Granholm helps open new Kalexsyn facility

Gov. Jennifer Granholm joined WMU and local economic development officials Nov. 16 to celebrate the completion of a new home for life science startup Kalexsyn at the University’s Business Technology and Research Park.

Granholm lauded what she called “a partnership of hope” created by WMU, Southwest Michigan First, the state, city and county, following a decision by Pfizer in 2003 to move some of its research operations out of Kalamazoo. She noted that Kalexsyn is one of 18 life science businesses that were started in the area following the Pfizer decision.

“Ann Arbor is trying to replicate what you have done,” she said. “This is a model that can be replicated throughout the state... This is an example of how Michigan can rise from extremely challenging economic circumstances... It is time for this state to get to drink a bit of the Kalamazoo water.”

Started in 2003, Kalexsyn was founded by long-time Pharmacia/Pfizer scientists David Zimmermann and Robert Gadwood. The company is a contract research organization of experienced medicinal chemists who work with pharma and biotech clients worldwide to expedite the development of new discoveries.

“Today we are thrilled to cut the ribbon and move into our new facility,” said Zimmermann, who is the company’s chief executive officer.

Gadwood, president and chief scientific officer, said their vision became a reality so quickly because of the dedication and hard work of staff members who made a commitment to the fledgling company and helped it grow. The firm now has 24 employees, including 15 research scientists. Its new 20,000-square-foot building will allow the company to increase the scientific staff to 32 people and the total staff to about 40.

Kalexsyn was established using laboratory space in the Southwest Michigan Innovation Center, also located at the BTR Park. It is the third company to graduate from the innovation partnership of hope created what she called “a part...
Dec. 10 deadline for 2007 MLK celebration proposals

Students, faculty and members of the greater Kalamazoo community are encouraged to submit proposals for activities, programs and workshops relevant to this year’s local Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration.

Event proposals, which may include a request for funding up to $150, are due Monday, Dec. 10. Past activities have included a jazz/poetry slam, film showings and discussions, and a brown bag luncheon series.

CEAS presents senior projects

An “intelligent” aerobic shirt and an unmanned aircraft will be among the 42 projects presented Tuesday, Dec. 4, at the 41st annual Conference on Senior Engineering and Design Projects. The free event will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences Building on the Parkview Campus.

APA reservations due today

The Administrative Professional Association will celebrate the holidays during an informal gathering in the Richmond Center for Visual Arts from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 14. Relax, enjoy the appetizers and view Richmond’s galleries and exhibits. Reservations are due today. Visit www.wmich.edu/apa/latest for details.

National peers honor staffer

Wil Emmert, Research and Sponsored Programs, has been named to a second term on the Research Administrators Certification Council Board of Directors. The national organization, which was formed by the Society of Research Administrators, certifies professionals in nonprofit, college and university research offices as well as grants and contracts offices. Emmert, senior research and program officer at WMU, also was recognized for more than 30 years of service to the society during its October meeting in Nashville, Tenn. A video reflecting some of his activities during those years ran during a plaque presentation in his honor.

The certification council is composed of active certified research administrators whose role is to certify that an individual, through experience and testing, has the fundamental knowledge necessary to be a professional research or sponsored programs administrator. Emmert and others who earn research administrator certification have demonstrated knowledge of Federal Acquisition Regulations and other important regulations and policies. At WMU, only Emmert and Shelly Carpenter, College of Education, have the Certified Research Administrator designation.

Researcher leads $9 million study

Richard Long, blindness and low vision studies, is leading a bioengineering research project that recently received an additional $4.8 million to continue work on “Blind Pedestrians Access to Complex Intersections.” The funds were awarded by the National Eye Institute, a division of the National Institutes of Health. The project is studying approaches to ensure that complex intersections are accessible for people who are blind or visually impaired.

Long, who also is associate dean of the College of Health and Human Services, is partnering on the project with a multi-disciplinary team of WMU professors as well as researchers at Boston College, the Maryland School for the Blind, North Carolina State University and Vanderbilt University. The collaborators are exploring a broad range of issues that people with vision problems face in crossing streets safely and efficiently at complex intersections.

The new five-year award comes on top of the initial $14.1 million grant, also from the NEI, that started the research project back in 2000. WMU was the logical institution to oversee the grant, Long says. “We’re the oldest and largest training ground in blindness and low vision studies in the world,” he notes. “The profession, to some degree, started here, at least on the academic preparation side. So we have a big stake in the project, both on campus and in the real world.”
Outstanding staffers honored
Six staff members were presented with fall Make A Difference awards during a reception Tuesday, Nov. 27. They each received $250 and a commemorative certificate. 

Receiving awards were: Laurie Foster, Registrar’s Office; Michelle Hruka, English; Allan Kern, physics; Patrick Lem, physical plant-maintenance services; Melinda Lockett, College of Health and Human Services; and Surangti Pradhan, Career and Student Employment Services. 

The WMU Make A Difference award program is a campuswide peer-to-peer program that recognizes University staff members for their outstanding accomplishments and daily investment of energy and creativity. Visit www.wmich.edu/makeadifference for more information about the awards program. 

WMU community donates record amount to United Way
WMU community members have donated a record $2,413,827 to the 2007 Greater Kalamazoo United Way campaign, surpassing the University’s previous high of $2,397,559 raised in 2002. This year’s tally includes record giving by faculty and staff ($212,002), emeriti and retirees ($31,451), and students ($22,541). The campus campaign’s success was due in part to this year’s steering committee: (pictured from left) Michele McLaughlin, Registrar’s Office; Vice President Emeritus Rick Beamer, committee chair; Craig Smith, GRIU associate; Susan Coufifield, sociology, Cam Vassen, public safety; (not pictured) John Boss, physical plant-maintenance services; Sue Green, Bernhard Center; Celeste Glasscock, Human Resources; Tonya Hernandez, university relations; Amy Huffman, Human Resources; Victoria Kennedy, physical plant-maintenance services; Thom Myers, university relations; Joe Resh, University Libraries; Sharon Van Valken, College of Engineering and Applied Sciences; Martha Warfield, multicultural affairs; and Janice Weaver, auxiliary cash operations. (Photo by Jeanne Baron) 

Obituaries
Carole Lint, retired from Human Resources, will be remembered during a service at 10:30 a.m. Friday, Nov. 30, in Langeland Chapel, 622 S. Burdick St. Visitation is at the same location today from 6 to 8 p.m. 

Richard C. Schubert, emeritus in mechanical and aeronautical engineering, will be remembered during a Saturday, Dec. 1, service at 1 p.m. in St. Joseph Catholic Church, 963 Lake St. Visitation is scheduled for 5 to 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 30, at Better Life Story Funeral Home, 6800 Stadium Drive. Visit www.wmich.edu/wmu/news/obituaries for more information. 

Retirements accepted for longtime faculty, staff members
The retirements of one faculty member and three staff members were accepted by the WMU Board of Trustees at its Nov. 16 meeting. Trustees also accepted the resignation of one faculty member. 

The faculty member who is retiring will do so on Dec. 31, with emeritus status. He is L. John Link, professor of art, who served from 1977 to 1979, then continuously since 1980 for a total of 29-1/2 years. 

The names of the staff members who are retiring, along with their positions, years of continuous service and effective dates of retirement, are: Howard J. Ross, lieutenant in public safety, 33-1/2 years, effective Feb. 29; Danny L. Sluss, pipetier in physical plant-maintenance services, 28 years, effective Jan. 31; and Teri L. Weese, student application project lead in information technology, 21 years, effective March 25. 

The faculty member resigning is: Mark F. Gillette, professor of physician assistant, effective Dec. 21. 

New members set to be inducted into this year’s 25 Year Club
More than 30 people who began their University service in 1982 are eligible for induction into WMU’s 25 Year Club. They will be recognized during the club’s annual gala Tuesday, Dec. 4, in the Bernhard Center. Counting 2007’s honorees, the organization has 400 members who are working at WMU and 564 who have retired. 

Those eligible for induction this year are: Robert J. Aardema, College of Aviation; Richard A. Aldrich Jr., public safety; Carol A. Aslanian, student financial aid and scholarships; Margaret A. Binns, Sindecuse Health Center; Jeanne L. Bloemsa, health, physical education and recreation; and a commemorative certificate. 

Service
The following faculty and staff members are recognized for 35, 30, 25, 20, 15, 10 and five years of service during December. 

35 Years—Gail L. MacNellig, College of Fine Arts. 
30 Years—Pearl L. DeVries, College of Engineering and Applied Sciences; Carolyn Kitchen, physical plant-building, custodial and support services; David K. Peterson, paper engineering, chemical engineering and imaging; and Nancy J. Salvaggio, Sindecuse Health Center. 
25 Years—Mark Domlovi, information technology, and Sandra O. Glista, speech pathology and audiology. 
20 Years—Thomas A. Myers, university relations; Julie A. Scrivener, Graduate College; Louise A. Shetton, physical plant-building, custodial and support services; and C. Richard Spates, psychology. 
15 Years—Tony O. Dennis, Graduate College; Kenny L. Eldred, physical plant-building, custodial and support services; and James W. Kamman, mechanical and aeronautical engineering. 
10 Years—Deanna D. Bowling, dining services-Burnham; June E. Clemence, institutional equity; Debra Demerly, physical plant-building, custodial and support services; Jacmaes J. Juralakshar, physical plant-building, custodial and support services; Maria T. Ruelas, WMU Bookstore; Celia L. Sykes, physical plant-building, custodial and support services; Brenda Wardlow, physical plant-building, custodial and support services; and Moon Yu, dining services-Davis. 
Five Years—Jan L. Arkin, marketing; John M. Boss, physical plant-maintenance services; Susan E. Brand, dining services-Valley II; Moshen Guzani, computer science; Suzanne E. Katje, WMU Bookstore; MaryAnn Koncki, Dining Services-Bernhard Center; Warren Lackfield, educational leadership, research and technology; Colleen F. Munson, intercollegiate athletics; and Shaila Rao, special education and literacy studies. 

Correction
In the Nov. 13 issue of Western News, the wrong photo was used for Mary Jo Peterson, family and consumer sciences. The photo was actually of Mary E. Peterson, speech pathology and audiology. We regret the error.
On Campus with Michael VanPutten

Michael VanPutten is a consummate multi-tasker.

As the Web developer for enrollment management in the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, VanPutten is in the forefront of WMU’s ongoing recruitment and retention efforts. His duties primarily involve designing, implementing, maintaining and supporting enrollment management-related Web sites and working with colleagues across campus to help unify the features and look of the University's online presence.

If that weren’t enough, VanPutten also presides over the campus Web Users Group, serves on various other Internet-related committees, and operates his own Web development and training business.

“You need to make a connection with prospective students soon after they visit WMU online, apply and arrive on campus,” VanPutten says. “So we’re trying to make visiting Western on the Web more interesting and fun. We want people to have an engaging experience. With so many innovative new initiatives under way at WMU, I wish there were 48 hours in a day.”

VanPutten earned a bachelor’s degree in philosophy from WMU in 2000. After graduating, he accepted a term appointment in media production in the Office of Information Technology, where he had worked while a student.

The Kalamazoo native became a full-time OIT staff member in 2001, joined Academic Technology and Instructional Services four years later as instructional services manager, overseeing development of online courses, and assumed his current post in 2006.

VanPutten lives in Kalamazoo with his wife, Nicole, and describes himself as a ‘movie buff.’ He enjoys playing the guitar, reading nonfiction, and developing his photography and illustration skills.

He’s been fitting in those hobbies while pursuing a master’s degree in educational technology as well as new creative ventures, such as working on and appearing in one of WMU’s fall concert of dance productions. Now bitten by the theater bug, he hopes to work on more productions in the future.

CASTING A WIDE NET

Individualized Announcement channel.

Students may login at www.sais.wmich.edu/SelectSurvey or through GoWMU’s Individualized Announcement channel.

WMU officials surveying students on living wage issues

WMU students are encouraged to participate in a brief, eight-question Living Wage Survey. The survey will remain available online until Friday, Dec. 7.

Access to the completely confidential poll requires a valid student BroncoNet ID and password and is restricted to WMU students. Students may login at www.sais.wmich.edu/SelectSurvey or through GoWMU’s Individualized Announcement channel.

The survey will remain available online until Friday, Dec. 7.

Once those initial notifications have been completed, authorized University employees will communicate closure details to local television and radio stations.

Official closure of the main campus means that WMU’s branch campuses are also closed. However, closure of a branch campus does not automatically mean that the main campus will shut down as well.

Winter hours will soon begin for WMU’s snow removal crews. Plow schedules cover snow and ice removal activities 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Snow removal crews are responsible for clearing more than 23 miles of roads, 100 acres of parking, 39 miles of walks, 200,000 square feet of steps and ramps, and hundreds of doorways.

Even when it does not snow, freeze/thaw conditions create special ice management challenges on all of these surfaces. Providing there is not a major storm, most areas will be clear of snow and ice before the majority of students and employees arrive on campus each day.

Various steps around the campus that are deemed to be a convenience rather than a necessity are closed for the winter, allowing crews to concentrate on major access areas.

Faculty, staff and students with special mobility needs should call Landscape Services at 387-8557, as snow and ice removal schedules can be adjusted to accommodate needs. Questions or concerns after normal business hours should be directed to public safety at 387-5555.

Kalexsyn continued from page 1

Kalexsyn is a wonderful example of the kind of economic development WMU had in mind when it launched the Business Technology and Research Park seven years ago,” said WMU President John M. Dunn. “They took enormous personal and professional risks. They didn’t just dream about what the future could be. They created a future for themselves and for their employees and for this community.”