Freshman enrollment soars by 18 percent to set University record

Beginning freshman enrollment at WMU this fall hit 4,426, shattering the University’s previous record freshman enrollment figure, set last year, by 18 percent.

The University closed its freshman class in May after receiving a record number of applications for spots in the fall freshman class. Since the closure—the first in WMU’s history—record numbers of students took part in summer orientation sessions, leading University officials to expect a large increase in freshman numbers this fall. This year’s beginning freshman class has 668 more students than last year’s previous record class of 3,758 students.

“The size of this record freshman class is a huge tribute to the work of our faculty and staff,” said President Floyd of the news. “The figures show that the quality academic experience the University offers is proving very attractive to a large number of high quality students. Our enrollment numbers also reflect substantial gains in such important areas as the Graduate College.

Total fall enrollment at WMU stands at 27,744, an overall increase of 4.4 percent over last year’s total of 26,975 students. The fall 1999 figure reflects the second highest academic profile,” said Fraire. “The overall GPA and ACT of the Honors College entering class are 3.9 and 28 respectively. Clearly we are attracting not only more students, but better students as well.”

Fraire also noted that the increase in graduate enrollment defies the traditional economic growth, prospective graduate students choose to remain working rather than seeking an advanced degree.

“Much credit for the increase in graduate enrollment must be given to the Division of Continuing Education and the directors of Western’s various regional centers,” he said.

University’s first black alumni gathering set for Sept. 23-25; will include career expo, history symposium

A career expo and a historical slide show and symposium are just two of the activities that are attracting black graduates to campus for WMU’s first Black Alumni Reunion Thursday through Saturday, Sept. 23-25.

Major speakers include President Floyd, who will address a Saturday breakfast gathering and Roy M. Roberts, a 1970 graduate who is a top General Motors executive and a former WMU trustee. He will be the Saturday dinner keynote speaker.

The WMU Alumni Association and its Oryx Society are sponsoring the three-day event, which has as its theme, “Making the Connection, Keeping the PACE.”

Programs include: “Making the Connection, Keeping the PACE.”

A RECORD EVENING FROM START TO FINISH—Record crowds of community members filled the Sept. 11 Comm/UniverCity tailgate area above, then stayed on to become the largest football crowd in Waldo Stadium and Mid-American Conference history. It was standing room only as 35,874 fans cheered the Broncos on to a 46-28 win against Youngstown State, then were treated to a finale enrollment and 16 percent turnout of the Brown marching band and fire-works. (Photos by Neil Rankin)

Viji Murali named vice president for information technology, effective Nov. 1

A computer specialist with a research background in organic chemistry will take charge of the University’s computing structure as vice president for information technology. Viji Murali, currently director of systems management and user support in the Center for Computer Information Technology at the University of Arizona, will assume her new role Nov. 1, subject to the approval of the WMU Board of Trustees. Her appointment is the culmination of a national search for an information technology specialist to fill the newly created vice presidential post.

Murali was one of four candidates interviewed on campus for the position during June and July. Her appointment was announced earlier this week by President Floyd.

“We were looking for the right combination of experience, vision, service orientation and technical skills for this critically important role,” Floyd said.

“We have found that and more in Viji. She brings a strong technical background to this challenging new role and she also brings a unique sensitivity to the needs and culture of a research university.”

Murali, who will serve as the University’s chief information officer, will become a member of the president’s leadership team and advocate for the development and use of technologies that will help WMU fulfill its teaching, research and service missions. As vice president, Murali will oversee academic and administrative computing, networking and telecommunications. She also will oversee the final phases of the Y2K readiness project.

Murali has been in her current position since 1997. She is responsible for numerous computer science, educational and academic systems as well as its data center and customer support center. Before assuming her current position, she was manager of systems programming in Arizona’s Computing Center for five years. She also worked as a systems programmer in the center and as research assistant in that university’s Computing Center.

CMS Energy Corp. CEO to launch series

William T. McCormick Jr., chairman and chief executive officer of CMS Energy Corp., the parent company of Consumers Energy, has launched this year’s Hasworth College of Business Distinguished Speaker Series with a presentation Tuesday, Sept. 21.

McCormick will speak on “CMS Energy’s Role in International Energy Development,” at 5:30 p.m. in Schneider Hall’s Brown Auditorium. He is expected to discuss “China’s energy plan.” McCormick was one of four candidates interviewed on campus for the position during June and July. Her appointment was announced earlier this week by President Floyd.

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A year of progress has put our University on solid footing for even more achievement in the future

It is difficult for me to believe that we have already completed our first full year together. And what a year it has been.

Your unswerving support throughout these past months has meant we've been able to make some giant strides toward achieving the goals we've set for this University. I have every confidence that in the coming months, even more progress will be made toward those goals.

We are embarking on a new academic year that will be full of challenges and opportunities, but because of the hard work of faculty and students, we have reached this year in the best possible circumstances.

We have a record enrollment of 44,266 freshmen—a figure which can be traced to the work of our outgoing dean of enrollment, Linda M. Delene, who chaired an ad hoc committee to seek new strategies.

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Bonds drive is going on now through Thursday, Sept. 30. Bonds, which are designed to protect your face value and have two parts to their redemption and above the rate of inflation for up to 30 years. Both Bonds and EE Bonds offer attractive tax benefits, as well. Buying U.S. Savings Bonds through payroll deduction and helps you to save, even if you can only set aside a small amount each pay period. For more information, please take a moment to review the material that was sent to employees this week, or check out www.savingsbonds.gov on the Web.

Human Resources has been provided with 150 small quartz desk clocks with the U.S. Savings Bonds logo. A clock will be given to each of the first 150 employees to enroll in the payroll deduction plan during the current drive.

Benefits fair Sept. 29

Caregiver services are invited to attend the Benefits Fair from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 29, in the North Regional Office. The fair, sponsored by the Benefits Office, will give employees an opportunity to learn more about their variety of benefits. Representatives from many on- and off-campus organizations and benefit providers will be at the fair, ready to share information and answer questions. Employees attending the fair will be able to enter the drawing for door prizes.

Health plan news

Benefits-eligible employees with health plan coverage will have an opportunity to switch health plans or add eligible dependents to their coverage during open enrollment, Sept. 27 through Oct. 8. Selecting the correct plan means meeting your needs and those of your family is a very personal decision, but employees should keep these points in mind:

• Employee contributions for dependent coverage under the University Plan (BCBSM), Blue Care Network and Michigan SHIPA Plan are increasing effective Nov. 1.

• Cash bonus for continuing or enrolling in the Alliance Health & Life Company plan will be offered through SHIPA when you enter the plan. Those who are new to the University Plan from the Blue Care Network and Blue Choice Network will be offered a cash bonus at the end of the open enrollment period.

• Representatives from our health plan carriers will be available to meet with employees to answer questions and help compare plans from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday, September 29, in 242 Bernard Center and Tuesday, Sept. 27, in the President's Dining Room at the Bernhard Center. Stop by at your convenience.

Health and Human Services reception set to honor two

Members of the University community are invited to attend a reception Thursday, Sept. 23, for two former employees who have recently assumed new leadership roles in the College of Health and Human Services.

The reception is for Adeline Seegers, chairperson of the Department of Occupational Therapy, and Donna M. Weinreich, director of the Occupational Therapy program. It is from 4 to 6 p.m. in the Oaklands.

Seegers joined the WMU Occupational Therapy Department in 1980 as its clinic coordinator. In 1985, she was promoted to assistant professor and today holds the rank of associate professor. Seegers earned her doctorate in child health policy from The Union Institute Graduate School in Cincinnati and was named department chairman on July 1.

Weinreich comes to WMU from Baltimore, where she was the director of the University's Division of Continuing Education and also earned a master's degree from WMU in 1973.

Survivors include her husband, W. Chester Fitch, dean emeritus of the College of Applied Sciences—now the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

Service

These faculty and staff members are recognized for five, 10, 15, 20, 35 and 50 years of service as of September 1.

5 years—Harold L. Bate, speech and hearing pathology; Larry J. Bloomma, health education and human development; Susan C. Charles, computer science and statistics; Tracy A. Edwards, finance and managerial law; Janene L. Marlow, extended care; N. Martin, math and statistics; and Linda Rizzolo, art.

6 years—V. Jackson, admissions and orientation; Patricia M. Martin, sociology; Tamara L. Porter, University budgeting and accounting; Ann B. Perry, computer science; and Philip S. Rocke, physical plant-general services.

10 years—W. B. Enzmann, Office of the President for Research; Robert O. LaDuke, blind rehabilitation; Carl D. Neff, health education; and Janet B. Stack, logistical services.

20 years—Mark S. Allen, campus facility development; Guy R. Barks, Miller Auditory; Delores A. Jeffries, physical plant-building, custodial and support services; Sharon K. Johnson, physical plant-building, custodial and support services; and Deborah K. Withee, educational student services.

30 years—Nancy Brown, physical plant-building, custodial and support services; Orlando R. Galvez, computer science; and Jay M. Megren, physical plant-building and custodial support services; Joyce A. Parsons, physical plant-building custodial and support services; and Janice F. Van Wagoner, pharmacy.

50 years—Diane B. Hamilton, health and human services.

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Presidentional envoy Wolpe to visit campus
Sept. 24, talk about post-Cold War Africa

Howard Wolpe, a former U.S. congressman and WMU faculty member who is now Presidential Special Envoy to Africa's Great Lakes Region, will speak on campus Friday, Sept. 24.

Wolpe will present a lecture on "The United States and Africa: After the Cold War" at 7 p.m. in 1010 Fetzer Center. His lecture, sponsored by the Diether H. Haenicke Center for International and Area Studies' African Studies Program, is free and open to the public.

Wolpe, who was a member of the political science faculty from 1967 to 1972, served in the United States House of Representatives from 1979 to 1993. An expert in Africa and a member of the House Africa Subcommittee while in Congress, Wolpe is the co-author of "The United States and Africa," a book recently published by W.W. Norton.

For more information, persons should contact the Haenicke Center for International and Area Studies at 7-3907.

**Presidential envoy Wolpe to visit campus**

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