Public invited to participate in conference

The ethics of enhancing human capabilities with such technology as bionic limbs and neural chip implants will be the focus Saturday and Sunday, March 28-29, when the Nanoethics Group holds a long-awaited conference at WMU.

The event begins each day at 8:45 a.m. in WMU’s Fetzer Center and concludes at noon on Sunday. In an unusual move for an academic conference, organizers are welcoming interested members of the public to attend without charge.

The conference will focus on the ethical and social impacts of human enhancement technologies that may give significant advantages to individuals in sports, the military, academia and other employment areas.

“Who wouldn’t want to be stronger, smarter and healthier—which is what we strive for now through exercise, academics, diet and medicine?” asks Dr. Fritz Allhoff, philosophy.

“But using new, powerful technologies to achieve the same result seems to push our bodies and minds beyond their natural limits, opening the possibility of unintended or unforeseen results and harms.”

The conference is being organized by faculty from WMU, California Polytechnic State University, Dartmouth College and the University of Delaware. Allhoff, who co-founded the Nanoethics Group, is the event host and a co-organizer.

The conference caps off a three-year nanoethics initiative funded by the National Science Foundation. Allhoff and Dartmouth’s James Moor were 2006 recipients of $250,000 of foundation funding for a series of studies and events culminating in the WMU conference.

They are expected to issue a report on their recommendations to the foundation this coming fall.

Go to the conference Web site at www.humanenhance.com for registration information and the full lineup of speakers.

Nobel Peace Prize winner slated to speak at WMU

Nobel Peace Prize winner Jody Williams is the featured guest at this year’s Great Lakes PeaceJam Conference Friday, March 27, at WMU.

Williams, the 1997 co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize for her work in the banning and clearing of landmines, will give a public address at 7:30 p.m. in the South Ballroom of the Bernhard Center. Tickets to attend are $10 at the door and $5 for students.

Her talk, "Creating True Human Security," will kickoff the conference, which continues with other events Saturday and Sunday, March 28-29, that are not open to the public.

Serving as the chief strategist for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, Williams wrote and spoke exclusively on the need for a total international ban on landmines. In a little more than five years, she and the ICBL achieved their goal of raising public awareness about landmines and affecting a landmine ban. In recognition for their efforts, the Norwegian Nobel Committee named Williams and the ICBL as co-recipients of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize.

Following her March 27 talk, hundreds of high school-aged children throughout Michigan, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio will spend two days with Williams during the PeaceJam conference.
Red Cross executive to give talk

Catherine McNulty, chief executive officer of the Greater Kalamazoo Area Chapter of the American Red Cross, will be the featured speaker Friday, March 27, as part of the Keystone Community Bank Breakfast Speaker Series. McNulty’s talk on “Your American Red Cross Today” begins at 7:30 a.m. in the Dean’s Conference Room of Schneider. Call 387-5050 to make reservations, which are required.

Environmentalist slated to speak

Josh Dorfman, author of “The Lazy Environmentalist,” will speak on “It’s So Easy Being Green” from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, March 27, in 2304 Sangren. “Not everyone can harvest rainwater and brew their own biofuels, but there is no reason each of us couldn’t take a few small, easy steps to help the environment,” says Joe Orchanian, chair of Students for a Sustainable Earth, which is sponsoring the program.

Cool Special Olympics fund-raiser set

The WMU community is invited to take the plunge into the icy waters of a makeshift glacial pool in Lawson Ice Arena to raise money for Special Olympics Michigan. Participants in the Law Enforcement Torch Run Polar Plunge will plunge into a four-foot-deep pool Saturday, March 28, to meet a fund-raising goal of $10,000. Registration begins at 11 a.m., and the plunge begins at noon along with a costume parade. Swimmers are encouraged to wear their favorite costume, with the winner of the best costume taking home the Golden Plunger Award. An award and post-plunge party will begin at 12:45 p.m.

Exchange

For sale—Enjoy privacy and nature out every window in this unique setting with only seven other condos. Seven minutes from WMU and two miles from Meijer on Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5433. Go to www.wmich.edu/business/itforum to register or obtain more information.

Jobs

Current job opportunities at WMU are announced daily on the Human Resources Web site at www.wmich.edu/hr/careers-at-wmu.htm. Please note that applications must be submitted online by the stated deadline. Complete application procedures are included with each posting.

Artist’s work selected for exhibition

Indrani Gall, art, is one of about 30 artists worldwide to have her work accepted for inclusion in the sixth annual exhibition “Erasing Borders: Passport to Contemporary Indian Art of the Diaspora.” The exhibition, which incorporates works by India and American Arts Council, explores the contributions of artists whose origins can be traced to the Indian Subcontinent. It began touring New York City’s boroughs, New York State and other parts of the country in February and will be on tour through October.

Marketing prof receives service award

Frank M. Gambino, marketing, has received the Distinguished Service Award from the Michigan Food and Beverage Association, an organization that represents more than 21,000 businesses employing more than 160,000 people. The award was presented during WMU’s 44th annual Food Marketing Conference held March 23-24 in Kalamazoo. Gambino was cited for the distinguished service he has provided to Michigan’s food industry and to WMU and its Food and Consumer Package Goods Program, which he directs.

Gambino also organizes and leads the annual food marketing conference. Prior to joining the faculty in 1984, he accrued more than 15 years of experience in the retail food industry. He received a Teaching Excellence Award from WMU in 1999.

Researchers tackle ‘orphan disease’

Charles Ide, biological sciences and environmental studies, is working with colleagues at Vanderbilt University to help those suffering from multiple system atrophy or MSA, a rare degenerative neurological disorder.

The research has been promising enough to prompt WMU and Vanderbilt to join forces to launch a pilot study that they hope will provide the basis for an early MSA diagnosis tool. To generate awareness and raise funds for that research, Fernando Bryant of the Super Bowl champion Pittsburgh Steelers hosted a charity event March 20 in Nashville, Tenn.

Ide, the Owen Frost Professor of Environmental Biology, has New York City expression techniques to study MSA and is leading WMU’s work on the disease. He came to the University in 1999 and directs the Environmental Institute as well as the Environmental Research Center.
Faculty, staff encouraged to attend diversity lecture

Issues related to Asian stereotypes in Hollywood, Asian-American paternal pressure and the “model-minority myth” will be addressed during Kalamazoo’s 11th annual “Respecting Differences” program Tuesday and Wednesday, March 31-April 1.

This year’s program is a lecture titled “Exclusion to Inclusion” and features BD Wong, who is known to millions of TV viewers as Dr. George Huang, the forensic psychiatrist on NBC’s “Law and Order: Special Victims Unit.” The lessons Wong has learned in order to survive and excel in a vocation filled with racism and rejection give him a keen perspective on diversity.

All WMU employees are encouraged to attend his free talk, which will be presented from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Tuesday, March 31, and repeated from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Wednesday, April 1. Both presentations will include on-stage American Sign Language translators and be held in Chenery Auditorium, 714 S. Westnedge Ave. in Kalamazoo.

A shuttle will provide transportation to and from Chenery. The shuttle will be in front of the Seibert Administration Building and picking up riders at 12:45 and 1 p.m. on Tuesday and 8:45 and 9 a.m. on Wednesday. For those who will be driving, ample parking is available behind Chenery and on adjacent streets.

WMU launches campuswide Girl Scouting initiative

Students as well as faculty and staff members with current or former connections to Girl Scouting are being asked to lend their insights and consider becoming involved in a campuswide initiative to strengthen the ties between WMU and Michigan’s Girl Scouts.

To learn more about the initiative, those with Girl Scout connections are invited to an information session and pizza party from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 31, in 208 Bernhard Center.

According to Bob Miller, community outreach, the University is in conversations with the Heart of Michigan Council in Kalamazoo, which oversees the activities for all of Michigan’s nearly 40,000 Girl Scouts.

“There’s a growing realization that as a University, we can offer resources that will allow the council to experiment with some ideas that could become best practices for the development of young women in the scouting movement nationwide,” Miller says.

Staffers to be recognized

Eleven staff members have been selected to receive WMU’s 2008-09 Make a Difference award for spring, along with $250 and a commemorative certificate.

The semianual awards are given out each fall and spring. The latest round of recipients will be honored during an awards reception at 2 p.m. Monday, April 20, in the President’s Dining Room of the Bernhard Center.

Members of the University community are invited to attend the reception and help recognize these exceptional staffers.

The employees being honored for spring are: William Arbogast, Sincerecare Health Center; Douglas Carnrey, Division of Student Affairs; Linda Comrie, Graduate College; Marilyn Duke, Center for Academic Support Programs; Cheri Edgar, business information systems; Deveta Gardner, Career and Student Employment Services; Deborah Goostrey, College of Health and Human Services; Wayne Pushie, physical plant-maintenance services; Penelope Schellenberg, University Ombuds Office; Kristi Schutter, university budgets and financial planning; and Kevin Wesel, College of Fine Arts.

The Make a Difference awards program is a campuswide, peer-to-peer program that recognizes University staff members for their outstanding accomplishments and daily investment of energy and creativity.

Summer camp enrollment open

Students, employees and the public are invited to enroll children in the 2009 Campus Kids Summer Theme Camp offered by WMU’s Children’s Place Learning Center.

The camp will run from June 15-Sept. 4. To register or obtain more information, go to www.wmich.edu/childrensplace or call 387-2277.

Lindbeck tapped to direct WMU-Southwest campus

An experienced academic and admissions counselor with a strong track record of working with community colleges has been named director of WMU’s Extended University Programs campus in Benton Harbor.

George E. Fierro, director of academic advising for the College of Aviation, was tapped to head the WMU-Southwest Campus, effective Feb. 23. He replaces Leonard Seawood, who is now dean of academic outreach at the University of Central Arkansas.

Fierro came to WMU in 1990 as an admissions counselor and was promoted to director of academic advising for the aviation college nine years later. Since 2006, he also has been a part-time instructor in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences.

Prior to joining WMU’s staff, Fierro served for a year as an assistant director of admissions at Hope College and for four years as a sheriff’s deputy in Allegan County Michigan, where he spent much of his time developing and implementing educational adolescent crime prevention programs for schools, communities and families.

Green with envy at the St. Patrick’s Day Parade

Many people watching the St. Patrick’s Day Parade in downtown Kalamazoo March 14 would have loved to change places with John M. Dunn. That’s because WMU’s president served as grand marshal for the event, which was sponsored by the Irish American Club of Kalamazoo. (Photo by Mike Lanka)

Joan E. Ashley, retired manager of Campus Apartments and of the Children’s Learning Place Center, died March 22 in Kalamazoo. She was 60.

Ashley joined the WMU staff in 1981 and retired in 2005 after 23-1/2 years of service. She returned to campus in 2006, serving as a temporary employee until February of this year.

During her career, Ashley worked in several different areas of the University and worked her way up to become one of the institution’s first women to hold a management position in facilities maintenance.

Memorial services will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, March 27, in the Unity Church of Kalamazoo, 1204 Whites Road. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to the American Cancer Society.

John R. Lindbeck, professor emeritus of engineering technology, died March 2 in Kalamazoo. He was 80.

Lindbeck joined the WMU faculty in 1957 and served the University for 34 years, retiring as professor in 1991. He was a frequent visitor in WMU engineering labs after his retirement until recent years.

In 2003, Lindbeck helped and advised a senior project team involved in building the full-scale replica of a Western State Normal Railroad trolley that is on display in front of the Bernhard Center.

Lindbeck had a noteworthy career at WMU-Southwest and taught several courses, wrote many papers and textbooks in his field, and received the Distinguished Service Award from the National Metric Council.
Psychology association president visiting campus

The president of the American Psychological Association will be on campus Monday and Tuesday, April 6-7, for a series of events open to members of the public.

James H. Bray, who became APA president this past January, will be presenting a communitywide lecture as well as two clinical training programs and two colloquia. His visit is part of WMU’s Visiting Scholars and Artists Program.

The events featuring Bray are free, but seating may be limited, so those interested in hearing Bray are asked to go to www.wmich.edu/coe/cecp and preregister for each event they plan to attend.

An internationally acclaimed researcher, author and lecturer, Bray is an expert in stepfamily therapy as well as in treating and preventing adolescent alcohol and drug abuse. He has extensive experience addressing the needs of at-risk children and families. His role as president of the 140,000-member APA gives him a unique opportunity to continue advocating for families from his position as one of America’s most influential mental health public policy leaders.

Bray’s communitywide lecture, titled “Adolescent and Young Adult Drug and Alcohol Abuse: Parents, Teens and Propaganda,” will take place from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Monday, April 6, in the Fetzer Center.

He also will lead two three-hour clinical training programs that start at 9 a.m. The program on “Screening and Brief Interventions for Substance Abuse” will take place April 6 while the program on “Love, Marriage and Parenting in Stepfamilies” will take place April 7.

In addition, Bray will present a colloquium from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. April 6 on “The Future of Psychology Practice” and a research colloquium from 3 to 4:15 p.m. April 7 on “Developmental, Family and Peer Influences on Adolescent Alcohol Use.”

More help available for students in trouble

WMU is continuing to build on its ability to identify and assist students who exhibit persistent troubling behavior.

Nancy McFadden, a veteran medical social worker, was recently added to the staff in the office of the associate dean of students as a case manager.

McFadden is among the trained staffers who are responsible for responding to concerns submitted through a new confidential online service. The service allows students and employees to report concerns about students with troubling behavior that persists despite efforts to intervene. The service’s reporting form can be found at www.studentworld.wmich.edu/health.html in the upper right portion of the page.

Government mandate necessitates new ethnicity survey of WMU students, employees

This coming fall, WMU employees will be asked to take part in an ethnicity survey that students registering for the fall 2009 semester are already being asked to complete.

As they register through GoWMU, students are being asked to complete an ethnicity survey to comply with a U.S. Department of Education mandate that colleges and universities all use the same specific language and categories to report ethnicity.

Surveys of faculty and staff members will take place in the fall, allowing WMU to meet the 2010-11 federal requirement for collecting and reporting ethnicity using the new format.

The survey consists of just two basic questions, and each person taking the survey has the opportunity to answer both questions. The first question asks if the respondent is Hispanic or Latino. The second question asks respondents to identify all of the following categories that they fit into: American Indian or Alaska native, Asian, black or African American, native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and white. Students are urged to take the short amount of time needed to answer the survey questions.