

That research is ongoing. But initially, the research does provide answers about the rate of infection between similar species. The analysis showed that, depending on the species involved, a single infected bat may infect up to 1.9 members of a different species. Also, on average, CST occurs only once for every 72.8 transmissions within the same species.

Rabies was chosen because of the virus’s nature to mutate frequently. Yet researchers found that the rapid evolution of the virus wasn’t enough to overcome the genetic differences between hosts, and that the virus was more likely to jump between closely related bat species.

Vonhof has studied bats for 17 years, including six years at WMU. He earned his Ph.D. from York University in Canada, then obtained post-doctoral experience at the University of Tennessee and Princeton University.

His research interests include the evolutionary biology of bats and their parasites. He applies genetic approaches to the conservation of endangered and migratory bat species, and he is also interested in various aspects of host-disease interactions in bats. He currently has funding to use genetic methods to assess the population-level impact of wind power development on migratory bats, and to develop a comprehensive database of host-parasite records that will be used to predict “hotspots” of viral and parasite diversity in bats.
A renowned Western Michigan University mathematics educator has been awarded a three-year, $3.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation to develop a mathematics course for high school seniors that will prepare them for college-level courses in majors that do not require calculus.

Dr. Christian Hirsch, who is nationally known for his work in leading the successful Core-Plus Mathematics Project (CPMP) at WMU, will lead a new effort called Transitions to College Mathematics and Statistics. The goal is to design, develop, field-test, refine, and bring to publication a fourth-year mathematics course that can be used in high schools around the nation, regardless of the type of curriculum used for the first three years.

Hirsch and his team will develop an eight-unit course for seniors that blends core mathematical skills from algebra and geometry that students need to succeed on college placement tests with a wide range of high-interest topics that cover the ways mathematics is used in a variety of professions. Those topics range from the coding and encryption technology that is part of Internet use, to the mathematics that governs democratic decision-making (polling, redistricting, and apportionment) and mathematics used in financial markets.

“We are working to make this course interesting as well as useful to students,” Hirsch says.

“The course being developed,” he notes, “will fill needs triggered by two recent trends: the growing number of students placed in remedial mathematics courses when they enter college and more rigorous standards adopted by states nationwide that call for every student to complete four years of mathematics before graduating.”

Hirsch says for students not planning to enter fields that require college calculus, there have been few or no alternative courses for seniors who do not opt to take a precalculus course during their final year of high school.

“The problem is universal for students who are not going into mathematics, engineering or the physical sciences in college,” Hirsch says. “If they don’t take mathematics during their final year, they are removed from the ideas, thought processes and skills of the subject and they don’t do well when they take the placement tests that determine their freshman-year courses.”

The data, he says, clearly show that students who are not enrolled in mathematics courses during their senior year are much more likely to be placed in remedial, non-credit courses when they enter college. And, he notes, college-bound students are overwhelmingly headed to majors that do not require calculus. In 2009, for instance, a College Board survey revealed that a full third of college-bound students planned to enter the health professions or business management, marketing and related fields.

Hirsch also notes that, to date, 36 states and the District of Columbia have adopted the new Common Core State Standards for Mathematics developed under the auspices of the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Those standards call for all students to complete four years of high school mathematics.

CPMP is a four-year curriculum that features interwoven strands of algebra and functions, statistics and probability, geometry and trigonometry, and discrete mathematics. The first three courses in the NSF-funded series provide a common core of broadly useful mathematics for all students. The fourth-year course, Preparation for Calculus, continues the preparation of students intending to study mathematics, engineering or the physical sciences in college.

Since 1992, WMU mathematics Professor Christian Hirsch has led development of the Core-Plus Mathematics Project. That NSF-funded effort has now been published in its second edition and has been named an exemplary curriculum by the U.S. Department of Education. Most recently, the CPMP curriculum was recognized by the research arm of the Business-Higher Education Forum as one of 35 education-related programs that increase student achievement and improve college readiness. The program is in use in nearly 900 school districts around the nation.

The new fourth-year course will be designed for use both with CPMP and with other mathematic curricula. The project plans call for development of both a print and digital version of the new course as well as software tools that can be used by teachers and students.

“The new course can be used as a capstone course with many different high school mathematics programs,” Hirsch says. “We plan to make the software freely available to students, teachers, and teacher educators across the country to help meet the equity and access challenges that have delayed significant incorporation of such technology tools in high school mathematics.”
A team of Western Michigan University researchers is among the first to show results of new work being done at a Stanford-University-based national laboratory, and their work is garnering international attention by giving the scientific community its first look at what the world’s most powerful hard X-ray laser can do. The first published scientific results from the world’s first X-ray laser, located at the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory (SLAC), in Menlo Park, Calif., show the X-ray laser’s unique ability to control the behaviors of individual electrons within simple atoms and molecules by stripping them away—one by one—in some cases creating hollow atoms.

These early results were outlined in papers published June 22 and July 1 and written, respectively, by the WMU-led team and a team from Argonne National Laboratory. They describe in great detail how Linac Coherent Light Source’s (LCLS) intense pulses of X-ray light change the very atoms and molecules they are designed to image. Controlling those changes will be critical to achieving the atomic-scale images of biological molecules and movies of chemical processes that the LCLS is designed to produce.

First results promising

The first report from any experiments carried out by the LCLS was published June 22 in Physical Review Letters. In the report, a team led by WMU’s veteran physics researcher Nora Berrah describes the results of experiments on molecules. Berrah’s team, which includes WMU post-doctoral researchers Matthias Hoener, Li Fang and Brendan Murphy, was one of the first groups to conduct experiments at the LCLS.

Berrah’s team created hollow atoms and molecules within molecules of nitrogen gas, and found surprising differences in the way short and long-laser pulses of exactly the same energies stripped and damaged the nitrogen molecules.

“We just introduced molecules into the chamber and looked at what was coming out there, and we found surprising new science,” said Hoener, who in addition to being a WMU postdoctoral researcher, also is a visiting scientist at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, and was first author of the paper. “Now we know that by reducing the pulse length, the interaction with the molecule becomes less violent.”

The work and the resulting publication, Berrah says, was the result of a collaboration that included researchers from other national laboratories and universities who are on the author list.

Second report in “Nature”

A second report, published in the July 1 issue of “Nature,” describes how Argonne National Laboratory physicist Linda Young and her team, which includes Berrah, Fang and Hoener, were able to tune LCLS pulses to selectively strip electrons from atoms of neon gas. By varying the photon energies of the pulses, the group could do it from the outside in—or, the more difficult task, from the inside out—creating hollow atoms.

“Until very recently, few believed that a free-electron X-ray laser was even possible in principle, let alone capable of being used with this precision,” said William Brinkman, director of DOE’s Office of Science. “That’s what makes these results so exciting.”

Young, who led the first experiments in October with collaborators from five other institutions, said, “No one has ever had access to X-rays of this intensity, so the way in which ultra-intense X-rays interact with matter was completely unknown. It was important to establish these basic interaction mechanisms.”
Once just a dream...

SLAC’s Joachim Stohr, director of the LCLS, described the discoveries being made as a dream becoming a reality. “When we thought of the first experiments with LCLS 10 years ago, we envisioned that the LCLS beam may actually be powerful enough to create hollow atoms, but at that time it was only a dream.”

Both teams found that the shorter the laser pulse, the fewer electrons are stripped away from the atom or molecule and the less damage is done. And both delved into the detailed mechanisms behind that damage.

International collaboration

Berrah leads a team that, in addition to the three WMU post-docs, includes 26 scientists from the United States, Germany, and Finland. The team spent five days conducting experiments at the LCLS last October. Their goal was to see how the LCLS pulses interacted with simple molecules of nitrogen gas, which consist of two nitrogen atoms bound together.

Berrah’s team bombarded puffs of nitrogen gas with laser pulses that ranged in duration from about four femtoseconds, or quadrillionths of a second, to 280 femtoseconds. No matter how short or long it was, though, each pulse contained the same amount of energy in the form of X-ray light, so researchers might expect that they would have roughly the same effects on the nitrogen molecules.

But to the team’s surprise, Hoener said, that was not the case. The long pulses stripped every single electron from the nitrogen molecules, starting with the ones closest to the nucleus, while the short ones stripped only some.

With these findings in hand, scientists have a new way to explore atomic structure and dynamics. Further experiments are casting light on formerly hidden areas of the atomic world, with results expected to be published in coming months.

Berrah’s research is supported by the DOE Office of Science. Young’s research is primarily supported by the DOE Office of Science, with additional support for Hoener’s fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

WMU scientists making headway in theoretical atomic physics

Berrah and her fellow researchers are not the only physicists from WMU to make groundbreaking discoveries. Led by WMU professor Thomas W. Gorczyca, a team of researchers has found interesting new patterns in the behavior of Auger and radiative rates on the nuclear level.

Gorczyca’s research has important applications in the interpretation of spectra from cosmic plasmas, and is funded by the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) under the Space Astrophysics and Research Analysis program. A main objective of this program is the computation of new dielectronic recombination (DR) data that are needed for modeling astrophysical plasmas. The production of more reliable DR data enable astrophysicists to more accurately infer information about the chemical evolution of the universe.

Also in recent news, Dr. Emmanuel Kamber, along with fellow researchers, has been examining single- and double-electron capture. The interest of electron capture processes stem not only from fundamental aspects but also from their importance in the study of the role of the impurity ions in controlled thermonuclear fusion, astrophysical plasmas, and atmosphere sciences.

A WMU Distinguished Faculty Scholar, Dr. John Tanis, is conducting research in the field of atomic collision physics—investigating fundamental interactions that occur in collisions between atomic particles. This experimental program probes the dynamics and associated structural aspects of collisions between few-electron and atomic or molecular targets. A major emphasis of this work at present is the study of electron interference phenomena resulting from the coherent ejection of an electron from the identical atomic centers of H2, an effect that is analogous to Young’s famous two-slit experiment, in which coherent light waves interfere when passing through a pair of closely spaced slits. Although interferences in electron ejection from molecules were predicted nearly 40 years ago, it was only recently that such phenomena were confirmed, with the results demonstrating how the ionization of molecules differs fundamentally from that of atoms. This work is carried out with several collaborators at WMU and other laboratories nationally and internationally. Dr. Tanis’ research has been supported by the U.S. Department of Energy and by the National Science Foundation.

With such a wealth of talented physicists taking the helm in classes and in the lab, it is no wonder that Western Michigan University is one of the nation’s top research universities, boasting fresh discoveries and visionary techniques in its staff and student body.
WMU Professor of Political Science, Susan Hoffmann, and former urban planner, Mark Cassell, an associate professor of political science at Kent State University and former newspaper reporter, recently published a book, “Mission Expansion in the Federal Home Loan Bank System.”

The heart of “Mission Expansion” devotes one chapter each to the three missions identified by bank insiders

- the original housing finance mission
- the community banks mission, and
- the affordable housing and community and economic development mission.

The book’s subject—the entire System’s mission expansion in recent years—is explained through the views of 45 individuals: senior bank executives and board members, who spoke about mission generally; members, bank staffers and community partners, who spoke about affordable housing; and former congressional staffers and federal executives, who spoke about the Financial Institutions Reform Recovery and Enforcement Act of 1989 (FIRREA) and Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act of 1999. In order to elicit candid discussion, no interviewee is identified. This new work is built upon a decade’s worth of research conducted by the two, either individually or in collaboration.

Missions Participants

According to the authors, the emphasis among the three missions varies from bank to bank based on perceived district needs, but all three are portrayed in the book as legitimate. Eight of the 12 banks in the system took part in the project.

“Missions don’t develop without capacity,” Cassell said, adding that if there is little or no capacity, a mission won’t be carried out well. Contrary to the popular view that growing activity in a public-purpose organization often stems from “bureaucrats gone awry,” Cassell said that having the banks move into areas beyond their original housing finance mission did not constitute “mission creep” and cannot be categorized as “self-interested behavior.” The affordable housing mission was successful not just because Congress told the banks to engage in it, Cassell said, but because the banks had some built-in expertise and some administrative capacity to pursue it. Co-author Hoffmann observed that while Affordable Housing Project (AHP) was imposed from the top down, the community bank mission emerged from the ground up, post-FIRREA, as the home loans came to better understand the specific needs of their new members.

Chasing a Buck

As the banks move closer to being further scrutinized as part of GSE reform, Cassell and Hoffmann offer some suggestions in their new book. Policy practitioners need to recognize the different foundations and histories of the government-sponsored enterprises (GSE) as the reform process begins, Cassell said. Talking about GSE’s as if they’re all one would be “to the detriment of the Federal Home Loan Bank System as well as the country.”

For her part, Hoffmann cautions against undue top-down mandates that drive a need to produce earnings.

“One of the things we’d like to see policy makers think about is not imposing mandates that distort decision making in the banks,” she said. “We’d like to see executives and board members making their decisions so they can best support housing finance in their respective regions, and not be trying to chase a buck.” She added that her research subjects made it “very clear” that the Resolution Funding Corporation (REFCORP) obligation had put pressure on some banks to create earnings.

Recommendations

“One thing we recommended is that FHL banks are treated a little bit more like Federal Reserve banks,” said Hoffmann, “where you don’t impose the mandates for making money; you just let them do their job. Instead of letting it [REFCORP] all revert to the Treasury, let it revert to the regions to support community and economic development.”

While Cassell and Hoffmann believe the FHL banks remain on the right track in terms of mission, they believe vigilance is in order to assure best practices in public-purpose administration.

“The more we learned, frankly, the more we were taken with what the organization [banks] is doing,” Cassell commented.

“These organizations have not been captured by their public managers or their private stakeholders,” Hoffmann observed, and she agreed with Cassell that the banks’ cooperative structure represents an “important institutional constraint” to unsound behavior. “But that doesn’t mean that vigilance isn’t going to be necessary going forward,” she cautioned, adding, “So far, so good.”

“Mission Expansion in the Federal Home Loan Bank System” tries to separate scholarly information from the practical so that a variety of readers—Washington policy makers, bank executives and staff, and students of public administration—will find it useful.
Recent external funding awards

The Office of the Vice President for Research office listed the following external funding awards for June 2010.

- **U.S. Department of Energy**, $180,000—to further the understanding of fundamental interactions between photons and complex systems using the Advanced Light Source and the Linac Coherent Light Source. Director: Dr. Nora Berrah, Physics
- **National Science Foundation**, $134,790—to study science achievement and attitude development in eighth-grade urban students. Director: Dr. William Cobern, Mallinson Institute for Science Education; Co-Directors: Dr. Edward Brooks Applegate, Educational Leadership, Research and Technology, and Dr. Renee Schwartz, Mallinson Institute for Science Education
- **National Science Foundation**, $105,000—to synthesize new catalysts to enable solar energy conversion and hydrogen production. Director: Dr. Sherine Obare, Chemistry
- **National Aeronautics and Space Administration**, $101,400—to integrate GRACE data with inferences from hydrologic models, geochemical data, and field data for a better understanding of the time-dependent water storage variability in large-scale aquifers. Director: Dr. Mohamed Sultan, Geosciences
- **WESTAT**, $27,544—to provide human factors support for driver/vehicle interface research. Director: Dr. Ron Van Houten, Psychology
- **National Science Foundation**, $26,724—to carry out X-ray studies in collaboration with three other universities on the newly discovered supersolid state which occurs in solid helium at low temperatures. Director: Dr. Clement Burns, Physics
- **Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory**, $19,800—to support living expenses for a research fellow while carrying out research at the Advanced Light Source, a division of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. Director: Dr. Nora Berrah, Physics
- **California State University, Fullerton**, $18,416—to test the role of faults as conduits to groundwater flow in the Mojave Desert. Director: Dr. Mohamed Sultan, Geosciences, Co-Director: Dr. Adam Milewski
- **Consortium for Ocean Leadership**, $14,994.51—to support participation as a science party member on an Integrated Ocean Drilling Program expedition. Director: Dr. Michelle Kominz, Geosciences
- **San Diego State University Foundation**, $9,942—to address policy questions that have significant economic and social implications for Mexico as well as other remittance-receiving developing nations. Director: Dr. Susan Pozo, Economics
- **Bronson Methodist Hospital**, $5,669.50—to help identify independent and dependent variables, sample size determination, and appropriate statistical procedures and their computation on various research related projects of Bronson Methodist Hospital. Director: Dr. Jeffrey Terpstra, Statistics
- **Michigan Humanities Council**, $8,100—to plan, promote and staff the 2010 Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Open House August 14-15, 2010 in Niles, Mich. Director: Dr. Michael Nassaney, Anthropology

Faculty and staff retirements

The following faculty and staff retired from the College of Arts and Sciences between Jan. 1, 2009 and Oct. 31, 2010. We thank them for their many years of service to the College.

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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Paul Eenigenburg</td>
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<td>Robert Wait</td>
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<td>Arthur White</td>
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<td>Mark Liberacki</td>
<td>Office Technology Coordinator</td>
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<td>Maria McGurn</td>
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<td>Karen McDougall</td>
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<td>Emily Hoffman</td>
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<td>Rebecca Beech</td>
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<td>Robert Scherzer</td>
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<td>Suzanne Moorian</td>
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<td>Patricia Nelson</td>
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<td>Maryann Bovo</td>
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<td>Jacqueline Van’tZelfde</td>
<td>Office Coordinator</td>
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<td>School of Public Affairs and Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radu Teodorescu</td>
<td>MFS-Professional Specialist</td>
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<td>Mathematics</td>
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The Kalamazoo Literacy Council has a full-time director whose goal is to strengthen adult literacy services in Kalamazoo County. WMU alumnus Michael Evans, (B.A. ’92, English and communication; printing minor) has been named Director of Literacy Services and is charged with bringing area adult literacy programs together to better coordinate services for adults wanting to learn how to read or improve their literacy skills. He also plans to raise awareness of adult literacy issues in the community and gather more support to this cause.

“I look forward to expanding the reach of the Kalamazoo Literacy Council in the community,” Evans said. “There are thousands of adults in the county who need help in improving their literacy skills to better prepare them for the workplace or to live more independently.”

The new position is the result of a collaboration between the Council and Goodwill Industries of Southwest Michigan to strengthen the adult literacy services provided in the area. The Council has also established an office in the Goodwill Industries building at 420 E. Alcott St. to provide a central location for its services and to coordinate activities with Goodwill’s Family Literacy Program. The collaboration is funded in part by the Kalamazoo Community Foundation.

“Hiring a director is the next step to broadening and improving literacy education for adults in Kalamazoo County,” Board President Paula Aldridge said. “We are confident that Michael will move the Council forward in its plans.”

The Kalamazoo Literacy Council has been helping adults learn to read since 1974. For more than 36 years it has operated as a volunteer organization, providing free tutor training in the Laubach Method, one-on-one services to adults, and literacy education materials.

Fulfilling the Council’s mission of having a fully literate community is more critical now than ever. In Kalamazoo County, over 31,000 people or 13 percent cannot read a simple story to a child, an intersection on a map, a prescription label, or total purchases from an order form. Additionally, children whose parents are functionally illiterate are twice as likely as their peers to be functionally illiterate. Helping adults improve their basic literacy skills has a direct and measurable impact on both the education and quality of life of their children. Moreover, for families to take full advantage of the Kalamazoo Promise or more confidently support their children’s education, they must be able to model reading and literacy in the home. Parents who value their own educational attainment make a great difference in their children’s success. That is why the Council is committed to quality literacy education to eliminate these problems and enhance the lives of adults through programs that increase reading, writing and spelling skills.

For more information visit the organization’s website at www.kalamazooliteracy.org.
During the academic year 2009-10, Career Network (formerly Career and Student Employment Services) provided career advising to approximately 1,623 students and recent alumni in four WMU locations (Ellsworth Hall, Friedmann Hall, Parkview campus and Oakland campus). Programs for students ranged from career development programs, workshops, panels and interviewing, to work study and the Call to Serve Grant.

Career development programs, totalling 170 in all, include:
- 83 college-specific career programs integrated within academic curricula and delivered in six colleges
- 41 non-college-specific career programs for campus groups, such as Registered Student Organizations, Residence Life, and advising
- 39 WMU career development programming and resources events, including seven Campus Student Employment programs
- 45 networking opportunities for students and recent alumni through:
  - nine career fairs, including: the Annual Career Fair and college-specific fairs for more specific needs
  - 13 career development workshops; 12 career panels; seven networking events; and four interviewing events.

During the academic year 2009-2010, BroncoJOBS included 17,793 active employers representing 155 industries.

Additional highlights:
- Career Services received a second year extension of the Call to Serve Grant to promote federal career opportunities
- The WAGE Project has been brought to campus to train 12 women to facilitate the $mart $tart workshop
- Career and Student Employment Services was recognized for participation in Y.O.U. – Youth Opportunities Unlimited
- Community Service Work Study was the largest in the history of Career Services
- Service learning opportunities are now posted in BroncoJOBS
- BroncoJOBS now includes on-campus job postings.

Contact www.wmich.edu/career or phone: (269) 387-2745.
Colleen Ames, Geena Holman, and Deondra Magett were selected as NextGen Leaders by American Humanics, a national affiliation that educates and certifies professionals to strengthen and lead nonprofit organizations. This competitive scholarship will support their internships with Michigan Citizen Action, Kalamazoo Communities in Schools, and Advocacy Services For Kids, respectively.

Underwritten by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, NextGen is a competitive scholarship program for students enrolled in American Humanics programs at 70 colleges and universities across the country. NextGen is designed to help a racially and ethnically diverse group of students with demonstrated leadership potential complete their American Humanics certification requirements, specifically a 300-hour internship with a nonprofit organization. NextGen Leaders receive a scholarship of $4,500 from American Humanics during their internship. Being selected as a NextGen Leader is a nationally recognized honor for these students, for the School of Public Affairs and Administration, and for Western Michigan University.

Ames, a political science major from Brighton, Mich. will pursue a career in an organization that concentrates on direct service to and advocacy on behalf of the indigent. She wrote in her application, “By concentrating on both direct service and advocacy, real progress can be made on solving social injustices.”

Holman, a human resource management major, comes from Plymouth, Mich., and will pursue a career in youth development. In addition to her internship with Kalamazoo Communities in Schools, Holman is a WMU Student Ambassador where she often introduces WMU to prospective students and represents WMU in the community.

Magett, a social work major from South Haven, Mich., will pursue a career in afterschool programming. She wrote in her application, “Over the past year, I have mentored youth with mood, emotional, behavioral, or mental disturbances and assisted them in fighting the negative stigma associated with mental health issues. I call them my young heroes because of the bravery they have demonstrated, and all of the life lessons they have taught me by not giving up despite adversity.”

All three students were instrumental in granting $14,000 to local nonprofit organizations this past spring and are members of the nationally award winning American Humanics Student Association at Western Michigan University.

(From left) Geena Holman, Deondra Magett and Colleen Ames are pursuing a Minor in Nonprofit Leadership through the School of Public Affairs and Administration. Colleen is doing her internship at Michigan Citizen Action; Geena is completing her internship at Kalamazoo Communities in Schools; and Deondra is interning with Advocacy Services for Kids.

To date, AH has identified more than 685 students nationwide as NextGen Leaders, awarding more than $3 million in scholarships.

WMU has had 20 students win the NextGen stipend award. Its first NextGen leaders were in the summer of 2007.
A graduate student in the Western Michigan University creative writing program has won the prestigious Mark Twain Prize for Comic Playwriting from the Kennedy Center’s American College Theatre Festival.

G. William Zorn won the national prize for his play, “Metropolis Has No Superman.” His award includes a $2,500 cash prize, a playwriting residency with a professional theatre company, possible publication from Dramatic Publishing Co., a production grant and a trip to the Kennedy Center-ACTF national festival in Washington, D.C. A portion of Zorn’s play also will be read at the Kennedy Center.

“That Zorn won, especially in a category as difficult as comedy, is very impressive,” says Dr. Steve Feffer, associate professor of English. Feffer teaches playwriting and is chair of the National Playwriting Program for the KC-ACTF’s region that includes Michigan and surrounding states.

“There’s an old writing adage which says, ‘Dying is easy; comedy is hard.’ To me, for Bill to win such a prestigious and competitive national award for comic playwriting (named in honor of one of the great comic writers) is a particularly distinguished achievement,” Feffer says.

The award also speaks volumes for the quality of the Department of English playwriting program, including the New Play Project, WMU’s collaboration with the “Theatre Kalamazoo!” initiative, the Prague Summer Program, and the partnership with the WMU Department of Theatre, all of which help to attract talented writers.

“Metropolis Has No Superman” tells the story of Chance Loring, the creator of Queer-Boy Comics, who grew up in Superman’s hometown of Metropolis, Ill., a town he vowed never to return home to—until his father is killed driving his Chrysler into the Man of Steel, and Chance must go home for the funeral.

Zorn’s award continues the tremendous record of success that Department of English playwrights have enjoyed in the National Playwriting Program of KC-ACTF. At the 2010 regional festival in Saginaw, Mich., which included competitors from Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin, WMU Department of English playwrights won regional awards in all three playwriting categories. They included master’s degree playwright Jason Lenz, who was honored for a 10-minute play; fellow master’s degree playwright Karen Wurl, who won an award for a full-length play; and Zorn, who won for a second work, a one-act play, titled “The Speed of Falling Objects.” This is the second year in a row that Western Michigan University playwrights have achieved this remarkable “sweep” by having a winning play in all three regional categories.

Also this year, two WMU students—master’s degree fiction student James Miranda and master’s degree playwriting student Kris Peterson—had their work presented at the regional festival. In total, five of 13 plays selected were by WMU playwrights, as were three of the five regional winners. In 2009, Peterson’s 10-minute play “Gun Metal Blue Bar” was selected for performance at the Kennedy Center.

Selected works by Zorn:

- Mother Earth Explains It All—Fancy Pants Theater
- Sunrise—Fancy Pants Theater
- Enough—Fancy Pants Theater
- Hard Times Come Again No More—Fancy Pants Theater
- When Terry Met Sally—Fancy Pants Theater
- Your Face Is A Map Of The World—Fancy Pants Theater
- Fanatic—Fancy Pants Theater
- The Valentine Kid—Fancy Pants Theater
- Your Face Is A Map Of The World—Working Theatre Collective
- The Speed Of Falling Objects—Kennedy Center Region III American College Theatre Festival
- Prop Hate: Heroes—Ohio UniVersity Forensics
- Metropolis Has No Superman—Western Michigan University (Winner: Mark Twain Prize For Comic Playwriting—Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C.)
English Ph.D. students Ilse Schweitzer and Christina Triezenberg elected to take their team-taught English 3110 honors class to a new ecological high when they developed “Our Place in Nature” for the Department of English and the Lee Honors College.

According to Triezenberg, “We are tremendously excited about teaching this particular course, not only because of our shared interest in environmental issues and nature writing but also because of the timeliness of our topic, particularly in the wake of recent events in the Gulf and the clear evidence throughout the world of the too-often-detrimental impact that human activity continues to have on the Earth that we share.”

To develop what the two hope will become a lifelong interest in environmental issues in their students, as well as a lifelong interest in the humanities, they designed a dynamic course—complete with guest speakers, two off-campus field trips, a screening of the West Michigan-focused documentary “Eating in Place,” and a writers’ workshop led by English alumna Kate Dernocoeur (M.F.A. ’10).

In keeping with the tech-focused nature of the course and their desire to harness students’ social networking skills in service to the environment, Triezenberg and Schweitzer used a Facebook page (titled English 3110: Our Place in Nature) and invited students to join. “We will use this page to post links that students might find of interest, digital pictures and film footage from our class, as well as information about upcoming events,” said Triezenberg.

With help from Professor of English Gwen Tarbox, the two also revamped their blog earlier this semester so that students would have a model of what was possible in their own nature-focused blogs.”

The class will shortly have its own gallery on the National Writing Project’s website to celebrate students’ nature writing successes.

Events during the fall 2010 semester included guest speakers in digital storytelling, nonfiction nature writing, and nature photography, as well as field trips to the Kalamazoo Nature Center and the Kalamazoo Farmer’s Market.

History Ph.D. surprised with second research grant

Department of History Ph.D. student Stephen Staggs has won two prestigious research fellowships that will allow him to spend the 2010-11 academic year completing the research for his dissertation, “Indian-Dutch Relations in New Netherlands and New York during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.” Staggs is working under the supervision of Drs. José António Brandão and James Palmitessa.

Palmitessa praised Staggs’s work in developing the project: “Steve’s knowledge of North American and Dutch History of the Golden Age, proficiency in Dutch, and transnational approach position him to make important contributions to our knowledge of the New Netherlands.”

The “NY400 Fulbright Grant” is a commemorative grant that celebrates 400 years of Dutch-American friendship and the 60th anniversary of the Fulbright Program in the Netherlands. The Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the U.S. State Department, together with the Netherland America Foundation and the Holland America Friendship Foundation, created this scholarship to enable one student at the graduate level to conduct research in the Netherlands for one academic year. Applicants from any field were invited to apply, as long as their proposed project was devoted to the study of an aspect of the longstanding relationship between the Netherlands and the United States.

Shortly after accepting the Fulbright award, Staggs learned he also had been awarded the Larry J. Hackman Research Award from the New York State Archives Trust. Staggs will use this award to return to his archival work in Albany, the other key collection he is using for his project. Brandão described Staggs’s grants as "wonderful affirmations of the merit and potential of his dissertation. These awards are, after all, highly sought after and awarded after careful review of applications by experts in the field."
Oscar H. Horst Scholarship established

Oscar H. Horst, professor emeritus of geography, died July 9 at age 86. He was a faculty member from 1956 to 1987 and twice chaired the Department of Geography. His family currently is in the process of establishing the Horst Scholarship.

His daughter, Susan Mori, says that supporting Western Michigan University through the creation of a scholarship fund was something her father very much wanted to do.

An alumnus, Alan Holck (B.A., 1968) remembers Dr. Horst well: "Oscar was a gifted teacher. I first encountered his enthusiastic approach to teaching and learning as a freshman in a physical geography course. Although it was a large lecture class, he always had interesting material to share and a real desire to make the course enjoyable as well as meaningful for his students.

"A couple of years later I had the chance to work with him again. Oscar and several other faculty members were engaged in an interdisciplinary study of a small region in the highlands of Guatemala, and they took small groups of students along each summer to participate in various aspects of the research. The whole experience lasted about a year with formal courses before and after the fieldwork. The students spent a lot of time together and felt a connection with each other and with other groups who had shared similar experiences. Oscar, in particular, was enormously supportive of all the students and did everything possible to ensure their success. The value of opportunities like this for students to work closely with faculty members on research and meet people from other countries or regions of the U.S. is hard to overstate.

“A scholarship fund is a fitting tribute to the contributions Oscar Horst made to WMU as a teacher, mentor and leader. I am very grateful to the Horst family for their generosity in establishing the scholarship. One of the things I like most is that it connects a distinguished group of past scholars and teachers like Dr. Horst with a way to help current and future students further their education. It also supports the mission of the Department of Geography."

For information on contributing to the Oscar Horst Memorial Scholarship, please contact Dorilee Schieble at dorilee.schieble@wmich.edu (269) 387-4399 or Trish Leighton at trisha.m.leighton@wmich.edu (269) 387-8980.

How to give...

Thanks to the many alumni and friends who made donations this year and supported so many important areas of the College. Gifts were made in various ways:

1. via the web to the departments;
2. via the web to the endowment funds that support the college and the departments;
3. sending a check to the WMU Foundation and directing it to the college and the departments;
4. establishing a bequest with an estate planning attorney and letting us know where WMU should direct the gift;
5. naming the WMU Foundation as beneficiary of retirement benefits;
6. transferring stock to the WMU foundation to benefit a specific area of the college; and
7. gifting an insurance policy to the WMU Foundation.

We have set up new funds with a name chosen by the donor. In some cases, the $10,000 minimum endowment will develop over a few years and will forever benefit a favored area of the college. Groups of alumni and friends have supported our college by making donations to existing funds. The college cannot begin to tell everyone how critical these gifts continue to be!

For more information about your giving plans, contact:

Dorilee Schieble at dorilee.schieble@wmich.edu (269) 387-4399 or Trish Leighton at trisha.m.leighton@wmich.edu (269) 387-8980 or see the enclosed gift envelope.

Obituaries

Milton J. Brawer, professor emeritus of sociology, died Sept. 8 in Kalamazoo. He was 84. Brawer joined the faculty in 1960 and retired in 1995 after 35 years of service. He served as acting director of the Center for Social Research in 1968-69 and as University ombudsman from 1970 to 1974. Active in several campus organizations, Brawer also served stints as president of WMU’s chapter of the American Association of University Professors and secretary of the Faculty Senate Executive Board.

Alan H. Jacobs, professor emeritus of anthropology, died Sept. 13. He was 80. Jacobs, one of the world’s foremost experts on the Maasai people of Africa, retired in 1996 after 22-1/2 years of service. He came to WMU in 1974 as chair of anthropology and stepped down from that post in 1978. Among his many other administrative posts were African Studies Program chair from 1976 to 1979 and resident director of WMU’s twinning program at Sunway College in Malaysia from 1990 to 1992.

William R. Rosegrant, professor emeritus of English, died Aug. 8 at age 91. He taught from 1955 until retiring in 1984. He was one of the first teachers at WMU to teach classes via television. A highlight of his career was traveling and teaching in the Philippines in the mid-1960s under a Fulbright Fellowship. He also taught American literature at the University of Denver, the former Oklahoma A&M, the University of Minnesota and the University of San Carolos in the Philippines.

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Minnesota and the University of San

Oklahoma A&M, the University of

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Our Alumni Write...

Dennis Cox, B.S. ’68
(Social Sciences and Sociology)
Minor in Geography
After doing social work in Detroit for a few years, I became a travel photographer and have a stock photo agency as well as operating photo tours around the world. You can check out my Facebook page to see some photos. I’m currently planning five photo tours for 2011, fewer than in past years, since I’m trying to slow down to put together some book projects, including “China Then and Now,” which will include photos from over 45 trips to China since 1976.

Paul A. Stermer, B.S. ’85 (English)
Minor in Art
Paul A. Stermer is executive director of Fair Food Matters, a nonprofit organization supporting local food throughout Southwest Michigan. He is a native of Southwest Michigan, a graduate of Western Michigan University, and has worked for various for-profit and nonprofit businesses throughout his career, most recently with the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts.

Fate may have chosen this career for Paul. He grew up on a cattle farm in Southwest Michigan, where his dad was a part-time farmer, his mom was a food service director for the local school system, and his first jobs were picking asparagus and tying grapevines. Later, he married into a family of “foodies” from New York, and loves the fresh, local food that the Kalamazoo area offers. Paul is a former journalist who has done things as sail a tall ship and attend noisy punk concerts to get a story.

He is a published poet and author, and was named “World’s Worst Poet” by the Julia A. Moore Poetry Society. He is an occasional artist and filmmaker. He lives in Kalamazoo, Mich. with his wife, Amy, and their daughter, Macie.

Jim Hickey, B.A. ’69
(Speech and Political Science)
Trusting in a curiosity that was encouraged by his WMU instructors, Jim Hickey has witnessed—and reported on—many of the world events that have defined the end of the last millennium. He has traveled to South Africa to cover the end of apartheid, witnessed the fall of the Soviet Union, and the civil war in Lebanon (1975-1991). Now a successful national correspondent with ABC radio, Jim still credits his education and experiences in Kalamazoo with jump-starting his long and well-rounded career in broadcasting.

Tell us what you’re up to—see page 32

Jack Klarr, B.A. ’75 (History)
Minors in Law and Political Sciences
Following graduation from WMU, I attended Wayne State Law School, graduating in 1978. Thereafter, I spent the next 33 years doing civil litigation, primarily defending health care professionals. More importantly, I married a girl from Nebraska, and we have (nearly) raised two boys. Our oldest is a junior at Albion, and our youngest is contemplating Western in 2011. For most of the past 15 years, I’ve been very involved in our local youth baseball organization, serving as coach, commissioner, officer, and director of training. As a runner, I’ve competed in races from the mile to the marathon, from Detroit to Paris, branching out into bike races and triathlons. My family and I have traveled all of the North American continent and 40 of the 50 states, and Europe a time or two as well. Throughout all of this, I’ve carried with pride my WMU heritage and actively recruit students at every turn, including serving as an alumni ambassador.
Our Alumni Write...

Michael Yoder, M.A. ’90 (Organizational Communication)

It’s hard to believe it was 20 years ago!

During the time I was pursing my master’s degree at WMU, I got into the field of Human Resources. I spent about 10 years in the HR profession. Since that time I have worked in business development and consulting. During the last couple of years my career has involved the use of social media on an ever-increasing basis. Today I am a social media strategist for a boutique branding company based in Grand Rapids, MI.

Life is a journey of continuous learning, growth, and the ability to adapt. If I could give one word of advice, it would be network. Never stop networking and building relationships.

Coreen Lubke Geary, B.A. ’93 (Philosophy and Public Relations)

Minor in Music and Journalism

Seven years ago I married my longtime love Kavan Geary (B.S., ’02, Interior Design), who is a full-time artist. We’ve been together for a total of 21 years. In 2009 we welcomed our son Valen Zen into our family. We currently reside in Kalamazoo’s Hillcrest neighborhood.

Professionally, I’ve worked at various nonprofit and higher education organizations since graduating from Western. I’m currently employed in corporate communications at Bronson Healthcare Group, and my 10-year anniversary with Bronson was August 14, 2010.

Stacy Putnam Noblet, B.S. ’03 (Environmental Studies and Geography)

In 2004, Stacy relocated and began working for ICF International, a global consulting firm based in Fairfax, Va. Stacy is now a Senior Associate at ICF where she leads projects that encourage the use of alternative fuels and advanced vehicles to reduce petroleum consumption in the transportation sector. Stacy has also provided support to efforts related to energy efficiency, recycling, and waste reduction.

In addition to working full time at ICF, Stacy is pursuing a Master’s Degree in Environmental Sciences and Policy from Johns Hopkins University. Stacy and her husband Michael (also a WMU graduate) have been married for two years and own a home in Arlington, Va. Whenever possible, Stacy tries to take advantage of everything the Washington, D.C. area has to offer, whether it’s running along the National Mall, enjoying a local theatre performance, or sipping Virginia wine.

John C. Sherwood, M.A. ’91 (English)

I’m one of the editors at The Times Herald in Port Huron, Mich., and do a fair amount of reporting as well. That means supervising the newsroom at nights, keeping breaking news posted online (as well as texted) and developing story ideas with other editors and the reporting staff.

Print journalism isn’t as healthy as it once was (and I remember the days of hot lead and linotypes), but it’s still managing to stay afloat in certain areas that aren’t overwhelmed by electronic and broadcast competition. It’s much the same at the newspaper in Battle Creek, Mich., where I spent a couple of decades as a reporter, editor and opinion writer. We’re all trying desperately to keep local news available—at least for a few more years!

I’m happy to talk to anyone who shows an interest in keeping people informed about their communities and the state of the world around them.

Ahmed Albatineh, Ph.D. ’04 (Statistics)

Ahmed currently serves as assistant professor of biostatistics with the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work at Florida International University. His advice for students is: “Your internship is your mine of GOLD. Publish at least one paper before you graduate, each or both will help you get a better job and better pay.”

Erin (Panici) Patrick, B.A. ’04 (Organizational Communication)

Erin currently is the enrollment services representative at Muskegon Community College in Muskegon, Mich., and she says, “I love working at the community college level, and I handle the recruiting, so that’s always fast-paced and fun.”

Her advice to students is to “take at least one class per semester that has NOTHING to do with your major.”

Tell us what you’re up to—see page 32 or click here
Amanda Huizenga, B.A. ’04
(Interpersonal Communication)
Minor in Sociology

I graduated in December of 2004 from WMU. I started at Quicken Loans in June of 2005 and have been here ever since. For the last four years I have been on the recruiting team, recruiting mortgage bankers. The company is growing significantly and I get to be a part of that.

We just moved our offices to downtown Detroit and are hoping to grow even more and spur the economy in the city. I get to interview a LOT of WMU grads and we hire a large percentage of them. I always have great things to say about my education at WMU.

Jessica A. Walker, PHR,
B.S. ’05

(Interpersonal Communication)
And Gender Studies

Jessie currently is a health care consultant for Gallup, based in Omaha, Neb. In this role she has guided health care providers on issues related to employee and customer relations through the use of quantitative and qualitative survey research.

Additionally, she has focused her expertise in areas related to government-required health care surveys and has become an internal and external expert as it relates to compliance and interventions. Prior to this role, Jessica was a recruitment and selection consultant with Gallup, assisting clients on issues related to strategic human resources issues. In addition to the professional, Jessica is currently completing her thesis requirements to earning her Master’s in Communication with an emphasis in Human Resources from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Erica Watson Gilmore, B.S. ’07
(English-Practical Writing)
Minor in Journalism and Management

Since graduation, I have been working in Portage, Mich. as a pre-press administrator for Printing Services, Inc. I used the experience gained while working at the Western Herald to get my current position. I got married in September 2009 and currently reside in Vicksburg, Mich.

Erica Finley, B.A. ’06 (Journalism)

Recently, I joined The Urbane Way as a senior journalist after spending a year and a half at a Bloomfield Hills-based agency as a social media account executive, where my responsibilities ranged from social media campaign strategy to content development and public relations. In my new role at The Urbane Way, a cutting edge digital marketing and public relations agency, I will work with clients, namely Dale Carnegie franchisees, to create blog content and help them continue to grow their digital footprints.

Both my degree from WMU and my experience at publications such as the Kalamazoo Gazette and Michigan Business Review have fully equipped me to take on this new challenge, and I’m fortunate to be working with such a talented team.

Andrew Josefowicz, B.S. ’08
(Communication Studies)
Minor in Sociology

After graduation, I moved back to my hometown of Muskegon, Mich., and found a job as an emergency telecommunicator at Muskegon Central Dispatch. I’m very happy where I am because I get to go to work and help people every single day. Plus, it’s in the same field as I studied at Western, which is a wonderful program.

Chris Skalsky, B.A. ’06 (Organizational Communication)

After graduating from WMU in spring 2006, I really wondered what I could do with an Organizational Communication degree. I came across a couple of big name advertising agencies in the Detroit area and thought it would be a great fit. Four years later, I’ve moved up the corporate ladder into my current position as account executive at Campbell-Ewald. Currently I’m working on the United Services Automobile Association account managing projects in Direct Mail, email, Out-of-Home, print and digital advertising.

Staying in touch with old colleagues, instructors and friends has been a great way to network and stay on top of career opportunities. It’s great to get a call from a friend saying they’ve heard of a job opportunity that they think I’d be interested in. It’s a small world, and you quickly learn that everyone is connected somehow.
Dan Fuoco, B.A. ’07 (Public Relations)

I can’t thank the College of Arts & Sciences enough for my awesome career in public relations at the Detroit Medical Center. The program taught me how to be a successful PR pro and how to adapt to changing roles when the situation arises.

Originally, my job responsibilities focused around dealing with traditional media (TV, radio and press) until about two years ago, when social media gained popularity. Since then, DMC has grabbed social media by the horns and taken off! Finally, my efforts are beginning to shine as I have recently been profiled on a major healthcare marketing blog as an expert in the field. Now, I integrate PR by promoting our services online while networking and building credible relationships with individuals.

Laura Feffer, M.A. ’08 (English Education)

Laura Feffer, a 2008 graduate of WMU’s Master’s program for English Education, has learned that she is the recipient of the prestigious Farmer Award from the editor of English Journal, the largest circulating academic journal in the world. Laura’s essay about helping at-risk students through theatre, written with Professor Allen Webb (English) as an independent study during her MATE program, was one of two essays selected this year to be given this national award.

Before her move to Kalamazoo, Feffer taught at New Trier High School, in Illinois. She relishes her current position of teaching English at Allegan Alternative High School in Allegan, Mich.

Alex Garrett, B.A. ’08 (Public Relations)

After my undergraduate degree, I graduated from the College of Education and Human Development with my M.A., ’10 in Educational Leadership: Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership. I am now the Coordinator for Student Life at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, Ill.

I currently advise our Student Government Association, and work on financial processes for the allocation of funds through the Student Government Association to other student organizations. I started at the Illinois Institute of Technology at the beginning of August, and absolutely love living and working in this city.

Sarah Hurd, B.A. ’08 (Public Relations)

Minor in Marketing

After graduation in spring of 2008, I moved to Chicago, Ill. to work in corporate sports hospitality. I was an administrative assistant who was promoted to full time event coordinator for the Hospitality Group of America. The company produced on-site hospitality events at sporting competitions worldwide.

I primarily worked in North America, traveling to two Superbowls, the NBA All Star Game, the PGA Championship, the Brazil Grand Prix and many more events.

After two years, and a great experience, I decided to shift gears and reenter the world of education. I am currently living in Iowa City and attending the University of Iowa. I hold a graduate assistantship in housing while pursuing my M.A. in Higher Education and Student Affairs. I guess I am the example of “it is ok to change your mind!”

Meg Porritt, B.A. ’09, (Communication)

Minor in Business

I grew up in Parchment and Plainwell, Mich. and came to WMU in the fall of 2005 to earn my degree. After graduation, I worked at building custodial and support services at WMU as an office assistant until I got a job working at a shelter downtown Kalamazoo in the spring of 2010.

I currently am the executive assistant at Ministry with Community, Kalamazoo’s only daytime adult drop-in resource center, downtown. I play a part in multiple tasks and project at MWC but I think my favorite thing is doing design work for our website, newsletters and events. I never pictured myself working at a shelter, but it has connected me with a lot of people from the community and keeps me in check when I think I’m having a bad day. I am also the communication coordinator for the First Day Shoe Fund, a local organization that gives new shoes to children in Kalamazoo Public Schools who qualify. I am in charge of the FDSF’s newsletter/event poster designs, Facebook page and media releases.

Although I work in an environment in which I never pictured myself, I have found that if you work hard and emphasize your personal skills you can be an asset to any business or organization. My philosophy has always been to load my plate up with as much as possible so I can network, gain experience, and never get bored. I look forward to what lies ahead…whatever that may be.

Melinda Moustakis, Ph.D. ’10 (Creative Writing and Fiction)

Melinda Moustakis is the recipient of the Flannery O’Connor Award for Short Fiction from the University of Georgia Press. This is one of the top three prizes in the U.S. for a first collection that entails publication of the book. Moustakis’s collection, tentatively titled “Bear Down, Bear North,” will appear in spring 2011. This is the second time that a Western fiction Ph.D. has won this coveted award. “Compression Scars.”

Wells recently joined the faculty of the highly ranked M.F.A. program at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa. Professor Jaimy Gordon served as advisor and mentor to Moustakis.
African Studies, Dr. Ollie Barnes

Dr. Ollie Barnes has been an adjunct professor at Western Michigan University for 12 years, where he teaches graduate courses in group dynamics; test and measurement; organizational consultation; and diversity and inclusion. He holds a Master’s Degree in Clinical Psychology and a Ph.D. that yielded a specially designed program of study to ensure proficiency in organizational behavior management, clinical psychology, and substance abuse.

Anthropology, Marvin Keller

Marvin Keller received his Master’s Degree in Anthropology from Western Michigan University in 1975. Since graduating from Western, he has been active in archaeology and cultural resource management in both the private and public sectors. Keller began his career with a private environmental consulting firm in New York and worked in the northeastern and western United States, as well as the Caribbean.

Biological Sciences, Annette Fleckenstein

Dr. Annette Elizabeth Fleckenstein earned her B.S. in Biomedical Sciences in 1988 from Western Michigan University. She currently is a professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology at MSU, and in the Interdepartmental Program in Neuroscience, at the University of Utah. Dr. Fleckenstein’s research on substance abuse and neurodegenerative disorders has been funded continuously by NIDA since 1998.

Chemistry, John Nappier

Dr. John L. Nappier, M.A. ('78), Ph.D. ('83), is an associate research fellow with Pfizer Animal Health located in Kalamazoo, Mich. While at Western, Dr. Nappier earned degrees specializing in analytical chemistry (M.A.) and biochemistry (Ph.D.). He currently designs and conducts pharmacokinetic, metabolism, and residue studies to address human food safety of veterinary medicines developed for use in livestock for Pfizer.

Communication, Deirdre Bryant Worth

Deirdre Bryant Worth earned her bachelor’s degree from WMU in secondary education: speech ('70). She has been a news correspondent for ABC Radio Networks for 20 years, anchoring hourly newscasts heard coast to coast. She has won a number of professional awards for her work including the Pinnacle Award from American Women in Radio and Television.

Economics, Kevin Haverdink

Kevin Haverdink currently is president of Haverdink Financial Management, LLC, located in Portage, Mich. He graduated from Western Michigan University in 1997 with a B.A. in Economics. He first attended WMU in the mid-1980s when he was an All-Mid-American Conference football player. He left WMU in 1989 after being drafted in the fifth round by the New Orleans Saints. He played for the Saints from 1989 to 1992, when a back injury ended his playing career.

The Alumni Achievement Awards program began in 1997 as a way of reconnecting our students and faculty with our alumni, as well as our alumni with the College. The awards are given in recognition of the recipients’ achievements in their fields and for their service to their former departments. While each of the departments in the College provides different opportunities for the Alumni Award recipients, most recipients spend a day or two on campus talking with students and faculty about their careers and experiences at WMU.

Our alumni have been major contributors to our national reputation and recognition, and we currently have more than 48,000 alumni nationwide. We applaud those alumni listed within these pages and invite you to browse the outstanding accomplishments of this year’s winners.
English, Dave Dempsey

Dave Dempsey holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from Western Michigan University ('77). Throughout his career, he has been professionally engaged in conservation and environmental policy and is widely recognized as a leading expert on Great Lakes environmental history and policy. He currently serves as communications director for Conservation Minnesota, a nonprofit organization in Minneapolis, Minn.

Foreign Languages, Aaron Boesenecker

Dr. Aaron Boesenecker received his B.A. in German, International and Comparative Politics, and Comparative Religion from Western Michigan University in 1999. In his work since that time, he has drawn on all three areas. He joined the faculty of the American University in the fall of 2009 in the School for International Service, where he is an assistant professor in the International Politics Program.

Gender and Women's Studies, Amber Depuydt-Goodlock

Amber Depuydt-Goodlock, LLMSW, has been a therapist and advocate with Sexual Assault Services of Calhoun County (SAS) since 2006. Depuydt-Goodlock earned her B.S. in Psychology and Gender Studies ('01) and her M.S. in Social Work ('06), from Western Michigan University. Currently, she is training her German Shepherd to become a therapy dog and join her in her work with children traumatized by sexual violence.

Geography, Lotta Jarnefelt-Burns

Lotta Jarnefelt-Burns obtained her B.S. in Geography with an urban and regional planning concentration from Western Michigan University in 1983, and an M.A. in Geography with a concentration in geographic information system (GIS) in 1997. In 2008, she was certified as a GISP (Geographic Information Systems Professional). She currently administers the County Remonumentation grant program, and the Kalamazoo County Street Directory.

Geosciences, Howard A. Nevins

Howard A. Nevins received his Bachelor of Science in Geology from Western Michigan University in 1978. He was a three-year letter winner in football at WMU, captain of the team, and recipient of the President's Award for Leadership his senior season. Nevins is a 30-year veteran of the oil and gas industry. He started his career with Ashland Petroleum Company (Marathon), and in 1992, founded, and was president of American Enviro Services, Inc., a regional leader in environmental consulting, emergency response, and used oil recycling. In 1997, AES was sold to U.S. Energy Systems, Inc., and Nevins was named chief operating officer for North American and Swedish operations.

History, Grafton "Grif" Cook

Grafton "Grif" Cook II, a long-time amateur historian, attended Washington and Lee University before graduating with his associate’s degree from Southwest Michigan College (SMC). Thirty-seven years after founding his successful lumber brokerage businesses in Dowagiac, Mich., Cook completed his B.A. in History at Western Michigan University in 1996 and retired. Throughout his lifetime, Cook was an active student, collector, author, and patron of local history projects, with a particular passion for the history of arms and armor. Cook passed away on Aug. 7, 2009, but the legacies he and his wife, Barbara, contributed to local communities, institutions, and students of history, will continue to have a lasting impact on southwest Michigan.

Mallinson Institute for Science Education, Eric Schreur

Dr. Eric Schreur earned his Master of Arts in Science Education in 1985. In 1996 he received the Astronomical League Hans Baldauf Award for service to amateur astronomy, and in 1998 he was awarded the Kalamazoo Valley Community College Enrichment Award. Dr. Schreur’s work in science education over the last 25 years has been through his employment as the planetarium coordinator at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum, which is part of Kalamazoo Valley Community College. He currently is the longest-serving employee of the museum.
Philosophy, David Zacker

Dr. David Zacker received his B.A. in 1989 and his M.A. in 1991, both in Philosophy, from Western Michigan University. An associate professor of humanities at Elgin Community College (ECC) in Ill. since 1999, his teaching goes beyond the classroom. He firmly believes in helping students understand their place in their local and global communities.

Physics, Ahmad Farhat

Dr. Ahmad Farhat currently is a warranty business supervisor in global manufacturing quality for the Ford Motor Company. Farhat’s research in atomic physics, performed in WMU’s Professor Nora Berrah’s group, well prepared him for these various challenges. He co-authored eight professional articles and received his Ph.D. in Physics from WMU in 1998. Previously, he served Ford Motor Company as a technical expert in reliability and data analysis, a process assurance auditor, and a reliability implementation engineer.

Political Science, Daniel A. Witt

Daniel A. Witt received his B.B.A. (’83) and M.B.A. (’85) from Western Michigan University. Witt is the president of the International Tax and Investment Center (ITIC), which he helped found in September 1993. Since 1991 Witt has led more than 30 private sector delegations to Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Libya, Azerbaijan, and Vietnam to hold meetings with top finance, taxation, and government and parliamentary officials. While overseas, Witt made more than 75 speeches on international trade and economic policy.

Psychology, William Heward

Dr. William Heward earned his B.A. (’71), magna cum laude, from Western Michigan University with majors in psychology and sociology. Dr. Heward has published more than 100 articles and chapters on a range of topics, with a focus on improving the education and treatment of people with disabilities, and is the author of a highly influential textbook, “Exceptional Children: An Introduction to Special Education.” Dr. Heward is an avid athlete and sports fan. His book, “Some Are Called Clowns: A Season With the Last of the Great Barnstorming Baseball Teams,” is often cited as a “must-read” baseball book.

Public Affairs and Administration, Carolyn Cassin

Carolyn Cassin earned her Master of Public Administration (’77) degree from Western Michigan University. She is considered a national expert in end-of-life care, organizational management, and the efficient, effective delivery of healthcare services. In 2009, Cassin accepted leadership of the Michigan Women’s Foundation and continues to lead the National Hospice Work Group (NHWG) after 17 years as a founding member.

Spanish, Lee Lovely

Lee Lovely received his Bachelor of Science in Spanish and an M.B.A. from Western Michigan University. In July 2003, Lovely was appointed vice president and general manager of Stryker Canada and Latin America. Lovely also is president and owner of Confetti Contract Fabrics, Telaco, Inc., and Vrain Street Group.

Statistics, Sudhakar Rao

Dr. Sudhakar Rao currently is the senior director of biostatistics with Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research and Development in Raritan, N.J. He received his Ph.D. in Statistics from Western Michigan University in 1989. Dr. Rao is the lead statistician for several new drug applications and biologic license applications with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, European Medicines Agency, Health Canada, Australia and other countries, and part of at least a dozen submissions for new indications in various types of cancer.

Read the full text at: www.wmich.edu/cas/alumni/awards
More than 2,000 students visited 38 information stations during the fourth annual Major Excitement event, sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences on Sept. 24, 2010. A repeat of the event is planned for Thursday, Sept. 22, 2011 and YOU’RE INVITED.

The event provides students with a great opportunity to explore as many majors as they find interesting with visiting alumni, faculty, graduate students, advising and more.

Visiting alumni help students make personal connections and get advice on which courses and programs are most valuable to their chosen profession.

Faculty, chairs and graduate students meet with upwards of 3,000 first-year students during the event to advise and share stories. To RSVP for the Sept. 22 event, or more for more information, call Dorilee Schieble at (269) 387-4399 or email to: dorilee.schieble@wmich.edu.

Join us for Major Excitement ’11
We love to keep in close touch with our alumni. What are you doing? Send us an email at cheri.bales@wmich.edu or fill this out and return it to the College via one of the methods listed below. To learn more about us, please visit www.wmich.edu/cas.

Name (maiden) married

Year of Graduation/Degree Earned/Major, Minor

Achievements and Accomplishments Since Graduation from WMU

Advice for Current Students?

Sending updates? Do you no longer wish to receive this newsletter? Do you have comments or concerns?

Contact Coordinator of Marketing and Communications Cheri Bales, by e-mail at cheri.bales@wmich.edu, fax at (269) 387-3999, or mail to: Office of the Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5308.