Just before the COVID-19 pandemic, the college had begun to reorganize the first floor of our building, trying to make it a space where our students can study, relax and recharge, and where they can find access to services like advising and printing.

This “first floor project” involved the re-purposing of storage areas and under-utilized rooms, relocating the CHHS Office of Advising and eliminating the central computer lab in the building that occupied a large percentage of our beautiful atrium.

After the pandemic, the scope of the first-floor project was reduced. Finally, this fall, we enacted several changes, beginning with the establishment of the new CHHS Student Engagement Center, where the little-used computer lab once stood.

The engagement center is a beautiful, glass-enclosed space, with views of the east lawn and trees that stand between the CHHS building and the Ernest Wilbur Building, home of the PT program and Center for Disability Services, among other things. But the glass walls also look into the atrium, which allows the entire lobby to be one seamless, student-focused space.

**Recruitment and Outreach**
In many ways, the engagement center is the front door to the college. When high school students and families come to tour the college, it is their first stop. Our excellent student ambassadors staff the space. In addition to welcoming visitors and conducting tours, we’ll showcase some of the educational technology we use in our college on digital screens. Visitors will be able to see our college in action from the engagement center.

**Advising**
Over the summer, our advisors moved down to new offices on the first floor. This move makes them more accessible to students. As before, they offer in-person walk-in advising appointments some days and during high-demand parts of each semester. They also continue to offer phone and virtual consultations, which are often more convenient for students.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**
The CHHS Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion was introduced in January 2021. Since that time, the DEI office has been busy identifying needs within the college and finding ways to address them. This fall, Dr. Betty Dennis, the director of the DEI office, moved her office from the college’s central office to the Student Engagement Center.

“I wanted to be closer to the students,” says Dr. Dennis. “Moving out of the dean’s office puts us right in the middle of the college, and I think it might make it a little easier to come talk about DEI issues.”

**Just the beginning**
Moving units into the space was only the beginning. We had to construct cubicles and convert common and storage spaces to usable office space. We added a sliding door in the corner to allow for easy access from the atrium.

All this minor construction is the first step toward making this a truly engaging space for our students.

The former computer lab was officially converted to the new Student Engagement Center over the summer of 2022.
“It’s a flexible space, and we have many ideas for ways to use it,” says Nancy Cretsinger, director of academic and student services in the college. “We are also surveying students to get their input. We want to make it a space that works for them. A warm, welcoming place for current and future students to gather.”

“It should be a place to show off everything that makes us such an excellent college,” she adds.

The Study Hub
The space formerly known as the LRC (Learning Resource Center) is now the Study Hub. This should be the primary printing resource in the CHHS building for our students. There are many computers and desks available in this quiet space. The back of the Study Hub features private rooms ideal for small group work.

When the Study Hub is reserved for computer testing for classes, signs will be posted to direct students to the Student Engagement Center where they can find other printing options.

Strategic planning and re-visioning
The University is updating its strategic plan, revising its mission, vision and values for the next decade. This fall, the college embarked on its own strategic planning process, establishing a steering committee to develop revised mission, vision and values statements for the college.

Our mission has been on our website for a while now - that we are here to prepare students for careers that are high in demand, high in purpose, high in satisfaction and unsurpassed in impact.

In addition, we have also been reflecting on the programs we offer and the ways we prepare students for life after WMU. As part of that process, a group of staff, faculty and administrators worked together to identify three groups - or pathways - into which our disciplines fall:

- Community and Public Health Sciences
- Healthcare Sciences
- Therapeutic and Rehabilitation Sciences

Talking about these pathways helps incoming students better understand the kinds of careers we can help them achieve. Rather than confusing them with careers they’ve never heard of, we talk about types of health careers instead.

So far, this approach has been well-received and we are excited to see how it continues to evolve.

It is an exciting time in the College of Health and Human Services. Many people are engaged, proactively working to improve what we do - from the dean’s office, to student services, to information technology, to our classrooms.

We hope our staff and faculty are starting to see it. And most of all, we hope our students can see it, too.
Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Ph.D. program granted Program of Merit status

The Association of Doctoral Programs in Health Sciences (ADPHS) has bestowed the Program of Merit status on the Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Ph.D. Program at Western Michigan University. It is one of only five doctoral programs in the country to obtain this distinction.

The reviewing committee noted the program’s commitment to quality faculty engagement as a primary area of strength. “This status from the ADPHS indicates that the College of Health and Human Services has developed a nationally recognized doctoral program,” says Dr. Kieran Fogarty, program director.

Over the last 20 years, the Ph.D. program has thrived as part of the college. With biennial cohorts of 12 to 15 students, the program is usually made up of 35 to 40 doctoral students, consistently making it one of the largest Ph.D. programs at the University.

Individuals from 17 different academic departments at WMU, and more than 50 leading research universities, hospitals and healthcare agencies across the nation have made up dissertation committees for students in the program. This academic diversity and the national scope highlight the interdisciplinary approach students can expect to encounter in the doctoral program.

In ongoing efforts to engage the academic and healthcare communities it serves, the IHS Ph.D. program recently initiated a virtual Grand Rounds series of events, inviting nationally-recognized speakers to explore emerging healthcare topics of national value. Speakers have included Dr. Kata Chillag, the Hamilton McKay Professor of Biosciences and Human Health at Davidson College (former senior policy analyst to President Obama) and Dr. Captain Joshua Devine, regional health administrator for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

“The Ph.D. program is well positioned going forward,” adds Dr. Fogarty. “It’s clearly emerging as a leading doctoral program for preparing interdisciplinary scholar-practitioners with the skills and vision to become thought leaders, improving health and human services in all areas of society.”

In addition to academic and institutional appointments, IHS Ph.D. program graduates are increasingly being awarded prestigious post-doctoral fellowships with leading academic centers and healthcare agencies. External reviewers noted this as a clear indication of the quality and scope of the program.

“We are respected by peer institutions for our doctoral education process, and also for our strength in producing highly qualified graduates who are making meaningful contributions to their professions at the regional, national and international levels,” says Fogarty.
Dr. Bernardine Lacey was the founding director and professor in the WMU School of Nursing, where she served for five years. That was after a remarkable life and education led her to an extraordinary career spent advocating for children and homeless individuals in Washington D.C. and beyond. After Dr. Lacey left WMU in spring 2020, she continued to work in education, mentoring nurses and nurse educators, truly shaping the field of nursing for generations to come.

Dr. Bernardine Lacey passed away on March 26, 2021.

Bernadine Lacey received her nursing diploma at Gilfoy School of Nursing at Mississippi Baptist Hospital in 1962. Dr. Lacy’s oral history, outlining her experiences working as a nurse in the 1960’s, is preserved through Georgetown University, where she earned her RN-to-BSN in 1969. She started as a staff nurse at Howard University Freedmen’s Hospital and worked her way to administrative supervisor.

While at Howard, she was a catalyst behind adding care of the underserved to the curriculum in the College of Nursing. She received a $1.4 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to develop and direct a nurse-managed respite center for homeless men.

Late in her career, Dr. Lacey received numerous citations and awards thanks to a lifetime of professional and civic excellence. Those honors included induction as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, the Georgetown University Distinguished Alumni Award, the ANA Pearl McIver Public Health, and a $1.5 million donation to WMU to establish the Dr. Bernardine M. Lacey Endowed Chair in Community Health Nursing.

Throughout her 88 years of living life to the fullest, Dr. Lacey received numerous accolades—which are tangible testaments to her undeniable impact on the intersection of nursing and our nursing education communities,” according to Texas Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson, in a statement entered in the Congressional Record. “Dr. Lacey’s significant contributions to the field of nursing and public health are widely appreciated by a host of colleagues, friends, and students.”

“He Lacey was clearly an influential figure in the world of nursing,” says Dr. Lisa Singleterry, director of the WMU Bronson School of Nursing. “We were so fortunate to have her here at WMU during the earliest days of our nursing program. She left her mark on us and set us up to be what we have become.”

In 2014, she was named a “Living Legend” by the American Academy of Nursing, recognizing a small group of fellows in honor of their extraordinary contributions to the nursing profession. Dr. Lacey continues to be named on lists of influential nurses from organizations and on websites focused on the contributions of Black nurses.

This fall, the WMU Bronson School of Nursing hired Dr. Chandice Covington as the Bernadine M. Lacey Endowed Chair. Her role in the endowed chair is to mentor and promote the nursing science careers of nursing faculty and to support development of further graduate education opportunities at WMU.
“2022 was a very active year for the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the College of Health and Human Services,” says Dr. Betty Dennis, director of the office. “The DEI committee and all of our subcommittees worked hard to take steps toward becoming a more diverse and nurturing community.”

Over the course of the year, the DEI office hosted numerous “anti-bias training” sessions on topics like intersectionality; LGBTQIA2S+ experiences with healthcare; and identity, power and privilege. College leadership and individuals from across campus participated in a two-day anti-racism workshop conducted by Eliminating Racism and Creating / Celebrating Equity (ERACCE).

The college’s DEI committee hosted two Burian University-Community Lectures featuring Dr. Deirdre Cooper Owens, author of Medical Bondage; and stef m. shuster, author of Trans Medicine. The committee hosted its biennial Diversity and Inclusion Conference in March with a theme of Moving Toward Health Equity. Dr. Cooper Owens joined us once again as the keynote speaker. Throughout the year, CHHS DEI also co-sponsored speakers on campus, including Harriet Washington and Olympic gold medalist and Ogala Lakota elder Billy Mills.

In the midst of all those activities, the DEI office moved to the first floor of the CHHS building, and is now located in the new Student Engagement Center. This move puts the DEI office in the heart of the building, close to where students already gather.

For 2023, the CHHS Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion plans to establish a monthly calendar of events. They will continue to offer training for students, staff and faculty and have scheduled monthly “lunch & learn” sessions throughout the spring, where speakers from across campus will lead casual, important conversations on topics like anti-fat bias, substance use, neurodiversity, and Deaf culture.

We will continue to promote the DEI Dropbox as a way to keep in touch with students, staff and faculty who wish to discuss equity-related issues. “We know that our students are hurting,” says Dr. Dennis. “We know that our students are impacted by racism and discrimination on a daily basis. We hope that students, staff and faculty will use the DEI Dropbox to let us know what’s going on so that we can continue to take steps toward meaningful change in the college.”

### 2022-23 CHHS DEI Committee Members

- Dr. Betty Dennis, chair
- Dr. Carrie Barrett
- Wan Chen
- Eric Comer
- Dr. Elyse Conners
- Dr. Steven Eberth
- Julie Eilenberg
- Joshua Enos
- Dr. Angela Groves
- Dr. Janet Hahn
- Rachael Koeson
- Joel Krauss
- Dr. Andrea Perez
- Dawn Smith
- Tanya Timmerman
- Dr. Pamela Wadsworth
- Nathan Wollensak
- Dr. Anna Yelick
CHHS STUDENTS

2022
Total CHHS students

86.4% Female
13.6% Male

CHHS EMPLOYEES

320
Total CHHS employees

64.7% Female
18.4% Male
16.9% No Answer

CHHS STUDENT RACE/ETHNICITY SINCE 2020

CHHS EMPLOYEE RACE/ETHNICITY SINCE 2020
Unified Clinics return to pre-pandemic availability

The Unified Clinics have emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic to a circumstance where services are routinely offered in face-to-face, remote and hybrid formats. In 2022, they were able to once again offer these important services (in all of those formats) provided by our specialty clinics:

- Aphasia Communication Enhancement Program
- Behavioral Health Services
- Building Resiliency in Substance Abusing Families (BRISA)
- Charles Van Riper Hearing, Language and Speech Services
- Children’s Trauma Assessment Center (CTAC)
- Music Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Pet-Assisted Therapy (new in 2022)
- Psychology Clinic
- Swallowing and Respiration Clinical Services
- Vision Clinic (Blindness/Low Vision Services)
- Voice Clinic
- Women’s Comprehensive Health Clinic

Promoting youth mental health services through the Unified Clinics

In August, the Unified Clinics and Resiliency Center for Children and Families, along with the WMU Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine, was visited by Debbie Stabenow and Sean McCann.

Senator Stabenow was promoting her support for the Youth Mental Health Workforce Enhancement and Training Consortium, a State of Michigan appropriation request through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Led by WMU and in partnership with WMed, this consortium will provide immediate resources for youth mental health and increased workforce opportunities in the long-term.

The $1.8 million will primarily be used for program development activities, and to fund stipends for students in multiple disciplines at CHHS and across WMU and WMed. These students will work collaboratively with our local behavioral health consortium, local schools and other nonprofit partners to increase access and capacity for youth mental health services.

Therapy dogs make the rounds at Unified Clinics

Under the direction of Dr. Angela Moe, many individuals visiting the clinics are finding their services improved with the addition of therapy dogs.

This has been especially beneficial for children being evaluated in the CTAC program. Each child leaves their evaluation with their own therapy dog stuffed toy. The impact of these additional services has been immediate and great.
Center for Disability Services

Dr. Carol Sundberg retired from her position of executive director of the WMU Center for Disability Services at the end of 2021. Carol dedicated 30+ years to CDS and was instrumental in developing the robust programs that impact the daily lives of the individuals we serve today.

In fall 2022, Dr. Andrea Perez was named as director of the WMU Center for Disability Services, after spending most of the year as its interim director.

“The past two+ years of COVID-19 have brought forth unique challenges for our programs,” says Dr. Perez. “We’ve made many adjustments to our practices to keep our clients and employees safe. The pandemic has highlighted more than ever before the value and enrichment our services bring to the lives of those we serve and the undeniable dedication of our employees.”

CDS by the Numbers

250 people served

91 student employees

105 intern and practicum students in music, nursing, OT, PT, psychology and speech pathology

$595,199 paid in student wages

386,935 total units of direct service (1 unit = 15 minutes)

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25% Operational
75% Compensation

5% Private Fees
95% Contract Fees

Private Fees: $106,571
Contract Fees: $1,978,992
TOTAL: $2,085,563

Compensation: $1,472,694
Operational: $503,337
TOTAL: $1,976,031

Special activities at Senior Day Services

Residential and skill-building participants joined the WMU symphony and learned to play a variety of instruments, including drums, trumpets, violins and more.

After practicing diligently and learning to read music, they performed with the symphony at their winter and spring concerts at Miller Auditorium.
In 2022, the physician assistant program at Western Michigan University celebrated 50 years of preparing physician assistant professionals. Founded in 1972, it was one of the first PA programs in the nation and the second in Michigan. William Birch, M.D., obstetrician and gynecologist, founded the PA program at Western Michigan University. Through his determination and regular presence at the state capitol, Birch convinced the legislature that educating physician assistants would be beneficial — and that locating a program at WMU in Kalamazoo would assure its success.

The PA profession flourished after the end of the Vietnam War, when veterans trained as medics came home to forge careers with the medical skills they learned while serving in the military. The profession and WMU’s program continues to flourish today with growing demand in the field and generous starting salaries. Our alumni have gone on to provide services throughout the United States, many becoming leaders in the field.

In 1998, the WMU program was converted from a bachelor’s degree to a master’s degree, following a national trend and indicating that the profession was advancing technically in the landscape of healthcare.

Today, the WMU Department of Physician Assistant offers an entry-level, full-time, 24-month program that leads to a Master of Science in Medicine (MSM). Each fall the department welcomes a new cohort of 40 students to the program. In the end, our graduates are prepared to take the certifying exam to become licensed as a physician assistant.
In July 2022, the Department of Occupational Therapy formally celebrated 100 years of achievement. Faculty, alumni, donors and supporters came together for continuing education programs, student poster presentations, campus tours, an exhibit of OT historical artifacts, cohort reunions and an alumni art exhibit.

What started with one instructor and three students has become a department with 11 faculty members and an enrollment of 150 students. Since it began, the program has produced more than 10,000 occupational therapists.

The OT profession began in 1917. So when Marion R. Spear established what is today Western’s program, the OT profession was still in its infancy. Then located at the Kalamazoo Regional Psychiatric Hospital, the training program was one of the first of its kind in Michigan.

By 1939, it was just the fifth accredited occupational therapy program in the country. Five years later, with 30 students enrolled, the program offered a Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy. By 1953, the department had developed one of the first occupational therapy graduate programs in the country.

Among the department’s many points of pride is the open access journal. Founded in 2012, the Open Journal of Occupational Therapy is peer reviewed with a mission to publish high-quality articles focused on applied research, practice and education.

“There’s only one other journal like it in the country” says Dr. Nancy Hock, who serves as the publication’s managing editor in addition to being the department’s chair. “It’s free and interactive, open to everybody.”

The department runs a dozen faculty-led fieldwork clinics on campus and in the community, with students providing hands-on services.

“Our clinics are mostly free and serve people who are uninsured and under-insured,” says Dr. Hock. “Students can see their professors as clinicians outside of the classroom while gaining valuable experience themselves.”
Health Administration: where health and business education meet

The new Bachelor of Science in Health Administration was developed with the Haworth College of Business to prepare graduates for leadership roles in health care organizations — a strong career market in a massive and growing business sector.

“It was a huge opportunity for WMU to step up, identify this need and work efficiently across colleges to develop this program,” says CHHS Dean Dr. Ron Cisler. “The University’s emphasis on interdisciplinarity helped us ramp this up relatively quickly. The fact that our college is already home to interdisciplinary programs helped us greatly.”

“Growing demand for qualified professionals and overall growth in healthcare really clarifies the need for this program,” says Dr. Tiffany Lee, interim SIHP director. “So much of our healthcare services and sciences program is already pointing students in that direction. Working with the business college to design a program that incorporates specific business and healthcare skills and knowledge was incredibly rewarding for us. And I know it will be rewarding for our students.”

The new program will be led by Dr. Jessica Cataldo, SIHP faculty specialist. Cataldo joined Western during summer 2022 and was most recently part of the faculty at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

New minors make our graduates more career-ready than ever

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the field of public health captured widespread and growing interest. The new minor in public health from WMU allows students to add valuable interdisciplinary skills and concepts to their undergraduate degree.

“Careers in public health-related fields are growing,” says Dr. Robert Bensley, program coordinator for the public health bachelor’s degree. “The concepts covered in this minor inform healthcare and social science workers in a number of jobs. But they can also be beneficial for students who plan to work in business, education, government and other fields.”

SIHP has also launched a 15-credit minor in long-term care administration to prepare students with skills and knowledge needed to oversee the daily operations of nursing facilities, adult day cares, home care organizations or assisted living facilities.

“Licensed nursing home administrators and trained managers at all levels of senior care are in high demand,” says Dr. Jan Hahn, coordinator of the minor. “We are pleased students have this new option to prepare them for a meaningful and challenging career options. This serves our aging community as well as our students.”
WMU honors Native American heritage, creates deeper connections with tribal communities

Recognizing Western’s Main Campus is on the lands of the Ojibwe, Odawa and Bodewadmi nations — the tribes that represent the Three Fires Confederacy in Southwest Michigan —WMU’s Native American Affairs Council is working to support, elevate and advocate for Native American perspectives and communities both on and off campus.

Council member and associate professor in the School of Social Work Dr. Dee Sherwood received a Climate Change Teaching Fellowship from WMU’s Center for Humanities to develop a course focused on Indigenous perspectives on environmental protection and climate activism. It will explore impacts of climate change, principles of environmental justice and historical and contemporary approaches to environmental protection.

Students will visit the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi’s hydroponic greenhouse and community medicine garden; observe wild rice riverbeds and learn about restoration efforts; participate in Indigenous-led discussions about the Seven Grandfather Teachings as they relate to climate change; and attend the tribe’s annual powwow, among other service-learning opportunities.

In addition to curriculum, the council has seen outreach from across the University seeking consultation and ways to engage Indigenous communities.

“We’re making really good progress and building momentum and engagement, and I think that’s evidenced by people within Western understanding that we have this council and then reaching out to us for consultation,” Sherwood says. “Our other major priority is empowering our students to have a voice and having Indigenous-led activities and events.”

Sherwood is encouraged by the leadership opportunities that have opened up for students within NASO.

“Of course, we want this to happen every month, that people are reflecting and mindful and listening and learning about Native Americans. But this month, in particular, I think it’s important,” Sherwood adds. “It’s an important time for us to increase awareness and understanding.”

MSW alum awarded Pulitzer Prize

Famed poet Diane Seuss, MSW ‘83, has been awarded a 2022 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry for “frank: sonnets,” a collection of poems that Seuss describes as a memoir in sonnets. Her subjects include the early loss of her father, being raised by a single mother, her son’s drug addiction and living in New York City in the mid-1970s.

The Pulitzer Prize committee described Seuss’ work as “a virtuosic collection that inventively expands the sonnet form to confront the messy contradictions of contemporary America, including the beauty and the difficulty of working-class life in the Rust Belt.”

She has taught at Kalamazoo College, Colorado College, University of Michigan, Washington University in St. Louis and the University of Southern Maine’s Stonecoast MFA program. Seuss was a 2020 Guggenheim Fellow and a recipient of the 2021 John Updike Award from the Academy of American Arts and Letters.

She has completed a draft of her sixth collection, “Modern Poetry,” which will be available in 2024.
Physical Therapy Updates

Several members of our WMU physical therapy community were honored at the fall Michigan APTA conference for their accomplishments:

- Dr. Rodney Weir was awarded the APTA MI President’s Award for his service to the organization.
- Mani Veerappan received the Diversity Award for advancing DEI in Michigan.
- Denzel Henderson received the TEAM Rehab Student Physical Therapist Scholarship.
- Will Dumochelle won the Outstanding PT Student Award.

PT alumna Mackenzie Belz (Class of 2021) organized a successful 5K for the American Cancer Society through her employer, NovaCare Rehabilitation. The first-year event drew around 30 runners and raised $700 for the organization. “NovaCare hopes to grow this event every year to get more involved in the community and help raise money for a great cause that has impacted so many people,” says Belz.

Blindness and Low Vision Studies faculty earn new external funding

Dr. Dawn Anderson, associate professor in the Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies, secured the renewal of an ongoing contract with the Michigan Department of Education to provide graduate training for teachers who wish to add a “visual impairment” endorsement to their existing teaching licenses. This initiative is part of the Visual Impairment Consortium for Teacher Preparation, a four state collaboration that fully reimburses tuition for participants who complete the program with a 3.0 GPA or better.

Dr. Anderson and Dr. Rob Wall Emerson, professor in the BLVS department, also secured a $2.5 million research Stepping Up Technology grant, a 4 + 1 year grant from the US Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs. This national project provides training programs focused on brain-based visual impairment, as well as mentorship around the use of specialized applications designed for students with cortical visual impairment. Initial success in the program has led to a national roll out, which will begin in 2022-23.

WMU and the Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies have signed an agreement with Baseera Foundation, a non-profit Egyptian organization that advocates for its visually impaired community, and ESLSCA University in Cairo, Egypt. The first cohort of students has begun taking classes in O&M and certified low vision therapist programs (in English) at ESLSCA University. Teachers of children with visual impairment and VRT programs will start next fall, when programs will also be offered in Arabic at Ain Shams University.

“The programs are modeled on our BLVS programs and will hopefully lead to graduates successfully passing the ACVREP certification exams,” says Dr. Wall Emerson. “They have mainly certified North American professionals, so these new Egyptian graduates may become the largest group of ACVREP certified vision professionals outside of North America.”
Public Health faculty receives Fulbright Scholarship

Over the summer, four Western Michigan University faculty members, including MPH program coordinator Dr. Shannon McMorrow, received highly competitive Fulbright Scholar awards to build lasting educational connections between the people of the United States and other countries.

Dr. McMorrow, assistant professor in the School of Interdisciplinary Health Programs, has traveled to Uganda to conduct research and teach at the Makerere University School of Public Health. Her work will continue there through May 2023.

Her teaching and research will expand critical public health knowledge and skills by teaching students, training faculty in online teaching and conducting photovoice research to generate powerful visual evidence to inform policies and programs for Congolese refugee women in Uganda.

“I lived in Uganda for three years prior to my doctoral studies and am so thrilled for the opportunity to return as a Fulbright Scholar, to bring along my husband and daughter to experience this special country,” says Dr. McMorrow.

Public health students to compete at state competition

Our bachelor’s degree in public health is focused on our students’ professional development. Because our cohorts are small, we are able to find opportunities and provide funding to support their professional growth. Part of that growth comes from presenting research at state and national conferences.

This fall, WMU undergraduate public health students finished in the top two spots at the eastern region National Case Study Competition in Health Education (NCSCHE). This automatically qualifies them to participate in the national competition to be held next spring.

Second Place
- Jake Line
- Lexi Wroze
- Shavonnie Shaw

First Place:
- Ashley Dittmar
- Karina Perales
Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences scholarship opens door for graduate research

This year’s recipient of the Robert and Rhea Corrion Scholarship was Erin Augustyniak, currently a doctoral student in the audiology program at WMU. That funding supports Erin’s graduate assistantship, where she is assisting Dr. Robin Criter in her research on hearing and balance.

“My grant expired in April and I thought I was going to have to give up my work with Dr. Criter,” says Augustyniak. “The Corrion Scholarship allowed me to keep working on our manuscript, which we were able to submit this semester.”

Erin is also working with Dr. Criter and Dr. Elyse Connors in the Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies on a project that examines the fear of falling and fall risk in individuals with vision and hearing loss.

“I am very excited to continue my work with Dr. Criter and our interdisciplinary work with Dr. Connors,” says Erin. “I’ve had great opportunities at WMU with classroom and clinical learning. I’m really honored to be involved in so much research as well. I feel like it’s really made me a well-rounded student.”

The Corrion Award gives preference to students with first-hand experience with communication disorder. Augustyniak was diagnosed with congenital, mild to moderate bilateral sensorineural hearing loss when she was 5 years old. Her own personal journey with audiology inspired her to make it her career path. Erin is a third-year audiology student and expects to graduate in May 2024.

ASHA-funded research on stuttering concealment

Dr. Hope Gerlach-Houck received a $5,000 mentored award from the American Speech Language Hearing Association to develop a questionnaire assessing the extent to which people who stutter try to hide their disfluencies. Dr. Gerlach-Houck’s previous research has shown that attempting to hide stuttering is a strong predictor of anxiety and depression in this community. Developing a valid measure of stuttering concealment can help identify and ease those concerns.

She hopes that this assessment tool will guide speech therapists in the future as they help their clients become more open about stuttering, if they wish to be. She is collaborating with Dr. Laura DeThorne, chair of the WMU Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences, and Dr. Eilidh Cage, a Scottish psychologist who studies autistic masking.

Dr. Gerlach-Houck also mentored three graduate students - Elise Nasser, Sarah Musilli and Natalie DeVries - on their master’s theses focused on stuttering. Each of these student projects was supported with internal funding from WMU. They presented their projects at the 2021 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Convention in Washington, DC.
**Updates from the CHHS Office of Research**

Five research projects at CHHS received a **Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award** from the WMU Office of Research and Innovation. These projects address complex problems encountered by individuals seeking care in healthcare and human services.

**Dr. Carrie Barrett**, PT, DPT, NCS, (Physical Therapy) will conduct a study to investigate a new model for physical therapy for geriatric populations who have had mild traumatic brain injury.

**Dr. Alessander Danna-dos-Santos**, Ph.D., PT, (Physical Therapy) will conduct a study examining the implementation of methods of autonomous recognition of higher risks of falling based on characteristics of human postural sway.

**Dr. Lori Gray**, Ph.D., (Holistic Health) will conduct a pilot study to further develop her mindfulness-based stroke recovery model.

**Dr. Shannon McMorrow**, Ph.D., MPH, (Public Health) will implement a study to elevate the voices of and generate data about the health experiences of adult Central American immigrant women and native-born women in Belize, Central America.

**Dr. Karen Schieman**, Ph.D., RN, and **Jaime Rohr**, MSN RN, (Nursing) will conduct a study on the use of exercise to facilitate symptom management of drug and alcohol withdrawal.

Two research projects at CHHS received the **Support for Faculty Scholars Award** from the WMU Office of Research and Innovation. These innovative projects address challenges faced by individuals in racial and ethnic groups that are historically excluded in research. Both projects provide support for WMU students.

**Dr. Angela Groves**, Ph.D., RN, (Nursing) will conduct a study on a peer (dyadic) support model to improve blood pressure among African American women with hypertension.

**Dr. Maria Roche-Dean**, Ph.D., RN, (Nursing) will conduct a study to examine the feasibility of collecting hair cortisol concentration, an objective stress biomarker, among racial and ethnic minority nurses.

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**External Funding: 2022**

**Awards:** $6,718,474  
**Submissions:** $10,301,215  
**Expenditures:** $5,655,286

- **31% Expenditure Increase from 2018 to 2022**
- **Largest Research Expenditure in Last Ten Years**

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**Expenditures: 2018-2022**

- **2018:** $4,321,444
- **2019:** $5,040,240
- **2020:** $4,552,532
- **2021:** $5,102,962
- **2022:** $5,655,286
Greetings CHHS Community,

2022 was another amazing year for the College of Health and Human Services. Our faculty and staff worked hard as ever to provide first-rate educational and research experiences for our students. Our partners in the community and across the state helped us provide clinical experiences that will shape our students’ professional lives for years to come.

And our students? They continually remind us why we work so hard to do these things. They show how they can thrive, even in a pandemic. They show us what resiliency looks like on a daily basis. And mostly they’re just the heart and soul of this college, filling the building with energy, spirit and learning.

We have filled this report with stories about the things our faculty, staff and students are doing to impact each other, the University and our greater WMU community. While they’re doing all that great work, the college is trying to do what we can to help them succeed.

• This fall, we launched a new Health Administration bachelor’s degree in coordination with the Haworth College of Business. The program covers the intersection of business and healthcare, a large and growing field.

• We just re-imagined our holistic health studies graduate certificates, moving to four shorter specialty certificates that fit more easily into graduate studies.

• We established more transfer agreements with regional community colleges to develop pathways for nursing, social work and public health students to come to WMU to earn their bachelor’s degrees.

• You’ll read more about our strategic planning process and ways in which we’re mirroring the University in order to better serve our students and prepare for the coming decades.

There is much more to share. Thank you for reading this report and for your continued support of the College of Health and Human Services and our students.

Thank you,

Dr. Ron A. Cisler, Dean and Professor
College of Health and Human Services
Western Michigan University
**GRAD STATS**

827 Total CHHS graduates in 2021

- 416 Bachelor’s Degrees
- 364 Master’s Degrees and Graduate Certificates
- 47 Doctoral Degrees

**GRADUATE SALARIES**

- 29% $60,000 OR MORE
- 54% $40,000 to $60,000
- 17% UP TO $40,000

**97% EMPLOYED OR CONTINUING EDUCATION**

**98% HAD AN INSTRUCTOR WHO EXCITED THEM ABOUT LEARNING**

**95% HAVE A JOB RELATED TO THEIR DEGREE**

From the Western Michigan University Career and Student Employment Services Post-Graduation Activity Report 2020-21.

**COLLEGE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

Ron A. Cisler, Ph.D., MS  
Dean and Professor

Carla Chase, Ed.D., OTR  
Interim Associate Dean

David Areaux, MPAS, PA-C  
Chair, Department of Physician Assistant

Ann Chapleau, DHS, MS  
Associate Director, School of Interdisciplinary Health Programs

D’Jaris Coles-White, Ph.D., CCC-SLP  
Associate Chair, Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences

Nancy Cretsinger, MA  
Director of Academic and Student Services

Betty Dennis, Ph.D.  
Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Laura DeThorne, Ph.D.  
Chair, Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences

Joshua Enos  
Director of Information Technology

Kieran Fogarty, Ph.D.  
Director, Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Ph.D. Program

Jennifer Harrison, Ph.D.  
Director, School of Social Work

Amy Heath, DPT, Ph.D.  
DPT Program Coordinator, Department of Physical Therapy

Nancy Hock, Ph.D., MOT  
Chair, Department of Occupational Therapy

Joel Krauss  
Marketing Manager

Joseph Kuchenbuch, MA, LLP  
Interim Director, Unified Clinics

Jasmine Mead  
Executive Assistant

Tiffany Lee, Ph.D., MA  
Interim Director, School of Interdisciplinary Health Programs

Andrea Perez, Ph.D., BCBA  
Director, Center for Disability Services

Lisa Singleterry, Ph.D., MSN  
Director, WMU Bronson School of Nursing

Mariann Vorva  
Business Manager

Bridget Weller, Ph.D., MSW  
Director of Research