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Jordan university turns to WMU to build its faculty

Seven of the eight Jordanian Ph.D. candidates with Dean Donald McCloud, Haenicke Institute

Headed up by a Western Michigan University alum, Tafila Technical University in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is sending graduate students to WMU to help build the faculty of this new university.

The first cohort of eight doctoral associates has successfully completed their first academic year, studying engineering, physics, or English literature. A tea honoring the TTU students was hosted by the Haenicke Institute in April. (click here for photo gallery)

Dr. Sultan Abu-Orabi, who earned a master's in chemistry at WMU in 1977, followed by a Ph.D. at the University of Michigan, was asked by Jordan's King Abdullah II in 2005 to serve as the first president of Tafila Technical University. In an effort to encourage development in South Jordan, the King granted university status to a regional college that had previously granted only two-year degrees to found TTU.

"WMU is where I first received my M.Sc. in chemistry in 1977 under the supervision of late R.E. Harmon, and where, 27 years later, I was privileged to receive the Distinguished Achievement Award for 2004," Abu-Orabi said. "A pivotal priority of Tafila Technical University and of my presidency is to enhance the participation of our students and faculty members in an increasingly global society, an effort which has implied a growing commitment to internationalize our campus and the provision of new opportunities for interaction with a number of leading academic institutions overseas."
"Though our global education efforts are far-reaching, nowhere are they more promising and pronounced than with WMU," he said. "Two years ago, I and senior leaders of TTU traveled to Michigan in hopes of deepening our relationship. And in what is possibly the most promising indicator of the growing strength of our partnership is the fact that WMU now hosts a dozen graduate students from TTU."

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan plays an important role in the Middle East, with 5.5 million inhabitants and gross domestic product that is growing by seven percent annually. Though the country allocates more than 22 percent of its national budget to the Ministry of Education, it faces growing demand for higher education; approximately 70,000 Jordanian students pass the Tawjihi, the national secondary exit exam, to compete for 40,000 seats in the country's 10 public and 12 private universities.

Tafila Technical University is the first technical university and the ninth public university in Jordan. The city of Tafila is home to 70,000 inhabitants and is located 180 km south of Amman, in an area rich with natural resources, such as potash, cement, oil, shale and mines. Within close proximity is Petra, an ancient archeological site know as one of the "new wonders of the world."

![Petra, Jordan's most famous landmark](image.jpg)

Five of the Jordanian doctoral associates are enrolled in the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences and three are enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences; one in physics and two in English.

Dr. John Gesink, chair of Applied Science in CEAS, said his department is pleased to have the opportunity to work with the TTU students.
"The Electrical and Computer Engineering Department is indeed honored that TTU has chosen us to participate in furthering the education of eight of their faculty to the Ph.D. level," Gesink said. "Two semesters have passed since these students arrived and we are pleased to report that all is better than could be expected. We find this group to be very serious, capable students, who are eager to learn, willing to work very hard, and who contribute towards enlightening our academic environment and are willing to share a bit of their Jordanian culture with us. It is indeed a challenge and an opportunity, and we look forward to their continuation and successful completion."

A TTU delegation visited WMU in March 2007 for an extensive series of meetings with senior administration and 16 academic departments. A general memorandum of agreement was signed, with the main focus of initial collaboration to train TTU instructors at the Ph.D. level to expand their faculty capacity. To this end, WMU reviewed 32 profiles and admitted the following 8 Ph.D. students in fall 2008:

- Qais Hashim Ibraheem Al-safasfeh
- Shadi Adel Hoh'd Bedoor
- Nabeel Taiseer Alshhabtat
- Hassan Ali Abdallah Al-Momani
- Abdullah Kheiruh Awad Shehabat
- Jumana Ali Al-shawawreh
- Abdi-Llah Noor Mahmood Al-shabatat
- Ahamad Falah Msfouh Ja' afreh

Qais Hashim Ibraheem Al-safasfeh
- Computer and Electrical Engineering

Shadi Adel Hoh'd Bedoor
- Physics

Nabeel Taiseer Alshhabtat
- Mechanical Engineering

Hassan Ali Abdallah Al-Momani
- English

Abdullah Kheiruh Awad Shehabat
- English

Jumana Ali Al-shawawreh
- Computer and Electrical Engineering

Abdi-Llah Noor Mahmood Al-shabatat
- Computer and Electrical Engineering

Ahamad Falah Msfouh Ja' afreh
- Computer and Electrical Engineering

Brett Berquist, Haenicke Institute executive director of international programs, visited TTU in July 2007 to meet with the admitted Ph.D. students and to discuss collaboration with TTU. During this, visit President Abu-Orabi phoned President John Dunn to congratulate him on joining WMU.
In their own words—two Jordan students comment on studying at WMU

Abdi-Liah Noor Marmod Al-Shabatat is one of the students pursuing a Ph.D. in Electrical and Computer Engineering. He arrived in Kalamazoo in August 2007, and his wife and four children, ages 5 years old and younger, arrived in December.

Al-Shabatat said he chose WMU based on a personal recommendation from TTU’s President Sultan. "Dr. Sultan liked WMU so much he is willing to find opportunities for TTU students to come to WMU," Al-Shabatat said. The focus of Al-Shabatat’s research is wireless networking, which will be complemented by the 16 years he served in the Royal Jordanian Air Force as a telecommunications specialist, earning the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Upon completion of his Ph.D. Al-Shabatat will return to Jordan to teach at TTU.
Professor Liang Dong is Al-Shabatat's faculty mentor and he took classes with Drs. Frank Severance and Ikhlas Abdel-Qader during his first year at WMU. He said the strength and quality of WMU's faculty and labs were the main reasons he chose WMU, and he very much likes Kalamazoo.

"This is the fifth time I've been in the United States and I have visited Texas, Iowa, Florida and Mississippi," Al-Shabatat said. "Sometime when you go to another place, after a short time you can judge if for yourself—are you at the correct place? I came to the correct university. People are nice in Kalamazoo, we feel safe, WMU has good staff and professors, and I like that people smile a lot. I've been to many countries where I've asked people for directions to a place and they just look at me like I'm crazy. In Kalamazoo, people will not only tell you where to go, but I've had people lead me to the place I need to get to."

In addition to his research, Al-Shabatat hopes to have the opportunity to teach at WMU to help him prepare for a professorship at TTU.

"Just because you take driving lessons, it doesn't mean you are ready to drive," he said. "You need to practice, and I hope to get that opportunity during my time at WMU."

Dr. Gwen Tarbox has worked with both of the TTU students working on English Ph.D.'s. and said they are "welcome additions to the department.

WMU President Diether Haenicke hosted a luncheon at the Gilmore House in March 2007 to welcome TTU's administrators and faculty. Left to right: Dr. Al Nawafleh (TTU), Said AbuBakr, Diether Haenicke, Janet Pisaneschi, Sultan AbuOrabi (TTU), Tom Kent, David Shields, Marwan Obeidat (TTU), Brett Berquist

"Abdullah Shehabat and Hassan Al-Momani bring an international perspective to our classrooms and they are working on challenging and important interdisciplinary dissertation
topics," Tarbox said. "As their professor in Introduction to Graduate Studies, I found myself learning as much from them as they were learning from me."

Hassan Ali Abdallah Al-Momani plans to complete a dissertation comparing media discourse in Jordan and the United States. His mentor is Dr. Paul Johnston, and he has successfully team taught classes with English Professors Gwen Tarbox, Jonathan Adams, Lisa Minnick and Phil Egan. He said the department's graduate advisor, Dr. Jana Schulman, has also been quite supportive.

"WMU has been a very good choice," said Al-Momani, who lives near campus with his wife and a toddler, with a baby on the way. "The facilities are beautiful, everyone has been very helpful to us, and the staff and faculty make us feel like we are part of this community."

Al-Momani received tangible affirmation of his value to WMU, when he received the English Department's International Student Award in April, which included a $225 honorarium. "I am very thankful to my professors, the Haenicke Institute and WMU's president for taking good care of us," Al-Momani said.

Upon completion of his Ph.D., Al-Momani plans to return to TTU to teach English literature and linguistics.

"I will be a good ambassador for WMU by telling my friends and colleagues about how helpful my professors have been," he said. "I will encourage my students and relations to attend WMU to earn graduate degrees from this distinguished university."
Masquerading was a ball

Ballroom and tango dancing were the lessons of the night for the more than 130 WMU students who donned formal attire and masks to attend the Masquerade Ball April 11 hosted by the International Programs Council.

IPC Masquerade Ball photos

The ball was also a venue to honor many IPC members who were recognized for their participation in one of WMU’s largest and most active student organizations. Many attendees, like Hashim Alsharif, a sophomore from Riyadh, Saudia Arabia, stayed until the last dance about midnight.

"It was like the Oscars at Western," said Alsharif, who is majoring in biomedical sciences. "International students have waited all year for this event. Hopefully it will encourage other international students to get involved in IPC. I especially liked seeing everyone dressed up."

The ball featured dance lessons by a duo from the University of Michigan Ballroom Dance Team, Portage native Keith Reisinger, and Kasia Strzalkowski, from West Bloomfield.

"While my dance partner and I are used to seeing diverse groups of people at U of M working together, we rarely see these same groups of people socializing with one another," Reisinger said. "This event created an atmosphere where that interaction was possible and everyone seemed excited to learn to ballroom dance."

Stephen Wood, Haenicke Institute international programming intern, said the ball was a great success and that plans are underway to "make it even better for next year."

Photos taken by professional photographer Anthony Dugal can be viewed online.
Comments from other participants:

Chitra Tarigopula  
Bangalore, India  
Junior majoring in finance and integrated supply management

"IPC's Masquerade Ball was an event that integrated elegance and fun. The best part of the event was the dance session by two well-trained and highly knowledgeable students from University of Michigan that taught us some movements of ballroom dance. This event can be summarized by excellent ambiance, good food and great music."

Daing S. Nasir  
Born in Kalamazoo, but from Malaysia  
Junior majoring in film, video & media studies

"The ball came at a good time for me and my friends to get together to unwind and relieve our stress from our respective hectic schedules. It was like a celebration for the Malaysian Students Organization to reminisce our memories, fun and laughter of the year. Kudos to IPC for recognizing the international diversity that exists at Western. I couldn't have asked for a more wonderful, colorful and memorable event this semester."

Pooja Suresh  
Bangalore, India  
Junior majoring in management, minoring in dance

"I thoroughly enjoyed the Masquerade Ball. It was a really nice event to go to as an international student because I did not have a 'prom' to go to back home. Also, the awards ceremony set the tone for the rest of the evening with its warm and encouraging message. I especially loved the dance lessons because I am a student of the College of Fine Arts, as well. It was also great to meet many other international students from various countries, which I don’t get to do at other events. It was a memorable experience."
Digging into the archaeology of New France

There has been considerable interest in the archaeology of New France at WMU over the past few years since investigations of the Fort St. Joseph archaeological site have intensified.

Fort St. Joseph was a trading post established in Niles, Michigan by the French in 1691 and it served as a hub of commercial, religious, and military activity for a community of French, English, and Native peoples for nearly a century. It was discovered on the ground by WMU archaeologists in 1998 and is the focus of the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project, a partnership between WMU, the City of Niles, and other community groups.

Many of the leading experts on the 'New France' period of history are at Laval University, founded in 1663 in Quebec City. In collaboration with the Anthropology, History, and Foreign Language Departments, the Haenicke Institute established a bilateral student exchange with Laval. Dr. Vincent Desroches, WMU foreign language professor, takes students to study Quebec culture and intensive French every other summer. WMU has hosted several exchange students and faculty visits over the last 3 years.

In May 2008, five graduate student members of the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project team under the direction of Dr. Michael Nassaney, WMU anthropology professor, traveled to Ottawa, Montreal, Québec, and Fort Niagara (western New York) to visit and meet with archaeologists, museum curators, and French colonial scholars. The group was treated to private tours of 16th-18th century artifact collections and ongoing excavations associated with the early settlement of New France by colleagues from the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Pointe-a-Callière Museum, and Laval University, among other institutions. One of the high points of the trip was the tour chief archaeologists gave of the French explorers Jacques Cartier and Jean-François
Roberval's 1541 encampment on the St. Lawrence River, one of the oldest European sites in North America. The students and Nassaney were also welcome guests at the University of Montreal and Laval University's archaeological field schools.

Chateau Frontenac — Quebec's most famous landmark

The ultimate destination was Québec to attend the annual conference of the French Colonial Historical Society, where the group met up with two other members of their team, Dr. José António Brandão (History Department) and Dr. Terrance Martin (Curator of Anthropology, Illinois State Museum and WMU alumnus). Collectively they presented six papers in a symposium entitled "Ten Years of Archaeology at Fort St. Joseph: A French Colonial Mission-Garrison-Trading Post Complex in the North American Interior." Nassaney said the session was well attended and very well received.

The conference was held in Québec in honor of the 400th anniversary of its founding, so the city was bustling with celebratory activities. The WMU group also made contact with students and faculty members Drs. Réginald Auger and Alison Bain of Laval University, one of WMU's institutional partners.

"They are very interested in our work at Fort St. Joseph," Nassaney said. "Professor Bain will visit WMU this fall to speak in a symposium on 'The French in North America: Historical and Archaeological Perspectives' organized by the Canadian Studies Initiative. The research trip was a valuable learning experience for all the members of the team. We visited many of the places that we had only read about, saw important archaeological collections up close, and made valuable professional contacts. We had the opportunity to disseminate the results of our research to a wide audience interested in French colonial history and archaeology. Information obtained from the tours, site visits, museum exhibits, and resources that I learned about will be incorporated into a new course that I will be teaching in Fall 2008 called 'The Archaeology of New France' (ANTH 3450)."
About the Fort Joseph Archaeological Project Fort St. Joseph was a trading post along the St. Joseph River in Niles and at times during its 90-year existence was controlled by the French, the British and, briefly, a group of Spaniards. The site was rediscovered in 1998 when a group called Support the Fort Inc. asked Nassaney to look for the fort. Nassaney narrowed his search to an area that Dr. Joseph L. Peyser, a local historian, had identified as the likely location of the lost fort. It wasn't until 2002 that Nassaney and student workers could make the site accessible for serious research by using innovative engineering equipment to dewater the area being examined. Since that time, a significant number of artifacts and the structural remains of Fort St. Joseph have been discovered.

Comments from students and participants

LisaMarie Malischke
Public Outreach Coordinator
Fort St Joseph Archaeological Project

I am grateful for the experience of traveling to the French Colonial Historical Society annual conference in Quebec City. Stopping at historical and educational centers in cities such as Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec and Niagara has given me a better sense of the interconnectedness, yet regional distinctiveness of colonial peoples, practices and constructed environments within New France. In addition to gaining new insights into New France, the fur trade, and the lived colonial experience, I was able to observe how various historical places choose to present their cultural heritage to the public. At the conference, I met many colleagues researching New France and have been stimulated to continue my research from new angles. The conference was also an opportunity for our WMU group to share the uniqueness of the remains and excavations of Fort St. Joseph. This truly was an once-in-a-lifetime experience.
Andrew Beaupré  
MA student - Department of Anthropology  
Hometown: Morgan, Vermont  

For me the trip to Quebec put my study of New France in a new light. The ability to physically wander through the metropolitan aspect of the colony gave an interesting perspective on the dichotomy that was present in the 17th century. Our study at Fort St. Joseph exemplifies a frontier outpost which has a new meaning when juxtaposed with the walls of the Citadel of Quebec. As for the conference, I was able to meet and discuss my thesis research on religion in New France with top minds including Cornelius Jaenen, the author of several texts that are paramount in the field. The conference had a very informal feel, which enabled me to discuss my work and gain further insights from other scholars working in the same research area.

Erin Claussen  
MA student –Department of Anthropology  
Hometown: Mahomet, IL  

In addition to providing an opportunity to present a paper entitled "Interpreting the Material Remains of Fort St. Joseph" at the French Colonial Historical Society Conference in Quebec City, the trip was also an opportunity to deepen my understanding of the historical context of the site of Fort St. Joseph in Niles, Mich. The material culture of Fort St. Joseph will be the subject of my master's thesis, and learning more about the fort's spatial and temporal relation to other places and events in New France history by having the opportunity to see such places and their material remains first hand will be invaluable to my future research. The behind-the-scenes tours provided by colleagues of my advisor, Dr. Nassaney at museums, archaeological sites, and laboratories in Ottawa (The Museum of Civilization), Montreal (Pointe-a-Calliere), and Quebec (excavations and laboratories of/associated with Laval Universite) furthered my interests in archaeological collections management and interpretation, a subject that I will be incorporating into my thesis research.

Meghan Cook  
MA student—Department of Anthropology  
Hometown: Ashaway, Rhode Island  

At the conference for the French Colonial Historical Society, I was able to engage and share ideas with prominent scholars, and create connections that will be beneficial to my future research and career goals. By visiting multiple museums and archaeological sites, I experienced the broader context of New France and the fur trade, and can now better visualize the site I work on, Fort St. Joseph, and its place within this larger framework. This trip also helped me to put my own thesis research on wampum into a broader perspective. While visiting sites and museums I was also able to identify research collections that will play a strong role in the construction of my thesis.
Two Western Michigan University students were recently awarded highly competitive Boren awards from the National Security Education Program to conduct research in Kenya and China.

Courtney Marie Buck, a political science graduate student working on a master’s degree in international development administration, received a Boren fellowship worth more than $19,000 to conduct biofuel research in Kenya. Buck was one of 92 recipients selected from a pool of 388 applications.

Jamie LeBlanc-Hadley, a senior majoring in global and international studies with a minor in Chinese, received a Boren Scholarship worth $11,300 to attend Beijing Language and Culture University for the 2008-09 academic year.

LeBlanc-Hadley was one of 150 scholarship recipients from a pool of 697 applications. She was also awarded a WMU President’s Grant for Study Abroad worth $8,000 in April, which is a needs-based scholarship for overseas foreign language study supported by a $5 million endowment.

"The Boren scholarships and fellowships through the National Security Exchange Program are very competitive national awards similar to the Fulbright awards," said Brett Berquist, executive director of international programs at WMU’s Haenicke Institute for Global Education and NSEP campus representative. "Jaime and Courtney worked closely with their faculty mentors and me to prepare a strong application. Their unique study projects would not have been possible without this support. We are pleased that two of three applications from WMU were funded this year, and we hope to see more applications next year."

NSEP focuses on the critical languages and cultures of Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America. Participants are involved in innovative, intensive, and long-term
programs designed to provide meaningful opportunities to gain significant competencies in these languages and cultures. The awards are unique in the commitment of recipients to proceed into public service with the U.S. Federal Government upon completion of their academic studies.

A native of Broomfield, Colorado, Buck will spend 10 months, beginning in late May, working predominantly with KOMAZA, a community-based organization focused on sustainable agricultural enterprises and poverty reduction in the Coast Province that she worked for as a volunteer in summer 2007. She plans to help implement a pilot project promoting small-scale jatropha farming to improve energy self-sufficiency and environmental sustainability in rural Kilifi District communities.

"Completing my proposed program will provide me with the credits needed to finish my master's degree and pursue a career in East African sustainable development," Buck said. "My proposed program involves both domestic and overseas training. The domestic component involves nearly three months of intensive language training prior to departing for Kenya to improve my conversational Swahili skills. The overseas component combines supervised research with my unpaid internship at KOMAZA. My research will be carried out with Dr. John Onyari and other biological chemists and biofuel specialists at the University of Nairobi, with whom Western Michigan University shares an academic memorandum of understanding encouraging collaboration in biodiesel research and development projects."

WMU Political Science Professors Paul Clements and Sushi Datta-Sandhu served as Buck's mentors and assisted her in applying for the Boren Fellowship. "Courtney richly deserves the award," Clements said. "She is one of the strongest students the Masters of Development Administration program has seen in recent years, and she is particularly committed to improving conditions in developing countries. This fellowship allows her to address two critical issues for developing countries—poverty and energy security. She will also be strengthening her Swahili language skills and building on her foundation of professional skills and resources."

While in China, LeBlanc-Hadley will be working on her senior thesis project for the Lee Honors College, which focuses on Chinese economic policy, primarily in Tibet. Her husband, Daniel Hadley, a WMU junior and former Marine who served in Iraq, will also be studying at BLCU under the direction of WMU Chinese language professor Dr. Xiaojun Wang, where they will take intensive Chinese courses, in addition to other academic courses applicable to their degrees. Hadley introduced his wife to Chinese in his freshman year, and she introduced him to global and international studies, which is now his major.
"I'll be focusing on economic policy that China has enacted and, obviously, given recent relations with China and Tibet, I'd like to visit there as well," Le-Blanc Hadley said. "There's data available in China that's not available over here. My main objectives are to become functionally fluent in Mandarin, to gain better insight into contemporary Chinese culture, and to analyze Chinese texts and data related to the country's economic policies that impact U.S. national security as it relates to the economy and trade."

Professor Gregory Veeck of WMU's Geography Department served as Jaime's undergraduate research director and assisted Jaime with crafting her NSEP proposal. "Jaime is an excellent student and certainly deserves the considerable national recognition indicated by this award," Veeck said. "It is an honor for her, and also, I might add, for WMU. The awards for China are particularly competitive because of China's growing international roles in the global economy and the political stage and the Olympics this year. Certainly, in the Geography Department, and I am sure across campus, all her faculty would second my opinion. It has been a pleasure to work with her and I know she will make the most of the opportunity."

As requirements of their awards, both Buck and LeBlanc-Hadley will give back through service to the United States intelligence community utilizing the language skills they will gain through their experiences abroad. The work could include serving as a Foreign Service officer overseas or as an intelligence analyst in the states.

To learn more about the National Security Exchange Program scholarships and fellowships, contact the Haenicke Institute at (269) 387-5890 or write: study-abroad@wmich.edu.
Study abroad experience translates into a career

Ann in front of Buddha statue, British museum, London

Immersion in the culture and language of France in college while studying abroad was the first step in a career path that led Ann Ganz to Haenicke Institute Study Abroad in September 2006.

After studying French for several years while in high school and college, Ganz participated in a WMU study abroad program that landed her at the University of Upper Brittany in Rennes, France. Because she grew up in a small Michigan town, she said the idea of going abroad was a bit daunting, as well as exciting.

"I studied French language, history and culture in a program taught entirely in French by native speakers," Ganz said. "I was selected to be a live-in tutor for a host family with two adolescent daughters and a two-year-old son. The parents didn't speak English, so I was completely immersed in the French language while in their home.

"As I helped my French sisters with their homework for their English classes, I observed that although they were only 12 and 14, each one already had an impressive start in studying English and one other foreign language," she said. "This convinced me that we should work harder in the U.S. to establish more foreign language programs in elementary and junior high schools, especially since second language acquisition is easier for younger students."
Her interest beyond the borders of the United States was further sparked by her French father, who she said enjoyed discussing politics and his perspective on U.S. foreign policy. While living with her French family, she also met many people of her grandparent’s generation and remembers being deeply touched by their heartfelt expressions of great admiration and praise for the "American heroes" who helped liberate France from Nazi rule in WWII.

"These experiences gave me personal insights into French culture, and hearing French in context on a daily basis improved my fluency to a level I could not have achieved through coursework alone," she said. "I also learned fun things that one doesn’t normally get in a classroom, like slang and the "baby talk" they used when speaking with their toddler. My host family included me in all their activities, so I was able to participate in the daily life of a typical French family. I enjoyed their more relaxed pace of life, leisurely family meals together, and many other things, such as accompanying my French mother to buy groceries in all the small neighborhood shops as she visited with the shopkeepers."

She fondly recalls memories from her college study abroad experience of spending weekends with her French host family at their cottage in St. Malo, a seaside town in Brittany founded in the sixth century. Years later, she returned on a two week tour of France with her daughter’s high school class that included a stop in St. Malo.

"I was able to see my daughter and her classmates fall in love with the town’s picturesque charm," she said. "They explored the old walled city and watched the sun set from the top of the citadel. It was wonderful to share their excitement for this place that holds so many special memories for me."

Ganz currently advises WMU students going abroad to France, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Canada. She has a BA from WMU in French and linguistics and a MA from the
University of Michigan in Romance Linguistics. She has taught French in programs ranging from grade school through college, including adjunct teaching in WMU’s French program.

Ann with WMU students at Negocia in Paris

Ganz’s personal and professional travels have included visits to Toronto, Montreal and Quebec, Canada, Mexico, France, Spain and the United Kingdom. She recently accompanied two WMU faculty, who led a business abroad short-term program to Paris and London. The group attended lectures at Negocia, a WMU exchange partner university in Paris, and Brunel University in London to learn about ways in which culture affects business practices in other countries. They also had opportunities to visit local business and attend a trade fair in Paris. This was the first trip to Europe for several participants.

"I was very impressed by how quickly they adapted to the new surroundings and their open-mindedness towards the cultural differences they encountered," she said. "I’m confident that they’ll be ready and willing to take advantage of opportunities to travel and/or work abroad in the future."

Ganz said her study abroad trip while in college was "one of the most treasured and beneficial experiences" of her life. "It is very rewarding to assist students in planning an overseas adventure as part of their college years," she said.
Canadian Bronco footballer and teammates preparing for 2008 season
by Katherine Peach

Bronco football kicks off the 2008 season with an away game versus the University of Nebraska in Lincoln on Aug. 30. The team's home opener is Sept. 6 against Northern Illinois University, which includes a huge pre-game tailgate party hosted by area corporations in an annual campus tradition known as CommUniverCity Night.

The Broncos are a Division I team of 100 players that competes in the West Division of the Mid-American Conference, which encompasses New York to Illinois. Division-I status is the highest level in college football, a rating based on stadium size and attendance. The team's 2008 schedule includes six home games (schedule link). Special events, such as CommUniverCity Night and Homecoming on Oct. 4 can fill Western Michigan University's 30,200-seat Waldo Stadium.

"CommUniverCity Night is the first home game of the year," said Mat Kanan, director of athletic media relations. "The entire baseball field is covered with tents from corporations that sponsor the pre-game events. It's tailgating and barbeque all in one."

The 2008 season marks the 71st anniversary of the Broncos playing in Waldo Stadium. The original stadium, built in 1939, cost $250,000. The stadium underwent a massive renovation in 2003 and the Donald Seelye Athletic Center added to the east end of the stadium cost $25 million alone.
Canadian wide receiver comments on the U.S. game

Caleb Clark, 20, is a wide receiver on the team who grew up near Calgary, Alberta—a 39-hour drive from Kalamazoo. He is a junior studying advertising and promotion and was a stand-out high school football player. He made his way to WMU on the suggestion of a Calgary contact who knows Bill Cubit, WMU's head football coach.

"Over the years I have really found Kalamazoo to be my second home," Clark said. "The U.S. is very welcoming to foreign students. They really embrace international students' culture and beliefs. It's not as daunting as they might think. In terms of being a student athlete, we have the same amount of academic work load, plus, we have the constraint of practice every day and the pressures of wanting to be on the field to play."

Clark said coming from Canada, a country proud of its diversity, well prepared him for living in the states. Adjusting to the changes that exist between the way the game is played in Canada and in the states is another story.

"It's night and day compared to football here," he said. "Canadian football is played on a longer field and there are more players and downs, but football is football despite these differences."

American football, especially college football, is quickly becoming an international obsession. Although widely played in Canada, it is not the media powerhouse that college football is in the U.S. "I think Canada is getting closer—here it's a way of life and there it's just a sport, Clark said."
Kanan said college football has caught media attention nationwide for the past 20 years with channels like ESPN and that when people think of the college experience, they think of Saturday college football.

"College football is becoming the most popular sport—it is very similar to soccer," Kanan said. "People go to soccer matches (overseas) and it's an all day event. Here we call it tailgating when students, alumni, fans and family, gather around the stadium hours before the game."

The excitement of the game expands beyond what the players do on the field. The half-time shows feature WMU's 300-musician, award-winning Bronco Marching Band, which practices nearly as much as the football team. The marching band also plays during the game to promote team/school spirit among the fans.

For more information, visit the Bronco Football Web site.
Kim Cho spells service with a smile

Walk into Western Michigan University's Career Language Center for International Students nearly any day of the week and chances are the smiling face that greets you will be Kim Cho, admissions coordinator.

For more than 17 years, Cho has been a dedicated CELCIS employee, whose No. 1 priority is helping students enroll in WMU's English as a Second Language Program and adjust to their new lives in the United States.

"Meeting and interacting with students from around the world and learning about their culture is the most rewarding aspect of my work," Cho said. "And, I work with a wonderful group of professionals. CELCIS has been my one and only job at WMU and I love it!"

Cho is very knowledgeable about immigration policy and the necessary procedures international students must follow to obtain visas to study in the U.S., knowledge she keeps fresh as an active member of both the state and regional branches of NAFSA: Association of International Educators. She also monitors many listserv notices to learn new ways of running ESL programs, which she freely shares with faculty and staff.

Interim CELCIS Director Joel Boyd has worked with Cho since he began his tenure in the program more than 12 years ago. He qualifies Kim as "indispensable," and said students, faculty and staff greatly appreciate her knowledge, candor and humor.

"When Kim comes in each morning, there is a flurry of things to take care of," Boyd said. "There's the student trying to take care of a problem that should have been taken care of the day before, working with staff who need clarification about procedures, or taking care of a technological problem that needs resolving. The rest of the morning is spent dealing with new admissions, collaborations with international student services or some other part of the university, and after a quick lunch, she's back at it all over again. Her day is a run, run, run, kind of day, but she faces it with determination and vigor. She is the life of CELCIS; bringing donuts for meetings and cakes for birthdays."

Outside of work, Kim enjoys spending time with her husband and children, volunteering at her church, traveling, and trying new foods.

"Kim is one of those fortunate people who loves her work and shows it and by so doing makes those who work with her just as fortunate," Boyd said.