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College of Arts and Sciences E-News Issue 26: June 2015

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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

College of *Arts and Sciences*

e-News Issue 26: June 2015

Upcoming CAS events



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Update your information



WMU biomedical sciences student and alumnus team wins \$10,000 Lemelson-MIT prize



CAS News

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Climate Change Studies Minor Available Fall 2015



Starting in the fall of 2015, Western Michigan University will offer a new minor in climate change studies. This minor was created by an interdisciplinary working group of WMU faculty members, the Interdisciplinary Humanities Group for the Study of Climate Change, sponsored by the WMU Center for Humanities. Sensing that climate change is the most important issue facing mankind, one of the major goals of this group was to infuse climate change into the liberal arts education.

According to the group's chair Dr. Denise Keele, associate professor of political science and environmental and sustainability studies, "It was time for us to move beyond the science and let students understand the world they live in. There are challenges coming and our real hope is to teach students something that will be useful to their lives and the future."

The climate change studies minor will be an interdisciplinary and integrative program of study involving expert faculty and key courses from intersecting disciplines. It will provide students with the necessary science-based background and a broad understanding of the human relationship to climate change, including the social and environmental causes, challenges and opportunities for migration and adaptation. The goal of the program is to develop informed and engaged citizens who can use information from multiple disciplines to draw appropriate conclusions and constructively contribute to societal adaptation to global environmental change.

Students who select climate change studies as a minor will:

- address one of the most significant challenges facing humanity
- study at a climate leadership award-winning University
- contribute to societal adaptation to global environmental change
- interact with research faculty from more than 10 departments, and
- connect the sciences to the human experience.

Faculty members interested in climate change are also welcomed to participate in this vital area of study in a variety of ways. "We will come give a lecture for you, help you put climate change into any course, or even get your course included in the minor for a more formal connection," says Keele. There is also the possibility of joining the Interdisciplinary Humanities Group for the Study of Climate Change. Interested faculty can contact Keele or any other advisory board member to discuss ways to get involved. Students interested in more information about the minor can contact [Lisa DeChano-Cook](#) at (269) 387-3536.

Climate change studies advisory board members:

Steve Bertman, Department of Chemistry

Jonathan Bush, Dean's Office
Lisa DeChano-Cook (Program Adviser), Department of Geography
Duane Hampton, Department of Geosciences
Dave Karowe, Department of Biological Sciences
Denise Keele (Chair), Department of Political Science & Environmental and Sustainability Studies
Allen Webb, Department of English

WMU receives one of six statewide college-access awards

BY JEANNE BARON

MAY 8, 2015 | WMU NEWS



From left, Brandy Johnson, executive director of MCAN; Dr. Mary L. Anderson, WMU associate professor of counselor education and counseling psychology; Dr. Ming Li, WMU dean of the College of Education and Human Development; and Dan DeGrow, chair of the MCAN Board of Directors.

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Western Michigan University is one of six "outstanding" college access advocates that have received awards for their contributions to a statewide effort to increase the number of Michiganders who earn college degrees or other postsecondary educational credentials.

The six organizations and individuals, including **Gov. Rick Snyder**, received inaugural College Access Impact Awards from the Michigan College Access Network during its fifth annual conference held **April 12-13** in Lansing.

MCAN singled them out as leaders in the college-access field as well as valuable partners in its effort to increase the number of Michigan students enrolling in, persisting through and completing postsecondary educational credentials. Organization officials say 38.4 percent of the state's residents have such credentials, and MCAN aims to increase the proportion to 60 percent by the year 2025.

WMU's efforts toward achieving that goal earned it the Steward Award: Creating College Access Talent. Recipients of the honor have "dramatically contributed to increasing the skills, talent and knowledge of college-access professionals in Michigan." Accepting the award on behalf of the University were **Dr. Mary L. Anderson**, associate professor of counselor education and counseling psychology, and **Dr. Ming Li**, dean of the College of Education and Human Development.

WMU INITIATIVES CITED

MCAN selected WMU for the Steward Award based on three primary initiatives.

- The University is the first Michigan higher education institution to require and implement a college-readiness training course for its master's degree students in school counseling. The course, launched in fall 2014, was designed by Anderson and led to WMU **President John M. Dunn** being invited that year to be a panelist at the White House College Opportunity Day of Action. Dunn joined **President Barack Obama**, the First Lady, and other governmental and educational leaders at the event to announce new actions to help more students prepare for and graduate from college.
- The University launched the Journal of College Access, a peer-reviewed, academic, online journal focusing on how students aspire to, gain access to, enroll in and persist in higher education institutions. It was co-founded by **Dr. Christopher Tremblay**, associate provost for enrollment management.
- The University has been a leader in supporting and facilitating the statewide professional development course that gives Michigan's school counselors formal training in the college-going process. Anderson and Tremblay served in 2014 as two of the four instructor-facilitators for the new eight-month, hybrid course launched last year by MCAN and Michigan Virtual University. Anderson served as an instructor-facilitator again this year, along with **Dr. Glinda Rawls**, WMU associate professor of counselor education and counseling psychology.

OTHER ADVOCATES, ACTIVITIES

All of the recipients of the 2015 College Access Impact Awards were cited for having a tremendous impact on increasing college readiness, participation and completion in Michigan, particularly among low-income students, first-generation college students and students of color.

They included Gov. Rick Snyder, who received the Compass Award for his advocacy for postsecondary attainment; the Kresge Foundation, which received the Beacon Award for its support of MCAN activities; and Destination Education, which received the Flagship Award for developing a strong as well as sustainable college-access network to serve the cities of Holland and Zeeland.

WMU's award draws attention to the University's extensive efforts related to college access, as well as the number of administrators and other employees who are involved in them.

Education college Dean Li, for instance, serves with Anderson on MCAN's Michigan College and Career Readiness School Counseling Task Force and also has been active at the national level. His more recent activities include being a member of the Michigan delegation that took part in the invitation-only White House convening event on strengthening school counselors and college advising that was held Nov. 17-19, 2014, at San Diego State University.

For more information about the College Access Impact Awards or increasing college attainment in Michigan, visit MCAN's website at micollegeaccess.org.

Coordinator named to oversee WMU's Lansing-area location

BY JEANNE BARON

MAY 7, 2015 | WMU NEWS

Brooks



KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Western Michigan University has selected a new regional coordinator for its regional location in the tri-county Lansing area.

Dr. Lillian Brooks began her duties at WMU-Lansing **Feb. 23**. In her new role, Brooks oversees the regional location's academic programs and enrollment activity. She also contributes to WMU's involvement in the Greater Lansing academic and business communities.

Previously, Brooks worked in the Continuing Education and Workforce Development Division at Lansing Community College, where she was instrumental in the planning and execution of the Encore! Plus 50 Expo in 2014 and 2015.

DR. LILLIAN BROOKS

Before starting her career in higher education, Brooks worked in the fields of marketing and hospitality for more than a decade. She shifted gears when she became a marketing instructor at the University of Phoenix in Orlando, Florida. When she returned to Michigan in 2005, her teaching expanded to include sales management and integrated marketing communications at the University of Phoenix metro Detroit campuses.

Brooks earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in marketing and international management from Georgetown University, a Master of Business Administration from the University of Detroit Mercy and a Doctor of Philosophy in higher, adult and lifelong education from Michigan State University.

She began her doctoral studies at MSU in 2007 and while there, was appointed program coordinator of the College of Education's Summer High School Scholars Program. In this position, she managed and implemented a program designed to interest students in studying education as well as attending MSU. In addition, she served as the College of Education's representative on the Council of Graduate Students and University Council.

Brooks' extensive dissertation research on displaced workers' transition to community earned her high praise and several fellowships as well as opportunities to present her research at several professional conferences. She also is an active member of the Delta Tau Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. and serves on its executive board and its membership and economic development committees.

ABOUT WMU-LANSING

For nearly 30 years, WMU-Lansing has been offering high-quality academic programs to community members as well as current and former LCC students in the Clinton, Eaton and Ingham tri-county area. It provides flexible, affordable programs and exceptional customer service to students who have chosen WMU as the next step for their academic pursuits.

WMU-Lansing is part of the University Center at LCC, which is located at the corner of Capitol Avenue and Shiawassee Street on the college's downtown campus. Students may enroll in an undergraduate degree-completion program, the graduate certificate program in alcohol and drug abuse treatment, or the Master of Public Administration, which has six areas of concentration.

For more information, visit wmich.edu/lansing or call WMU-Lansing at (517) 483-9728.

Data Challenges

Posted on Tuesday, April 28, 2015

Chad Schafer (*BS '95, Statistics*) went on to receive his Ph.D. from UC Berkeley before becoming the director of graduate studies for the department of statistics at Carnegie Mellon University. Now, in addition to his other roles, Schafer has a new challenge as the co-chair of LSST Informatics and Statistics Science Collaboration.

According to Carnegie Mellon news, "Starting in 2022, the Large Synoptic Survey Telescope (LSST) will digitally image the sky every night for a decade. The massive camera will gather roughly 30 terabytes — or 30,000 gigabytes — each night, creating "big data" for astronomy like never before."

Schafer will be in charge of preparing for the data challenges, which includes developing new methods to analyze and gain insight from the data collected by the telescope.

“The unprecedented telescope will create a new paradigm for ground-based astronomy by scanning the sky over and over again, collecting many petabytes of data each year. This data promises to yield exciting new discoveries across the face of astronomy, from the motions of present-day asteroids to establishing the history of our galaxy and understanding the nature of dark matter and dark energy.”

Student awarded prestigious Boren Scholarship for study abroad

BY MARGARET VON STEINEN

MAY 14, 2015 | WMU NEWS



Alex Gibson on an earlier trip to Jordan.

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—A Western Michigan University student from Parchment will study Arabic in Jordan for the 2015-16 academic year through a prestigious federal scholarship.

Alex Gibson will receive a David L. Boren Scholarship of \$16,500 to study abroad at the Qasid Arabic Institute in Amman, Jordan, where he will focus on Arabic language.

Gibson was selected as one of 171 undergraduate Boren Scholarship recipients out of a pool of 750 applicants from around the country.

He and his fellow Boren Scholars are studying Arabic, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, Swahili and more than 30 other languages while living in countries throughout Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.

ALEX GIBSON

A graduate of Parchment High School, Gibson is a junior working on a bachelor's degree based on a self-designed major in Arabic language and Middle Eastern studies.

He is WMU's fifth Boren Award recipient since the program was founded in 1994. His \$16,500 scholarship will pay all of his study abroad-related expenses.

ABOUT THE BOREN AWARDS

Boren scholarships and fellowships, collectively known as the Boren Awards, give both undergraduate and graduate students the chance to develop their language and international skills in areas of the world that are critical to America's continued security and stability.

Sponsored by the National Security Education Program, they are part of a major federal initiative aimed at increasing the number of U.S. citizens who possess foreign language and international skills. Scholars receive up to \$20,000 while fellows receive up to \$30,000, but all Boren Award winners agree to work in the federal government for at least one year.

"To continue to play a leadership role in the world, it is vital that America's future leaders have a deep understanding of the rest of the world," says University of Oklahoma President **David Boren**, who as a U.S. senator was the principal author of the legislation that created the National Security Education Program and the scholarships and fellowships that bear his name. "As we seek to lead through partnerships, understanding of other cultures and languages is absolutely essential."

More than 5,400 students have received Boren Awards since 1994, and many of these former scholars and fellows are today contributing to the critical missions of U.S. government agencies in Washington, D.C., and around the world.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

WMU provides assistance to apply for grants that support long-term linguistic or cultural immersion in a foreign country. Students are encouraged to learn more by contacting Dr. Michelle Metro-Roland at michelle.metro-roland@wmich.edu or (269) 387-5890.

Metro-Roland is director of faculty and global program development and the University's advisor for students wishing to apply to most of the nation's competitive scholarship programs that have an international focus, including the Fulbright, Boren and Gilman programs.

For more information about the Boren Awards, visit that program's website at borenawards.org. For details about student and faculty funding opportunities, visit the Haenicke Institute for Global Education website at wmich.edu/international.

Student Given Creative Writing Fellowship

DJ DeLong

Creative writing and history major

College of Arts and Sciences, Marketing and Communications student employee



Western Michigan University students have multiple opportunities to gain experience and value during their academic careers. While WMU offers numerous internships, fellowships and grants, students can also expand to find these opportunities off-campus, like Spanish major and English minor, Alice Kinney. Kinney has been granted the opportunity to participate in the Nature in Words Fellowship at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute in Hastings, Mich. The goal of the fellowship is to develop the writer's creativity by deepening her appreciation of nature and the sciences and is rewarded based on the quality of the submitted proposal. The fellowship will allow Kinney to expand and explore writing.

Kinney grew up in Hastings and Pierce Cedar Creek had always been a part of her childhood. However, it was not until last December that she discovered this unique opportunity. She spent her free time thinking of creative proposal ideas.

Kinney said, "I couldn't resist applying. The idea of reading, writing and playing in the woods was pretty tempting."

Kinney will spend 11 weeks living in-residence with her faculty-mentor, Alisha Siebers, researching, collaborating and enjoying her natural surroundings. As her faculty-mentor, Siebers offer advice, recommend new areas of focus and guiding the revision process. She will coach Kinney through her writing project and to talk through options. When asked about the fellowship, Siebers said, "We have the potential to educate a wide audience." The project has the kind of interdisciplinary components the institute values. The brochure Kinney is designing is about the effects of nature on children that will help the institute expand the demographics of

their visitors. Kinney's final research on the representation of nature in children's books will also benefit many education majors at WMU and other institutions.

Kinney spent several weeks working on her proposal and application. Although she had the help from Siebers, Kinney strived to go through the process of proposal writing as independently as she could. This process involved collecting signatures, prioritizing, selecting sample works, and creating calendars, tentative books list and budgets. Kinney said, "When I handed in my hefty proposal, I felt very accomplished."

The six parts of Kinney's proposal included research, creating a brochure, writing and illustrating a children's book, keeping a journal, completing weekly reading material, and committing to give public readings of her book following the fellowship. When asked about the amount of work she plans to take on, Kinney said, "I didn't want my proposal to seem stagnant. Each part is very distinct, but in a way they all flow together." By having so much variation throughout her time at the institute, she will be able to stay focused and intrigued in her work since it will always be changing.

The fellowship serves as a challenging, new experience for Kinney to improve her writing skills. She will also get the chance to discover new interests and talents. The opportunity is a great growing experience for both Kinney and Siebers. It also opens up a lot of possibility in future education for Pierce Cedar Creek Institute and WMU. At the end of the fellowship, Kinney will have a signature project that she can use to help her navigate finding a job and that showcases her multiple talents.

Both Kinney and Siebers encourage students to pursue this opportunity or others like it. Siebers said, "It never hurts to try!" She also recommends reading the grant proposal requirements carefully and learning all you can about the granting institution so that you can tailor your proposal to what they require. Kinney advises students to take a break from what's wearing them out and when they're able to apply to this fellowship or any other similar opportunity, do it, adding, "It's worth the time and I'm pretty sure you'll love it!"

Sociology Students Visit Prison Museum



Fourteen Western Michigan University Department of Sociology students recently spent time in prison—the Cell Block 7 Prison Museum in Jackson, Michigan. The only prison exhibit within the walls of an operating penitentiary, Cell Block 7 is not a replica of a prison, it's a real prison where thousands of convicts have served hard time. Students, accompanied by WMU

sociology professor, Aaron Kinzel, walked the same corridors, visited the same cells and passed the same gun towers as some of the most hardened criminals in Michigan's history.

Kinzel's pedagogy has intentionally been hands-on because he is determined to give his students real-life experience. Recognizing that most students are naive when it comes to the prison experience—and rightly so—Kinzel sought out ways to give them more than lessons from a textbook. Kinzel wanted, "students to sit in that space, in a cell, and experience how horrific the conditions are. I wanted to shock them." Clare Tell, a sociology student from Ann Arbor, Mich., thought she was familiar with what goes on in a prison, but had an emotional reaction during the visit. In particular, a notepad where former prisoners and corrections officers shared their memories left an impression. Tell said, "I read every line and almost cried. It was emotional. I can't stop thinking about the notes." One former inmate stated he stayed in that very cell for 20 years and that hit Tell particularly hard. "It made me sad. I had kind of an idea of what it would be like, but standing there, it was so vivid and so real."

She also recalled the showers as a pivotal moment of the visit. "The showers are not even a foot apart. They stood next to someone they didn't know, next to someone who committed crimes they had no idea about and had to shower next to them."

Kinzel arranged this visit not only to give his students a realistic view of the corrections system, but also to help students understand how choices and circumstances can lead people in certain directions. "I get what it's like to grow up in a life of crime and poverty. That can shape your decisions." Kinzel's willingness to open up about his personal history and determination to humanize those in the corrections system is why students like Tell consider him to be such an influential professor. "I appreciate him because he teaches outside of the book. He tells the truth and doesn't leave anything out to spare feelings," said Tell. While she isn't sure what she wants to do professionally, because of Kinzel's influence Tell wants to help those in prison. She added, "I want to help. I can't think of them rotting in prison in sub-par conditions."

This fall Kinzel is taking another group of students to the Cell Block 7 Museum. Students with interest in sociology and criminal justice are welcome to attend and may [contact Kinzel](#) to be included on any correspondence. When asked why he is offering another group of students this same opportunity, he stated that this type of experience "is a good place to start if you are interested in criminal justice. It is a good place to get exposed to it."