Two calls for proposals announced

Those wishing to give presentations during the Teaching With Technology Symposium have until Friday, Oct. 30, to submit their proposals. The annual symposium, which will be held Wednesday, Feb. 10, provides an opportunity for faculty members and graduate teaching assistants to showcase their use of technology.

Visit wmich.edu/facultydevelopment for submission details about either call for proposals or to register for an upcoming Cool Tools session. Sessions are scheduled for Friday, Oct. 30; Monday, Nov. 16; Wednesday, Nov. 18; and Thursday, Nov. 19.

Time to help recognize WMU staffers

Nominations for the spring semiannual Make a Difference awards are due Saturday, Oct. 31. The awards recognize staff members for their daily investment of energy and creativity. Visit wmich.edu/makeadifference for more information, including guidelines and the nomination form.

PSSO annual fundraiser underway

The Professional Support Staff Organization is selling popcorn from Kalamazoo Kettle Corn as part of its annual fundraiser. Orders are due by 4 p.m. Monday, Nov. 23. Proceeds support PSSO, which is able to turn to support of the University’s Alumni Center and Office of Development and Alumni Relations.

Numerous events scheduled to honor veterans

Students and employees will be engaging in a weeklong celebration of Veterans Day, which is officially observed Wednesday, Nov. 11. A summary of major events honor those attending the ceremony will be able to visit a number of stations around the building. In addition to a hospitality tent, they will continue on page 4.

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Past WMU-hosted events have included a luncheon for veterans. (Photo by Mike Lanka)
Fall programs highlight tuition-related employee benefits

Informational sessions being held this semester will help WMU employees and their eligible children take advantage of the University’s tuition-related benefits, which include a new benefit launching this fall.

Brown-bag sessions for employees who are considering enrolling at WMU are set for noon to 1 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 26; Wednesday, Nov. 11; and Wednesday, Dec. 9, in the President’s Dining Room of the Bernhard Center.

They will include presentations by Human Resources, the Office of Admissions, the Graduate College, Extended University Programs, the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships, the Center for Academic Support Programs, and the University Studies degree-completion program.

Sessions for employees’ children who are considering enrolling at WMU are set for 8:30 a.m. Friday, Nov. 13 and Dec. 4, in the President’s Dining Room of the Bernhard Center. Students and parents are welcome to attend these sessions, which are being held just before regularly scheduled admissions office open houses.

The prospective students and their parents who attend will be able to obtain information about the tuition-related benefits open to employees as well as about getting admitted to the University. Immediately afterward, they will be able to attend the admissions open house. For details about the open houses, visit wmich.edu/admissions/openhouse.

Future dates for both types of programs have also been set and can be found, along with more information about tuition-related benefits for employees, at wmich.edu/admissions/guest/employees. WMU departments that would like this information presented to their staff directly should contact Scott Hennessy at scott.hennessy@wmich.edu or (269) 387-2017.

Retirement reception

Paula Armstrong, speech pathology and audiology, will be honored for 30 years of service to the University during a retirement reception from 1 to 3 p.m. today in 4010 Health and Human Services Building.

Jobs

Current job opportunities at WMU are announced daily on the Human Resources website at wmich.edu/hr/jobs. Please note that applications must be submitted online by the stated deadline. Complete application procedures are included with each posting.
University getting ready to adopt next generation email system

The verdict is in: Microsoft Office 365 for Education—O365—will be WMU’s next email system.

The version of O365 for educational institutions is a suite of email and other applications available free of charge that will replace WMU’s current Webmail Plus email and collaboration system.

The tentative plan is to do test migrations for @wmich.edu email users in December and January. The remaining users will be migrated in February and March, with everyone expected to be switched over by the first week of April. Edward Kluk, NextGen Email Project manager, says by adopting the O365 suite, WMU will be able to provide new and improved services. Many of the popular features from Webmail Plus are included, and lifelong email accounts, address books and a calendar have been added for all WMU alumni who want to remain engaged with the University.

“Email is only a part of the overall expectation people have of electronic communications,” Kluk says. “When we looked at the pros and cons of Google Apps for Education and Microsoft O365 for Education, we found significant strengths in both. We found that O365 allows sharing of email folders and had other compelling features that swayed the decision.”

He adds that WMU will see numerous benefits from adopting a single suite rather than a hybrid system that incorporates a combination of features from different packages. Notably, a non-hybrid solution helps ensure a smooth transition for both PCs and Macs as well as most tablets and cell phones. Many of the collaboration tools found in Webmail Plus are available in O365, both on the Web and as stand-alone applications. Webmail Plus’ email, Calendar, Address Book, Tasks and Briefcase will be replaced in O365 by Outlook Mail, Outlook Calendar, Outlook People, Outlook Tasks and OneDrive for Business, respectively.

Under the new system, each user will be able to store 50 gigabytes of email data, archive an unlimited amount of email data and have 1 terabyte of OneDrive cloud storage. In addition, information technology will be supporting rule-based forwarding and rule-based redirection.

“Rule-based forwarding will forward email with the ‘from field’ showing the account that the email was forwarded from,” Kluk explains. “Rule-based redirect keeps the original sender’s email address in the ‘From’ field.”

The O365 suite includes on-the-Web versions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint Access and OneNote and OneDrive. It also includes Microsoft Office apps for mobile devices (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, OneDrive); Microsoft Office desktop versions for installation on work and home personal computers (five installations per individual); and Skype for Business (Instant Messaging and video chat).

Kluk says when the actual migration date gets near, documentation will be available regarding how to use O365, and the information technology Help Desk will be available if employees have questions. For more information, visit wmich.edu/nextgenemail.

Longtime student affairs official new dean of students

Susie Nagel, associate dean of students, was named dean of students, effective Aug. 4.

Nagel replaces Diane Anderson, who remains WMU’s vice president for student services. “Since 2010, Dr. Nagel has served as associate vice president for student affairs and has been a tireless advocate for students,” says Anderson. “She has extraordinary insight and compassion and addresses each student concern with the utmost care and professionalism. We are so pleased she now carries the title most closely aligned with the work she has been doing for many years.”

She earned a bachelor’s degree from Valparaiso University, a master’s degree from Miami University and a doctoral degree in higher education leadership from WMU.

Robotic ‘temp worker’ will soon be roaming corridors in Waldo Library

A telespresence robot is putting in an appearance at Waldo Library for a few hours every weekend, but soon will be roaming the facility’s corridors during weekdays.

The robot is being tested for its potential use as a way for library patrons and staff members to communicate with one another when they are not in close physical proximity. Patrons can learn more about the robot and even take it for a test drive from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturdays and 4 to 6 p.m. Sundays through Nov. 29.

On loan from WMU’s Communication and Social Robotics Lab, it is part of a collaborative project between University Libraries and CSRL, which is overseen by the School of Communication. During the course of the project, library staff will test how telepresence robots could enhance service while CSRL researchers will study how people interact with the bots.

“Telepresence robots are beginning to show up in organizational and educational settings. These robots can help facilitate social interaction when there is physical distance between people,” says Dr. Autumn Edwards, communication, who leads CSRL. “Libraries are large, intricate and sometimes intimidating spaces in which having easy access to assistance may really benefit users. We’ll be watching how our ‘roaming librarians’ and users of the library are able to navigate their interactions with one another.”

At some point this fall, the robot will begin “working” on weekdays so library officials and staff members can explore its potential uses. Librarians will use a video-capable computer to project their image and voice to the bot. Patrons, in turn, will project their image and voice to the librarians via the bot.

“We’re still researching and want see how our users react and engage with the robot,” says May Chang, University Libraries. “Some students have already reported that they find the robot a fun way to interact and particularly helpful when they just have simple questions.”
**On Campus with Lu DeBoef**

As an environmental specialist at WMU, Lu DeBoef has the opportunity to work with just about everyone on campus, ensuring facilities, grounds and construction projects comply with federal and state environmental guidelines.

“We’re a pretty tight-knit group and get along extremely well,” DeBoef says of the five-person staff in the Office of Environmental Health and Safety. “We help each other. Someone will jump in if a colleague needs it. We care about the University, and we are all here to help.”

Her job supporting environmental compliance at WMU covers a wide net, including submitting required reports, training staff members and students, and managing project compliance.

“We make sure the University is following the rules handling biomedical waste, hazardous waste and universal waste,” DeBoef says. “In the end, it’s still Western’s waste. We are still responsible for it even if [a contractor] dumps it somewhere.”

Another large part of her responsibilities involves erosion and storm water management, areas in which the University is seen as on the forefront. Public and private companies and organizations visit WMU regularly to tour projects related to storm water management practices, and soil and erosion control measures. Some have even used WMU as a training ground.

“The key is keeping Western’s [environmental] footprint the same or better when planning projects. Sometimes, I have to make decisions that are unpopular,” DeBoef says. “It might set back the project a bit, but it’s protecting the University. My job is to make sure we stay in compliance, we preserve what we can environmentally, and we make it better than it was.”

While training the campus community, she makes the connection that everyone is responsible for handling waste that can affect the environment, from a large construction project to disposing of chemicals and everyday items at home.

DeBoef joined WMU in 2010 in her current position after working at Pfizer Inc. She started her career with the Illinois EPA and has been in the environmental compliance profession for over 30 years, working in the areas of air, hazardous waste and water compliance. Originally from Muskegon, she and her husband, Mît, live in Kalamazoo and have five children, one of whom is a senior at WMU. DeBoef enjoys spending time with her children, especially impromptu family dinners when schedules spontaneously align. She keeps active biking, standup paddle boarding, swimming and walking her chocolate-colored Labrador Retriever.

**Benefits open enrollment underway for health benefits, FSAs**

The open enrollment period for 2016 health care benefits and flexible spending accounts, or FSAs, begins Monday, Oct. 26, and continues through 5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 20.

Open enrollment for health care benefits is available for WMU benefits-eligible non-bargaining employees, retirees and employees who are members of the American Association of University Professors; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; Michigan State Employees Association; and Police Officers Association.

During open enrollment, employees and retirees have the option of adding eligible dependents to their health care coverage. Elections made now are effective Jan. 1. If no action is taken, benefit elections rollover to 2016, except for FSAs. Employees who choose to contribute to an FSA in 2016 must enroll or re-enroll.

Those who complete WMU’s wellness program requirements by the end of 2015 receive the wellness incentive for all of 2016. Visit wmich.edu/hr/openenrollment to review materials sent to employees and retirees or access the necessary enrollment forms.

**WMUK launches fall fund drive**

WMUK’s public radio station WMUK kicked off its annual fall campaign Oct. 17, and hopes to cut on-air pledging in half.

WMUK will again feature a shortened pledge drive format designed to raise all of the dollars needed in half the live on-air pledge hours.

Membership contributions and additional gifts directly support local program production and to purchase national programs. WMUK encourages members to support the programs they value by sending in their gifts, contributing online at w Muk or calling in a pledge during the live portion of the pledge campaign.

**Numerous events scheduled**

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**Heritage Hall grand opening details set**

Numerous events scheduled

former U.S. Marine Benjamin Busch, noon to 1:30 p.m., Putney Auditorium, Fetzer Center. Many know Busch for his roles on HBO’s “The Wire” and “Generation Kill.”

• Military Appreciation Night—Bronco football game, 8 p.m., Waldo Stadium.

**Thursday, Nov. 12**

• Listen to the Vets—Panel discussion, noon to 1:30 p.m., 157-159 Bernhard Center.

• ROTC luncheon—for all veterans, on and off campus, 2 to 4 p.m., 1310 Activity Therapy Building.