Talk explores meshing generations at work

Kalamazoo County's 18th annual Respecting Differences program will delve into the inter-generational nature of today's workforce during a talk by Scott Zimmer from BridgeWorks. Zimmer will speak on "Bridging the Generational Divide" at 9:30 a.m. and again at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, April 13, in Cherney Auditorium, 714 S. Westnedge Ave. in Kalamazoo. An American Sign Language translator will be at both sessions of the free, public talks.

It used to be that older workers were bosses and younger ones took orders. Now, roles are all over the map and rules are being rewritten. In addition, Zimmer says four distinct generations are working together shoulder to shoulder in the labor force, with each generation having a unique set of attitudes, values and work styles. As a result, he says organizations are struggling to manage productivity and morale while maintaining high standards of quality and service in a challenging economy.

In his Kalamazoo presentation, he will explain what today's four generations of workers are and identify the stereotypes that keep members of these generations from understanding each other. He also will provide tools to convert inter-generational diversity from an obstacle into an opportunity, as well as identify key trends associated with the future of the workplace.

A Gen Xer, Zimmer grew up in the 1980s and 1990s—sandwiched between the idealistic Boomers and innovative Millennials. During his 12 years of public speaking, he has developed a unusually personable style in which data as well as insight and humor are used to foster an environment in which every generation feels valued and understood.

Trustees set WMU's strategic direction for next five years

Acting at its March 23 meeting, the WMU Board of Trustees approved a strategic plan that will set the University's fundamental direction over the next five years. The plan is available at wmich.edu/strategic. Trustees unanimously adopted The Gold Standard 2020, a five-year strategic plan designed to build on a three-year strategic planning period that has just concluded. The updated plan retains the core tenets of the earlier document—identifying the University as a learner centered, discovery driven and globally engaged institution. The Gold Standard 2020 has been in development since July 2015, guided by a campuswide transition team whose job was to review the results of the original three-year plan, identify parts of the original plan that needed to be retained, and identify new challenges and opportunities that should be included moving forward.

Our charge was to transition, transform and transcend that initial strategic plan and develop an updated plan in a way that was meaningful and provided an end product that would serve this University well," said Jody A. Berylinsky, associate provost for institutional effectiveness, who led the transition process and outlined for the board some of the key elements of the new plan. "We started with a look at the past and then worked closely with senior leadership to focus on the challenges, aspirations and assumptions going forward."

Strategic plan goals

The updated plan, Berylinsky noted, has five overarching goals that will be pursued through a set of measurable objectives and strategies outlined for each goal.

The objectives and strategies identified will be prioritized and appropriately resourced as part of the plan's implementation in the coming weeks. Listed as the five goals are:

- Ensure a distinctive and supportive learning experience that fosters success.
- Promote innovative learning, discovery and service.
- Progress as a Carnegie-classified higher research doctoral university that advances new knowledge and value-added discovery.
- Promote a diverse, equitable and inclusive University culture to ensure social sustainability and accessibility.
- Advance economic and environmental sustainability practices and policies.

The plan also embraces the principles of enterprise risk management as a critical tool to identify and address challenges along the way that could prevent the University from successfully accomplishing its long-term goals.
Garrison Keillor coming to Miller Auditorium

WMUK will welcome Garrison Keillor to Miller Auditorium in a live solo event at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 27.

A limited number of specially priced “WMUK Ticket Packages” and “WMUK Meet and Greet Ticket Packages” are now available by calling (269) 387-2300 or visiting the Miller Auditorium Box Office.

Keillor is the entertaining writer, humorist and speaker who is probably best known for his popular radio show “A Prairie Home Companion.” The show attracts some 17 million listeners on more than 900 public radio stations weekly. Keillor also is a best-selling author of many books.
Fourteen staff members to be feted at reception

The 14 recipients of WMU Make a Difference awards for spring 2016 will be recognized during a reception at 2 p.m. Tuesday, April 12, in 157 Bernhard Center. They are:

- Katherine Bates, Student Activities and Leadership Programs
- Andrea Bui, College of Education and Human Development
- Lauren Carney, College of Arts and Sciences
- Earl Conner, building custodial and support services
- Judy Curtier, Haworth College of Business
- Adam Limban, Bronco Express services
- Nicole Lockwood-Womack, teacher and administrator certification
- Buffy Nespodzany, Career and Student Employment Services
- Kerneth Schaeter, admissions
- Darcey Stevens, family and consumer sciences
- Kim Tembreull, psychology
- Stacy Thines, intercollegiate athletics
- Cindy Town, institutional equity
- Travis Wendt, information technology

The Make a Difference awards program is a campuswide peer-to-peer program that recognizes staff members for their outstanding accomplishments and daily investment of energy and creativity.

Up to 15 staffers may be selected in each of the two semiannual award periods. Semianual winners are eligible for one of four annual awards that carry a prize of $1,200, before taxes.

Institute kicks off forums with Michael Moore

Michael Moore will visit Kalamazoo next month to discuss the Flint, Michigan, water crisis; disinvestment in low-income communities; and how we get to a future that works better for everyone. He also will reflect on his career as a citizen filmmaker.

Moore will present “It Only Hurts when I Laugh” at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 6, in Miller Auditorium. The event is free and open to the public, with seating on a first-come, first-served basis. It is being sponsored by WMU’s Walker Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations, in collaboration with the Lee Honors College, School of Communication and other entities at the University.

Tim Ready, director of the Walker Institute, says Moore’s appearance is the kick-off event for a series of upcoming community forums and scholarly discussions being sponsored by the Walker Institute.

The series, “Growing Together or Pulling Apart? Making Public Policies that Work for Everyone,” will begin later in April with a presentation on “Building a Sustainable Michigan: Social and Environmental Aspects of the Challenge.” It will continue through April 2017 and cover topics including immigration, criminal justice reform, housing segregation by race and class, equality of opportunity, and poverty and education.

For more information, visit wmich.edu/walkerinstitute or contact Ready at (269) 387-2141.

PRO Services advances endowed professor effort

A local business executive and his company have donated $25,000 toward an industrywide effort to raise money to fund an endowed professorship in chemical and paper engineering. Mike VandeMaele, chief executive officer and founder of PRO Services and a board member of the WMU Paper Technology Foundation, recently executed a $25,000 gift agreement to help fund the Dr. Raymond L. Janes Endowed Professorship. Janes, who died in 2009, was a longtime faculty member and chair of the former Department of Paper and Printing Science and Engineering.

So far, about two-thirds of the $1.5 million needed to establish the professorship has been raised. To contribute to the professorship, scholarships and other activities supported by the WMU Paper Technology Foundation, contact the foundation by calling (269) 276-3964 or visiting its office at 4651 Campus Drive in Kalamazoo.

One-day blood drive set for CMI-WMU challenge

Students have set Thursday, April 7, for the Bronco Blood Bash, a blood drive to establish a new state record for donations during a single, university drive and the only local drive planned for this year’s CMU-WMU blood collection challenge.

The event will take place from 11 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. in the Bernhard Center Ballroom on the WMU campus. All members of the University and Greater Kalamazoo communities are invited to participate.

According to the Facebook page for WMU’s student Red Cross Club, this is the 19th year of the friendly CMU vs. WMU challenge, and WMU hopes to keep up its three consecutive years of dominance in the competition by collecting more than 403 units of blood during Bronco Blood Bash.

By collecting that many units, the club would beat the University of Michigan’s current record for blood collection in the state as well as have a chance to end the year as the university to have brought out the largest number of donors to a Michigan blood drive during 2016.

Everyone who tries to donate blood April 7 will receive a free hero T-shirt. Walk-ins are welcome; however, making an appointment will result in faster processing.

To make an appointment, go to the American Red Cross website at redcrossblood.org and type donorsearch (all one word) in the search box, call (800) 733-2767, or download and use the Blood Donor App.

Obituary

Malcolm Robertson, emeritus in psychology, died Feb. 28. He was 90. Robertson joined the staff in 1961 and retired in 1998 after 37 years of service.

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Tigers night tickets on sale

WMU Night at Comerica Park is set for 7:08 p.m. Wednesday, June 22, when the Detroit Tigers take on the Seattle Mariners.

The first 2,500 people who purchase a ticket to the game through mywmu.com/tigers will receive a limited edition WMU-Tigers baseball hat in the University’s brown and gold colors. In addition, $5 of the cost of each ticket sold on the site will go to the WMU Legacy Scholarship Fund.

Also, WMU will host a pre-game Bronco Stampede at 5:30 p.m. in Party Plaza 3. The stampede package includes Upper Box Infield seats and a picnic buffet, but is limited to the first 300 purchasers.

A variety of Tigers night ticket prices and pregame event packages are available. Those who purchase game tickets or the stampede package through mywmu.com by Sunday, May 1, will be automatically entered into a raffle in which they have a chance to win prizes such as a baseball autographed by Miguel Cabrera.

Speech path slates open house

The Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology will hold an open house for prospective graduate students from noon to 4 p.m. Friday, April 1. It will take place in 4010 of the College of Health and Human Services building.

The open house will include informational sessions, tours and a reception with faculty members. For complete schedule of events, visit bit.ly/1PVX95.
Office warns that spring is season for student employment scams

After spring break, most college students get serious about making work plans for the summer months.

But not all summer job offerings come from reputable employers, warns Lynn Kelly-Albertson, WMU executive director of professional and career development.

“Most opportunities are legitimate and can give you experience and money, and build your skills. However, this is the season for scams,” Kelly-Albertson says. “A good rule to keep in mind is: ‘If a job opportunity sounds too good to be true, it probably is.’”

She adds that although WMU’s Career and Student Employment Services screens employers before listing them in BroncoOBS, the University’s comprehensive database of jobs, even CSES may occasionally miss a scammer.

“We’ve compiled a list of ‘red flags’ to look for to help students identify fictitious or disreputable employers,” Kelly-Albertson says. “We urge students to review them before accepting any job offer.”

For more information, visit wmich.edu/majcases/fraud/fraudschemes.htm or the FBI’s website for fraud at fbi.gov.

Students who have questions or concerns may call CSES at (269) 387-2745 or stop by its office in Ellsworth Hall.

State Geographic Bee is April 1

For the ninth straight year, WMU is hosting the Michigan State Geographic Bee.

This year’s event is being coordinated by Lisa DeChano-Cook, geography, and will be held Friday, April 1, in the Fetzer Center’s Kirsch Auditorium.

Students will be vying for a trip to Washington, D.C. to compete in the National Geographic Bee championship. For more information, visit wmich.edu/news/201603/31165.

Will Posthumus came to WMU in 2005 as a student-athlete playing baseball and studying communication. Both his academic and professional careers led Posthumus around the country, working for teams in the NFL, NBA, NHL and Major League Baseball until he returned to the University and intercollegiate athletics this past fall as assistant athletic director for broadcasting and multimedia.

In the newly created post, he’s responsible for programming and producing the in-game experience at all athletic events held in Lawson Ice Arena, Waldo Stadium and University Arena. This includes live broadcasts to outside markets as well as game and interactive experiences for fans and utilizes a new broadcast production trailer outfitted with high-definition equipment capable of generating ESPN-quality broadcasts.

With a staff of one part-time intern and more than 30 student workers for event broadcasts, Posthumus wants to build on the responsibilities of his job to provide more practical real-world work experiences for students and greater exposure for WMU’s sports.

“We’re responsible for three main things: enhancing the experience for fans of WMU athletics at each of our events, providing a home-field advantage for our student athletes, and creating value for the ticket holders, partners and alumni who support this great institution,” he says. “I like to tell my crew that it’s the marketing and ticket sales departments’ job to get people to buy a ticket to an event, but it’s up to us to make sure that those people come back again regardless of the score at the end of the game.”

But at the same time, Posthumus notes, the media world is undergoing a major shift.

“We’re getting further away from traditional print, radio and television mediums and trending toward streaming and social video platforms,” he says. “We want to make sure we’re caught up if not beyond that point with our athletic programs. The partnership we now have with ESPN is built on this concept, and it’s great exposure for the University.”

A Portage native, Posthumus left WMU after suffering an injury his freshman year. He transferred to Arizona State University and after graduating, got a job with the Arizona Diamondbacks, then worked successively as a producer for the Detroit Red Wings, Pistons and Tigers. In 2014, he began overseeing content for all television programming for the Miami Dolphins, and he won an Emmy Award in 2015 for producing a behind-the-scenes documentary on the team’s trip to play a game in London.

With his family still in the local area, Posthumus has remained connected to job opportunities here, which led him to return to WMU. He and his fiancée, Lainey Williams, met in Detroit. The couple live in downtown Kalamazoo and plan a June 2017 wedding.