Key administrative appointments announced

Three WMU administrators have been named to fill key University positions.

The appointments are of Bassam Harik as interim provost and vice president for academic affairs, James Gilchrist as vice provost for academic operations and chief information officer, and David M. Powell as chief academic officer for WMU while the University conducts a nationwide search for a new provost. A member of the economics faculty since 1979, he has been serving as vice provost for budget and personnel. Gilchrist replaces Viji Murali, vice president for information technology and CIO, who left WMU earlier this month to accept a new position at Washington State University. A member of the communication faculty since 1980, he is serving as vice provost for academic operations and will retain this position in addition to overseeing the University’s information technology services.

Powell replaces Rick Maloney, who left WMU last month to become president and chief executive officer of Pentastar Aviation, based in Waterford, Mich. He will serve as interim dean of the aviation college while the University conducts a nationwide search for a new dean. A member of the college’s administration since 2003, he has been serving as associate dean and managing director of operations.

A letter from President Dunn

Dear Colleagues:

We are truly at the beginning of what will be a tremendous year of accomplishment for Western Michigan University. With just a few days of the fall semester behind us, all the signs point to success this year—success for our students and success in every facet of university life.

Many of you have worked hard to make the launch of the 2007-08 academic year truly one to remember. You have my thanks and admiration. We’ve been hearing from parents and new students who are delighted with their chosen university and who are expressing their appreciation for the level of service and commitment they’ve experienced in every interaction with the campus community. That’s the type of personal service for which we want WMU to be known. Thank you for what you’ve done and continue to do for our students and our University.

Some of you were away from the campus for the summer traveling, writing and conducting research. I’ve had two months now to meet many members of the campus community, but I have been eagerly awaiting your return and the opportunity to meet you. Please don’t hesitate to simply walk up and introduce yourself when you see Linda and me in the community or on campus. I deeply appreciate the warm welcome we’ve received so far, and I plan to quickly get to know as many of you as I can.

If you’ve been following the news over the summer, you know we have some challenges ahead of us. But if you followed the news, you also know we’ve taken some steps that will have a significant impact on the campus this year. We’ve developed a graduation compact and incentive program called the Western Edge, designed to both challenge our students and inspire us to help them succeed. We’ve set the bar high with this initiative, but I believe we have what it takes to make this work. We also kept our tuition increase at the lowest level of any of Michigan’s public universities, and that should help us maintain access to this great University.

Our students, meanwhile, have been busy over the summer attracting attention nationally in ways that can only benefit WMU. Our engineering students brought home a national championship by designing a hydraulic bike for Parker Hannifin’s annual Chainless Challenge. They competed successfully against some of the country’s top engineering schools. Another student group, a team of supply management undergraduates, nailed down a third-place finish against graduate students from across the United States and Canada in a virtual marketplace competition...

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Podcasts to be part of Bronco’s weekly football show

The “Bronco Review” football show will kick off its 2007-08 season Thursday, Sept. 6, with a preview of the home opener against Big Ten school Indiana University, coach Bill Cubit’s take on the game against the nation-ranked West Virginia Mountaineers, and a short segment on strength and conditioning.

“Bronco Review” is a weekly TV program now entering its fifth season that gives WMU football wide recognition and Bronco fans a glimpse into the team’s inner workings. It is hosted by Robin Hook, intercollegiate athletics and “the voice of the Broncos,” and produced on campus by WMU Media Production IT under the direction of Stephen Kettner, information technology.

This year, the 30-minute show will be available to the public for the first time as a podcast, allowing fans to access recorded programs over the Internet and download them for playback on an iPod, MP3 player, mobile device or personal computer. “Bronco Review” will air twice a week, at 7:30 p.m. Thursday and 10:30 a.m. Saturday, during the week following each game day. Locally, it is carried on Channel 5 of the Charter Communication cable system and Channel 2 of the Comcast Digital Cable system.

Podcasts will be available at itunes.wmich.edu the Friday after game days. The program also will be shown at Waldo Stadium an hour before the start of every home game.

Jobs

Job opportunities at WMU are announced every Monday on the human resources Web site at www.wmich.edu/hr/careers-at-wmu.htm and the applicant Information Service phone line at 387-3669. Applications must be submitted online by the stated deadline. Complete application procedures are included with each posting.

Exchange

Service offered—Will house sit or dog sit. Call Maria at 998-1349.

For Sale—Staff-owned lakefront ranch, north side of Atwater Pond, Texas Township. Three bedrooms, four baths, geothermal heating. Custom design maximizes advantage of 215-foot lot with walkout basement and southern exposure. On market since April, high-quality finishes, MLS #2728638. Call Peg Kolaja at 381-7653 ext. 152. For Sale—Mobile home near WMU. Housing for student/family, excellent condition, two bedrooms, air conditioning, all custom blinds, stove, refrigerator, dishwasher, garbage-disposal, washer, dryer, 10-1/2 x 16 foot deck, two sheds. $13,000. Call 375-3328 for appointment.

Research funding focus of event

Wil Emmert, Office of the Vice President for Research, will discuss how faculty members can use the Community of Science database to locate potential funding sources from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 12, in 1903 College of Health and Human Services building. RSVP to wil.emmert@wmich.edu.

Workshops slated on hearing loss

A series of workshops aimed at better hearing is being offered beginning Tuesday, Sept. 18, by the Van Riper Language, Speech and Hearing Clinic. Both morning and evening sessions are available. For more information, call 387-8047 or 387-8062.

Study Abroad Fair scheduled

Campus and community members are invited to “Explore the World” by attending the 2007 Study Abroad Fair from 4 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 19, in the Bernhard Center's South Ballroom. The event is being sponsored by the Haenicke Institute for Global Education.

Music faculty record new CD

Music faculty members Renata Arman Knific, violin, and Lori Sims, piano, released a new CD earlier this year. The recording, released on the MSR Classics label, is a compilation of sonatas for violin and piano by Witold Lutoslawski and is appropriately titled “William Bolcom Works for Violin and Piano.”

On the liner notes, Bolcom states, “The vibrant team of Renata Knific and Lori Sims play these violin sonatas with rare fervor and drama. I first heard them in a shattering performance of the third sonata; they have evinced the same intensity in their readings of the other three, and I thank them profoundly for this recording.”

Commission gains mathematician

Arthur T. White, mathematics, has been appointed to a two-year term on the Michigan State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The state advisory committees are composed of citizens familiar with local and state civil rights issues.

The members serve without compensation as a part-time commission with its fact-finding, investigative and information dissemination functions. Individual members of these committees are recommended by the regional director of their area, approved by the staff director and voted upon at a regular meeting of the commissioners.

White came to WMU in 1969 and specializes in topological graph theory. He was Kalamazoo County coordinator for the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative, which passed last year and bans discrimination as well as affirmative action programs based on race, gender, color, ethnicity or national origin.

Around Campus

Fall semester under way

The University’s temporary One Stop Conference Center will be open through Friday, Sept. 7, so students can tie up loose ends and take care of last minute business associated with the start of school. One Stop is located on the second floor of the Bernhard Center and will be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. today and from 9 a.m. to noon tomorrow.

WMU will observe the start of the new academic year by staging two huge annual events. First up will be the information and entertaining 27th annual Bronco Bash from 3 to 8 p.m. Friday on the West Campus Promenade from Haenicke Hall to the Campus Flagpoles. The ComunnInUnivCity Night football game, which celebrates the first home game, pits WMU against Indiana University and will take place at 7 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 8, in Waldo Stadium.

American Theatre touts WMU’s innovative use of technology

Kevin Abbott, information technology, was quoted in the September issue of American Theatre magazine regarding WMU’s innovative use of digital technology in its production of “Doctor Faustus” this past spring.

American Theatre recently focuses on theatre in higher education. In addition, Abbott wrote a six-page feature about the staging of “Doctor Faustus” that ran in the August issue of Live Design’s TQ.

Interactive technology in “Doctor Faustus” was made possible by a WMU Digital Media in the Performing Arts Innovation Grant. Abbott, project director, along with a team of collaborators, worked with performing arts students and faculty members to apply high-cost, high-tech digital media to the production.

Contributors


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Advocacy office fills important need for transfers, deployed military

WMU's transfer students and military students and personnel now have a resource committed to ensuring smooth transitions when transferring from community colleges or departing or returning from military deployment.

The Advocacy Office for Transfer Students and Military Affairs was created in June by Interim President Diether H. Haenicke and has been endorsed by President John M. Dunn. The new unit serves as a liaison between WMU and community colleges around the state to make transitioning to WMU as easy as possible.

Students should always begin with the standard transfer process, which works well for most. But when the occasional complications arise, students and staff members may use the advocacy office as a resource to quickly overcome barriers.

“Were prepared to assist when irresolvable issues occur or military entry or exit problems crop up,” says Gerry Schma, one of the office’s university advocates. “We exist as an additional service, not to replace but to support the usual procedures. Our office is a safety net designed to assure that each student receives the special service needed when unusual circumstances arise.”

Besides assisting individual students, the advocacy office works closely with the presidents of community colleges to determine ways to better ease the transition from community college to WMU. This includes examining current practices and policies that negatively impact student success or satisfaction and developing workable solutions. Similarly, it recommends procedures and policies that meet the special needs of deployed students, faculty and staff.

The office is composed of Schma, university advocate Steve Miller and office associate Eric McConnell. It is located in 217 Bernhard Center and open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. To contact the office, send e-mail to advocacy-office@wmich.edu or call 387-0740.

Plagiarism detection tool available online

All WMU faculty and administrators now have free access to Turnitin, an online plagiarism detection tool.

The Web-based software allows students or instructors to upload papers and have Turnitin analyze them and issue a report highlighting phrases that may have been taken from sources it recognizes.

Anyone wanting to learn more about Turnitin may view the online educational video at www.turnitin.com. WMU faculty members may ask for their own user name and password for their classes.

A site license for Turnitin has been purchased by the Office of the Provost with the support of Academic Technology and Instructional Services to foster academic honesty and help reduce plagiarism.

For more information, visit http://atis.wmich.edu/turnitin.html or contact Brian Carnell at brian.carnell@wmich.edu or 387-4137.

WMU researchers among West Michigan's top innovators

Business Review Western Michigan has cited Margaret Joyce, paper engineering, chemistry; treen and imaging, and William Liou, mechanical and aeronautical engineering, for being leading innovators in the region.

The two are among the 35 individuals and organizations the business publication named as finalists for its 2007 Innovation Michigan Awards. The awards program recognizes the development or use of innovative products and services in West Michigan.

Joyce was recognized along with her project team for assembling a group of Michigan’s top innovators industry professionals and faculty members to develop technology that directly prints antennae and integrated circuits on paper and board to form radio frequency identification—RFID—tags. She came to WMU in 1996 and directs the University’s Center for Coating Development.

Liou, who came to WMU in 1996, was recognized for conceiving the Center for Advanced Vehicle Design and Simulation, or CAVIDS, which he directs. The research consortium provides breakthrough applied computer simulation technology and knowledge to the auto industry, particularly in the areas of vehicle design and analysis.

Campus community members link up for golf outing

Some 60 faculty, staff and student golfers as well as volunteers turned out for the Aug. 17 golf outing sponsored by Academic Technology and Instructional Services and the Administrative Professional Association.

“The reason why we did this came from the Simpson/Scarborough report, which basically said that students feel like there is a sense of community here but some faculty and staff don’t,” says ATIS employee Kirk Sturndale, a member of the event’s organizing committee. “ATIS felt the need to change that and partnered with the APA to bring people together and build community.”

Taking first place in the nine-hole scramble with a score of 31 was the team of Ed Kluk and Arnold Taylor, information technology; Tim Koryczan, friend of WMU; and Jen Doyle, student.

On the second-place team was Andrew Huang, ATIS; Dave Longjohn, Extended University Programs; Jim Murray, Medieval Institute; and Dominic Nicola, College of Aviation.

Several other awards also were presented during the outing. The awards and award recipients were: closest to pin—Paul Ciccantell, sociology; longest drive for women—Michele McLaughlin, registrar’s office; longest drive for men—Koryczan; shortest drive—Sue Caulfield, provost’s office; and most spirited—Cat Fuller, Haenicke Institute, and Mike Hahn, WMUK.

Photos from the event are posted online at http://atis.wmich.edu/golf.
Google Earth contest motivates students to ‘rebuild’ WMU

Seven WMU students are putting WMU on the map—literally. The group answered an invitation by the Internet giant Google to participate in its Build Your Campus in 3-D Competition. Its submission placed among the top 30 received out of some 350 entries and consequently, is being added to Google Earth. The fruits of the students’ work will be showcased during WMU’s Friday, Sept. 14, Board of Trustees meeting. Once the students complete the arduous task of creating digitized 3-D models of each campus building, plans call for developing virtual fly-by tours as well as other new and innovative 3-D content.

To view WMU’s models, go to http://sketchup.google.com/3dwarehouse and type WMU’s name in the search box.

On Campus with Barbara Banks

By Monday, Aug. 27, business was booming for the manager of the Bronco Express Service Team office in the Bernhard Center.

Barbara Banks and her eight full-time and seven temporary staff members handled more than 2,200 phone calls on Monday and Tuesday alone, while dozens of students had already stopped in. Bronco Express opened in November 2006 and handles a variety of account-related business for students in one convenient place.

“We maintain close ties with financial aid and scholarships, cashiering and accounts receivable and occasionally work with the registrar,” Banks says. “We’re sort of a one-stop center that handles walk-in traffic and operates a phone center year round.”

Banks came to WMU last December to manage Bronco Express. She had been at the University of Michigan-Flint, where she was associate director of financial aid for seven years and split her time between processing financial aid forms and providing customer service.

“Now I focus on customer service. UM-Flint was more of a commuter school. Here, there’s a lot of students on campus and more interaction with them and their parents,” she says. “My biggest challenge has been getting used to the way WMU does things, but the transition has been quite smooth.”

Easing the transition was Mark Delorey, who Banks used to work for before he became WMU’s director of financial aid and scholarships, and Shanta James, a Bronco Express staff member who has been serving as co-chair with Banks on the Early Awareness Multicultural Outreach Committee of the Michigan Student Financial Aid Association.

“The best part has been already having connections here,” Banks says. “I also have a wonderful staff! I like their gusto—their positive attitude. We really work as a team, and there’s a lot of communication and friendships.”

Banks lives in Portage and enjoys traveling, gardening and bicycling. She has two daughters, Briana, a freshman at WMU this year, and Monica, who attends Mott College.

Students first initiative puts classrooms high on repair list

Instructors now have one place to go for assistance with all classroom facility problems, including maintenance emergencies, locked rooms and difficulties with classroom technology.

Bronco Fix-It, Western Michigan University’s online maintenance service request system, began making classrooms a priority this summer. Bronco Fix-It for Classrooms expands on an initiative introduced in January that provides same-day response to non-emergency maintenance requests regarding residence halls and campus apartments.

Peter Strazdas, maintenance services, says making residence areas and classrooms top priorities is a way of putting students first, although it lowers the priority for general University buildings.

As part of the renewed emphasis on classrooms, a four-person student team spent the Summer I Session assessing WMU’s 489 classrooms, then issued 400 work orders—which were completed by the start of the fall semester.

Armed with the data the students obtained, Vice President Lowell Rinker says the University will be setting aside money so classrooms can be maintained on a regular schedule.

President’s Dunn’s letter continued from page 1

These are just a few items to add to the many “points of pride” that can be used to describe WMU. We all need to share such information with those we encounter. I intend to emphasize loudly and clearly the successes of our students, faculty, staff and alumni as well as the quality of our programs. The WMU story needs to be shared with external audiences, and we who work here must share the internal pride that we feel in being part of this amazing University.

I’m happy to be a part of this wonderful University and eager to work with each of you in the coming months and years.

Warmest regards,

John M. Dunn
President