Governor appoints two new WMU trustees

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder has appointed Ron Kitchens of Portage and Shani Penn of Detroit as new members of the WMU Board of Trustees.

Kitchens, chief executive officer of economic development agency Southwest Michigan First, will serve an eight-year term ending in 2024. He replaces James Hettinger, whose term expired at the end of 2016.

Penn is chief of staff to Chancellor Veronica Conforme of the Education Achievement Authority of Michigan.

She will serve a term ending in 2024 and replaces Mary Asmonga-Knapp, whose term also expired at the end of 2016.

Kitchens has led Southwest Michigan First since 2005. In addition, he serves on the Collaborative Development Council for the Michigan Economic Development Corp. Prior to taking the reins at SWMF, he was CEO for six years of the Corpus Christi Regional Economic Development Corp. His background includes experience as a consultant and in local and national politics.

Penn, a 2000 alumna of WMU, has served in her current position with the EAA since 2015. Before that, she was senior strategy advisor to Gov. Snyder for three years. Her background in economics and internal audit is an asset to the board, notes the governor.

Product design program is object of $3 million gift

A Kalamazoo couple with a passion for the arts and a history of executive leadership in the community has given $3 million to support the creation of a new product design and innovation facility at WMU.

The Richmond gift will be used for renovations to 28,000 square feet on the first and third floors of Kohrman Hall. The renovation will include studios, presentation spaces and laboratories dedicated to innovation, fabrication, rapid prototyping, 3D printing, and woodworking and metalworking. Architectural work already is underway, and the project is expected to be complete by the fall of 2017.

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College of Aviation’s gift-giving elves still flying high

Pilots from the College of Aviation helped make Christmas merrier for more than 5,000 children and adults in foster care around the state.

Some 200 Michigan pilots participated Dec. 3 in Operation Good Cheer, a statewide effort begun in 1971 by caring individuals to distribute donated Christmas gifts to fostered adults with disabilities as well as infants, children and teenagers.

Volunteering from the College of Aviation were flight instructors Adam Chamberlain, Collin Kearney and Seth Nabozny. Mitchell Blankenheim, a sophomore in aviation flight sciences from Hartland, Wisconsin, also participated.

This is the 12th consecutive year WMU pilots have participated in the initiative, which is sponsored and coordinated by Child and Family Services of Michigan. More than 5,000 people received some 16,000 gifts through the initiative in 2015. To learn more about Operation Good Cheer, visit wmich.edu/goldgatherings.

Histator co-edits text on U.S. sport

Linda Boris, history, is the lead editor of a new book on American sport history, “The Routledge History of American Sport.”

The book is co-edited with David Wiggins from George Mason University, and Gerald Gems, vice president of the International Society for the History of Physical Education and Sport.

The book provides the first comprehensive overview of historical research in American sport from the early Colonial period to the present day. It considers sport through innovative themes and topics, such as the business of sport, material culture and sport, the political uses of sport, and gender and American sport.

The text offers an interdisciplinary analysis of American leisure. Those topics are dealt with in thematic chapters, emphasizing the influence of sport on American society.

Physician pens realistic novel

Richard R. Roach, Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine, is the author of three self-published novels, all through iUniverse. His most recent book, “Never a Woman,” came out last year and is a story about the power of the human spirit as a Ke motor teenager attempts to overcome seemingly insurmountable anguish in order to find love, success and joy.

The protagonist is a Kisi girl from western Kenya who refused female genital mutilation as part of her tribe’s puberty rites and survives an attempt from her father to kill her. Tribal prejudice, AIDS, human trafficking and higher education are some of the topics covered in the book.

Roach, an associate professor of internal medicine, based the main character on interviews of hundreds of women when he previously worked in Kenya and Rwanda.

He has been teaching in the medical school since its inception and has direct contact with patients in his role supervising internal medicine and medicine/pediatric residency students. His other two books are “Releasing Lisa” and “Saving Skunk.”
New appointments to key leadership positions announced

Four WMU employees recently were named to new leadership positions.

Sherine O. Obare, chemistry and formerly interim associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, was appointed the associate vice president for research, effective Dec. 1. She replaces Paula D. Kohler, who retired from the University at the end of June.

Obare, who has been a key player in numerous campus initiatives, has garnered more than $4.5 million in external funding for her research, particularly efforts that focus on developing novel materials and technologies with environmental applications.

She has served as interim associate dean of arts and sciences since February 2015, served as chemistry associate chair and graduate advisor prior to that, and was an acting director of the Africana studies program.

Two of the new appointments are to

Grad student research published in top journal

An unusual examination of the practical therapeutic applications of mindfulness combined with a senior faculty member’s commitment to community service has led seven graduate social work students to have their first professional paper accepted for publication in one of their discipline’s most prestigious journals.

“An Environmental Scan of Mindfulness-Based Interventions on University and College Campuses” was published in the December 2016 issue of the internationally acclaimed Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare. The newly published researchers are Kaley J. Cieslak, Lethanna E. Hardy, Natalie S. Kyles, Erika L. Miller, Becky L. Mullins, Katelyn M. Root and Christina M. Smith.

The students undertook and completed their original research project in addition to their regular coursework in a section of Evaluation of Social Work Practice taught by Rick Grinnell. Grinnell says it is rare for social work students to be published in a refereed journal, and their success in doing so indicates the importance of their topic in addition to their commitment to advancing social work practice through research.

Obituaries—wmich.edu/news/obituaries

Chuck Comer, emeritus in health, physical education and recreation and a former assistant football coach, died Dec. 13. He was 79. Comer joined the faculty in 1968 and retired in 1997 after 29 years.

George M. Dennis, a former provost, died Jan. 3. He was 81. Dennis came to WMU in 1987 and left in 1990 to head his alma mater, the University of Montana.

Charlie H. Harris, a former member of landscape services, died Sept. 21, 2015. He was 91. Harris joined the staff in 1981 and retired in 1991 after 10 years.

Kandiss-Tai Ross, a Human Resources assistant senior, died Dec. 29. She was 60. Ross joined the staff in 1989 and had been employed in Human Resources 27 years.

Kamlesh Sharma, emerita in biological sciences, died Dec. 21. She was 78. Sharma joined the faculty in 1981 and retired in 2003 after 22 years. Survivors include her husband, Visko B.L. Sharma, professor emeritus of arts and sciences.

John E. Walker, a former industrial design teacher, died Dec. 27. He was 76. Survivors include Gay S. Walker, interdisciplinary health programs. A memorial service is set for 7 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 15, in Kalamazoo’s People’s Church.

Search committee releases presidential profile

The Presidential Search Advisory Committee has completed a critical document in its work to find WMU’s ninth president. Armed with feedback from 17 campus community forums, the committee has developed a Presidential Profile that describes the campus’ goal of finding “a courageous, visionary and resourceful academic leader who will enable us to leverage our strengths, advance our stature and help us shape an enduring identity.”

The committee’s profile outlines the opportunities and challenges the University’s next president will encounter as well as the personal and professional qualities the campus wants that person to possess.

It has been published on the committee’s website, wmich.edu/presidentialsearch.

The document includes a description of the University and community as well as a list of 10 critical duties and responsibilities and 16 important characteristics and qualifications the successful candidate should possess.

Trustee William Johnston, who chairs the search committee, noted in a Dec. 13 report that the committee is the largest and most diverse group ever put in place to serve the campus community by identifying a new president.

Members of the committee, he said, used the community forums to gather “front-end” input. Committee members and consultants were listening carefully to the feedback.

The committee hopes to identify a candidate to recommend to the Board of Trustees by the end of the academic year. The interview round is expected to begin by late February or early March.
NURSING A DREAM

( Photo by Deanne Puca)

On Campus with Sheneeka Skinner

At a very young age, Sheneeka Skinner dreamed of being a registered nurse. But she started her career in the Sindecuse Health Center as a certified medical assistant in 2004.

Skinner, the oldest of three children who grew up in a single-parent home, has always thought of herself as a determined person who sets goals, follows through and does not give up easily.

So after nearly five years at WMU, she went back to school. Skinner graduated from Kalamazoo Valley Community College’s RN completion program in 2010, then worked in the Kalamazoo area as a nurse. She returned to Sindecuse in 2015, this time as a nurse.

“I like to consider myself well-rounded in the health care field. I have experience as a certified medical assistant, licensed practical nurse and an RN,” she says. “Every day is different in nursing. I enjoy working with the students, faculty, staff and individuals from the community, the overall environment, and how WMU has such a strong tie to the community.”

Skinner interacts with patients directly, administering care to those who come to Sindecuse for travel consultation visits. During these visits, she obtains the patient’s health history, vaccination history and any other information, advises them on which immunizations or medications are recommended, and provides safety tips for international travel.

“We review the countries they’re planning to visit, look at trends and recommendations, educate them, and administer recommended immunizations and medications at the time of their visit,” she says. “These visits require a high level of critical thinking and organization on behalf of the nurse. Every patient is different, so it’s important to know disease processes and contraindications when reviewing a patient’s health history—as I do with every patient. I must be very thorough, and stay up to date on the latest recommendations because updates and recommendations change constantly.”

In June 2016, Skinner was promoted to nursing supervisor. She handles a variety of nursing and administrative duties, including providing direct patient care, overseeing the nursing staff, coordinating several outreach activities, and reviewing and maintaining nursing processes, policies and procedures. She also serves on Sindecuse’s quality improvement committee and leadership team and works closely with the Kalamazoo County Health Department to help decrease the spread of communicable diseases through vaccination and education.

Skinner grew up in Kalamazoo and lives in the city with her college-age son and their dog. She’s an active church member, big fan of football at all levels, and likes to craft, refurbish furniture and “live vicariously” through the people she advises on travel. She’d love to travel more, herself.

Time to review winter weather policies, procedures

Winter hours are in effect for WMU’s snow removal crews, who must plow, shovel, scrape and de-ice more than 26 miles of roads and 120 acres of parking area, 39 miles of walks, hundreds of doorways, and 200,000 square feet of steps and ramps.

Plow schedules cover snow and ice removal activities 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Providing there is not a major storm, most main campus areas will be clear of snow and ice before the majority of students and employees arrive each day.

Any snow removal needs regarding special activities or weekend events should be relayed to the landscape services office with a Facilities Management event request form or by calling (269) 387-8514. Provide as much advance notice as possible.

Those with special needs when it comes to mobility on campus also should call (269) 387-8514. Questions or concerns after normal business hours should be directed to public safety at (269) 387-5555.

Helpful hints and guidelines for being safe while traversing campus during this time of year are available on the Environmental Health and Safety website. Go to wmich.edu/ehs and click Resources for details.

Now is a good time to review WMU’s Closure Policy due to severe weather or emergency conditions. It is available on the Policies website at wmich.edu/policies. For up-to-date closure information, read the story published in December at wmich.edu/news/2016/12/0620. The story includes a link to sign up for the WMU Alert system.

Product design program is object of $3 million gift

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goal is to begin construction in spring 2017 and have the facility open in summer 2018.

“We’re so pleased to see the way the University, community and local corporations are coming together to build a program that fully leverages Kalamazoo’s strengths in the arts and innovation,” Jim Richmond says.

“This program will be a leader in the growing fields of design and innovation nationally, and will prepare WMU students for these important careers for generations to come.”

Jim and Lois Richmond are both WMU graduates and have a long history of community involvement and philanthropy, particularly in relation to the arts at WMU as well as in the Kalamazoo community.

Entities involved in the new institute project include Whirlpool, Tekna, Newell Brands, Stryker, Fabrikal, Landscape Forms, Eaton and Southwest Michigan. First, Bob Brown and the Monroe-Brown Foundation provided key initial funding.

Governor appoints new trustees

Continued from page 1

also includes work as advisor and chief of staff to Detroit Emergency Manager Kevin Orr and a series of positions of increasing responsibility with Daimler Chrysler Financial Services and Chrysler Financial.