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Dean's Message

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to the readership of our first e-news for the Graduate College at Western Michigan University. In May of 2012, I was honored to be named Dean of the college (story) and am excited about helping to shape the future of learner centered, discovery driven, globally engaged graduate education at WMU.

As you know, graduate education is pivotal to our classification as a research university and ranking in national publications. The Graduate College and its staff serve as a hub for professional development opportunities and support services for graduate students as well as the gatekeeper of policies and procedures that ensure quality and excellence.

For the upcoming year, the staff and I have set a number of goals to enhance our services in support of graduate education at WMU. One goal includes increased outreach and communication to all our constituents. In addition to the e-news, we are excited to partner with the Graduate Student Advisory Committee to begin our Graduate Student Ambassador program that will help us to engage more with our current graduate student body as well as potential future graduate students and our alumni. We will be looking for ways to increase support for our students in their teaching, research and scholarship and global engagement. We will be seeking new ways to provide financial assistance for graduate students, in particular for critical times in their degree programs such as thesis...
or dissertation completion or when faced with devastating life occurrences.

We are excited about the possibilities and welcome your input and support as we move graduate education forward at WMU.

Susan R. Stapleton, Ph.D.
Dean, Graduate College

Dr. Tova Samuels

The Graduate College is proud to announce that Ms. Tova Samuels graduated with her PhD in chemistry in June 2012, the first Western Michigan University affiliated MI-AGEP student to graduate from the College of Arts and Sciences at WMU since the inception of the program. MI-AGEP stands for Michigan Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate, a National Science Foundation grant program geared toward increasing the number of under-represented students in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Social, Behavioral and Economic (SBE) fields.

Besides Western Michigan University, other member institutions are Michigan Tech, Michigan State University, University of Michigan and Wayne State University. AGEP students may be supported in their pursuit of doctoral degrees for up to four years.

Ms. Samuels’ advisor in the Chemistry Department was Dr. Sherine Obare, whose tireless work on behalf of recruiting and retaining highly qualified
students has resulted in a number of AGEP awardees in the Chemistry Department. Ms. Samuels’ specialty in the field of chemistry is nanoscience; her dissertation title is “Strategies for Studying the Interaction of Nanoscale Materials with Chemical and Biological Contaminants.” In this area of specialization, Ms. Samuels primarily studied the interaction of silver, gold, and bimetallic-silver/gold nanoparticles with pesticides, specifically organophosphorus pesticides. These are a particular class of pesticides that are similar in structure to some chemical warfare agents. She also used silver and gold nanoparticles coated with an antibiotic, ampicillin, to study their effects on antibiotic resistant bacteria.

Ms. Samuels received her Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Cedar Crest College in Allentown, PA, in 2007. She chose Western Michigan University for graduate study on the strength of a recommendation by her advisor. She has earned several scholarships, awards and honors at WMU, including the Gwen Frostic Doctoral Fellowship for Spring 2011, the Graduate College Graduate Travel Fund award, 2010, and the MPI Research, Inc. Graduate Research Scholarship, 2011. When asked about her most outstanding experience at WMU, she said the entire experience of earning her PhD was memorable and life-changing. In five years, she sees herself wearing many hats and serving many positions. She has interests that expand far beyond the classroom, leading her to pursue a career as an educator and a business entrepreneur.

Her extra-curricular professional activities include membership in NOBCChE, the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers. She volunteers for the Secondary Education division of NOBCChE and plans to pick up more volunteer opportunities outside of NOBCChE now that she has graduated. She also does free-lance tutoring. Ms. Samuels is interested in promoting an eco-friendly, natural lifestyle and proudly states, “I’m out to change the world!” Given her outgoing personality and her many professional skills, the Graduate College has no doubt that she will do just that and congratulates Ms. Samuels on her achievement in attaining a Ph.D. in Chemistry at WMU.
Meet Tony Dennis

Tony’s career in higher education began in 1990 working as an admissions counselor at Kalamazoo College. In 1993 he was hired as Assistant Director of Admissions and Orientation at Western Michigan University. In June of 1999 he was promoted to Director of Recruitment and Outreach Director/Student Services at Western Michigan University’s College of Aviation. Tony has recruited students throughout the United States and has played a significant role in recruiting some of the top underrepresented (minority) students in the country to attend WMU.

Tony has a Bachelor of Science degree and holds a Master’s degree in Educational Leadership, both from WMU. Tony is Director of Recruitment and Retention in the Graduate College of WMU. His primary responsibility in the Graduate College is to direct graduate recruitment and retention programs throughout the university. He collaborates with department chairs, faculty, and graduate advisors to implement recruiting programs to increase the number of enrolled graduate students. In addition, he promotes WMU as a provider of graduate education to college seniors and recent graduates of undergraduate programs, and to non-traditional students with undergraduate degrees. He serves on many university committees, coordinates retention programs, and directs the Graduate Diversity Program.
On Tuesday, October 23rd, The Graduate Center will sponsor a presentation, “Writing Ethically and Well: Plagiarism, Patchwriting, and the Thesis/Dissertation.” The presenter is Dr. Edward J. Eckel, associate professor at WMU and librarian at WMU’s University Libraries. The event will take place in the Walwood Commons at Walwood Hall, from 1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Many students do not understand fully what plagiarism is or what doing it could mean to their current status as a student or their future career.

We’ve all heard of high-profile cases when a college president or powerful professor is exposed as a plagiarist. They may lose their positions and are frequently blacklisted in academia. If found responsible, students also can sustain
sanctions from failing the class to being dismissed from their programs, up to being dismissed from the university permanently.

Students at all levels may find it difficult to understand the exact definitions of plagiarism and how to avoid it in their writing. Often it is as simple as using another author’s words without quoting, making it appear that the student came up with that pithy quote all by him or herself. For careful professors, it is immediately clear that the student has plagiarized, especially if the professor is familiar with the material. It could mean copying fragments, sentences, or whole paragraphs from a source, without attribution. Again, most professors will catch these types of plagiarism, since often the original source does not sound like the writing of the actual student who has “borrowed” from the source. In addition, there are plagiarism detection software systems, such as Turn-It-In, into which professors can submit papers to determine if plagiarism exists in those documents. Or they can just type the phrase into Google and see if it comes up.

Patchwriting, a form of plagiarism, usually happens when the writer does not fully understand the information he or she is writing about. It generally occurs when students write too closely to the original source without using the appropriate attribution. It may come in the form of copying sections of an original source or multiple sources and presenting the information as if the student is the author: for instance, taking out certain words or phrases but conforming to the wording and structure and ideas of the original (s), creating something like a “patchwork quilt”. It could also mean using a thesaurus to change key words to another word with the same meaning. At the outset, patchwriting can help a student understand a concept; for instance, students can use it as a method to understand content, but it is never appropriate for use in the final paper. By that time students should have come to fully understand the concepts and be able to write fluently on the subject, not using another author’s structure, wording or ideas, unless they are credited fully.
Kevin Grazioli—Winner of Two EMMY awards!

Posted on September 11, 2012

Kevin Grazioli, MBA student at Western Michigan University, has two beautiful golden statues to commemorate his undergraduate film career. His film “Seeing Stars in Indiana” won two EMMY awards from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences in 2012. Completed while he was a senior at Ball State University majoring in telecommunications, the film has been airing on Public Broadcasting System stations across Indiana since 2011.

In “Seeing Stars in Indiana,” Grazioli’s film crew followed professional and amateur astronomers as they traveled through Indiana and to Arizona to explore the night sky.

The film, which was created to, in Grazioli’s words, encourage people to “look up!” was nominated by PBS station WIPB-PBS, which funded the work. It won the overall prize for Health/Science Program or Special. Grazioli also won an EMMY for his role as Director—Post Production. In pre-production, Grazioli proposed the idea, obtained funding, and hired the crew, including narrators for the voice-overs and film editors. In post-production he hired the film editors and consulted with them as they edited the work on its journey to completion. Grazioli has made contacts in Los Angeles while working on the film and this worked to his advantage in hiring his crew.

Since it has come out, the film has been a stepping stone for Grazioli as he has worked on commercials for Wal-Mart as well as on Fox Sports and ESPN. Acting as producer, writer and director, as well as cinematographer, has given him
great experience in his future career. Grazioli, who is from Canton, Michigan, is in his first year in the Master’s of Business Administration program at Western Michigan University. He works on campus as a Graduate Residence Hall Director at Ackley-Schilling. He has been working on a film project with Sindecuse Health Center and wants to pursue the financial and accounting side of filmmaking. For more information please visit his website at www.kevingrazioli.com.

Dr. Zella Jackson Hannum

Posted on September 11, 2012

Western Michigan University’s First AGEP Ph.D. Graduate in Engineering

Zella Jackson Hannum, who will be WMU’s first National Science Foundation (NSF) Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) grant doctoral graduate in engineering, successfully defended her dissertation on May 16, in Walwood Commons. Western Michigan University is partnered in a special AGEP Alliance with the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and Wayne State University in a federally funded initiative aligned with efforts to increase participation among underrepresented groups in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Dr. Hannum was awarded a Ph.D. at the June 2012 commencement ceremony from the Department of Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering, which is chaired by Dr. Paul Engelmann.

Dr. David Lyth, professor and co-director of the Engineering Management Research Laboratory in the College of Engineering, served as Dr. Hannum’s dissertation chair and guided her research, titled Development of a New Technology Balanced Scorecard Derived from Critical Factors that Impact Product Quality. Hannum’s study used multiple linear equations to predict critical factors that drive product quality and that demonstrated significant correlations with measures of product
quality management practices and product quality performance. The second part of the study developed and tested scorecard performance capability and usability and demonstrated significant correlations with measures of scorecard performance capability and managers’ decisions to use the scorecard as a tool in making quality management decisions. Such a performance measurement tool will be important to business environments interested in cultivating new technology ventures (NTVs) through the use of continuous process improvement and quality efforts.

Other members of Dr. Hannum’s dissertation committee include the following: Dr. Tarun Gupta and Dr. Leonard Lamberson, professors, WMU Department of Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering, and Dr. John Lloyd, University Distinguished Professor emeritus, College of Engineering, Michigan State University.

2012 MI-AGEP Dissertation Writing Retreat

Posted on September 11, 2012

The 2012 Michigan Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (MI-AGEP) Dissertation Writing Retreat, held from May 21 to May 24 at the Kellogg Biological Station and Conference Center at Gull Lake, was a great success. For the third year in a row, a total of sixteen students attended from four participating universities: Western Michigan University, Michigan State University, University of Michigan, and Wayne State. The students were in the STEM fields, which include Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, or the SBE fields, which include the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences. MI-AGEP is a National Science Foundation
grant. For the third year, the four day event featured Dr. Wendy Carter-Veale, nationally known facilitator.

Dr. Carter-Veale has master’s degrees from Stanford University and Carnegie Mellon University and an M.S. and Ph.D. from University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is affiliated with University of Maryland- Baltimore County.

While receiving these degrees and raising her daughter, Dr. Carter-Veale experienced many of the problems that all graduate students face: time management issues, family/life/school balance, learning how to network and work with her committee and other contacts, and many other challenges. Research, along with her own experience, showed Dr. Carter-Veale that 50% of all students drop out of graduate school and 17% drop out during the thesis and the dissertation phase. In response to this disturbing statistic, she developed an interactive motivating tutorial designed to eliminate the high attrition rate among graduate students. She produced a powerful presentation that not only inspires students, but gives them workable solutions to their own educational predicaments.

The Kellogg Biological Station and Conference Center is located right on the shores of beautiful Gull Lake and has extensive grounds with gardens as well as self-contained dorms and cafeteria. As in years past, students found the setting to be relaxing and the retreat to be very helpful with their progress to dissertation completion. They began by charting out a course of action and then learned techniques to stay on that plan even in the face of “real life,” which always seems to intrude on the process. These Ph.D. students kept to a rigorous and very structured timeline, which included mini-workshops and one-on-one hour long meetings held by Dr. Carter-Veale, and many hours spent working on their plan for their dissertation, or actually writing their dissertation itself. The appeal of the Dissertation Writing Retreat is that it offers structured writing time, along with consultations on problem areas, for students who are often pulled in many directions from jobs, families and school responsibilities.

Dr. Carter-Veale says, “A good dissertation is a done dissertation,” and that is a truth that she constantly reiterates to participants in her workshops. Another
exercise she promotes is getting the “elevator speech” down pat. This involves distilling one’s thesis into a short, succinct, two minute speech for when one might have to impress a future professor or hiring unit with one’s scholarship, or when speaking to the media. This, along with many other motivating tips from Dr. Carter-Veale, helped bring the attending students further along in their dissertation completion in four days than they might have in four months of working on their own.

Did You Know?

Posted on September 11, 2012

Accelerated Programs at WMU
Accelerated Degree Programs allow eligible students the opportunity to complete both an undergraduate degree and a master’s degree in less time because the student may begin taking graduate courses while still an undergraduate. During their senior year of their undergraduate careers, students in the accelerated program may substitute up to 12 credit hours of graduate course work for undergraduate course work. Once they enter graduate school, they’re able to quickly move through their master’s degree requirements because they’ve already taken several graduate classes.

The following departments offer the accelerated degree program.

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<tr>
<th>Department</th>
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<tr>
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<td>COM</td>
<td>Communication (Accelerated)</td>
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<td>CS</td>
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<td>ECE</td>
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<td>IME</td>
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<td>MUS</td>
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<td>BLS</td>
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<td>PAPR</td>
<td>Paper/Imaging Science &amp; Engineering (Accelerated)</td>
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<td>STAT</td>
<td>Statistics (Accelerated)</td>
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<td>SWRK</td>
<td>Social Work (Accelerated)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLS</td>
<td>Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (Accelerated)</td>
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Dr. Koorosh Naghshineh, Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering (MAE) Department Graduate Adviser, Professor and Director, Noise and Vibration Laboratory notes, “MAE was the first [department] in the university to introduce such a program. It is a great way of recruiting our good undergrad students to our graduate programs.”

To learn more about Accelerated Degree Programs in your discipline, contact your program advisor.

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