Board of Trustees meeting scheduled
The next meeting of the WMU Board of Trustees is planned for 11 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 1, in Heritage Hall. Information about the agenda will be posted online at wmich.edu/trustees closer to the meeting date.

Free shredding event set for this month
Students, faculty and staff can ensure all personal and professional documents and media are properly destroyed and recycled by participating in a free campuswide shredding event from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday, Oct. 27, in Lot 41 near Sangren Hall. More information is available at wmich.edu/news/2017/10/43127.

Award nominations for staffers sought
Nominations for the semiannual Make A Difference Award are due Tuesday, Oct. 31. The award recognizes staff members for their daily investments of energy and creativity. Guidelines and nomination forms are available online at wmich.edu/makeadifference.

Get moving by joining an activity team
Gather a team of two to four WMU employees and sign up for the Movement Matters Team Challenge Nov. 5 through Dec. 8. Simply track physical activity to accumulate points. Sign up online or at the Benefits and Wellness Expo Wednesday, Nov. 1. For details, visit wmich.edu/wellness/programs.

Commercialization funding available
Funding up to $20,000 for the current fiscal year is available for researchers with discoveries who need help transitioning from invention to commercialization. Submit applications for the Technology Development Fund by 5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3, using InfoReady, an online submission tool. Details are available at wmu.edu/technology-Development-Fund.

Three-minute thesis contest planned
Graduate students working on a thesis or dissertation can present their research and compete for scholarships by applying to take part in the Grad Talks/3-Minute Thesis Competition. The event is set for noon Friday, Nov. 10, in 157-159 Bernhard. More information, visit wmich.edu/news/2017/10/43127.

Employee Self Service options updated
The ability to update direct deposit preferences is being made available again in Employee Self Service with the PeopleSoft Upgrade project. Refer to wmich.edu/self-service for instructions on this new feature and additional payroll and personnel data as well as updates related to the travel authorization system. Watch the short video for a sneak peak at the new navigation.

School leadership project gets $12 million
Two longtime school leadership researchers at WMU will use one of the largest single grants ever awarded to the University for a three-year effort aimed at intense school leadership development in high-poverty schools across West Michigan.

A 12.5 million award from the U.S. Department of Education will fund the High-Impact Leadership for School Renewal Project, led by Patricia Reeves and Jamping Shen, educational leadership, research and technology. The project focuses on two major outcomes—developing a strong pool of practicing school leaders and improving student achievement.

Working with a pool of elementary schools in 20 West Michigan counties, the project will support teams of school principals and teacher leaders by:
• Providing intense professional development and support, and money for renewal projects for teams of leaders in 75 schools that are implementing a set of new literacy essentials.
• Placing a trained team of school renewal coaches in each project school.
• Providing a lower level of professional development support and funding for leaders in an additional 75 schools.
• Applying a set of proven school leadership practices for school renewal and sustainable implementation.

Presiding for the first time
This year’s student speaker, Ian Brown, 2016 alumnus and current graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, has been a participant in one of the international observational teams and working at a radio telescope array in Australia to track the phenomenon, known as a kilonova. The event was first detected in mid-August. In simultaneous announcements Oct. 16 in Europe and the United States, those teams unveiled visual observations and information on the gravitational waves they’ve detected. Their announcements have generated headlines worldwide. Previously and only very recently, scientists had, according to Science magazine, only sensed such occurrences from the gravitational waves they had been able to measure. Time, this, the

Grad helping to study first collision of neutron stars
A recent WMU graduate is playing an important role as scientists around the world are chronicling, for the first time, what happens when two neutron stars collide. Ian Brown, 2016 alumnus and current graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, has been a participant in one of the international observational teams and working at a radio telescope array in Australia to track the phenomenon, known as a kilonova. The event was first detected in mid-August. In simultaneous announcements Oct. 16 in Europe and the United States, those teams unveiled visual observations and information on the gravitational waves they’ve detected. Their announcements have generated headlines worldwide. Previously and only very recently, scientists had, according to Science magazine, only sensed such occurrences from the gravitational waves they had been able to measure. Time, this, the

Presidential search fund for ideas aimed at campus transformation
“Ideas that come from the bottom up are the best ideas.”

With those words, WMU President Edward Montgomery introduced a Transformational Initiative Fund intended to make $1 million available to campus entities that propose innovative efforts aimed at tackling three major WMU goals.

Speaking Oct. 6 in his State of the University address, Montgomery identified three areas of immediate focus for the campus:
• Improve retention and six-year graduation rates.
• Find alternative revenue streams that reduce reliance on tuition and state funding.
• Place WMU the school of choice for students, faculty, staff and community organizations.

President Montgomery said, “People at every level and in every department or unit may well have ideas that will help us achieve one or more of these goals.”

To encourage people to collaborate and bring ideas forward, Montgomery announced the establishment of a $1 million fund that could support six to 10 initiatives with the potential to impact one or more of the goals he outlined.

“We’re looking for big picture ideas and initiatives that will spark institutional change . . . .” he said. “Preference will be given to initiatives that cut across departmental boundaries, and the successful proposals will need to have the support of their areas. By having that support and leveraging matching funds and contributions, we’ll have the potential to invest $2 mil-

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Cara L. Lieurance, WMUK
Patricia A. Keck, university
five years of service during October.

(269) 387-8433; or fax, (269) 387-8422.

Professor in theater arts and sciences; Jamie M. Payne, building

20 years—Sarah A. Rasmune, human

25 years—Cara L. Lierance, WMUK

20 years—Sarah A. Rasmune, human performance and health education; Rena J. Lynema, English language and culture center; and Timothy P. Johnson, power plant.

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25 years—Cara L. Lierance, WMUK Radio.
Profs get $2.6 million to train ESL learners

In response to the exploding number of English language learners in Michigan, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of English Language Acquisition has awarded a $2.6 million grant to a team of WMU professors to boost professional development efforts for teachers working with English learners.

WMU is the only university in Michigan among this year’s awardees to obtain funding.

Selena Protacio, Susan Piazza, Virginia David and Hsiao-Chin Kuo, in special education and literacy studies, will use the five-year training grant to undertake the ELATE program, English Learners and Teacher Education. Protacio is the project’s principal investigator.

The effort will provide a rigorous and comprehensive professional development program for ELATE pre-service and in-service teachers who have an interest in earning their ESL endorsement can apply to be part of the pre-service cohort wherein they would take three out of seven courses in the program. The classes would be paid for by the grant.

Meanwhile, WMU has partnered with six local education agencies, which have high needs in terms of educators with an expertise in working with English learners. Project ELATE will provide substantial financial support for these in-service teachers as they work toward earning the English as a second language endorsement. In addition, other activities of Project ELATE include hosting an annual ESL conference.

Longtime employees to be inducted into 25 Year Club during 36th annual gala

A total of 25 people will be inducted into the 25 Year Club during a gala honoring WMU’s longtime employees.

The 36th annual 25 Year Club Gala, which includes dinner, begins at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 28, in the Bernhard Center. Reservations for the invitation-only event are due Friday, Nov. 10. Invitations are expected to be mailed to club members and inductees soon.

The event honors employees who have built their careers at WMU. Once the 2017 class of inductees is in place, the 25 Year Club will have 1,244 members. Of these, 451 are active employees and 793 are retirees. All but two of this year’s inductees began their service to WMU in 1992. The two who prior service credit because they began working at WMU earlier than 1992, separated from the University and then returned in 1992.

This year’s inductees are: Karen R. Blaisure, family and consumers science; John A. Brown, health and human services; Barbara J. Cockrell, University Libraries; David Lobreg Code, music; Tony O. Dennis, Graduate College; Perry Lee Elder, building custodial and support services; David J. Flanagan, management; Khanh Hoang, University Libraries; Lori M. Kisons, Haenicke Institute; Jill C. Larson, English; Tara L. Lieurance, WMUK radio; Debra K. Lindstrom, occupational therapy; Melinda Lockhart, health and human services; Thomas A. Mills, arts and sciences; Michael S. Nasarany, anthropology; Shannon R. Penny, occupational therapy; Craig A. Peterson, finance and commercial law; Rebecca T. Popp, Valley Dining Center; Melissa L. Porter, development and alumni relations; Sam N. Ramratnam, engineering design, manufacturing and management systems; Kitty M. Scheffers, health and human services; Karen L. Severson, music; Zoan K. Snyder, sociology; Donna M. Talbot, educational leadership, research and technology; and Allen T. Webbi, English.

The current membership list is posted online at wmich.edu/hr/25yearclub. Direct questions to the Office of Human Resources at hr-hris@wmich.edu or (269) 387-3620.

‘Stuff the Bus’ donation drive to benefit WMU Food Pantry

The College of Engineering and Applied Sciences will be holding a “Stuff the Bus” event to benefit the WMU Food Pantry from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 21.

The event will take place at the D&W Fresh Market in Kalamazoo at the corner of Parkview Avenue and Oakland Drive. The college’s Sunseeker solar car and Formula SAE and Baja vehicles will be on display.

“Western’s food pantry, which is part of the Invisible Need Project, was established to help our students who are hungry,” says Jamie Long, chemical and paper engineering, who is organizing the event. “We’re hoping that the community will support this effort, with shoppers picking up an extra item or two when they’re doing their grocery shopping that day.”

WMU Food Pantry drop-off locations are available across the WMU campus. Students in need may shop the pantry as often as every two weeks during its regular hours of 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information about pantry, contact Shari Glaser at shari.glaser@wmich.edu or (269) 387-4820.

ELATE will provide substantial financial support for these in-service teachers as they work toward earning the English as a second language endorsement. In addition, other activities of Project ELATE include hosting an annual ESL conference.

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Grad helping to study first collision of neutron stars

The collision of two neutron stars in a galaxy 130 million light years away is providing scientists on Earth a front row seat to document the event. For the first time, scientists have been able to simultaneously sense the collision in gravitational waves and observe the light generated by the calamity through dozens of ground-based optical and radio telescopes and several U.S. and European orbiting observatories in space.

The extent of the teams’ discoveries was unveiled this week when representatives from the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory, or LIGO, joined with Europe’s Virgo gravitational-wave observatory, and a sampling of researchers from 70 other observatories to share their new findings during a briefing in Washington, D.C.

Shortly after the international announcement, Brown emailed his University mentors in physics, Clement Burns, Paul Pancella and Lisa Paulaus, to let them know the role he played and to thank them for their support. He had been under a gag order about the kilonova work until the news was revealed.

“It is partly due to your recommendations that I was in the right place at the right time to be included in this amazing astronomical event,” Brown, a WMU Presidential Scholar in Physics wrote. “I...have to say, given the current events, grad school is turning out to be a lot more fun that I thought it would be.”

After Brown left college and spent 13 years in the workforce, he came to WMU to finish a degree in physics with an electrical engineering option. He is now working at the Murchison Widefield (Radio Telescope) Array in Western Australia and is a graduate assistant at the U of W’s Leonard E. Parker Center for Gravitation, Cosmology and Astrophysics. His name appears as a contributor on two scientific papers that have resulted from the work in observing the kilonova.

For more about the breakthrough, read a full account of the news from Science and the New York Times at bit.ly/2qKwflW and nyti.ms/2iFBv4D.
On Campus with Carole Nelson

What can be an unwelcome conundrum for campus researchers can often be an interesting puzzle for Carole Nelson in the Grants and Contracts office. That's because Nelson is not just good with numbers, she has an inquiring mind.

“I’m intrigued by puzzles in all aspects of my life, and sometimes it’s just very satisfying to solve a puzzle or a problem,” says the restricted funds accountant senior. “A lot of the questions we get about how you can and can’t spend money are complicated. You can’t make everybody happy all of the time, but you can contribute to solving a problem.”

Grants and Contracts deals with externally funded research and other projects once funding has been awarded. It partners with project directors and administrative staff, as well as the sponsors who fund these projects.

Nelson assists the directors with determining how the funds can be spent, maintains and prepares financial reports, and handles related administrative duties such as setting up new projects for spending and examining transactions for compliance with University procedures and policies as well as state and federal regulations. The College of Engineering and Applied Sciences is her largest constituent area, and she holds “office hours” in Floyd Hall every two weeks to facilitate communication with this college’s researchers.

“A lot of our time is spent responding to questions,” she says, noting that an early call to her office can help direct researchers where to go to get necessary information.

“We’re happy to provide information or find out where to go to get it. It’s always helpful if people coming into these projects have some familiarity with policies and procedures.”

Nelson earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in business and came to WMU in 2001, joining the Grants and Contracts office in 2004. She had previously worked at universities in Nebraska, but admits she had a lot to learn about restricted funding.

“Learning is a lifelong pursuit,” she says, “and I’m still learning because the federal regulations that we deal with change all the time.”

Nelson and her husband live in Portage, Michigan, and have three grown daughters, one of whom is a WMU alumna, as well as one granddaughter. The couple enjoy music of all kinds. They sing in their church choir and are huge fans of the Bronco Marching Band and University Symphony Orchestra. They have a goal of visiting as many national parks as they can, and love to take day trips to Lake Michigan, walk the beaches and collect a few rocks, hoping to find a Petoskey stone someday.

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School leadership project gets $12 million

The project is a collaborative effort involving WMU and two statewide initiatives called the Reading Now Network and the General Education Leadership Network. Patricia Reeves, the project director, says the initiative began among a group of West Michigan school superintendents determined to improve student reading levels by working together to build a school leadership model around the practices they saw in use at high-performing schools.

“Initiatives that build from the ground up, like this one, are so precious,” says Reeves. “They can ultimately lead to real change, and our job is to provide the support necessary to make this enormously ambitious project work and keep a complex range of moving parts in sync.”

Along with Reeves and Shen, the project will be led by two educators from Ottawa County—Kyle Mayer, assistant superintendent for instructional services with the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District, and Douglas Greer, director of school improvement with the OAISD. Reeves specializes in educational leadership and evaluation, measurement and research. She is co-author of School ADvance, one of two research-based performance evaluation systems for school leaders adopted by more than 80 percent of Michigan school districts.

Shen, a 2017 WMU Distinguished Grant Awardee, has led numerous large research projects focused on such topics as principal leadership, school renewal, data-informed decision-making, teacher retention and attrition, alternative certification, and systemic change.

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President starts fund for ideas aimed at campus transformation

“What is of the essence. We need to create momentum and want to start making progress,” Montgomery said in explaining the pace of the fund rollout.

To read a transcript of Montgomery’s State of the University speech, go to wmich.edu/president/state-university-2017. Detailed information on the Transformational Initiative Fund can be found at wmich.edu/president/transformational-initiative-fund.

Giving Day tallies announced

WMU’s first Universitywide Giving Day held Oct. 11 resulted in 1,366 donors contributing $36,968. Several groups and fundraisers won challenge awards that included money the winners could earmark to WMU. The challenges, monetary amounts and winners are:

• Most donors, academic college ($3,000)—arts and sciences.
• Most donors, nonacademic ($3,000)—diversity and inclusion.
• Most donors, individual fundraiser ($2,000)—Stephen Blanco, Bronco Marching Band student.
• Most liked Facebook post ($1,000)—education and human development.
• Farthest gift from WMU ($1,000)—Claudia Cook, 11,263 miles, Perth, Australia.
• Random selection from donors—Tina Thompson, education and human development.
• In lieu of the 1,903rd gift, Spirit Award ($1,000)—Joe VanDerBos, Sintecuse Health Center, the first to sign up and make a gift.

Gifts are still being accepted. To give or view photos of the winning groups and fundraisers, visit givingday.mywmwu.com.