Western Michigan College Newsletter, December 1956

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Dr. Russell H. Seibert, vice president for academic affairs, in his meeting with the faculty this winter, made the following remarks concerning the academic future of the college:

We face new tasks and new opportunities, as well as new dangers. All of us are aware, I am sure, what tremendous numerical growth we will experience in the years ahead. Much has been said about the tidal wave of students that will descend upon us within another five years. As we change from a small or medium sized institution to a very large one, we must avoid the idea that being larger means that we are better. We will only become better by concerning ourselves with qualitative standards and making sure that we never confuse size and quality.

As our graduate program properly assumes an increasingly important role, we must avoid the idea that teaching a 500 course carries more prestige than teaching a 100 course. Graduate teaching is of tremendous importance, but so is undergraduate, and it has always been my experience that there are few things more thrilling than the opportunity of opening new intellectual horizons to a class of freshmen. I hope that all of us will always look upon teaching as one of the greatest of the professions and not be concerned with whether we are teaching freshmen or graduate students. In either case it is our responsibility to carry the student forward intellectually as rapidly and as far as he can go.

We have recently reorganized the college into five schools. In the midst of this rapid transition and in the years ahead, I trust we will never lose sight of the need to produce teachers liberally educated and dedicated to the public service. Western Michigan College has always gloried in its role as a great institution for the preparation of teachers. As new curricula are developed, I hope we will continue to hold high the cause of teacher preparation.

Many times I have heard faculty colleagues spelling out the difficulties that confront us as we grow larger. Many of these difficulties are real. At the same time, I hope we are even more aware of the great opportunities we face at the present time. Western is maintaining the highest admission standards ever. This higher level of selectivity and Western's growing prestige as a major institution of higher education will undoubtedly bring to us a still higher caliber of students. Such students should have a stimulating effect upon this faculty, as this faculty should have upon them.

As we face forward, each of us must concentrate on attaining the highest possible standards of teaching effectiveness. By this I do not mean the we should “flunk out” as many as possible, but rather that we should raise every student to the
Among its many statewide engagements this year was an appearance by the WMC choir in Farmington, where they are shown singing for a high school audience. Miss Margo Reynolds, left, is the soloist in a medley from the "Wizard of Oz" arranged by Tom Fulton, a music faculty member and here at the piano. Dr. Elwyn Carter conducts.

level of accomplishment that inspired teaching can achieve. Meanwhile, we must make sure that we maintain warm, human contacts with our students, for no mechanical device has yet been invented that is a substitute for the spark that can be engendered in the heart of a student who knows that some instructor is genuinely interested in his welfare. Different studies indicate that information may be imparted to masses of students in large classes almost as effectively as it can be in small classes, but related studies indicate that students in large, impersonal classes rarely have a continuing interest in that subject and rarely are inspired to continue their education. It is the student who feels some personal importance because of the attention given him by a wise instructor who is apt to go on and make his mark in the world.

As our faculty grows larger, we will be given increasing opportunities to multiply stimulating intellectual contacts. We will enjoy greater opportunities for each instructor to work in the area of his specialization, a situation which, in turn, should help assure greater competence in the various fields of learning. At the same time I would hope that each faculty member would never lose sight of his own need to be an educated and well-rounded individual.

More adequate library resources are still another advantage that will come to us with growth. Not only will greater resources offer better opportunities for research, but they should also provide, to students and faculty alike, opportunities for intellectual enrichment in other ways as well. I regret that even now some departments are negligent in ordering and using materials necessary to keep them abreast of current developments in their respective fields.

Greater library resources, opportunities to teach in the field of one's particular competence, and the growth of graduate work should encourage many of our people to programs of scholarly research and writing with resulting participation in national and regional professional programs. While all research workers are not necessarily good teachers, good teaching is almost impossible without continuous research and wide reading directed to particular purposes even though it may not result in publication.

Finally, if we are to become a university in fact as well as in name, we will find many opportunities opening to us for service to a still greater number of people of the State of Michigan. We would not be worthy of the trust they have placed in us if we did not move forward to meet them.

Let us hope that in the years ahead this institution may emulate that ideal university described by John Masefield in a speech delivered at the University of Sheffield in June, 1946. In memorable prose, he said:

"There are few earthly things more beautiful than a University. It is a place where those who hate ignorance may strive to know, where seekers and learners alike, banded together in the search for knowledge, will honour thought in all its finer ways, will welcome thinkers in distress or in exile, will uphold ever the dignity of thought and learning and will exact standards in these things. They give to the young in their impressionable years, the bond of lofty purpose shared, of a great corporate life whose links will not be loosed until they die. They give young people that close companionship for which youth longs, and that chance of the endless discussion of..."
Britton, Moore, Retired Faculty Members, Die

In recent weeks two former faculty members passed on: Mrs. Leoti Combs Britton, assistant professor emeritus of music, and Miss Mary Moore, assistant professor emeritus of home economics.

Mrs. Britton died Oct. 30 at her home after an extended period of failing health. A native of Kalamazoo who received much of her education in this city, Mrs. Britton joined the WMC faculty in 1919 and continued her vocal instruction until her retirement in 1950.

In addition, Mrs. Britton had directed the choir of the First Methodist church from 1919 until 1952. She received her MA degree from Northwestern University.

Mrs. Britton leaves one son, one daughter and two grandchildren.

Another native of Kalamazoo was Miss Moore, an assistant professor in the home economics department from 1911 until 1947. For many years she had resided with her late sister, Miss Grace Moore, who also served the college.

Miss Moore was educated here and at Columbia and Cornell Universities. Her death came Dec. 7.

the themes which are endless, without which youth would seem a waste of time.

"There are few earthly things more splendid than a University. In these days of broken frontiers and collapsing values, when the dams are down and the floods are making misery, when every future looks somewhat grim and every ancient foothold has become something of a quagmire, wherever a University stands, it stands and shines; wherever it exists, the free minds of men, urged on to full and fair enquiry, may still bring wisdom into human affairs."

$37,700 Grant To Aid Summer Science Work

Western Michigan College has received a grant of $37,700 from the National Science Foundation to finance a special institute next summer in the general sciences.

Dr. George G. Mallinson, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, will direct the program on the campus, which will locally provide transportation, tuition and a stipend for 30 students in the 1957 summer session.

This is the first time that Western Michigan has shared in such a program with the Foundation. Dr. Mallinson, one of the leading national figures in the field of science education, is a former president of a national association in the field.

Grants will go to high school teachers who have been out of college five years or less, with applications due not later than April 1 on the local campus.
Petoskey Resigns; Seek New Grid Coach for 1957

The resignation of Ernest J. (Jack) Petoskey as head football coach was announced early in December by President Paul V. Sangren.

In his letter of resignation, Petoskey said, “I appreciate the support and loyalty of the administration, the faculty and my players throughout my coaching tenure. I am sure that with good direction Western will in time gain its proper place in collegiate football.”

The search for a new head coach has started and it is expected that a successor will be named before the opening of spring practice.

Petoskey came to Western Michigan in the fall of 1952 as a backfield coach under John Gill. After Gill’s appointment as associate director of athletics at the close of the season, Petoskey was appointed to the head coaching position, becoming Western Michigan’s seventh head football coach since the sport was instituted in 1906.

In releasing the announcement of Petoskey’s resignation, President Sangren stated that, “Coach Petoskey has been a loyal and hard working member of Western Michigan’s faculty during his coaching tenure on this campus and we wish him success in all his future endeavors.”

A change in status has come to Miss Lilija Puze, who came to Western in 1953 as a clerk in the order department. She has been promoted to an assistant, and will work in the main library and a part of her time in the department of librarianship laboratory.

A native of Latvia, with three degrees from the University of Latvia, Miss Puze has considerable experience as a teacher and librarian.