A strong visual identity is a powerful communication tool for any institution.

The use of consistent colors, logos, fonts and images in print and electronic communication signals a sense of unity and common purpose among and across all of the units that fall under the umbrella of the organization known as Western Michigan University.

WMU’s Visual Identity Program is designed to be flexible enough to meet the needs of Western Michigan University and its multiple audiences, while creating a strong brand presence for the University in the higher education marketplace. The campus community’s enthusiastic application of these guidelines is integral to building public awareness of the University’s prestige and support of its mission.

The visual identity guidelines are intended to cover all publications, signs, promotional materials and the plethora of visual ways used to represent Western Michigan University to University audiences, including, but not limited to, promotional gear, uniforms, vehicle wraps and printed materials. While each such visual representation may not be included in these general guidelines, design assistance for all such needs is available through the Office of University Relations.

Four major design elements are used to communicate the University’s visual brand identity consistently in print and electronic communications:

- W and name
- Color palette
- Typography
- High-quality photography
The promotional W mark and name

The promotional W mark, introduced in 2007, is the block W, used with or without the Western Michigan University name. Both the University name and block W were carefully rendered and must not be reset with any other font. When the block W is used without the University name, the University name must be in a prominent place in the communication piece. This mark should be used in all University communication, including—but not limited to—advertising, recruitment publications, promotional products and websites.

Minimum size requirements

The clear space surrounding any WMU logo should be, at a minimum, .25” on all sides. The height of any WMU logo should not appear any less than 1” in print. Contact the Office of University Relations at (269) 387-8400 to obtain permission to use the promotional art at any size smaller than described here. A decreased size may be necessary for printing on novelty items, for instance.

Color requirements

The colors for the University promotional W mark and signatures are Pantone 131, Pantone 4625, black and white. The University promotional mark may only be reproduced in these colors as illustrated in this document. Downloads are available online at wmich.edu/universityrelations. Printing the promotional mark in brown is only permitted for gold novelty items.

Use of the brown W is permitted when placing the W on top of a gold background or when printing brown for a one-color piece.
Individualized promotional W marks for University units

An individualized promotional W mark for each major unit demonstrates a clear and direct association between the University and its individual units.

Because these unit marks require special spacing of the elements, the Office of University Relations will prepare artwork for each unit.

An example of an individualized unit mark is shown below.

![Graduate College](image)

![Graduate College](image)

The University logo may need to be paired with the logo of an external partner. For example, the university sponsors an event that is a shared cost between partners. Below is an example showing the bottom of a poster for the annual MLK celebration.

![MLK Celebration Poster](image)

Logos that require approval

The University seal or seal signature is not for general use and may only be used with the approval of the director of University creative services in the Office of University Relations.

![University Seal](image)

The Chenille W is not for general use due to the difficulty of reproduction and enlargement. It may only be used with the approval of the director of University creative services in the Office of University Relations.

![Chenille W](image)
Avoid common errors

Do not cover the W with line art or type.

The W must not be redrawn.

Logos must be sized proportionally.
Do not squeeze horizontally or vertically.

Logos no longer being used must be discarded and replaced with current art in compliance with the visual identity guidelines.

Use the promotional W art only once per page.

Do not change the color of the promotional W mark.

Do not screen the promotional W mark.

The promotional W mark must not be combined with other logos.
Other marks used by the University

Special marks have been approved for selected units that have been designated sub-brands or brand extensions of the core Western Michigan University brand. These marks recognize the unique identity needs of the units and their audiences while maintaining a strong relationship to the central University brand.

Requests for permission to continue using an established mark or create a new mark should be made to the Office of University Relations at (269) 387-8400. Exemptions will be considered for non-academic units that can demonstrate a compelling, market-based need. The following units are good examples of entities that meet those criteria:

- Intercollegiate Athletics
- Miller Auditorium
- WMUK
- Business Technology and Research Park
- Office of Development and Alumni Relations

The above named areas are non-academic units. All academic units are required to follow the guidelines stated in the visual identity program. The University promotional mark represents all departments and offices. To preserve the clarity and impact of the University's brand identity, no individual unit logos should be developed or used with University communications. The names of individual units should be developed and presented using the promotional mark guidelines herein. Use of that mark as a base for unit identity will serve to avoid the confusion that comes from competing logos.

Please note

Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine is a collaboration involving Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo’s two teaching hospitals, Borgess Health and Bronson Healthcare. It has been in planning since 2008 and was granted preliminary accreditation from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education in October 2012. Welcoming its first class in fall 2014, the school is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation supported by private gifts, clinical revenue, research activity, tuition from students and endowment income. As an independent entity, the medical school has developed a visual identity that is closely related to but not within the WMU Visual Identity Program.

The Western Michigan University Thomas Cooley Law School has a co-branded visual identity developed to reflect the formal affiliation between WMU and the private law school previously known as the Thomas M. Cooley Law School. The WMU Cooley Law visual identity is closely related to but not part of the WMU Visual Identity Program. The logo and combination of colors and fonts that are the elements of the WMU Cooley Law visual identity are for the exclusive use of the law school and are not available for use by other units at the University.
Secondary (commercial) marks
Secondary or commercial marks for the majority of the institution’s units, departments, centers and other entities are not allowed. Existing icons or logos must be retired. However, there are select instances when use of a secondary or commercial mark is appropriate. Units meeting these primary criteria will receive consideration for approval to use a secondary mark when:

- the unit must operate in a retail environment and have a storefront (example: WMU Bookstore); and/or
- the unit has multiple funding sources and operated as a true consortium (example: a program receiving funding from an external source as well as the University).

Units approved to use a secondary mark must also use the authorized University promotional W mark with their communication materials. The University promotional W mark should receive more prominence than the approved secondary mark.

Athletic marks
Athletic marks are the identification for the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics. Questions about or requests to use these marks should be directed to the marketing and promotions office in intercollegiate athletics.

With written approval of both the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics and the Office of University Relations, the chenille W and the Bronco logo may be combined. This may include, but not be restricted to, jewelry or special external purposes.

Event-specific marks
Secondary marks may be created to promote a specific event, such as an annual lecture series or a special anniversary. But event-specific secondary marks must be used in conjunction with the University promotional W mark.

Some special campus events like Homecoming, Bronco Bash, Fall Welcome or the Campus Classic Race may have their own event marks.

Contact the Office of University Relations for more details.

Campus wide initiatives
Contact the Office of University Relations for more details. Examples of this exception are Tobacco Free Campus and We Sustain.
Color palette

The University’s official colors are brown (Pantone 4625) and gold (Pantone 131).

The following guidelines apply when working with the WMU color palettes:

- **Primary colors** must be used on all materials to ensure that the promotional W mark is produced in the proper color combinations.
- **Supporting colors** may be used in addition to these primary colors on all materials.
- **Accent colors** may be used in small amounts (20% or less) in addition to the primary color palette and other supporting colors.

**Primary colors**

Always used at 100% and as a strong part of the color scheme.

**Secondary colors**

These from the palettes below may be used in any percentage of full color.

**Accent colors**

These must not dominate primary colors.

**Neutral colors**

Always use at 100%. These are spot ink only for print.

**Metallic colors**

Always use at 100%. These are spot ink only for print.

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**Important:** Do not rely on the output produced by a desktop color printer for matching the color attained when a project is printed on a printing press. The color calibration of desktop printers typically does not match the Pantone Matching System colors used by offset printers.
Typography
The following families of type should be used for all print publications.

**Source Sans Pro**
(Extra Light, Extra Light Italic, Light, Light Italic, Regular, Italic, Semibold, Semibold Italic, Bold, Bold Italic, Black, and Black Italic)
Visit fontsquirrel.com for a free download.

**Open Sans Condensed**
(condensed, condensed light and condensed light italic)
Visit fontsquirrel.com for a free download.

**Adobe Garamond**
(with italic, semibold, semibold italic, bold, bold italic)

Appropriate for materials produced in Microsoft Office applications

**Arial**
(with regular, Italic, bold and bold Italic)

Add script or stylized fonts sparingly.

Best practice is to limit use of font families to three per document.
Photography

The Office of University Relations maintains and regularly updates the University’s photo database. This office works with contracted photographers to cover events, showcase new facilities and capture student culture. University units are encouraged to contact the Office of University Relations to suggest events, classrooms or locations on campus that are potentially good photo opportunities. There are thousands of high-quality digital images on this database available to WMU units and organizations. Call (269) 387-8402 to schedule an appointment to search the photo database. Although there is no charge for using images from the database, use is limited to WMU communication. This photography is not available for personal use.

Existing photography may be added to the University’s database by contacting the Office of University Relations.

Formal headshots

Sessions for formal headshots usually occur the week before the WMU Board of Trustees meeting and are announced through WMU Today. Other sessions may be scheduled through the Office of University Relations.

Headshots for use in Web departmental directories are produced by the Office of University Relations.

Headshots are available for personal use upon request. Call (269) 387-8402.
Logos and templates

Below are our most frequently requested University logos. To download the art file, go to wmich.edu/visualidentity. For a complete list of available art, contact the Office of University Relations at (269) 387-8400.

Solid W
This version of the promotional W mark is suitable for cmyk, two-color or grayscale printing. Do not alter the color of this art.

Gold W with brown outline
This version of the promotional W mark is suitable for two-color printing (Pantone 131 gold and 4625 brown). Do not alter the color of this art.

Gold W with black outline
This version of the promotional W mark is suitable for two-color printing (Pantone 131 gold and black). Do not alter the color of this art.

White W
This version of the promotional W mark is suitable for cmyk, two-color or grayscale printing. Do not alter the color of this art.

Solid W signature one line
This version of the promotional W mark is suitable for cmyk, two-color or grayscale printing. Do not alter the color of this art.

Gold and Black signature one line
This version of the promotional W mark is suitable for two-color printing (Pantone 131 gold and black). Do not alter the color of this art.

Gold and Brown signature one line
This version of the promotional W mark is suitable for two-color printing (Pantone 131 gold and 4625 brown). Do not alter the color of this art.

White W signature one line
This version of the promotional W mark is suitable for cmyk, two color or grayscale printing. Do not alter the color of this art.
Gold and brown signature stacked
This version of the promotional W mark is suitable for two-color printing (Pantone 131 gold and 4625 brown). Do not alter the color of this art.

Gold and black signature stacked
This version of the promotional W mark is suitable for two-color printing (Pantone 131 gold and black). Do not alter the color of this art.

White W signature stacked
This version of the promotional W mark is suitable for cmyk, two-color or grayscale printing. Do not alter the color of this art.

Nameplate black one line
This art is used when separating the name from the promotional W mark. It is suitable for cmyk, two-color or grayscale printing. Do not alter the color of this art.

Nameplate brown one line
This art is used when separating the name from the promotional W mark. It is suitable for two-color printing (Pantone 131 gold and Pantone 4625 brown). Do not alter the color of this art.

Nameplate white one line
This art is used when separating the name from the promotional W mark. It is suitable for cmyk, two-color or grayscale printing. Do not alter the color of this art.
Nameplate black stacked
This art is used when separating the name from the promotional W mark. It is suitable for cmyk, two-color or grayscale printing. Do not alter the color of this art.

Nameplate brown stacked
This art is used when separating the name from the promotional W mark. It is suitable for two-color printing (Pantone 131 gold and Pantone 4625 brown). Do not alter the color of this art.

Nameplate white stacked
This art is used when separating the name from the promotional W mark. It is suitable for cmyk, two-color or grayscale printing. Do not alter the color of this art.

Tobacco free
This art is useful to include when promoting an on-campus event or recruiting new students. It is available in color or black and white. Do not alter the color of this art.

Powerpoint, brochure, postcard, flyer and poster templates are available at wmich.edu/visualidentity.
Stationery
All Western Michigan University letterhead, envelopes and business cards should be ordered through the Purchasing website: wmich.edu/stationery.

A coordinated system of stationery is important to presenting the University’s brand identity clearly and consistently. Letterhead, envelopes and business cards often serve as the first graphic representation of the University to a variety of audiences. By using the standardized formats available, every college, school, department and unit can show its proper affiliation to the University. There are two approved formats.

Business cards
Personalized business cards
The approved format for personalized business cards includes the University seal signature or promotional mark signature in two colors at the top, followed by the individual’s name in bold type and his or her title and college, school, department and/or unit name in smaller type. Thereafter, a space, the address with mail stop, phones, fax, email and Web address appear in smaller type. GPS coordinates also may be used when available.

Office business cards
Generic business cards may be created when a unit wants to display general unit information without including the name of an individual.

Minimum information must include:
• University seal signature or promotional W mark signature
• Unit name
• Unit room and building location
• Unit telephone
• WMU website

Office business cards
Business cards may be printed on recycled paper that is produced from start to finish in WMU’s paper and printing sciences department. Dining hall boxes are used as source material.
**Letterhead**

Standard letterhead size is 8.5” x 11.” The approved format includes:

- University seal signature or promotional mark signature
- College, school, department, and/or unit name in the upper right corner
- Mailing address, phone, fax, email and Web information in the lower right corner
- A campus site location (room number and building where the office is located)

A single-color (black ink) letterhead also is available for use with special mailings of large-quantity orders.

**Letterhead formatting**

The proper formatting of letters prepared on University letterhead has the left-hand margin of a text aligned with the center of the tree in the University seal, or the left of the W on promotional mark letterhead. The right edge of the letter’s text should not extend beyond the right end of the rule at the top.

**Electronic letterhead templates**

Individual units should not attempt to produce their stationery products. For units that want to produce black and white stationery on a desktop printer, customized electronic templates in Microsoft Word can be provided by the Office of University Relations.

**Envelopes**

Two standard size envelopes are available:

- No. 10 (9.5” wide x 4.125” high) and
- No. 7 3/4 (7.5” wide x 3.875” high)

Consistent application of the University seal signature or promotional mark signature on envelopes helps establish a consistent brand identity for the University among its multiple audiences. The art appears in two colors, with the college, school, department and/or unit name and the address with mail stop below it.

**Avoid common errors**

The layout of the promotional mark signature and seal signature as shown on stationery is not available for use as art on other materials.

**Email signatures**

Please use the following format:

Download the email signature W from wmich.edu/visualidentity
Name
Title
Office
1903 W. Michigan Ave.
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-your +4 zip
Campus site: room# and building name
Trademark usage

A WMU trademark is any mark, logo, symbol, nickname, letter(s), word or derivative that can be associated with Western Michigan University and can be distinguished from other institutions or entities.

Some examples of WMU trademarks are
- Western Michigan University
- Western Michigan University Broncos
- Western Michigan
- Western Michigan Broncos
- WMU Broncos
- WMU

WMU trademarks are the property of Western Michigan University. All uses, either print or electronic, must be approved in advance by the WMU licensing office located in the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics. Unauthorized use of WMU trademarks is prohibited. The University, in cooperation with our licensing agent, Licensing Resource Group, vigorously enforces our trademark rights.

Internal use
For University use such as letterhead, brochures, reports, etc., there is no licensing approval required. However, the visual identity guidelines must be followed. The trademarks may not be altered and should be reproduced using a high-quality master image. These are available from the WMU licensing office or the Office of University Relations.

External use
University departments may, with permission of the licensing director, use University marks to raise funds for their own organization or charitable support. Items acquired for such purposes must be acquired from licensees and have the design artwork approved by the WMU licensing office. The licensee or organization will be required to pay royalties on the product in such cases. The trademarks may not be changed. Alteration of the trademarks may dilute them and weaken their protection.

Student organization use
Student organizations that have items produced bearing WMU marks are required to buy them from licensed vendors and have the design artwork approved by the WMU licensing office (licensed vendors will submit the artwork for you). If the items are for sale to the public, then the licensee or organization will also be required to pay royalties. The trademarks may not be altered. Alteration of the trademarks may dilute them and weaken their protection.

Unauthorized use
The WMU licensing office works in cooperation with Licensing Resource Group to enforce the University’s trademark rights. The University is committed to protecting WMU trademarks and the reputation they represent. No use of WMU trademarks is permitted without written consent of the Western Michigan University licensing office.

Any information regarding possible trademark infringement should be reported to the Licensing Resource Group at (616) 395-0676 x103, or to the WMU assistant athletic director for sports marketing, media relations and trademark licensing at (269) 387-3098.

Who must be licensed?
Anyone who uses the name or marks of Western Michigan University for a commercial purpose must be licensed. Manufacturers of products with WMU marks on them are required to pay an 8 percent royalty on the wholesale price of the item. WMU trademark use in advertisements, motion pictures, etc., also requires licensing approval and a payment of a licensing fee. License applications are available from Licensing Resource Group or by phone at (616) 395-0676.

WMU trademarks used in the traditional news media are not subject to licensing fees.
Glossary

**Signature**
The promotional W mark combined with the nameplate

**Promotional W mark**
It is the block W used with or without the Western Michigan University nameplate.

**Nameplate**
The Western Michigan University name carefully rendered as vector art.

**Visual identity guidelines**
The set of formal guidelines describing WMU's names, symbols, logos, trademarks, service marks, designs, seals, or any combination of these marks, which correlate to the Western Michigan University licensing program.

**Clear space**
Area that must separate the WMU promotional W mark from surrounding type or graphic elements.

**Commercial use**
A business undertaking with the intent to make a profit.

**Copyright**
The legal right granted to an author, publisher, or distributor to exclusive publication, production, sale or distribution of an artistic work.

**Infringement**
Unauthorized use of a trademark or service mark that belongs to another, or use of a trademark or service mark so similar to that of another as to cause the likelihood of confusion in the minds of the public as to the source (affiliation or sponsorship) of the product or service.

**Four-color process or cmyk**
The method of separating color and/or photos with filters into the four process colors: cyan, magenta, yellow and black.

**Grayscale**
An image printed in black and in one or more shades of gray.

**Fonts**
A type face or a collection of all characters comprising the entire character set of a typeface.

**Vector art**
Line art created in Adobe Illustrator that can be enlarged with no loss of quality.

**EPS**
Encapsulated PostScript language file, a file format used to transfer PostScript data within compatible applications. Use this format to reproduce the promotional mark in the highest quality. An EPS is vector art.

**Pixel art**
Photographic images are made up of pixels and cannot be enlarged without loss of quality. For printed publications, a resolution of 300 ppi must be maintained.

**JPEG**
A compressed bitmap format, developed by the Joint Photographic Experts Group of the International Standards Organization. JPEG is generally used to create files of photographic images.

**GIF**
Graphics Interchange Format is a 256-color bitmap format that supports animations, but has largely been replaced by the Portable Network Graphics format.

**PNG**
Portable Network Graphics format is a 24-bit color plus transparency format. In all Web applications other than animation, PNG is preferred over GIF for all non-photographic images.
Frequently asked questions

1) How were the guidelines developed?
The guidelines were developed based on best practices in higher education visual identity programs after a review of such programs at universities comparable in size, complexity and stature to WMU. The strongest aspects of the 1997 guidelines were preserved and enhanced. The “W” Promotional Mark usage and color palettes were developed in consultation with personnel across the campus who produce communication and marketing materials for both academic and nonacademic units. Initial guidelines were reviewed by members of a marketing advisory committee. Feedback was invited over a period of time, and the guidelines were refined based on the feedback of members of that committee and the units they represent. The guidelines were then reviewed by the University’s senior leadership and endorsed by the president.

2) Do I need to discard my old stationery and brochures?
Existing stationery and brochures should be used until it is time to reorder or produce a new generation of materials. Your next project and those now in design should incorporate the guidelines.

3) Why can’t my unit use its custom logo along with a new unit mark that follows the guidelines?
One of the problems identified in the initial stages of the branding effort was that Western Michigan University’s brand—both visually and perceptually—was soft and diffused because we were focusing on too many messages. Multiple logos are symptoms of that problem and work against a strong and visually compelling University brand. Existing icons or logos may be repurposed as illustrations or graphic elements.

4) Will my unit lose its identity if its logo is replaced?
No. Having a logo doesn’t equal having a strong identity. Logos take a long time to grow in recognition and elicit strong associations. A unit’s identity is made up of much more than an abstract graphic. Identity is a collection of impressions and set of associations based on your overall look and message. Your unit’s brand will grow in strength along with WMU’s overall brand strength.

5) Is it OK to use the University seal instead of the promotional W mark?
The University Seal is the formal identity mark of Western Michigan University. It is used for stationery (letterheads, envelopes and business cards), diplomas, legal documents and other formal visual representations of the University. The use of the University seal on other printed materials requires the approval of the director of University creative services in the Office of University Relations. Contact university relations for more information about when it is appropriate to use the seal.

6) Is it OK to use the Chenille W?
The Chenille W has proven to be difficult to reproduce with color consistency and loses quality when enlarging. The Chenille W is no longer offered as part of the visual identity program.

7) Do the guidelines affect publication mastheads—the name of a magazine or newsletter, for instance?
Publication nameplates may remain intact, but the name of the unit producing the publication should be incorporated into the design. The unit name must be presented in a manner consistent with the guidelines. Mastheads for Western News, Haworth News and the Western Michigan University Magazine are good examples of such established nameplates. If you produce a regular publication, keep the Office of University Relations design team in mind as a resource if you want to redesign, freshen a design or look for a way to incorporate guideline elements. The design of publication nameplates must be approved by the Office of University Relations.

8) The University’s color palette is not appropriate for some topics/uses for my unit. What should I do?
There are some instances in which the primary palette of brown and gold is not appropriate for a particular topic or use. The palette does suggest many supporting colors that when incorporated can fit nearly any application. The design staff in the Office of University Relations can help you adapt the palette to give you the appearance of being part of the WMU family in a way that is appropriate to your need.

9) Who do I talk to if my unit has logo/mark needs that fall outside the guidelines?
Please contact the director of University creative services in the Office of University Relations and to discuss your concerns.
10) We’ve been working hard to “brand” our unit, and these new guidelines conflict with our efforts. What’s wrong with having multiple strong brands within the University community?

The best brand for any unit on campus is the Western Michigan University brand. As the saying goes in the marketing industry, it is far better to build a branded house than a house of brands. That simple premise is at the heart of the issue these guidelines are intended to address. We need to embrace a single strong brand. The alternative is a series of smaller, weaker brands that continue to diffuse the public perception of WMU. While units on campus may feel strongly that they need to differentiate themselves, the easiest and most productive way to do that is through using the WMU brand and linking that unit’s reputation to the strength and stature of the WMU name. External audiences rarely think about the individual units within the University. They see us all, appropriately, as Western Michigan University. That is a strength, not a weakness, and we can leverage that strength to the benefit of the entire University.

11) We prefer to use the Bronco “horse head” logo for our visual identity. Why can’t we continue to do that?

WMU’s guidelines use the W as the mark intended for use by units campus wide. The Bronco horse head logo was designed exclusively for use by WMU Intercollegiate Athletics, and there are strong guidelines for that mark that were developed when it was adopted. The mark remains one intended for athletics, but can be appropriate for competitive teams in other areas as well as University events and initiatives built around an athletic event. If your desire to use the Bronco horse head logo falls into one of those categories, you’ll need to work with the Office of University Relations and the licensing/promotions area of the Office of Intercollegiate Athletics to secure permission.

12) How can we get help to make sure our unit is in compliance and supporting the WMU visual identity?

Designers in the Office of University Relations are working to help departments and offices across campus ensure their units have the WMU look and feel. Do not hesitate to contact the director of University creative services to pose questions about the new guidelines or request design assistance.

13) Why did my logo print fuzzy or pixelated when it looked fine on screen?

Screen resolution is 72 ppi. For a quality print, 300 ppi is needed. For best results, always use the EPS file for printed material.

Contacts

Western Michigan University’s Visual Identity Program
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Office of University Relations
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Trademark and licensing
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Assistant Athletic Director for Marketing and Promotions/Licensing
Intercollegiate Athletics
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Use of the University logos, request exceptions to guidelines or to request design assistance
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WMU resources

Graphic design services
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WMU brand ambassador program

The University launched The Behind the W: A Brand Ambassador Program in 2013 to give faculty and staff members the tools they need to act as champions for WMU, both on campus and in their communities. Since the first workshop on Feb. 22, 2013, nearly 400 participants have graduated from the program.

“I learned things about WMU I never knew,” said one staff member who has been a WMU employee for 36 years.

Each workshop is three hours long and can be taken alone or as part of the series. A full day session, combining all three workshops, is offered twice a year. The workshops are open to any faculty or staff member. To reserve your spot, go to wmich.edu/behindthew.

This brand-building and employee-development program was developed through a partnership involving the University’s Integrated Marketing Team, the Office of University Relations and the Human Resources department. It builds on similar successful programs offered at Virginia Tech and Rutgers universities.