Aerospace engineer named engineering dean

Anthony J. Vizzini, the Bill and Carolyn Cobb Chair and head of the Department of Aerospace Engineering at Western Michigan University, will take up the reins of the engineering college July 1. His appointment, which includes a tenured position as a professor of mechanical and aeronautical engineering, was made pending approval of the University's Board of Trustees.

Vizzini's selection follows a national search for a new engineering dean to replace Timothy Greene, who was chosen last summer to lead WMU's academic operations as provost and vice president for academic affairs.

An Allen Park, Mich., native, Vizzini says he is excited about coming to WMU as well as having the opportunity to return to Michigan and help the state address the challenges it faces during tough economic times. When he visited the campus earlier this year, he said he was particularly struck by how the engineering college focuses on individual students and their success.

Vizzini has led Mississippi State's aerospace engineering department since 2003. In 2005, he was named the inaugural holder of the Cobb Endowed Chair at MSU's Bagley College of Engineering. Before that, he served for 17 years as a faculty member at the University of Maryland, where he was graduate education director for two years and was founding director of the Composites Research Laboratory at the A. James Clark School of Engineering.

For and about WMU faculty and staff

Register by Friday for free perks

Friday, May 8, is the deadline to register for WMU Day at the Capitol in Lansing and receive a free WMU T-shirt as well as an optional box lunch and bus transportation from Kalamazoo. More than 700 students, faculty and staff have already signed up at www.wmich.edu/wmuday to participate in the event, which is Wednesday, May 27, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the front lawn of the state capital.

WMU Day at the Capitol will feature interactive and hands-on exhibits and live vocal performances showcasing the talent and success of WMU students, faculty and staff. More than 30 exhibits and activities are planned for the day. For more information, contact Donna Marks at donna.marks@wmich.edu or 387-3580.

TIAA-CREF reps coming to campus

TIAA-CREF representatives will be on campus Tuesday through Thursday, May 12-14. To schedule a consultation for investment or retirement planning, go to www.tiaa-cref.org and click Meetings and Counseling under the Services link. If unable to register online, contact Richard Schaper at richard.schaper@wmich.edu or 387-3580.

Board of Trustees OKs TAU contract

Trustees have approved a three-year contract with the Teaching Assistants Union, increasing both compensation and the number of credit hours of tuition that will be waived for union members. The contract will go into effect Aug. 18. Go to www.wmich.edu/flu for more details.

New emergency management Web site goes online

WMU unveiled a complete Web site devoted to emergency planning May 4 that includes a variety of possible emergencies, from fires and tornadoes to bomb threats and workplace violence. It also has a link to WMU's Critical Incident Response Plan. Employees are encouraged to bookmark the emergency planning Web site and check it frequently.

The pandemic flu section focuses on the University's plans for responding to any pandemic, although links are provided for both the avian and swine flu. The section includes FAQs for faculty and staff and for students and families, as well as numerous campus and governmental documents and resources.

To keep the campus community informed about the evolving swine flu situation, another new site has been created at www.wmich.edu/flu that consolidates much of the information that previously has been posted online.

The WMU home page and the Emergency Information Line at 387-1001 are the University's official sources for information about campus closings and ongoing emergencies.

Secretary of State office gets Bronco country makeover

The WMU-themed walls inside the Secretary of State office on West Main Avenue in Kalamazoo have received a major makeover. The work was completed over the course of three months by University Relations staff led by Tammy Boneburg, with the assistance of student employees Aaron Cosney and Christina Long. In addition to updating the pictures and memorabilia on display, the team created several monographs reflecting WMU's history and campus life. (Photos by Tammy M. Boneburg)
Habitat recognizes emerita, students
Dorothea I. Barr, a retired staff member, was honored March 16 by Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity during the annual meeting of its board of directors.

Barr, one of five volunteers to be recognized, was told for providing exceptional administrative support to the organization. An office assistant in political science, she retired in 2005 after 37 years of service at the University.

The WMU chapter of Habitat for Humanity was the lone community organization recognized during the meeting. It was designated KVEH’s outstanding community partner for 2008-09, in appreciation for its 20 years of service to helping build affordable housing in the area.

In other business, junior Kevin Key of Portage Mich., was elected to serve on the board as a director.

Russia expert chosen for NEH institute
Dasha C. Nisula, foreign languages, has been selected to participate in “America Engages Russia, Circa 1880-ca. 1930: Studies in Cultural Interaction.” This National Endowment for the Humanities’ 2009 Summer Institute program will be held June 14 to July 3 in New York.

It will bring together 25 university teaching faculty, curators and senior bibliographers, and 10 session leaders to consider, investigate and reflect upon the implications of the various forms of cultural engagement between the United States and the Russian Empire/Soviet Union.

Nisula joined the WMU faculty in 1988 and serves as director of the Russian Studies Program. Her research focuses on 19th- and 20th-century Russian literature and culture, Russian language pedagogy, Slavic languages and literatures, and translation.

Department chair to be honored
Steven C. Rhodes, School of Communication director, will receive the 11th Tony Griffin Golden Word Award during a banquet Thursday, May 21, in the Fetter Center.

InterCom, a Kalamazoo-based professional communicators group, presents the award for significant contributions to professional communication in Southwest Michigan.

The banquet is open to the public and requires reservations with payment in advance. It will begin at 5:30 p.m. with networking. A dinner and an awards program will follow at 6 p.m. The event will include presentation of InterCom’s 2009 Memorial Scholarship to Lauren Berry, an interpersonal communication major from Portage, Mich.

Reservations with payment of $28 per person are due by Monday, May 11. Checks made payable to InterCom should be mailed to Golden Word Award, c/o Lawrence Productions, 25 Ottawa Ave. SW Ste 204, Grand Rapids MI 49503-4099.
Trustees approve 10 faculty, staff retirements

The retirements of two faculty members and eight staff members were approved by the WMU Board of Trustees at its April 24 meeting. Trustees also accepted the resignation of one faculty member.

Both of the faculty members who are retiring are doing so with emeritus status. Their names, positions, years of continuous service and effective dates of retirement are: Emily P. Hoffman, economics, 28-1/2 years, effective Dec. 31, and Christine M. Smith, music, 17-1/2 years, effective April 30.

The staff members retiring are: James N. Adduci, dining services-Davis, 19 years, effective July 31; Sharon L. Daughtery, physical plant-landscape services, 27-1/2 years, effective Aug. 31; John P. McDevitt, public safety, 24 years, effective May 31; Mary E. Metzler, physical plant-building, custodial and support services, 16-1/2 years, effective July 31; Rebecca L. Roberts, physical plant, 24-1/2 years, effective May 31; Cynthia B. Stoneback, Student Activities and Leadership Programs, 10 years, effective July 31; Jacqueline Wadsworth, dining services-Burnham, 22 years, effective June 30; and Sara L. Wick, Waldo Library, 23 years, effective May 31.

The faculty member resigning is: David Shields, dean of the Haworth College of Business, effective June 30.

Service

The following faculty and staff members are being recognized for 30, 25, 20, 15, 10 and five years of service to the University during May.

30 Years—Nancy J. Johnson, Office of the Associate Vice President for Finance.

25 Years—Krista J. Cekola, Human Resources.

20 Years—Paul Hildenbrand, Haworth College of Business; Denise A. Richards, Forzer Center; and Kandinos-Toi Ross, Human Resources.

15 Years—Gregory P. Anderson, geography; Cheryl Cart, physical plant-building, custodial and support services; Cheryl A. Peters, statistics; and Veronica L. Thomas, residence life.

10 Years—Joan L. Beffel, Internal Audit; Lynn A. Buthala-Plew, Office of the Vice President for Research; Victoria E. Janson, Office of the Vice President for Research; Kristen M. Rose, WMU Bookstore; and Richard H. Welch, physics.

Five Years—Tommi L. Manet, admissions.

Wood Hall aptly named for first University tree tour

About 45 employees, students and friends turned out April 17 for the Arbor Day celebration. Attendees had a chance to help plant a tree, take WMU’s first campus tree tour and listen to speakers. Event participants included, from left, President John M. Dunn, landscape services manager Tim Holyza and business Vice President Lowell Rinker. Go to www.ppwmich.edu/ssa and click Tree Tours to obtain a map and descriptions for the Wood Hall Tree Tour. (Photo by Jeanne Baran)

Obituaries

Georgia C. (Kerby) Bryan, a retired staff member, died April 10 in Kalamazoo. She was 54.

Bryan came to WMU as a student in 1972 and earned a bachelor’s degree in 1980. She began working in the Registrar’s Office in 1974 and was hired full time as that unit’s assistant supervisor in 1978.

Bryan was named registration director in 1982 and associate registrar-scheduling in 2002-03. She retired in 2008 after 30-1/2 years of full-time service to WMU.

Elen M.C. Cutrim, geography, died April 15 in Rose Arbor Hospice, Kalamazoo. She was 62.

Cutrim joined the Department of Geography faculty in 1990 as an adjunct professor and was appointed a full professor in 2006. Due to her illness, she was scheduled to retire Aug. 9 after 19 years of service to WMU.

Cutrim focused her research on South America, meteorology and global climatic change, and her work garnered numerous important grants.

She was active in a variety of professional organizations as well as on campus, serving on the Faculty Senate and as president of the Phi Kappa Phi chapter.

Annie Dobbs, chemistry, died April 14 in Augusta, Ga. She was 58.

Dobbs came to the University in 1994 and was serving as an office associate in the Department of Chemistry.

The Kalamazoo resident was active in WMU’s Professional Support Staff Organization and received WMU’s semiannual Make a Difference award in spring 2007 in recognition of her outstanding accomplishments and daily investment of energy and creativity.

Guiseppi “Joseph” Frattallone, emeritus in art, died April 17 in Paw Paw. He was 80.

Frattallone began teaching art and art education classes at the University in 1965 and retired as an associate professor in 1985 after 20 years of service.

He served two stints as chairman of the art education area.

During his tenure, Frattallone was a key player in advancing art education at WMU as well as in Michigan. His efforts helped the University develop into a model institution for Michigan’s minimum performance objective in art.

WMU sculpture honors artist, naturalist Gwen Frostic

A sculpture created at WMU to honor Michigan artist, poet and naturalist Gwen Frostic was unveiled April 26 in Wyandotte, Mich., at the Frostic Field city park that bears her family name.

Frostic, a 1927 WMU alumna who died in 2001, had a lifelong love affair with WMU. She was widely known for her block print art, and became a successful entrepreneur and businesswoman. The Frostic School of Art was named in her honor in 2007.

Four students worked with faculty-sculptor John Running-Johnson to create the sculpture. Their 11-foot high, 1,200-pound piece takes its artistic cues from the flora and fauna found in Frostic’s work.

The team created its own designs, which they cut into steel plates. The plates were folded to resemble Frostic’s famous greeting cards and then welded together.

Reservations due Friday for APA/PSSO luncheon

The APA/PSSO Awards and Spring Luncheon is set for 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Friday, May 15, in the Bernhard Center Ballroom. The deadline for submitting reservations with payment is Friday, May 8.

The annual luncheon includes door prizes and staff recognitions by the two sponsoring organizations: the Administrative Professional Association and the Professional Support Staff Organization.

This year’s event, which features Girls on the Run as the service project, has a health and fitness theme. Keynote speaker Becky Argue of Holyn Associates will address “WMU Wellness at Work” and describe wellness services available on campus at no cost to benefits-eligible employees of the University.

The cost to attend is $5 for members of APA and PSSO, and $8 for nonmembers. Go to wmich.edu/apa or wmich.edu/psso to obtain a map and descriptions for the Wood Hall Tree Tour.
WMU sets room, board, apartment rental rates

Acting at their meeting April 24, members of the WMU Board of Trustees approved a 2.9 percent increase to both residence hall room-and-board rates and campus apartment rental rates for the 2008-09 academic year.

The new residence hall rates will not affect students who were living in campus residence halls during the 2007-08 year. Two years ago, as part of WMU’s Western Edge compact with students, the University pledged to freeze room-and-board rates for up to four consecutive years for students who choose to remain in the residence hall system.

The rates approved by the board April 24 will be in effect for students new to the residence halls in 2009-10, but those students also will have their entering-year rates frozen for up to four years if they opt to continue living in the hall system.

Diane Anderson, vice president for student affairs, notes that in 2008-09, the total savings to students and families who took advantage of having their previous year’s rates frozen never seen, such as record player turntables and reel-to-reel tape players.

“It definitely like solving puzzles or mysteries. That’s when customer service is especially fun. It doesn’t matter whether the question is why someone was charged an overdue fee or where an item is,” Belland says. “A lot of people don’t know that we exist or that we have more than classical music. We have books, recordings and musical scores covering many genres of music and dance as well as materials on important artists, such as the Beatles, Bob Marley and Elvis Presley.”

Any member of the campus community or resident of the seven-county area around Kalamazoo may use WMU’s libraries, Belland notes. Area residents age 18 and up can register as guest borrowers while high school students can get a one-day pass through an interlibrary loan arrangement with surrounding schools.

Belland lives in Kalamazoo and enjoys reading, watching movies and spending time with her two cats. She still plays the bassoon—occasionally as a member of the orchestra for local community and high school theatrical productions.

Graduate students honored

Two graduate students have received 2009 Frostic Doctoral Fellowships while 17 others won awards during the third annual Research and Creative Activities Poster Day.

Named Frostic Fellows and receiving $4,000 grants were Jamie McCandless, history; and Julie Ryan, biological sciences.

The competitive Frostic fellowships assist doctoral students in all fields with dissertation expenses, including tuition and fees, materials and travel. They are given annually by the Graduate College and made possible by a gift from the estate of the late Gwen Frostic.

Held April 10, Poster Day featured displays and posters by faculty members and graduate students from across campus. Go to www.wmich.edu/wmu/news/2009/04/047 for a story detailing the 17 winners.

Poster Day was sponsored by the Research Policies Council, Office of the Vice President for Research, Graduate Student Advisory Committee, Graduate Studies Council, and colleges of Arts and Sciences, Education, Engineering and Applied Sciences, and Health and Human Services.

‘Idol’ contestant to be feted

A celebration honoring alumni and “American Idol” finalist Matt Giraud will take place today at the Arcadia Creek Festival Site in downtown Kalamazoo.