Gov. Snyder praises WMU's Seita program

In his Jan. 18 State of the State address, Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder singled out WMU's Seita Scholars program for praise, triggering a round of applause in the Michigan House chamber at the state Capitol.

"I want to give special recognition to WMU, which is already providing support for 141 young adults in this age group through the Seita Scholars Program," Snyder said.

Snyder tied his praise to recent moves to extend state support to age 21 for students who have aged out of the foster care system. He signed such a bill late last fall, and one of WMU's Seita Scholars was invited to speak at that ceremony.

The University's Foster Care Youth in Higher Education initiative, or Seita Scholars program as it's commonly called, has become the largest and most comprehensive program of its kind in the nation. The program was founded in fall 2008. Yvonne Unrau, social work, has been serving as director of the program since then, but William C. "Chris" Harris replaced Unrau effective Jan. 6 after a nationwide search.

The program focuses on young people who have aged out of foster care and need the kind of support that families usually provide to be successful in college. It receives support from foundations, individuals and a variety of private sources.

Participants are called Seita Scholars in honor of alumnus John Seita, a former foster care youth who is now a leading U.S. advocate for foster care children. They receive full-tuition scholarships, a year-round campus home, and intense personal and academic support. This year, 141 students are part of the program, and some of the first freshmen who started with the program in 2008 will graduate.

Unrau has taken on the new role of creating a Center for Foster Youth and Higher Education.

Town hall meeting to focus on East Campus redevelopment

A campus town hall meeting to discuss the status of efforts aimed at redeveloping East Campus has been set for 9 to 10 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 1, in the west lobby of Walbridge Hall.

The public meeting is being organized by WMU's Office of Community Outreach and the Western Student Association in coordination with Students for East Campus.

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Cooley named interim education dean, academic searches launched

Van E. Cooley, chair of educational leadership, research and technology since 2006, will lead the College of Education and Human Development for the next year, while a national search is launched to find a new dean.

In addition, WMU will launch a national search in the coming weeks for an associate provost to guide the Haenicke Institute for Global Education. The person selected for that newly created position will replace Donald McCloud, dean of the Haenicke Institute, who is finishing his five-year appointment in that position.

Cooley's appointment, made pending approval of the WMU Board of Trustees, is effective Jan. 1 through Dec. 31. He will guide the college while the University search for a new dean to replace John Wheeler, who resigned last fall to accept a new position at East Tennessee State University. In addition, Katharine E. Cummings, associate dean of the college who had previously announced her return to the faculty, has agreed to stay on for another year in her current post.
Around campus and beyond

Student-produced movie debuts

“Tortilla Flat,” a film produced entirely by WMU students, will have its world premiere at 9 p.m. today in Miller Auditorium. Admission is $1 at the door for WMU students and $2 for all others. Doors open at 8:30 p.m., and free popcorn is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Israel-Palestine conflict is talk topic

A well-known author and son of Holocaust survivors is coming to campus to share what he thinks might be a way out of the standoff between Israelis and Palestinians. Norman Finkelstein, who has written six books, will speak about the conflict at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 31, in the North Ballroom of the Bernhard Center.

Emeriti Council programs continue

The Emeriti Council’s next Wednesday meeting will feature a presentation on “The Stages of My Life” by D. Terry Williams, emeritus in theatre, at 2 p.m. Feb. 8 in Walwood Hall’s Heining Emeriti Lounge. Williams will look at the theatres that influenced the teaching of theatre history as well as choices of a stage director.

Award-winning authors to visit

Two award-winning authors whose work has been published by WMU’s New Issues Poetry and Prose will be featured in the next installment of the Frostic Reading Series. Kevin Fenton and Rachel Eliza Griffiths will read from their selected works at 8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 2, in 157 Bernhard Center.

Fenton wrote the novel “Merid Benches,” which won the AWP Prize for the Novel, and Griffiths is the author of “Mule & Pearl” as well as “Miracle Arhythmia” and “The Required Distance.”

Civil engineer to lead two seminars

Chandrasekhar Parcha from California State University, Fullerton will lead two seminars during a visit through the Visiting Scholars and Artists Program. Parcha will speak on “Basic Principles and Applications of Reliability and Risk Analysis to Civil Engineering” at 3:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 9; in D115 Engineering and Applied Sciences Building. He also will speak on “The Mathematical Formulation of the Poverty Index” at 10 a.m. Friday, Feb. 10, in 6625 Everett Tower.

Author to share troops’ war letters

Best-selling American author Andrew Carroll will share correspondence from U.S. soldiers from American Wars at 2 p.m. Friday, Feb. 10, in Schneider Hall’s Brown Auditorium. The talk will be followed by a question-and-answer period, and Carroll will sign books during reception at 3 p.m. Reservations for the talk can be made by calling (269) 387-5050.

Some 175 employers expected at 2012 Career Fair

Preparation events will begin soon for WMU’s 34th annual Career Fair, set for 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 16, in the Bernhard Center Ballroom.

Organized by the University’s Career and Student Employment Services, the event is expected to attract some 175 employers and 3,000 job seekers. Although open to the public, it is tailored to WMU students and alumni. Visit www.wmich.edu/career and click Calendar for a list of employers. Employers are recruiting for internships and college graduates. Some may conduct first-round interviews with selected candidates Friday, Feb. 17. Many employers will ask qualified candidates to complete an online employment application in lieu of submitting a paper resume.

Prior to the Career Fair, WMU students may visit www.wmich.edu/career to access various preparation events and services, including:

• Every day—Resume critiquing (a schedule is posted under Spring Advising Schedule)
• Feb. 3—Workshop on U.S. Employment Regulations for International Students
• Feb. 10—Practice Interview Day (advance sign-up and BroncoJOBS account required; login to your BroncoJOBS account, then click on Practice Interview Day under One-Click Searches to sign up for an interview time slot).

Reception

Bruce Haigh, history, will be honored for his more than 41 years of service during a retirement reception from 4 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 2, in the Oaklands. Visit www.wmich.edu/history to share a reminiscence.

Jobs

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

Administrator earns LBGT award

Associate Dean Cathryn Bailey, College of Arts and Sciences, received the Terry Kuseske Education Award from the Kalamazoo Gay Lesbian Resource Center during its Winter Gala Dec. 10. Bailey received the award for her leadership and advocacy for lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgender people on WMU’s campus and in the broader Kalamazoo community.

The award is named in honor of the late educator Terry Kuseske, WMU’s first openly gay city commissioner.

Bailey also is director of gender and women’s studies. Her research interests include the intersection of feminism, pragmatism and Buddhism; issues associated with animal ethics; articles that address topics of gender, race, and anthropocentrism; and rediscovering and interpreting 19th-century African American theorist and activist Anna Julia Cooper.

Emeritus pens book on car museum

David O. Lyon, emeritus in psychology, has penned “The Gilmore Car Museum: Miles from the Ordinary.” The 136-page coffee-table book traces the history of the Gilmore family from the late 19th century, explores the Gilmore Car Museum complex’s development, and describes the evolution of the museum collection and the architectural plan for the 90-acre campus.

The 2010 book uses vintage images and modern color photographs of the automobiles in the collection to illustrate the organization of the collection into themes. Lyon joined the faculty in 1963 and retired in 1998 after serving the last 10 years as director of collective bargaining. Since his retirement, he has embarked on a new career as an automotive historian. A Gilmore Car Museum volunteer, he wrote the “Kalamazoo Automobilist” published in 2002.

Emeritus serves as consultant on film

Ben Wilson, emeritus in Africana Studies, served as historical consultant on an award-winning documentary video that will air at 8 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 5, on WGVU and WGVK, the local Public Broadcasting Service stations.

“Up From the Bottoms: The Search for the American Dream” tells the story of the massive migration of African Americans from the rural south to the prosperous, industrial north during the World War II years and beyond. It features 15 residents of Muskegon, Mich., telling their personal stories.

The production is narrated by actress Cicely Tyson and includes a cameo appearance by activist Dick Gregory. Musical clips feature the voices of Stevie Wonder and the rapper, Common.

Wilson, former director of the Africana studies program, retired from WMU in 2006 after more than 30 years of service to the University.
Late-night bus service tested

A student-government initiative is allowing WMU students to “test drive” late-night bus service between the main campus and several Kalamazoo community locations.

Late night service on four Metro Transit community routes began Jan. 9 and will run Monday through Thursday each week through March 1 to determine if there is sufficient student ridership to continue.

Rides on the four lines will cost $1.50 in exact change after 10 p.m. The lines will dramatically extend the hours students can use the bus service to travel back and forth between campus and off-campus sites.

The four routes with expanded hours and the times of their last arrivals on campus are:

- West Michigan #1 Route, 12:55 a.m.
- Lovell Street #16 Route, 11:57 p.m.
- Solon/Kendall #21 Route, 12:30 a.m.
- Lafayette Street #22 Route, 12:12 a.m.

The expanded hours are for Metro Transit lines only and do not include Bronco Transit lines.

Visit www.broncotransit.com/late-night for complete schedules.

University trustees approve retirements of five faculty, 11 staff members

The retirements of five faculty members and 11 staff members were approved by the WMU Board of Trustees at its Dec. 8 meeting. Trustees also signed off on four resignations, one promotion and two changes in departmental affiliations for faculty members.

All of the retiring faculty members have been granted emeritus status. Their names, positions, years of continuous service and effective dates of retirement are: Thomas C. Bailey, change in retirement date only, English, 41 years, effective Dec. 31, 2011; Suzanne Hedstrom, change in retirement date only, counselor education and counseling psychology, 23 years, effective June 30; Charles E. Hines Jr., change in retirement date only, accountancy, 35 years, effective Aug. 31; Elizabeth A. Hoeger, business information systems, 23 years, effective April 30, 2017; and John F. Nielsen, social work, 16 years, effective Dec. 31.

The retiring staff members are: Barbara J. Alexander, teacher certification, 11 years, effective Oct. 15, 2011; John M. Barney, maintenance services, 23 years, effective Sept. 30, 2011; Mary J. Devreeneay, Unified Clinics, 14 years, effective Dec. 31, 2011; James B. DeScheemaker, University Libraries, 19 years, effective Dec. 12, 2011; Pamela J. Emery, University Libraries, 22 years, effective Dec. 31, 2011; Barbara A. Gustafson, student financial aid and scholarships, 31 years, effective Dec. 31, 2011; Cheryl J. Lay, lifelong learning and education, 18 years, effective Jan. 9; Kamiti S. Njiru, information technology, 37 years, effective Dec. 31; James L. Schultz, WMU-Grand Rapids, 17 years, effective Jan. 3; James D. Short, building support and custodial services, 15 years, effective Dec. 11, 2011; and Alicia J. Yeagley, College of Arts and Sciences, 33 years, effective Dec. 31, 2011.

The resigning faculty members are: Allison L. Baker, special education and literacy studies, effective Dec. 31, 2011; Daniel W. Briggs, mathematics, effective Dec. 31, 2011; James L. Schultz, WMU-Grand Rapids, 17 years, effective Jan. 3; James D. Short, building support and custodial services, 15 years, effective Dec. 11, 2011; and Alicia J. Yeagley, College of Arts and Sciences, 33 years, effective Dec. 31, 2011.

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New center offers grandparents support

WMU and Georgia State University are collaborating partners in a new center that focuses on informing professionals, decision makers and the general public about the unique challenges, needs and strengths of custodial grandparent families.

During their Dec. 8 meeting, University trustees approved creation of the center, which will be housed in the Colleges of Education and Human Development. Directors include Linda Dannison, WMU chair of family and consumer sciences; Andrea Smith, WMU professor of teaching, learning and educational studies; and Deborah Whitley, GSU associate professor of social work.

Originally established by GSU in 2001, the National Research Center for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren promotes best practices in the kinship care field by linking researchers and field-based professionals.

The center will be housed in the College of Education and Human Development, effective Dec. 31. The resigning faculty member is: Mary A. Allard, special education and literacy studies, effective Dec. 31, 2011.

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Nominations are being accepted through Friday, Feb. 10. Visit www.rso.wmich.edu to obtain a nomination form.

Obituaries

More complete obituaries are available for these WMU employees by visiting www.wmich.edu/news and clicking Obituaries.

James B. DeScheemaker, of Kalamazoo, died at home Jan. 2. He was 60. DeScheemaker joined the staff in 1992 and retired in December as coordinator of fast cataloging in University Libraries after 19 years of service to WMU.

A memorial service will be held in WMU’s Kanley Chapel at a later date. Donations may be made to the Friends of the University Libraries, c/o the WMU Foundation; West Michigan Cancer Center; or Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan.

Franklin G. “Greg” Fisk, emeritus in science studies, died Dec. 28. He was 80. Fisk joined the faculty in 1969 and taught half time in the School of General Studies and half time in the College of Education. He retired in 1997 as a professor after 28 years of service to WMU.

A memorial service will be held in the First Baptist Church of Kalamazoo at a later date. Visit www.avinkcremation.com to make a memorial guestbook entry. Donations may be made to the Greg Fisk Music Fund.

John A. Fochtman died Dec. 13 at his home in Petoskey, Mich. He was 74. Fochtman, a physician, joined the Sinecure Health Center staff in 1978 and retired in 1992 after 14 years of service to WMU.

Visit www.stonefuneralhomeinc.com to make a memorial guestbook entry. Donations may be made to the Friendship Center in Petoskey.

Sally L. Stickan died Dec. 7. She was 79. Stickan, of Portage, Mich., joined the staff in 1986 and retired in 1998 as a hall assignment clerk in residence life after 12 years of service to WMU.

A memorial service will be held in the Dutcher-Kolke Funeral Home in Bronson, Mich., at a later date. Keep visiting www.dutcherfuneralhome.com for updated service information. Donations may be made to the American Cancer Society, Disabled Veterans of America, hospice or any other organization of choice.

Louella M. Stratton died Dec. 31 in Kalamazoo. She was 88. Stratton joined the staff in 1963 and retired in 1984 as a secretary in Dining Services after more than 20 years of service to WMU.

Visit www.winkelfuneralhome.com to make a memorial guestbook entry. Donations may be made to the American Cancer Society, Disabled Veterans of America, hospice or any other organization of choice.

Who’s Who nominations sought

Faculty and staff members are invited to nominate deserving students for inclusion in Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges.

Nominations are being accepted through Friday, Feb. 10. Visit www.rso.wmich.edu to obtain a nomination form.

The partnership between WMU and GSU is a logical collaboration that will combine strengths inherent in programs developed by each university. WMU’s Second Time Around program has a strong footing in curriculum development, assessment and has developed resources to serve custodial grandparents, the children in their care, and professionals working with these family members. GSU’s Project Healthy Grandparents has focused on physical and mental health of grandparent care providers.

Fisk
Semiannual staff award nominations due Feb. 28

Nominations for the spring round of WMU's semiannual Make a Difference awards are due by Tuesday, Feb. 28.

Make a Difference is a campuswide peer-to-peer program that recognizes WMU staff for their accomplishments and daily investment of energy and creativity. It features semiannual and annual awards available to Staff Compensation System, AFS/CM, MSEA and POA employees who provide exceptional services to the University.

Every fall and spring, semiannual awards are presented to a maximum of 15 people. Those selected for the accolade receive a before-tax prize of $300 and a certificate; are recognized at a special reception; and may be nominated for one of four annual Make a Difference awards that includes a before-tax prize of $1,200.

Semiannual award recipients may win multiple times, but are limited to one semiannual award per academic year. Visit www.wmich.edu/hr/make-a-difference for nomination instructions and forms.

Gov. Snyder praises Seita Scholars program

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Gov. Snyder praises Seita Scholars program and brings a unique blend of qualities and personal experiences to the program. He has worked with Vanguard, Pfizer and Stryker Medical, where he was a senior project manager. He also had a highly successful nine-year stint in the U.S. Air Force, including two years in the Air Force Academy's admissions office.

Larry LeVan grew up without his biological father, was sexually abused during his formative years and entered a state-run independent living program at age 16. Persevering, he went on to earn a bachelor's and master's degree.

LeVan also believes in learning, self-improvement and setting goals. For example, he keeps a list with him at all times of 10 new things he can do in a few hours or days. When he accomplishes a listed task, he replaces it with a new one. He says this gives him at least 10 reasons to start every morning with a goal in mind. Since he started keeping the list, he's completed close to 120 new things, from learning how to make Tiffany windows to exploring and studying extinct volcanoes in northern Arizona.

“Here at WMU, they encourage you to learn and apply what you’ve learned in your everyday work duties,” he says. “Hopefully that will carry over into your personal life, also.”

A former builder, LeVan lives in an older five-bedroom home he’s renovating in Three Rivers, Mich. He likes traveling, especially taking spontaneous trips. Although most of his trips today are to visit his three grown children and three grandchildren, he admits he still prefers to take the “long way on back roads” and explore new areas. Since he was young, LeVan has had an interest finding and collecting fossils and rocks. He still enjoys looking for specimens and polishing them and has collected hundreds of unusual rocks from campus alone. He also enjoys cross-country and downhill skiing.

On Campus with Larry LeVan

Listening, paying close attention to details and making sure to learn something new every day are goals that have served Larry LeVan well in life and in his job as an environmental control person at WMU.

When he came to the University almost 10 years ago, his job was answering service calls for heating and cooling issues, and LeVan quickly learned to look beyond the obvious. From items blocking temperature sensors to software glitches, it’s LeVan’s job to monitor the climates of University buildings and respond to concerns if temperatures become too hot or cold.

His work the past decade has led him to most buildings on campus for service calls. This past fall, however, his job focus shifted from working on hardware in the field to working more on software systems. A major part of his responsibilities now is upgrading systems and anticipating problems before they occur.

“Preventative maintenance is something I really believe in,” he says. “It’s just like changing the oil in a car. You have to change the oil in a car before it runs out or there’s a major expense.”

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