OT receives monumental $2 million gift

President John M. Dunn announced Nov. 9 the receipt of a $2 million gift from Kalamazoo residents Frederic “Fred” W. Sammons and Barbara A. Rider, emerita in occupational therapy.

The gift, the largest ever to a U.S. occupational therapy program, will help shape the future of WMU’s nearly 90-year-old OT program—the oldest and most highly ranked such degree program in Michigan.

It is the largest cash gift from individual donors for the College of Health and Human Services and ties for 10th on WMU’s all-time list of cash gifts in the University’s 108-year history.

The gift will provide:

• $1.5 million for the Frederic W. Sammons Endowed Chair in Occupational Therapy.

• $250,000 for innovative projects in the OT department, such as development of the Open Journal of Occupational Therapy, which will be the first open-access, online journal in the profession to publish peer-reviewed articles that focus on applied research, practice and education.

• $250,000 for the Barbara A. Rider Endowed Distinguished Professorship in Occupational Therapy.

Sammons and Rider serve as members of the Dean’s Advisory Council for CHHS. Both are longtime supporters of the University.

Sammons, an occupational therapist, founded Sammons Preston Inc., the largest worldwide distributor of rehabilitation equipment and supplies. Rider is a past chair of WMU’s occupational therapy department who retired in 1991.

State research universities establish business network

A collaboration involving WMU and Michigan’s four other research universities will create the first statewide university network in the country to provide a critical new tool for business growth and attraction.

The Michigan Corporate Relations Network, or M-CRN, was announced Nov. 10 in Lansing. It will create the first statewide university network in the country to provide a critical new tool for business growth and attraction.

President John M. Dunn and Ron Kitchens, chief executive officer of Southwest Michigan Development Corporation, announced the partnership Nov. 10.

The University of Michigan, Michigan State University and the University of Michigan-Dearborn will be key partners in the program.

Students organize charity fundraiser

Communication students have organized a fundraiser with the Bronco hockey team from 4 to 7 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 27, in Lawson Ice Arena. All proceeds will go to Ministry with Community. In addition to open ice-skating with hockey players, Buser Bronco will be on hand to take pictures with attendees. There also will be games, coloring, face painting and refreshments. Admission is $5. Skates may be rented for $1.

Early deadline for next Western News

This is the next to the last issue of Western News before the annual holiday closure. The final fall issue will be distributed Dec. 1. Due to the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, the deadline to submit items for that final issue is 5 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 23. Western News will resume its regular publication schedule Thursday, Jan. 12, after the start of the spring semester.
Talk focuses on success from coach's perspective

Men’s head basketball coach Steve Hawkins will talk about what constitutes true success as it pertains to basketball on Friday, Dec. 2, as part of the Keystone Community Bank Breakfast Series. The talk, titled “A New Way to Look at Success,” begins with breakfast at 7:30 a.m. in the Dean’s Conference Room of Schneider Hall. Reservations are required by calling the dean’s office at (269) 387-5050.

Hawkins is beginning his ninth season as head coach and 11th season at WMU. He has positioned the Broncos among the best teams in the Mid-American Conference and led WMU to a level of success unparalleled in school history.

The Broncos have appeared in four of seven postseasons since Hawkins’ arrival in Kalamazoo and have rattled off 10 consecutive conference titles during which the team never lost a single conference game. In every season under Hawkins, the Broncos have appeared in the NCAA Tournament and the NIT.

As a four-time All-Big Ten honoree, Hawkins has been named the Mid-American Conference’s Coach of the Year on five occasions. Hawkins was named the Big Ten Coach of the Year in 2007, 2008 and 2011 and the Mid-American Conference Coach of the Year in 2007, 2008 and 2010.

Women’s basketball head coach Tonya Strickler has been named the Big Ten Coach of the Year in each of the last two seasons. This year, the Broncos appear to be a legitimate Big Ten title contender and could make their first NCAA Tournament appearance since 2007.

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Leading translation prize awarded

Jeffrey M. Angles, foreign languages, has received the Landon Translation Award, America’s most prestigious national prize for the translation of poetry. Angles won this year’s award for “Forest of Eyes: Selected Poems of Tada Chimako,” published in 2010 by the University of California Press.

This is the first time a translation from Japa-
nese was recognized with the award, which goes to the previous year’s best book translated from any language into English. “Forest of Eyes” was selected by the celebrated poet and translator Charles Martin from among 32 finalists translated from 17 languages.

Angles accepted his award during the Academy of American Poets’ annual Poets Forum Oct. 20-22 in New York. The winning book is the first full-length retrospective of the work of Tada Chimako (1930-2003), a major Japanese poet known for her use of mythological images and beautiful writing.

National association honors researcher

Nickola W. Nelson, speech pathology and audiology, has received a 2011 Honors of the Association Award from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association in recognition of her distinguished contributions to communication sciences and disorders.

The award, ASHA’s highest distinction, will be presented Friday, Nov. 18, during the organization’s annual convention in San Diego. It goes to ASHA members known worldwide for a lifetime of innovative clinical practice, insightful research, outstanding leadership, creative administration, effective legislative activity, or other professional contributions.

Nelson, who serves as director of WMU’s doctoral program in interdisciplinary health sciences, focuses her research on school-age language and literacy disorders and has produced six books, dozens of book chapters and articles, and seven tests in child language.

Communicator pens ‘post-racial’ book

Mark P. Orbe, communication, has written a book that examines public perceptions of President Barack Obama’s communication style, race matters and the role of the media in 21st century politics.

Titled “Communication Realities in a ‘Post-Racial’ Society: What the U.S. Public Really Thinks About Barack Obama,” the text was published in November by Lexington Books. The first book of its kind, it draws from a large national qualitative data set generated by 333 diverse participants from 12 different U.S. states across six regions and provides comprehensive, in-depth coverage of the similarities and differences that exist among diverse groups of everyday U.S. Americans.

A WMU faculty member since 1997, Orbe is an expert in interpersonal communication, communication and diversity, and intercultural communication.
Study Abroad implements Internet-based application system

Study Abroad has a new online student application system—Broncos Abroad. The system will manage all study abroad program information and provide a greatly improved online application and approval environment for WMU faculty, staff, and students. It is based on the Studio Abroad program designed by the Terra Dotta company that is being used by study abroad offices in more than 140 colleges and universities across the country. The WMU version was implemented with support from the Office of Information Technology and is integrated with the University’s Banner student information system.

Jane Blyth Warren, Study Abroad, says the system will make it easier for students to find information on study abroad programs and to apply for their chosen programs. “It will also help us better support students while they’re abroad by having information about where students are living and traveling so we can quickly make contact in the event of a crisis situation,” Blyth Warren says. Starting with applicants for short-term summer and semester-long or academic-year programs that begin in fall 2012, Broncos Abroad will provide support such as: • Registration and tracking of student, staff and faculty travel for credit and noncredit programs, courses and activities. • An enhanced searchable database of all WMU and non-WMU approved off-campus programs. • Easy access to budget information for individual programs. A user “dashboard” allowing students to track the processing of their applications. • Improved online ability for faculty directors to monitor their program’s enrollment and to obtain immediate email confirmation for each application that is submitted. • A more user-friendly faculty recommendation area that lets faculty to login anytime to review all requests for recommendations and students to include personal information and notes with their requests. • An enhanced email function that improves the ability of select faculty and staff members to communicate via a single message with all students enrolled in a program. • More options for including pre-departure information in the student application process. • Significantly improved study abroad data and reporting functions. • The provision of digital records, greatly reducing data-entry and paper and printer toner use.

Haenicke Memorial Garden earns national award

WMU’s Haenicke Memorial Garden was recently recognized for outstanding landscape design and construction by the national Professional Grounds Management Society. The University received an Honor Award for the garden in the Small Site category of the PGMS 2011 Green Star Awards competition, the results of which were announced in late October.

Located near Waldo Library, the memorial garden was designed and planted in fall 2009 in honor of former WMU President Dr. Elmer H. Haenicke. Conifers, which were a favorite of Haenicke, were planted in the garden to add color throughout the winter.

The garden also consists of lighting as well as benches, on which visitors can relax. “This is a great honor to receive,” says Tim Helyze, director of landscape services. “It not only recognizes the efforts put in by our staff, but also Western Michigan University’s commitment toward enriching its students’, staff’s and visitors’ lives through green spaces.”

Other projects receiving PGMS awards included the Biltmore Estate Historic Gardens. Arabic L. Leja, blindness and low vision studies; Grace Ann Young-Woolf, landscape services.

Research resources event slated

Discussion on funding and other resources for faculty research will be featured at the Research and Dessert open house from 1 to 4 p.m. Friday, Nov. 18, in the Fetzer Center.

Visit http://WMU-Research-And-Dessert-2011.questionpro.com to register. Faculty members will be able to learn about funding opportunities and strategies, connect with WMU colleagues, and share ideas. The event will include resource stations and mini-workshops on a variety of topics. Door prizes that support scholarship will be awarded at 4 p.m. Prizes include trips to funding agencies and sponsors and an iPad2.

Frederick E. MacDonald, social work; Gracie K. Mce, Bernhard Center Dining Service; Parviz Merati, mechanical and aeronautical engineering; Patricia A. Moore, intercollegiate athletics; Todd K. Mossman, Human Resources; Russell F. Northey, power plant; Lonnie L. Page, building custodial and support services; Carol J. Patterson, Logistical Services; Leonard J. Peirce, information technology; John Racine, information technology; Robert F. Reck, marketing; Elizabeth Richardson, multicultural affairs; Mark T. Robinson, Valley Hall Dining Service; Cynthia Runnion-Johnson, foreign languages; Terri Ann Stoken, landscape services; Stacy L. Vallier, intercollegiate athletics; Cindy A. VanderWoude, University Recreation; Cindy A. Walton, building custodial and support services; Chad Wheeler, building custodial and support services; Paul T. Wilson, special education and literacy studies; Steve M. Wolfinbarger, school of music; and Linda J. Young-Woolf, landscape services.

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Anonymous online program helps students live healthier

WMU has launched an interactive, Internet-based program that consolidates University health resources into a single location and tailors those resources based on the intent of individual students to change their health-related behaviors.

Launched as a technology research project, Bronco HealthAdvisor was unveiled Nov. 9 during WMU's Health and Wellness Expo. It provides a secure and anonymous environment in which any WMU student can begin exploring what may become a wide range of health-related modules.

The program is initially focusing on sexual health through spring 2012. During this pilot period, the Bronco HealthAdvisor project team will determine the program's effectiveness as a behavior-change and resource-referral system as well as its potential commercialization for use at other colleges and universities across the country.

Bronco HealthAdvisor is the result of a two-year collaboration between the eHealth Innovations Group in the WMU Department of Human Performance and Health Education and the Office of Health Promotion and Education in the University's Sincere Community Health Center. The eHealth Innovations Group is spearheaded by Robert J. Bensley, emeritus in human performance and health education who continues to teach and conduct research.

An Internet-based nutrition behavior-change system originally developed by that group and other relevant Web service products were adapted to help produce Bronco HealthAdvisor.

Cari Robertson, health promotion and education, and her staff provided the expertise needed to develop lesson content for the pilot topic based on the most common barriers to college students making healthy sexual choices. The office's nationally-certified Sexual Health Peer Educators carefully selected the necessary resource materials.

Now, Sincere is encouraging students to participate in the pilot research project by completing the first online module. Visit www.broncohealthadvisor.org to directly login to Bronco HealthAdvisor.

Series to feature three alumni

Three alumni will be the next authors featured in the fall Gwen Frostic Reading Series at 8 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 1, in 157-158 Bernhard Center. Reading from their works will be Elizabeth Knapp, winner of the 2010 De Novo Prize for Poetry; Melinda Moustakis, winner of the 2010 De Novo Prize for Fiction; and Jason Skipper, author of the novel “Hustle.”