Trustees scheduled to meet Feb. 27

The next meeting of the WMU Board of Trustees will be at 1 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 27, in 157-59 Bernhard Center. This will be the board's annual meeting, so election of new officers is on the agenda. Routine business will be on the remainder of the agenda, including recommendations for changes in academic programs, announcements of gifts and grants, and acceptance of the personnel report.

Employees asked to take email survey

All members of the campus community are urged to complete a short survey assessing WMU's email and collaboration software needs. The survey will be available online at https://survey.wmich.edu/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=76MInpl through Tuesday, Feb. 26.

The survey is part of an assessment project regarding the features and functionality of Webmail Plus and how it satisfies the University community's needs. Answering all questions is optional. Contact the Office of Information Technology atoit-pmo@wmich.edu for more information.

SRC slates daylong open house

University Recreation will host an open house for WMU employees and retirees as well as their spouses from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 27, in the Student Recreation Center. Attendees will be able to tour the center and use its facilities, as well as obtain information about SRC memberships and programs.

The open house will feature refreshments and complimentary items, and attendees may enter to win a door prize. For more information, contact Cindy VanderWoude, membership coordinator, atcindy.vanderwoude@wmich.edu or (269) 387-3115.

Safety training session scheduled

Provost Timothy Greene encourages faculty and staff who have not undergone safety training to do so. A training session is set for 2:30 to 4 p.m. Friday, Feb. 22, in 2010 Fetter Center. To register, contact Sue Daniels at susan.daniels@wmich.edu or (269) 387-2383.

Conducted by Cam Vossen and Officer Andrew Bachmann, the session will cover both the updated “Active Shooter/Intruder Response” and the new “Recognizing and Preventing Campus Violence” programs. Those attending will learn about basic de-escalation tips, examples of WMU classroom incidents, intervention techniques and campus resources, be able to ask questions, and receive handout materials along with the “Shots Fired on Campus” and “Flashpoint on Campus” DVDs.

Following the session, all participants are encouraged to attend the “Fridays with Friends” faculty and staff mixer from 4 to 6 p.m. in the Fetter Center lobby.

WMU launches brand ambassador program

The University is launching a program this month that is designed to give faculty and staff members the tools they need to act as champions for WMU both on campus and in their communities.

Behind the W: A Brand Ambassador’s Program is a three-part series of employee workshops that will kick off Friday, Feb. 22, with Workshop No. 1, which focuses on “Understanding the WMU Identity.” The session, which was pilot tested earlier this month, focuses on Bronze history, points of pride, the WMU brand promise and strategic planning.

“I learned things about WMU I never knew,” said one 36-year member of the University staff who was part of the pilot workshop offering.

Each workshop is three hours long and can be taken alone or as part of the series. The topics of the second and third workshops are:

- “Understanding WMU Audience and How to Communicate With Them,” and
- “WMU Communication Guidelines and Standards.”

The workshops are open to any faculty or staff member, and reservations may be made by going to: https://wapps.wmich.edu/workshops/login.jsf.

This brand building and employee development program was developed through a partnership involving the University’s Integrated Marketing Team, Office of University Relations and Human Resources department. It builds on similar successful programs offered at Virginia Tech and Rutgers universities. Early last year, one of the Rutgers developers was invited to campus to share the benefits and structure of that institution’s program.

Prof’s tweets net generous outpouring from Japan

Twitter messages requesting Japanese books to support WMU’s new major in Japanese garnered thousands of donations, as well as dozens of heartwarming and heartrending letters. Jeffrey Angles, world languages and literatures, was in Japan in early 2011 when he wrote a series of Twitter messages calling for the donations out of concern that there were too few Japanese-language holdings in Waldo Library to buttress the major in Japanese starting with the 2012 fall semester.

To Angles’ surprise, his tweets went viral. Materials and books poured in by the boxful, before and after March 11, 2011, when Japan suffered the largest earthquake in recorded history.

“At the time I wrote the tweets, I only had about 80 followers so I expected only a few friends to send books. But within moments, my tweet was retweeted hundreds of times, and the number of people following me skyrocketed. The first box of books arrived at my Tokyo apartment less than eight hours after the first tweet!”

Within three days, Angles had received so many boxes of books that it was practically impossible to move in the apartment. Over hundreds of hours, he opened every box, sorted the materials, and sold duplicate and unnecessary items to used bookstores, then repacked the remaining books and sent them to WMU. About two weeks into the donation drive, Angles had to beg people to send their books directly to Kalamazoo.

Staff members in Waldo Library have spent the past two years working their way through all the donations that have come in. To date, they have processed 2,951 books, and there are still many more, mostly paperbacks, waiting to be processed. Among the donations, Angles has found treasures such as the complete works of famous authors, dictionaries, encyclopedias, popular novels, richly illustrated art history books, and complete sets of popular Japanese comic publications known as manga.

He said what has been most touching are the letters that came with the books. One woman sent a big collection with a note explaining that the books used to belong to her father who had passed away. Other letters came from students who explained that they wanted to send their favorite manga to students in America. “There were dozens and dozens of wonderful letters like that,” Angles said. “The outpouring of kindness and generosity moved me deeply.”

Among the donors were several people with Kalamazoo connections, including residents of Numazu, Kalamazoo’s sister city located near Mount Fuji, who collected several dozen books.

“They were excited to be able to contribute to Kalamazoo, a city that they knew and...
Around campus and beyond

Jenson is next Keystone speaker

Hal Jenson, dean of the WMU School of Medicine, will discuss the school’s progress at 8 a.m. Friday, Feb. 22, in 2150 Schneider Hall as part of the Keystone Community Bank Breakfast Speaker Series. The free event will begin with a continental breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Reservations are required by contacting Kayla Hunt at kayla.j.bunt@wmich.edu or (269) 387-6059.

Climate change series continues

The Lyceum Lecture Series’ weekly Wednesday talks on climate change continue Feb. 27 with Duane Hampton, geoscientist, speaking on “What’s the Worst That Could Happen?” The series runs from noon to 1 p.m. in the Lee Honors College lounge through April 17. Attendees may bring a brown bag lunch. Paul Clements, political science, will talk March 13 on “The Ethics and Politics of Climate Change.”

‘Deadbeat’ poet to give Frostic reading

The Gwen Frostic Reading Series event featuring poet and writer Jay Baron Nicorvo, English, that was canceled due to severe winter weather has been rescheduled for 8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28, in 208 Bernhard Center. Nicorvo will read from his debut poetry collection, “Deadbeat,” and his other works.

GMAT preparation course offered

To improve test takers’ chances of gaining admission to their chosen MBA programs, WMU-Grand Rapids Belhine is offering a comprehensive preparation course that covers each area of the test. This on-site, instructor-led course features classes sessions on Friday March 1, 8 and 22 and Saturday March 2 and 9. Visit wmich.edu/offcampus/gmat.php for the cost and to register.

MSU economist to give Sichel lecture

Susan Lint, a Michigan State University economist, will present “Good Governance in Transition Economies: A Comparative Analysis” at 3 p.m. Wednesday, March 13, in 2028 Brown Hall as part of the Sichel Lecture Series.

Ecovillage topic of Emeriti Council talk

The Emeriti Council’s next Wednesday meeting will feature Sr. Virginia “Ginny” Jones discussing “Envisioning an Ecovillage in Southwest Michigan” at 2 p.m. Wednesday, March 13, in Walhoff Hall’s Emeriti Lounge. Jones is part of a group that has been investigating what a local ecovillage would look like and what it would take to create it.

Food truck owner to speak at WMU

The owner and operator of a popular food truck business specializing in seasonal, organic, unrefined and local foods will be the next speaker in the Entrepreneurship Forum sponsored by the Educational Community Credit Union. Bridget Blough will speak at 8 a.m. Friday, March 9, in 2150 Schneider Hall.

Blough is a certified natural chef and founder of The Organic Gypsy, a food truck business serving the West Michigan community. Her presentation is free and open to the public and begins at 7:30 a.m. with breakfast, which will be catered by Blough. Reservations are required and can be made by contacting Kayla Hunt at kayla.j.bunt@wmich.edu or (269) 387-6059.

Rutgers philosopher to address ethics

Jonathan Schaffer from Rutgers University will examine the causal thinking infused the law at noon Friday, March 15, in 1115 Moore Hall. His presentation is titled “Apt Causal Models for the Law” and is part of the WMU Center for the Study of Ethics in Society’s spring season.

Schaffer will discuss how the law employs the intuitive conception of causation and how various legal theorists have used a theoretical framework to better understand their application. Thinking of legal doctrine through the lens of causal models reveals new problems, new suggestions and new ideas.

Institute to hold fundraiser, honor Lewis Walker

The Walker Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations will sponsor a fundraiser for 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Friday, March 15, in the Bernhard Center’s North Ballroom. Reservations are requested by contacting Shaghil Husain at lwirer-info@wmich.edu or (269) 387-6059. More information, contact Jeanne Baron at jeanne.baron@wmich.edu.

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Save the date for 2013 diversity program

The dynamic spoken-word duo Kinetic Affect will perform at Kalamazoo County’s 15th annual Respecting Differences program, “Expanding Ourselves, Embracing Differences,” Tuesday and Wednesday, March 19-20.

Kinetic Affect, grounded in the experiences of members Gabriel Giron and Kirk Latimer, brings spoken-word poetry to a new level. The two call on audience members to challenge their own beliefs with an approach that is humorous, compassionate and lively.

The group will perform at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 19, and again at 9 a.m. the following day, in the Kalamazoo Public Schools’ Cherney Auditorium, 714 S. Westnedge Ave. in Kalamazoo.

The performance is offered free of charge to the public and to employees of WMU and the other organizations sponsoring the 2013 Respecting Differences program.

Kinetic Affect will explore questions about diversity, acceptance and inclusion as they relate to the world and the workplace. The performance will also help attendees realize how personal experiences affect the way one views the world and the importance of embracing each other’s uniqueness. Giron and Latimer are passionate about the importance of self-reflection and the need to push boundaries. As Kinetic Affect, they have appeared on New York’s Apollo stage, took part in an “America’s Got Talent” taping and consulted for local organizations such as the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and United Way.

Go to wmich.edu/hr/development/differences.html for more information.

University Dames invites all members and former members as well as their guests to attend a celebratory luncheon program and final on-campus gathering Saturday, May 4. The featured speaker will be Sharon Carlson, director of WMU’s Archives and Regional History Collections.

Invitations for the event will be mailed in late March. Call Jean Scott at (269) 341-2296 to be added to the invitation mailing list or to add someone else who may be interested in attending the gathering. Luncheon attendees are asked to bring photos, notices, recipes and other souvenirs of the past that can be included in a memorabilia display.

The University Dames, founded as an organization of WMU faculty members’ wives, was later opened to all University women.

“It has been a fruitful and educational women’s organization for a long time, enabling us to learn and socialize,” says Marcella Kelemen, Dames publicity person.

“But membership losses and changing times have necessitated calling it a day. We want to go out in grand fashion, so we hope to reach as many former Dames as possible. Remember, ‘Once a Dame, always a Dame.’”

The University Dames is leaving a lasting legacy through its University Dames Endowed Scholarship, which is awarded to WMU graduate students, with preference given to female applicants.

International students get tax help

Information about a free tax-preparation system for international students and scholars is accessible online through the Haeincke Institute for Global Education. Visit http://international.wmich.edu/content/view/1112/548/ for details.

Agreement extends WMU presence in metro Detroit

A collaboration between WMU and the Wayne County Community College District will expand WMU’s growing presence in southeast Michigan.

WMU President John M. Dunn and WCCCD Chancellor Curtis L. Ivery met Feb. 6 in Detroit to sign an agreement that will allow WMU to offer advanced classes at the district’s University Center in Harper Woods as early as May.

The initial WMU offerings will be courses that lead to a bachelor’s degree in university studies as part of a “two-plus-two” arrangement. The program will see WCCCD students complete their associate degree and then transfer seamlessly to WMU for the final two years of study. The WMU courses will be a combination of online and face-to-face courses.

The agreement also provides WMU with a space to offer classes at WCCCD’s Northwest campus, located on West Outer Drive in Detroit, as well as a space for advising students enrolled in other WMU online offerings.

The agreement must be approved by the state, the Higher Learning Commission and WMU’s faculty. Online courses would then begin in May, and face-to-face instruction would start in September.

Future plans call for even more opportunities for traditional and nontraditional students to enroll in WMU degree programs at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. WMU opened a regional location in Royal Oak in 2010 to serve as a base of operations for its Detroit-area activities. WCCCD has five campuses and was established in 1967 to serve some 2.3 million people who live within the college’s service district.

Obituaries

Editor’s Note: Visit wmich.edu/news/obituaries for full obituaries.

Anne Devereaux Jordan, a former English instructor and noted contributor to the fields of children’s literature and science fiction writing, died Saturday, Feb. 2. She was 69. Jordan taught at WMU from 1971 to 1973.

Leroy R. Ray Jr., emeritus in and a former director of Black American Studies, died Tuesday, Feb. 12. He was 82. Ray came to WMU in 1973 as BAS program director and remained in that post until retiring in 1996 after 23 years of service.
Institute surveys racial attitudes of select freshmen

A survey of incoming WMU freshmen shows these students have positive attitudes about diversity overall but little previous experience in diverse settings.

WMU’s first survey documenting the views of freshmen was conducted by the Walker Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations and is available online at wmich.edu/walkerinstitute. It queried 2,146 students attending freshman orientation in 2011, a class that will be surveyed again before graduation to allow researchers to document any changes in attitudes.

Among the survey’s major findings are:

- White students reported less experience with diversity than students of color.
- Students of color are more likely than whites to report being treated unfairly because of race or ethnicity.
- About half of all students reported having felt insults or threatened by someone of another race at least occasionally.
- Three in 10 students expressed agreement with the idea that discrimination against blacks and Hispanics has been eliminated, while 37 percent disagreed.
- A huge majority of students in all groups believe “most people” confer high status on whites and lower status on other groups.
- “We found students were coming here to increase students’ knowledge and appreciation of diversity as well as their ability to thrive as professionals in our increasingly diverse communities.”

Employee gifts help WMU excel

Some 400 employees attended the Mardi Gras-themed U Make Western faculty and staff mixer in Miller Auditorium Feb. 12. The event was a festive celebration of the contributions employees already make to WMU as well as an invitation to join the recently launched fundraising campaign that seeks to increase the annual rate of faculty and staff giving from 11 percent to 30 percent.

Coach PJ Fleck was the mixer’s featured speaker, and he took the opportunity to make his first donation to the University. Fleck, who temporarily left the digital world and wrote his first check of any kind in years, that seeks to increase the annual rate of faculty and staff giving from 11 percent to 30 percent.

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Thomas’ office plans to make the mixer an annual event. Visit mywmu.com/employee-giving to learn more about giving to the University; to make a gift through payroll deduction, which provides the biggest bang for the buck; or to give in other ways.

Prof’s tweets net generous outpouring from Japan

“I really enjoy coming to work every day,” says Chad Stratton, a licensed electrician in WMU’s Shop 4. “Everybody in the shop gets along really well, and when you show up to complete a work order, people are glad you’re there.”

Stratton, who joined Facilities Management’s maintenance services division in 2006, adds that working at the University has allowed him to get to know not just his departmental colleagues, but people across campus.

Previously, he had been an electrician with Local 131 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers for 15 years. After doing a five-year apprenticeship through the union, he would be hired out to various companies on an on-call basis.

“Business slowed down and I saw an ad for an electrician at Western so I applied,” Stratton says. “It’s different here because you see people every day and get to know them and their families. We also run into a lot of students. They’re a lot of fun and usually super to deal with.”

Shop 4 is what Stratton calls a “do-it-now” shop because it’s the first unit called when a problem is reported in its coverage area, which encompasses 32 buildings including the Sincicse Health Center, the Seibert Administration Building, new Sangren Hall, Moore Hall, the Student Recreation Center and all athletics-related facilities.

Stratton says he’s primarily called in when offices have heating- or power-related problems. In addition, he assists his shop’s mechanics when equipment needs to be wired and is the electrician who works on the University’s scoreboards and water pumps.

“Our goal is to get in and get the job done without interrupting the daily flow. If you don’t know who we are, we’ve done our job,” Stratton says. “Everybody in the shop worries about what’s best for the University and the students. There’s very good cooperation here. The carpenters, mechanics and plumbers are quick to show up to help.”

Stratton lives in Alamo, Mich., and enjoys spending his free time out of doors and with family members, especially his son. Among his favorite activities are hunting, fishing, biking, hiking and riding quads. He also likes to attend WMU hockey games.

On Campus with Chad Stratton

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