Dear Friends,

We have had a very exciting fall semester at Missouri Western!

In September, two professors and their undergraduate students were able to continue their synthetic biology research, thanks to a $1.1 million research grant from the National Science Foundation. You can read all about the grant, which is the largest in Missouri Western history, and the cutting edge research it funds on p. 4.

Also, this fall marked the 10th year of Missouri Western’s offering graduate programs. Our stellar Graduate School has grown in both enrollment and offerings, and I am proud to have witnessed this testament to our University’s outstanding academics. An article about that is on p. 12.

In September, I was privileged to accompany several members of our staff to New York City and Washington, DC for performances of our live, multimedia productions as part of the Walter Cronkite Memorial. The New York City performance of all three shows was attended by two of Walter Cronkite’s children, Nancy and Chip, and I was honored to spend time with them while we were there.

Two days after the New York performance, we moved our entourage on to Washington, DC, where we performed “Cronkite” at the Newseum as part of the celebration of the centennial of Walter Cronkite’s birth. This was particularly special because several Missouri Western students joined us. You can read all about our fantastic trip and see photos on p. 10.

We closed the fall 2016 semester with our traditional Commencement ceremony in the M.O. Looney Complex. That ceremony always makes me realize that I have the great honor of witnessing firsthand students achieving their goals and reaching their dreams because of Missouri Western.

As we begin 2017, I hope the new year brings you the fulfillment of your dreams and the achievement of your goals.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Vartabedian
President
Missouri Western State University
Student earns University’s new degree

Lauren Patton ‘16 knew she always wanted to work in health care, so she was really excited when her advisor told her about a new bachelor’s degree in population health management (PHM) at Missouri Western. Patton knew that was what she wanted to do.

This past December, Patton, from Kansas City, Missouri, was the first to graduate from Missouri Western with the new degree, which is also one of the first undergraduate degrees offered in that field in the country.

“I want to help people live healthier lives, and I have a passion for public health,” she said. “This degree was a perfect fit for me.”

In 2014, Mosaic Life Care (formerly Heartland Health) gave a gift of $1.5 million to Missouri Western to endow a professorship for a PHM degree. The program was approved by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education in 2015, and Fiona Sansone ‘94 was hired as the endowed director for population health this past summer.

Population health is an approach to health care that steps beyond the individual-level focus of traditional clinical and preventive medicine by addressing a broad range of factors that impact health on a population level. It’s about preventing illnesses rather than just treating them, Sansone says, and focusing on controlling health care costs and patient satisfaction.

“The degree is very forward-thinking,” Sansone said. “Graduates will help ensure that our healthcare system of care is proactive rather than reactive.”

She has more than 20 years of health care experience in northwest Missouri, and most recently had been the director of patient-centered home care at Cerner Corporation in Kansas City to develop the curriculum.

Sansone, who earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Missouri Western and a Master of Social Work from the University of Missouri, will teach courses as well as direct the program.

Lauren Patton ‘16 helps at her sorority’s booth at Western Warmup this past fall.

“It was an opportunity of a lifetime,” she says of the position. “I have a true passion for health and prevention, and holistic care.”

Patton met most of the core requirements for the degree by the end of the spring 2016 semester, and taking a full load of courses this past summer and fall put her on track to graduate last month. She had also completed an internship at the Kansas City Health Department and completed another internship this past fall, as well.

Patton plans to attend graduate school in the public health field.

“I’m really excited to be the first to receive the degree, but I am more excited that I can help people live healthier lives,” Patton said. “Missouri Western has given me the platform to be the best that I can be, and I really appreciate that.”
Missouri Western receives largest research grant in its history

The National Science Foundation awarded the largest grant in University history – $1,106,896 – to two Missouri Western professors, Dr. Todd Eckdahl, professor of biology, and Dr. Jeff Poet, professor of mathematics, and two Davidson College (North Carolina) colleagues, Dr. A. Malcolm Campbell, professor of biology, and Dr. Laurie Heyer, professor of mathematics, to continue their synthetic biology research with students for three more years.

The grant amount eclipsed a $1 million-plus grant that the professors received in 2013 for the synthetic biology research. “This grant application succeeded because we have a track record of research with students for three more years.”

The Missouri Western team will travel to Davidson for a week each summer. “The grant also funds travel to national conferences where students and faculty will present the results of their research. The undergraduates synthetic biology research at Missouri Western and Davidson began in the summer of 2006 with collaboration among the two biology and two mathematics professors. We try to use math to help inform the biology’s,” he says. “We give them better starting points.”

Nature and biology are very difficult to understand, but the math component makes it more understandable, Dr. Poet said. “We try to use math to help inform the biology’s,” he says. “We give them better starting points.”

So where does the math come in? “We try to use math to help inform the biology’s,” he says. “We give them better starting points.”

Since the synthetic biology research began in 2006, Dr. Jeff Poet and Dr. Todd Eckdahl and their Davidson colleagues have had three unwavering goals for their undergraduate research group, in this order:

1. Provide a quality educational experience for everybody in the group.
2. Have fun.
3. Contribute to the advancement of science and math.

The grant, “Broadening the Application of Programmed Evolution for Metabolic Engineering,” is a collaboration between Missouri Western and Davidson College. It began in September 2016 and funds 36 full-time, 10-week summer research positions for undergraduate researchers – 18 at Missouri Western and 18 at Davidson. The grant also pays for faculty member summer stipends, research supplies and equipment, and research-related travel.

“The opportunities for our students are advancing science while delivering educational value for our students.”

– Dr. Todd Eckdahl
Professor of Biology

By Joseph region.

For example, there are millions of factors to consider in their research, and the mathematicians create simulations that narrow down the range of variables.

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The cutting edge research explained

The Missouri Western-Davidson team invented a method to discover better riboswitches. Their method, however, didn’t have the capacity to explore the number of sequences of RNA that they needed to explore.

So, early in the summer of 2016, they requested permission from Harvard University to use a method that its researchers had created less than five years ago – PACE (phage-assisted continuous evolution). Phage, or bacteriophage, are viruses that infect bacteria.

This is right on the cutting edge,” Dr. Eckdahl said of the PACE technology. He noted that only five universities in the world are conducting research with PACE, and Missouri Western and Davidson are two of them. Additionally, the other three universities have graduate students and post-doctoral researchers conducting the research, whereas students at Missouri Western and Davidson are conducting PACE research with undergraduates.

By the end of the 2016 summer research, students had conducted experiments with PACE, which is very complicated, and developed a way to use PACE for riboswitch discovery.

Next summer, they will focus on using it for riboswitch discovery so they will be able to return to Programmed Evolution to make useful products in E. coli bacteria.

“Where does the math come in?” Dr. Poet said his math students conduct mathematical modeling and statistical analysis to support the biology research. For example, there are millions of
Campus improvements greet students this past fall

Several renovation and improvement projects greeted students when they returned to campus this past fall. The largest, most noticeable projects were in the Blum Union, Looney Complex and Potter Hall.

Blum Union
Improvements for students was the purpose behind recent renovations of the second floor of the Blum Union. Over the summer, several offices, including the Multicultural Education Center, Center for Student Involvement and International Student Services, were reconfigured and rearranged.

The hallways were also painted and new carpet was installed, as well as ceiling tiles.

By the time the renovation was complete, three new offices were built, two small offices were removed, and one hallway was closed off and became part of a new suite of offices.

International Student Services, which had been sharing offices with the Center for Multicultural Education, now has its own office suite.

Additionally, the new suite of offices for the Center for Student Involvement has a new glass front wall and greets students when they come up the stairs that are located between the cafeteria and food court on the first floor.

New furniture for the second floor lounge was also purchased.

Just outside of the Blum Union, a large Griffon now enhances the sidewalk.

Senior Jacob Teasley, who served as Sen. Eagleton was also the guest for SGA; with helping him

Coordinator for the Center for Student Involvement; with the project.

Teasley said he heard great feedback from students when they arrived back at campus for the fall semester. He credits the physical plant; Shana Meyer, vice president of Student Affairs; and Jessica Frogge, administrative coordinator for SGA, with helping him with the project.

"I'm really happy with it," he said. "It was a great gift for the centennial." Looney Complex Pool

Major repairs were made to the Looney Complex pool over the summer, the area surrounding it received a major renovation and the pool was named for a former United States Senator.

In 1987, Sen. Eagleton returned to Missouri as an attorney, political commentator, and professor of public affairs at Washington University in St. Louis.

In 2003, he gave the eulogy at the memorial service that was held on campus for State Sen. John Downs ’35. Sen. Eagleton passed away in 2007.

A plaque and display in Sen. Eagleton's honor is in the entryway of the pool.

Total cost for the project was nearly $600,000, which was paid for with student fees.

Thanks to a partnership between Missouri Western, the City of St. Joseph, Buchanan County and the St. Joseph School District, the pool is now open to the public at least 30 hours per week.

Because of that change, a new storefront entry and ticket office were created that allows patrons to enter directly from the outside. Also, the entire pool shell interior, pool deck and locker rooms were renovated, and a family restroom and changing area were added.

Discussions about the future of the swimming pool began in 2014, and at that time the future didn’t look promising, according to Shana Meyer, Missouri Western’s vice president for student affairs, who spoke at the dedication ceremony.

“At that time, we were facing lifeguard shortages; pool usage was at an all-time low; and the pool was leaking an astronomical five gallons of water every 45 seconds,” Meyer said at the dedication ceremony. “Multiple public forum petitions, letters, and discussions later, it seemed promising, according to Shana Meyer, Missouri Western’s vice president for student affairs, who spoke at the dedication ceremony. “At that time, we were facing lifeguard shortages; pool usage was at an all-time low; and the pool was leaking an astronomical five gallons of water every 45 seconds,” Meyer said at the dedication ceremony.

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Meyer and Dr. Robert Vartabedian, Missouri Western’s president, thanked St. Joseph Mayor Bill Falkner and the Missouri Western Board of Governors for stepping in with an 11-hour proposal to save the pool with the assistance of the community partners.

Potter Hall

Thanks to a Missouri House bill to fund capital improvements, $325,000 was spent on Potter Hall over the summer of 2016 for new ceiling tiles and carpeting in the main corridors, and heating and cooling improvements. Additional funds that had been raised in the Centennial Capital Campaign were used to paint and the band and choir rooms, a classroom and a conference room.

Potter Hall is one of the focuses of the Centennial Capital Campaign. As funds are raised, classrooms will be expanded and renovated as Phase I. Phase II includes plans for an addition of a performance center and lobby.

The state Legislature recently provided $150,000 as a 50/50 match for the design, planning and architectural study of the renovation. The matching funds will be provided from donations raised in the Centennial Capital Campaign. •
Bradley loan fund helps entrepreneurs

A mainstay on the square in Savannah, Missouri, will stay open, thanks in part to a loan program administered by the Center for Entrepreneurship in the Craig School of Business.

The Sports Page, 411 W. Main Street, was recently purchased by Leigh ’12 and Stacy Spicer. It was started by the late Terry Powell and then run by his wife Julie Powell for more than 20 years. The Bradley Entrepreneur Loan Fund was used to secure financing from Farmers State Bank for the Spicers’ purchase of the business.

“It is wonderful that Stacy and Leigh Spicer have been able to purchase the business and continue the service to the region,” said Annette Weeks ’87, director of the Center for Entrepreneurship. “Thank you to the Bradley family for establishing this program to support entrepreneurs.”

The Bradley family, owners of the News-Press & Gazette Company, pledged $100,000 earlier this year to establish the fund that helps Missouri Western students and alumni get financing to start or acquire a business.

“One of our goals this year is to help family-owned businesses begin succession planning early enough to bring prospective owners into the business prior to their anticipated retirement,” Weeks said. “This is a great example: we were able to bring together a current business owner and one of our alumni to help maintain a 20-year cornerstone of the Savannah community.”

For more information on the loan program or to begin the application process, contact Weeks at (816) 271-4283 or awweeks@missourinwestern.edu.

Students support comfort corners

“When you feel comfortable and safe, you can learn.”

That says Jean West ’88 LCSW, ACTP CT, is why she is working to get “Comfort Corners” in every school in the St. Joseph School District, and Missouri Western’s Organization of Student Social Workers (OSSW) donated funds for two corners that were set up in elementary schools this past fall.

West, the district’s homeless social worker and trauma consultant and trainer, said when children act out, the teachers try to calm them down, but sometimes they have to be sent to the principal. A comfort corner, usually set up in the back of the room, allows the child to stay in the classroom. Go to the corner and try to calm down.

Each corner contains a big, comfy chair and items that can help the child calm down — stress balls, crayons and paper, books (one is called “Calm Down Time”), and several sensory items like small craft pom poms and stuffed animals. A liquid, 10-minute timer tells the students when they need to leave the corner. West introduced the concept to the school district and set up five during the 2015-16 school year in elementary school classrooms.

She said many children face a lot of trauma and stress in their homes, and when something in the classroom triggers the stress, they may act out as a way to deal with it. The comfort corners help them learn coping skills.

“Our kids need to be mentally well in order to learn. We want to do whatever we can do to help them be successful.”

Each corner cost approximately $150 to set up. West said, and she hopes to set up at least one in every elementary school.

Ashley Buzzard, president of OSSW, said the Missouri Western student group is always looking for community projects they can help support. In the past, they have coordinated a walk for the homeless, adopted a highway, and

 Buzzard’s talking about comfort corners to her classmates when the student group was trying to raise funds for it.

“Thank’s what social work is all about — networking and building community, and working together to get things done,” Buzzard said.

“I’m so thankful to OSSW,” West said. “It meant we could help more children.”

Campus News

Students enjoy making a craft with children as part of the community service component of Griffin Edge, the University orientation for new students last fall.
Cronkite shows performed in New York City and Washington, D.C.

The live, multimedia performances that are part of the Walter Cronkite Memorial traveled to New York City and Washington, D.C. for performances in September.

“And That’s the Way It Is: Cronkite’s Journey,” a 90-minute trilogy, was performed for invited guests, including members of Cronkite’s family, Sept. 23 at Lincoln Center’s Stanley Kaplan Penthouse in New York City. A reception followed the performance.

“Cronkite,” a 25-minute show, was performed Sept. 25 at the Newseum in Washington, D.C. Several Missouri Western students who were journalism and political science majors, student leaders, and two professors attended the Newseum performance and toured D.C.

The shows combine video, still photographs, music and live actors. They are each between 20 and 25 minutes long and can be performed separately or as a trilogy. “Harry & Walter: Missouri’s Native Sons” explores the parallel lives of President Harry S. Truman and Walter Cronkite. “King & Cronkite” features the words of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. and the reflections of Cronkite on the civil rights movement, and “Cronkite” is based on an interview of Cronkite on CNN’s “Larry King Live” one year after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Cronkite reflects on that event and other events he covered during his career.

The shows were conceived and written by Dr. Vartabedian. “Cronkite” is directed by Dr. Bob Willenbrink, founding dean of Missouri Western’s School of Fine Arts. “Harry & Walter” and “King & Cronkite” are directed by Dr. Vartabedian. Tara Stoll ’00 is the multimedia producer and director. Jake Kelly ’08 is the technical director. Ryan Menley is music supervisor.

For more information on the Memorial or performances, go to missouriwestern.edu/wcm or its Facebook page – Walter Cronkite Memorial.

Cronkite Centennial celebrated

2016 marked the centennial of Walter Cronkite’s birth, and Missouri Western celebrated with a live performance of the trilogy, “And That’s The Way It Is: Cronkite’s Journey,” and a private reception on what would have been Cronkite’s 100th birthday, Nov. 4, 2016.

A new sculpture by Eric Faison ’88, artist-in-residence, was unveiled. “We Came in Peace ...” represents an Apollo 11 rocket to reflect Cronkite’s interest in the NASA space missions, especially the moon landings. The Apollo 11 mission in 1969 carried the first astronauts to walk on the moon.

On Nov. 5, the doors were opened to the public with tours and screenings of the trilogy.

Object Spotlight – Mickey Mouse

Walter Cronkite received a Mickey Mouse caricature in return for his support of the Disney-MGM Studios theme park, which opened as part of the Walt Disney World complex in 1989. It was later renamed Hollywood Studios. Cronkite also starred with Robin Williams in “Back to Neverland,” a short film about the animation process shown as the introduction to “The Magic of Disney Animation” attraction.

The caricature is on display in the Memorial.
Graduate School turns 10

When Missouri Western received university designation from the state Legislature in 2005, it was given the green light to offer graduate programs, and this past fall marked the 10th year of the University’s offering master’s programs.

The first programs offered in the fall of 2007 were a Master of Applied Science in Chemistry and a Master of Applied Science in Information Technology Management (later changed to Information Technology Assurance Administration).

Dr. Ben Caldwell, who became dean of the Graduate School in 2012, said that in the past 10 years, both enrollment numbers and program offerings have grown every year.

First master’s degrees

The first post-bachelor’s degree was awarded at the May 2007 commencement ceremony, when Deb Schwebach ’74/’07 received a Graduate Certificate in the Teaching of Writing. The certificate had been offered on campus for several years from Northwest Missouri State University through Missouri Western’s Prairie Lands Writing Project, but Schwebach was the first to earn the certificate from Missouri Western.

Two years later, at the spring 2009 Commencement ceremonies, 12 students participated in the University’s first hooding ceremony for master’s degrees.

Receiving the first master’s degree from Missouri Western were James Blevins, receiving the first master’s degrees from Missouri Western that are hands on,” Jeffries said. “The applied nature of the program really puts you ahead in your career by several years. It gives you the edge to get you to the next level.”

Kountz, a validation senior specialist at Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc. (BIVI) in St. Joseph, earned a bachelor’s degree in chemistry from Missouri Western in 2000. He said he had always wanted to pursue a master’s degree, so when the University began offering the Master of Applied Science in his field, he immediately enrolled.

“The courses were very beneficial in regards to seeing the overall picture from research and development, to production, to quality control and to the safety stages,” he said. “Receiving my master’s provided me with knowledge that opened new opportunities in my career.”

He said he received a promotion at BIVI while he was earning his master’s degree.

Nursing programs fill needs

The Department of Nursing and Allied Health offers two master’s programs and one graduate certificate. The Master of Science in Nursing – Health Care Leadership began in 2012, and a Master of Science in Nursing – Nurse Educator and a Nurse Educator graduate certificate began in 2014.

Dr. Carolyn Bruse, director of the graduate programs for nursing, said the development of its master-level programs was driven by the health care needs of the region. She said they developed the MSN’s Nurse Educator option and Nurse Educator graduate certificate because of the critical need for nurse educators not only in this region, but across the country.

“It’s important that we work to sustain and build a workforce for nursing,” Dr. Brose said.

Missouri Western also began offering its master’s degree programs in the Kansas City area at the request of hospitals there. In the spring of 2015, a cohort for the MSN program began at Liberty Hospital. The classes, Dr. Brose said, are a combination of faculty teaching on site alternating with video conferencing.

Schwebach has truly opened the door for metropolitan-based students who are challenged both by time and distance to attend classes on campus,” she said.

Last year, Missouri Western was approached by North Kansas City Hosptals who request to provide a master’s program there, and they plan to begin the courses this spring, Dr. Brose said.

Education programs

Like the nursing programs, the graduate programs in the Department of Education were developed to address area needs in the field.

Since 2010, the department has offered a Master of Science in Assessment with options in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and Autism Spectrum Disorders, and two graduate certificates with these options.

“Both areas are identified as critical areas of need,” said Dr. Susan Basbisksi, director of the graduate programs for the department “English language learners are one of the fastest growing populations in the United States.” She added that the department’s programs also offer a great opportunity for teachers to advance their education, which usually leads to higher salaries in most districts.

Dr. Basbisksi said Missouri Western faculty stay abreast of new developments in the ever-evolving field of education, and the program continues to grow and change to meet the demands of school districts. The graduate programs in the Department of Education are also 100% online, and their students are from across the United States and foreign countries, including recent graduates from Jamaica and South Korea.

International Students

Along with international students in the Department of Education’s programs, several other graduate programs have attracted international students, which have helped grow the University’s overall international student enrollment. When the master’s programs started 10 years ago, there were just a handful of international students on campus, and none were enrolled in the graduate school. But by the fall of 2016, there were 132 Missouri Western international students, and 63 were enrolled in graduate programs.

Currently, the Information Technology Assurance Administration program has the largest number of international students – 12.

Recruiting international students for graduate programs is a good thing, said Ann Rahmat, director of International Student Services. Along with increasing Graduate School enrollment, it helps to further “internationalize” the campus and provide more opportunities for intercultural experiences.

Beyond 10

So what’s ahead for Missouri Western’s Graduate School as it moves into its second decade?

In the near future, a new MBA program will begin this fall, in response to community requests and input. Beyond that, Dr. Caldwell said plans are to continue to grow the enrollment, both nationally and internationally, and continue to develop programs that fit the needs of the area.

“We have always focused on serving the local industry, and that will not change,” Dr. Caldwell said. “We try to fill needs in the area and will continue to listen to people in local and regional businesses.”

He said the Graduate School will also look at academic departments on campus to see if they currently offer graduate programs, and explore if there is a need for programs in those areas.

“There have been challenges in the past 10 years, but we will continue to grow and change,” Dr. Caldwell said. “But offering graduate programs has been worth it for the University.”

Timeline of graduate programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Year Offered</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master of Applied Science in Chemistry</td>
<td>2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master of Applied Science in Information Technology Management</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Applied Science in Information Technology Assurance Administration Graduate Certificate – Teaching</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Applied Science in Information Technology Assurance Administration Graduate Certificate – Informed Media</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Applied Science in In Human Factors and Usability Testing</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Applied Science in Forensic Investigations</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Science in Nursing – Health Care Leadership</td>
<td>2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master of Science in Nursing – Nurse Educator Graduate Certificate – Nurse Educator</td>
<td>2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Certificate – Digital Media</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Science in Information Technology Assurance Administration</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Science in Information Technology Management</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Science in Information Technology Assurance Administration Graduate Certificate – Forensic Accounting, Enterprise Resource Planning, Animal and Life Sciences</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master of Business Administration (MBA)</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master of Science in Industrial Life Science</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Science in Information Technology Assurance Administration Graduate Certificate – Professional Skills</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graduate School turns 10

Graduate School snapshot

Student input
Missouri Western's graduate programs are designed with the students in mind. Most classes are offered in the late afternoon and evening. Programs also offer online courses, and some of the degrees can be earned totally online.

Student input is also valuable. The Master of Applied Science in Information Technology was phased out and replaced with the Master of Science in Information Technology Assurance Administration because students expressed the need for the change.

Many of Missouri Western's graduate programs have been developed because of requests received from prospective graduate students, including the new MBA program.

By the numbers
• 17 Master’s Programs
• 7 Graduate Certificate Programs
• 242 Graduate Students in Fall 2016
• 12 Academic Departments offer graduate programs

Community input
Since Missouri Western began offering graduate programs, every degree has been developed with input from business and industry throughout the region. For example, the Master of Science in Industrial Life Science was created in response to St. Joseph's location in the Animal Health Corridor, whose businesses account for about one-third of the global animal health market.

Sylvester Brandon ‘06: Remembering His Father
When Sylvester Brandon ‘06 was a student, he was involved in a lot of co-curricular activities, including president of the Campus Activities Board his sophomore year and president of the Student Government Association his senior year. He says his involvement was all because of his father's encouragement and guidance.

When his father passed away in December 2014, Brandon wanted to honor his memory, so he recently established the Sylvester Brandon, Sr. Memorial Scholarship.

He’s the reason I got so involved and why I graduated," Brandon said of his father. “We want to recognize his dedication to education and community service.”

Brandon graduated with a speech communications degree from Missouri Western and a master’s in higher education and student affairs from the University of Northern Colorado.

Brandon’s father was a U. S. Army veteran and served as a project manager for the City of St. Louis. He also coached and mentored youth basketball and baseball, always encouraging his family and players to pursue higher education.

Scholarship created in memory of student
A Missouri Western student will be remembered through a scholarship established in memory by Cabana in St. Joseph, Missouri. The first Jordan Swearngin Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Blair Griffin.

To receive the scholarship, full-time students must have a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5. Preference is given to current employees of Cabana. If no current employees qualify, preference is given to students with a declared or intended major in physical education with an emphasis in health and exercise science.

Griffin, the first scholarship recipient, is a junior nursing major from St. Joseph.

Longtime supporter passes away
Shirley (Wyeth) Bradley, who worked with Swearngin at Cabana, Swearngin's family is hoping to create a permanent endowed scholarship fund. Family and friends who would like to contribute to the scholarship fund can send donations to the Missouri Western State University Foundation; 4525 Downs Drive, St. Joseph, Missouri 64507. Please specify that your gift is intended for the Jordan Swearngin Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Sylvester Brandon ‘06: Remembering His Father

The scholarship will give preference to applicants from the St. Louis area. Brandon is senior vice president and managing director of operations for Valeo Management Limited, a real estate investment company that specializes in accommodations for college students. His job takes him all over the world, and as he travels, he said, he remembers his father’s advice.

“He told me to use every opportunity, every class, every relationship as a chance to advance myself and make the world a better place.”

Alexis Carr, a digital animation major from a St. Louis suburb, was the first recipient of the scholarship.

Shirley Bradley received an honorary doctorate and was also named the Missouri Western Foundation’s first Life Member for her many years of service to the Foundation.

If you would like to make a donation in memory of Bradley, please contact the MWSU Foundation at (816) 271-5648.
It was Sept. 1 and it was the second half of the first football game of the 2016 season. Fans were enjoying the newly renovated Spratt Memorial Stadium, especially the new video board. Suddenly, the 2,500 square-foot video screen went black. After a few seconds, an error message appeared on the screen. The crowd groaned. This was the board’s big debut. The components had arrived on campus on eight semi-trailers in June, and everyone had been working furiously since then to get it up and running by the first game.

And now the screen was totally black.

Slowly, slowly, a ticker message appeared at the bottom of the screen: “I am broken. I need noise to fix me. I am broken. I need noise to fix me.” The crowd erupted. The image on the screen rose higher and higher as the crowd got louder until it was again on full display.

“I was both excited and terrified about this project, but it worked out better than I could have ever imagined. It’s stressful, but it’s fun. We’ll keep learning, keep improving and keep pushing the bar. We want to try to get better with everything we do, every year.”

- Ryan Menley

For every football game this past season, he and his team of nine worked behind the scenes and on the field to enhance the crowd's game day experience. Menley’s office/broadcast booth on the third floor of the stadium building is a technology-lover’s dream, filled with computers, a large control board, computer monitors everywhere and, in the back of the room, two electronic equipment racks (each as big as a refrigerator). If you don’t want to look out the wall of windows at the real thing, a television screen on the wall shows what’s playing on the video board.

One computer monitor, two cameras and two filing cabinets, Menley says, are the only remnants of his old office in the Looney Complex that moved into his new space with him. (He was hired in 2010 as a videographer for Athletics.)

Everywhere else is new, including the video editing software, so he said he had to manage quite a learning curve. He will readily admit that he is not a tech guy, so it was up to Jake Noyd ’04, operations engineer for the Instructional Media Center, to figure out exactly what was needed to get the video board up and running by the first football game on Sept. 1. Noyd, on the other hand, readily admitted that he was not a football guy. (Menley says Noyd’s first question was, “How long is an average college football game?”) So football guy and tech guy started talking about two years ago, and it was a beautiful thing.

Noyd conducted extensive research to pick the best and most cost-effective products, and the design and installation of equipment was all done in house. (Menley calls Noyd one of the smartest people he knows.)

Just about the time Menley started wondering how he was going to afford to pay someone to produce the large number of graphics needed for the video board, Jeff Meyer ’11 called him. Meyer graduated with a theatre and video degree and is a videographer/editor for the Miami Dolphins NFL team. He saved the day when he volunteered to create graphics for the new board, and he kept sending new ones throughout the entire football season.

“Jeff offered to do it for free; he just wanted to give back to Missouri Western,” Menley said. He estimates that Meyer created about 20 graphics for the video board.

Menley said he decided right from the start to use the video board to broadcast the football games rather than
Behind the screen: The Griffons’ new video board

continued from pg. 17

just show “fan prompts,” such as “First down!” “Touchdown!” and “Make some noise!”

“I am a storyteller first, and this is a very cool way to tell a story,” he said. “I wanted to take fans to the middle of the action.”

With that in mind, Menley hired a crew of five camera operators. For every home game, three filmed the action on the field from the third floor of the stadium building (just down the hall from Menley) and two moved all over Craig Field.

In the broadcast booth with Menley are four more on the team who work behind the scenes, including Ivan Baida, a junior computer science major.

“I loved it. I learned about video production, replays and how to go from one camera to another,” he said. Baida is interested in a career that combines computer information with sports, so this position gave him great experience.

When he found out about Missouri Western’s video board, Trevor Moss ’11 volunteered to help. At first, Menley thought Moss would be a runner for him, but 10 minutes into the first game, Menley realized he needed a spotter to call out downs and distance information.

“I always loved being involved in game day operations,” said Moss, who graduated with a recreation sport management degree. He currently officiates at high school football games, so he was a good fit for the spotter role.

Menley is pleased that four of those involved in game day production were Missouri Western students. “You can’t duplicate the hands-on experience,” he said. “Between broadcasting, video and sports, we are teaching them how to be pretty well rounded.”

For the games last season, Menley arrived about five hours ahead of kickoff. About 30 minutes prior to game time, he started directing the camera operators and broadcast booth crew, and he didn’t stop or slow down until the game was over. He stood the entire time and directed nonstop for four quarters and straight through half-time.

We’re feeding the wrong feed, switch cameras!
Ready 5, nice job.
4 and 5, I need to cut to you.
Okay, there’s Max, Max is up.
Fumble, fumble. Somebody get me a replay. Good job.
Get ready, defense, in case we get a good stop.
Pan down, please.
If that’s the worst that can happen today, then we’re okay.
2 go wide; wide shot, please.
Wow. We almost know what we’re doing here.

- Ryan Menley on the job on game day

He admitted that prior to each game, he apologized in advance to his crew for any angry outbursts that may happen during the game.

“But I’m lucky. I’ve got a group that you don’t have to tell something to twice.”

When the games were over, Menley worked on video highlight clips and got them out on social media. After one game, he ran into a technical glitch and didn’t leave the stadium until 3 a.m. Sunday.

“I was both excited and terrified about this project, but it worked out better than I could have ever imagined,” Menley says. “It’s stressful, but it’s fun.”

“We’ll keep learning, keep improving and keep pushing the bar. We want to try to get better with everything we do, every year.”
Griffon fall sports

Football
A new experience for Griffon football fans was ushered in this season as the football team played on Craig Field in the completely renovated Spratt Memorial Stadium.

Unfortunately, the 2016 season saw the program’s streak of 11 straight winning seasons fall. Missouri Western finished the season 4-7, its first seven-loss season since 1991, and Jerry Partridge’s ’86 run as head coach of the team ended after his 20th season (see article, “Partridge relieved of coaching duties; Williamson hired,” p. 22).

Thirteen Griffons were named All-MIAA, including unanimous first-team selections Josh Caldwell and Travis Anderson. Caldwell picked up an armload of postseason honors after leading the MIAA with more than 1,400 yards rushing as a sophomore. It was the third consecutive year for Anderson, a senior, to be named to the conference first team.

The 2017 Griffon football team is set to return 18 starters, nine on each side of the ball, and 11 of the team’s 13 All-MIAA selections from this year’s team. More than 51,000 fans attended football games at Spratt Memorial Stadium this season, setting a new Missouri Western attendance record for a season with five home games.

Volleyball
The volleyball team under head coach Marian Carbin ’07 finished a winning season with a 17-15 record and postseason play in the MIAA tournament. It was the team’s fifth consecutive winning season. The team came just three wins short of completing three straight 20-win seasons.

With an almost completely new starting rotation, the Griffons still managed to go 9-9 in the daunting conference.

Two members of the 2015 Griffon football team gained positions on the 2016 regular season NFL team rosters. Michael Jordan (Rams) and Leonard Winter (Buccaneers) joined Greg Zuerlein (Rams) and Davis Bass (Titans) as Griffons in the NFL this season. Winter made the active roster in Tampa Bay out of training camp while Jordan earned a practice squad spot before being promoted to the active roster later in the season.

MIAA volleyball schedule and placed five members of the team on the All-MIAA squad, including first-team selection Rachel Friedrichs.

The team swept Lindenwood on Senior Day in November, with 25-13, 25-13 and 25-15 wins. At the Washburn Invitational in September, Stephanie Doak and Friedrichs were named to the All-tournament team.

Soccer
For the third consecutive season, Griffon soccer had its best season in program history.

Head coach Chad Edwards’ team set a new Missouri Western soccer record, winning 11 games in the regular season, earning a record-breaking 10th win of the season on Oct. 28 against Northwest Missouri State. Both goals in the 2-1 game were scored by Cassidy Menke, who broke the single-season scoring record during the game and who later became Missouri Western’s first-ever first-team All-MIAA selection for soccer.

Five members of the team were named All-MIAA; 13 were named to the MIAA Academic Honor Roll with four receiving MIAA Scholar-Athlete awards. Paige Phipps was also named CoSIDA Academic All-District for her performance in the classroom and on the field.

Missouri Western’s first-ever head coach for the men’s and women’s cross country and track and field teams was hired in August 2016. The teams will begin competing in fall 2017.

Marc Bierbaum, who was an assistant women’s cross country and track coach at the University of Nebraska Omaha, was selected from a pool of more than 100 candidates. Prior to UNO, he had served as the head men’s and women’s cross country coach and assistant track coach at Dana College, in Blair, Nebraska.

“We’re very excited to have Marc lead our new programs,” said Kurt McGuffin, director of athletics. “Marc’s enthusiasm really stood out and I think that will be a great attribute as he starts these programs.”

At UNO, Bierbaum coached 36 all-conference performers and helped the Mavericks break 13 school records. At Dana, he coached a national champion in outdoor track and field, three national qualifiers in cross country, 17 national qualifiers in indoor track and field, 20 national qualifiers in outdoor track and field, two All-Americans in indoor track and field, and 43 all-conference selections. He also saw eight school records fall.

“Everyone that was involved in the process, everyone I’ve met, the campus, it’s all amazing. I can’t think of a better place to start a program,” Bierbaum said when he was hired.

Bierbaum, a 2001 Dana College graduate, was a two-time national qualifier as a marathoner for the Dana track team and a 1999 national qualifier in cross country.

“Marc has a proven record of success at this level and knows the Midwest. We were really impressed by his knowledge of the area and the MIAA, along with his strategies for building a program that Missouri Western can be proud of,” McGuffin said.

Basketball seasons underway

Along with the excellent basketball action and fun promotions, fans can see the newly refinished court.

Call the ticket office at (816) 271-4481 or visit gogriffons.com for tickets and schedule information.
Partridge relieved of coaching duties; Williamson hired

On Nov. 17, 2016, Director of Athletics Kurt McGuffin announced that football head coach Jerry Partridge ’86 was relieved of his coaching duties.

“Coach Partridge has been a part of Griffon football for most of his adult life as a player, assistant coach and head coach, and I thank him for his hard work, his passion and his loyalty,” McGuffin said. “Our goal is to find a coach who can build on the foundation Jerry established to position our student athletes for continued success on the field and in the classroom.”

Prior to becoming head coach in 1997, Partridge was the defensive coordinator at Missouri Western for five seasons under head coach Stan McCarvey. Partridge was also an assistant at Murray State (Kentucky) University and Austin Peay University in Tennessee. He served as a graduate assistant coach at both the University of Notre Dame and the University of Missouri.

On Dec. 5, McGuffin announced that Matt Williamson ’96 was hired as Missouri Western’s sixth head football coach.

Williamson began his coaching career at Missouri Western in 1997 as a graduate assistant and, in 2000, returned as a defensive line coach before becoming defensive coordinator in 2005, a position he held for two seasons. Since leaving Missouri Western, Williamson spent 10 seasons at the Division I level, most recently serving as defensive coordinator at Stephen F. Austin (SFAU) University in Nacogdoches, Texas.

“We’re very happy to see Matt come home,” McGuffin said. “Clearly, Matt is familiar with Missouri Western, the region and the MIAA, which is a very important foundation to have as a head coach in this league. Matt will also bring a wealth of knowledge from coaching experiences outside this conference and at various levels of NCAA football.”

“It’s a blessing and an honor, to be selected as the new head coach at one of the top Division II programs in the country,” Williamson said when he was hired. “I’m ready to go black and gold again.”

In three seasons as defensive coordinator at SFAU, Williamson had the Lumberjacks defense among the top of the Southland Conference in rushing and scoring defense. He also served as defensive coordinator at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) during the 2010-13 seasons after serving as defensive line coach and special teams coordinator for three seasons. Williamson’s UCA defenses led the Southland Conference in scoring defense three straight seasons.

The three-time All-MIAA defensive lineman was named honorable mention Don Hansen All-American for the Griffins in 1995. Williamson and his wife, Andrea, have two sons, Zach and Brock.

From the Alumni Association President

Dear Fellow Alumni,

Wow, what a wonderful homecoming celebration. We had a great turnout of alumni during the weekend activities. Thank you for making it a huge success and showing that Griffon pride. You Griffons really did bring home the Black and Gold!

The Alumni Association also sponsored our first webinar on Oct. 6, 2016 with approximately 23 participants registering for Understanding Social Media.

That is just the beginning of our year together. We have more events to come and more alumni to reach. As I stated in the last edition, our main goal this year is to get people involved. This means inviting other alumni to join us at events. Take advantage of the many special opportunities coming up.

Remember to join us for the next webinar scheduled for Feb. 15; the subject is contact marketing and is a free one-hour webinar. More information will be coming out soon.

In St. Joe, we will once again celebrate Future Griffins at the Chocolate Factory on Feb. 20, and Griffins Uncorked April 20. Events are also planned throughout the year in our various chapters in Kansas City and St. Louis. These are all great ways to connect with your fellow alumni and old friends. Most activities are scheduled around athletic events and/or local events.

We also have a number of networks that are very active and meet a number of needs: Mama Griffins (alumni with children and/or grandchildren), Forever Griffins (alumni who have graduated 40 or more years since graduation), Craig School of Business, Griffon Band Alumni and the Black Alumni Network. They are all planning events and activities to pull people together.

I strongly encourage you to get involved on some level. Whether it’s volunteering or attending the events, it will make you more aware of what’s going on with Missouri Western and appreciate the great asset it is. It will also help you remember the great education you received and the connections you made while attending Mo West.

Our alumni are our greatest assets.

No university is strong without having passionate and committed alumni. So make a plan today to get involved, show your spirit and be a part of this outstanding University and alumni association. You can be a part of the excitement! Sincerely,

Mary Vaughan ’79

Alumni Events

Jan. 16 | Martin Luther King Jr. Day, campus closed
Jan. 17 | First day of spring 2017 semester
Feb. 20 | Future Griffins at the Chocolate Factory, Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory, 3715 Frederick Ave., St. Joseph, Missouri
Presidents Day, campus open
Feb. 24-26 & March 2-4 | “Macbeth,” Potter Hall Theater
March 12-19 | Spring Break, no classes, campus open
April 20 | Griffins Uncorked, Tipple Hill Winery, Highway 36, Eastern, Missouri
April 21-23 & 27-29 | “The Wedding Singer,” Potter Hall Theater
May 6 | Commencement
Homecoming 2016

Jerry 71 and Linda Myers

Herb 35 and Peggy Hift Award for Outstanding Service to the University

For Jerry 71 and Linda Myers, it’s all about the Griffons. They have been faithful Super Fans of Missouri Western Athletics for more than four decades. You can always count on seeing them at both home and away games of several sports.

Jerry became sports information director for Missouri Western in 1973 and served in that role for six years. In fact, it was he who created the Griffon logo that is still in use today. He stepped down from the Gold Coat board this past year after serving on it for 30 years (as president some of those years). He remains a longtime member of the Athletics Hall of Fame committee.

The couple owns and operates Jerry and Linda Myers Shelter Insurance in St. Joseph, Missouri. Son Jay ’89 and daughter Kelley (Myers) Schenk ’92 are both alums.

Shannon Swanson White ’06 GOLD Award

(Graduate of the Last Decade)

Armed with a graphic design degree from Missouri Western, Shannon Swanson White ’06 was hired as a graphic designer at Populous in Kansas City, Missouri. She wasn’t sure what to major in, so she took a graphic design class as an elective and found her career path. “I’m very humbled and excited that I was chosen for this award.”

Jeff Mittie ’89

Distinguished Alumni Award

When Kansas State University Head Women’s Basketball Coach Jeff Mittie ’89 was hired in that role at Missouri Western in 1992, he was hired for just one year while Athletic Director Ed White fondly remembers her college career and considers some of her professors friends to this day. She wasn’t sure what to major in, so she took a graphic design class as an elective and found her career path. “I’m very humbled and excited that I was chosen for this award.”

Wayne Chatham ’90

Distinguished Alumni Award

Wayne Chatham ’90 is the vice chairman of Card Compliant, in Kansas City, Missouri, a company that provides regulatory compliance solutions for prepaid card programs. Chatham also co-founded and previously worked as an executive for Stored Value Solutions, the company that started magnetic stripe Gift Cards, and worked as an executive for National Processing Company and Discover Card.

When he began working on the student newspaper, Griffon News, when he was a freshman, “cutting” meant he and his wife, Shanna Mittie, have two daughters and one son.

Wayne Chatham

Distinguished Alumni Award

On the day Ellen Sommer ’93 was born, a piano tuner was working in her parents’ home, which delayed the trip to the hospital. Ellen was born just 20 minutes after they arrived at the hospital. That, quite possibly, was a portent of her career as a renowned pianist.

Today, Sommer is a full-time lecturer in piano in the School of Music at the University of Kansas. She performs extensively throughout the United States, Canada, Central and South America and Europe, and serves as a pianist for regional, national and international competitions and festivals. She is also a founding member of the Allegresse trio, and has collaborated on several recordings. Along with her bachelor’s degree in music from Missouri Western, she earned a master’s from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music. She taught at Missouri Western for 10 years and joined the KU faculty in 2008.

Sommer is the mother of one son.

Dr. Bob Bergland

Distinguished Faculty Award

Dr. Bob Bergland, professor of journalism and digital media, became advisor for Missouri Western’s student newspaper, Griffon News, when he was hired in 1997. When he began working on the student newspaper, “cutting” meant he and his wife, Beth, have two sons and one daughter.
Dr. Judy Grimes: Faithful, Proud and True

After Dr. Judy Grimes interviewed for a position on Missouri Western’s campus in 1996, she was pretty surprised when Dr. Janet Murphy McCarthy, president from 1983-2000, called her with a job offer for a different position. “I loved my job in Kansas City, but Dr. Murphy was very persuasive,” said Dr. Grimes, now associate vice president for Student Affairs and dean of students. She immediately accepted the position to help students succeed, and she has been doing a great job of that ever since. She started out as the director of Missouri Western’s Freshman Year Experience (FYE), a newly created intensive freshman advising program, which included faculty advisor training, and support services for freshmen. Throughout her more than 20-year career at Missouri Western, Dr. Grimes has held several different positions, but student success has always been at the forefront of her responsibilities. She has overseen a range of programs including residential life, student conduct and student development. Currently, she oversees the health and wellness program for students and the international programs. She also works with the college completion, accreditation and assessment programs. “I’m continually learning and I am never bored,” Dr. Grimes said. “It’s really rewarding to work for student success, and I’ve been given many opportunities to increase my boundaries.” She received Missouri Western’s Drum Major for Justice Award in 2006, and was nominated for the YWCA’s Outstanding Women of Excellence Women in the Workplace Award last year.

Women of Excellence Women in the Workplace Award last year. Dr. Grimes, who is originally from Minneapolis, noted that Missouri Western’s Student Affairs and Academic Affairs have always worked well together. “A complement of academic departments and student affairs offices is critical,” she said. “For many students, a big part of their college career is outside of the classroom.”

Looking Back: Access Plus for student success

Throughout her presidency from 1983 to 2000, Dr. Janet Murphy McCarthy was committed to Missouri Western’s open admissions policy, but she realized the challenges of helping underprepared students succeed. In the mid-1990s, Dr. Murphy McCarthy began requesting funding from the state so the College could provide programs for its at-risk students.

“A commitment to open access must be linked to a commitment to enhanced learning competencies and success in navigating through the academic requirements of the institution,” she told the Board of Regents. “With the commitment of open admissions comes the responsibility to work with students to succeed.”

In early 1995, House Bill 442 was filed by Rep. Gary Witt, Rep. Charlie Shields, Rep. Dan Hegeman and Rep. Glenda Kelly ’99 to provide Missouri Western $2.2 million over three years to assist the College in enhancing its mission and improve retention and graduation rates. A companion bill, SB 320, was filed by Sen. Sydney Johnson and Sen. Marvin Singleton. Gov. Mel Carnahan signed the bill to fund Access Plus at Missouri Western for fiscal years 1997, 1998 and 1999. Prior to FY 1999, the state reduced the amount of funding for it that year and extended the program for a fourth year, FY 2000. Over the program’s four years, the money funded 28 new faculty members, 22 staff positions, technology support, telecommunications equipment and several new initiatives.

New programs

In the summer of 1996, as part of Access Plus, Missouri Western opened the Griffon Edge, a one-credit hour, two-day orientation course, open to all new students. Approximately 500 attended the first year, and in the fall of 1999, more than 800 new students participated.

Additionally, College 101, a freshman seminar course that had begun in 1988, was expanded from an eight-week, two-credit-hour course to a full semester, three-credit-hour course. The Center for Academic Support also increased its tutoring in math, reading and writing, and added tutors for biology, geology, chemistry, political science and foreign languages.

Communities, which developed at Missouri Western in the early 2000s. Additionally, College 101, a freshman seminar course that had begun in 1988, was expanded from an eight-week, two-credit-hour course to a full semester, three-credit-hour course. The Center for Academic Support also increased its tutoring in math, reading and writing, and added tutors for biology, geology, chemistry, political science and foreign languages.
Looking Back: Access Plus for student success

Missouri Western and a Master of Arts in Languages (Spanish with a minor in German from the Department of Elementary and Learner) Curriculum for the Missouri District in Kansas before he was hired by Hickman Schools in Rosendale, Kansas, for four years. In 1999, he moved to Phoenix in Arizona where he earned a master’s degree in English at Northern Arizona University and was a fellow Griffon, Shelby Coxon ‘99, with the “patients,” ask questions and/or conduct a basic non-invasive physical exam. They are required, but the individuals need to accurately portray a patient and participate in a simulated health care encounter with student nurses. The students will interact with the “patients’ ask questions and/or conduct a basic non-invasive physical exam. She said no prior acting experience is required, but the individuals need to consistently reflect the script and background of the patient that they are portraying. Volunteers must be dependable, have basic computer knowledge and respond to email or phone calls in a timely manner. For more information, contact Rinehart at (816) 271-4415 or drinehart@missouriwestern.edu.

Volunteer patients wanted

Dawn Rinehart ‘08, simulation lab manager for the School of Nursing and Health Professions, is seeking volunteer standardized patients to help student nurses in Missouri Western’s simulation lab. A standardized volunteer patient, she said, is an individual who has been trained to accurately portray a patient and participate in a simulated health care encounter with student nurses. The students will interact with the “patients’ ask questions and/or conduct a basic non-invasive physical exam. She said no prior acting experience is required, but the individuals need to consistently reflect the script and background of the patient that they are portraying. Volunteers must be dependable, have basic computer knowledge and respond to email or phone calls in a timely manner. For more information, contact Rinehart at (816) 271-4415 or drinehart@missouriwestern.edu.

2010s


Meagane (McCloud) Weldon ‘11 and her husband, Ben, announce the birth of a son, Oliver Scott, born May 23, 2010.

Lindsey Stubs ‘14 and Jake Edwards ‘15 were married Sept. 17, 2016. The two had met when they were both student workers in the Office of Admissions. The couple resides in Parkville, Missouri.

Cagney McDonald ‘15 was hired as an audit associate with Anders CPAs + Advisors, a company that provides full-service accounting, tax and audit services.

Taylor Bryant ‘16 and Heaven Stewart were married Aug. 27, 2016. Heaven is a Missouri Western student. Taylor’s parents, Jim ‘07 and Elaine Bryant ‘04, and Heaven’s parents, Corey and Stephanie Stewart ‘97, are all Missouri Western employees.

AlumniNotes

1980s

David Slater ’82 received an award for outstanding service from the Missouri Municipal League. He is currently serving his sixth two-year term as mayor of Pleasant Valley, Missouri. He is also serving his fourth one-year term as chair of the Metro Mayors Caucus, representing 84 communities in Jackson, Clay, Platte and Cass counties. He is past president of the Missouri Western Alumni Association and continues to serve on the board.

1990s

Greg Gildersleeve ’93 was recently the subject of a feature article in the Grantham Blog. Gildersleeve is a member of the English faculty at Grantham University and the author of two books.

LaShandra Randolph ’03 is the project coordinator in the Campus Life and Leadership Office at Metropolitan Community College – Penn Valley. She focuses on campuswide retention initiatives and co-advises the Student Government Association. Her supervisor is a fellow Griffon, Shelby Coxon ‘99.

Angela (Till) Hinjosa ’03 began working at Children’s Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri. She graduated with an associate of applied science degree in health information technology. “I just want to thank my instructors, especially my advisor, Marsha Dolar, during my time at MWSU. They not only gave me the education that I needed to graduate, but life lessons that gave me the tools to be successful.”

2010s

Jim ‘95 and Lara (Von Emmiker) ‘95 Tenpenny: Jim works for the U.S. Army Inspector General at the Pentagon and was recently selected for promotion to Colonel. Lara was hired by the Federal Investigative Services in Arlington, Virginia.

Mary Elizabeth Schmitz ’99 and Jeffrey Alan Porter were married April 16, 2016 in Kansas City, Missouri. Mary Elizabeth earned a Doctorate of Pharmacy from University of Missouri-Kansas City and is a clinical pharmacist manager at Liberty Hospital in Liberty, Missouri.

2000s

Nicolle (Linley) Collier ’03 is the assistant women’s basketball coach at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois.

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Ryan Rumpf ‘02: Helping English language learners

For those not familiar with the field of teaching English as a second language, it may just seem like a lot of alphabet soup – ESL, ELL, ESOL, TESOL, MELL – but to Ryan Rumpf ’02, it’s a career he wouldn’t trade for anything.

It’s a career that took him to Vietnam for three years and most recently, to Jefferson City as the director of ELL (English Language Learner) Curriculum for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Ryan Rumpf earned a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish with a minor in German from Missouri Western and a Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction/English Language from the University of Phoenix in Phoenix. His degrees took him to Lexington, Missouri, Arizona and Colorado before he was hired by Hickman Mills C-1 School District in Kansas City, Missouri as ESOL (English as a Second Language) teacher for his fourth-grade class. He is the Director of Campus Printing and Design Services at MWSU and the design editor of the magazine.

Ryan Rumpf ’02 and his family.

We recently changed our e-mail platform. Because of this, our e-mail may be filtering to your Spam folder. We ask that you please check your Spam folder to verify our e-mail messages. If you are not currently receiving our e-newsletter “G riff Gab” and would like to, please go to missouriwestern.edu/alumni/update-your-records.

For intensive advising was another focus of the Access Plus program. Nearly 150 faculty and staff advisors received advisement training and resources, and they maintained a relationship with their advisees throughout the semester.

“The reality of the situation is that Missouri Western is an open admission institution and some of our students need an additional foundation,” Dr. Murphy said in a speech to faculty and staff at the start of the 1996 academic year. “Therefore, I believe that we have an obligation to do more than merely accept tuition and fees from students, wish them well and stand back.”

In its third year, 1998-99, Access Plus funded the hiring of a special needs coordinator and an adaptive technology specialist, a Unity Services at MWSU and the design editor of the magazine.

www.missouriwestern.edu
Melissa Cairns ’16: Adventurous internship

Challenging. Adventurous. Fun. And outdoors. That’s what Melissa Cairns ’16 was looking for in an internship this past summer. She found all that and more when she was hired as a Class V whitewater rafting guide at Ace Adventure Resort in West Virginia.

For those not familiar with whitewater rapids designations, there are six classes, and the higher the number, the wilder the ride. According to americanwhitewater.org, Class V, which Cairns guided and was the highest level offered by Ace, is “extremely long, obstructed, or very violent rapids which expose a paddler to added risk. Drops may contain large, unavoidable waves and holes or steep, congested chutes with complex, demanding routes. Rapids may continue for long distances between pools, demanding a high level of fitness.”

Cairns wouldn’t argue with that description. One of the most harrowing experiences for her, she said, was when a raft flipped at a Class V rapid. “We had kids all over the place. I was able to pull one kid back to the raft, and three other guides were throwing ropes to get other people out of the water,” Cairns said. “I ended up standing on a rock holding a raft of three people from going downstream into a feature we call ‘meat grinder.’”

In an internship like hers, she said, you have to be someone who can stay calm and level-headed in a situation that requires you to be. That situation required it, and she was.

When Cairns wasn’t taming the Class V rapids, she served as a guide for paintball, high ropes, mud obstacle courses, kayak tours and stand-up paddle board trips.

“When the internship gave me a lot of room to try new things and step outside my comfort zone, I think what I enjoyed most was the challenge. Every day was different.”

Melissa Cairns ’16

Oh, the places you’ll go: Rick ’11 and Cindy ’05/’15 Dierenfeldt

When Rick Dierenfeldt ’11 enrolled at Missouri Western, he had a plan. At the time, he was working full-time as a police officer, and he wanted to earn an associate degree so he could get promoted. It was a good plan, but it didn’t quite work out that way.

He wasn’t a student very long before he met Dr. Greg Lindsteadt, associate professor of criminal justice.

Dr. Lindsteadt didn’t think Dierenfeldt should stop with an associate degree, and he encouraged him to continue his education beyond the associate degree. Dr. Lindsteadt also suggested he begin to pursue research projects.

Dierenfeldt took Dr. Lindsteadt’s advice and continued his education and research. And then he continued his education and research some more. In 2016, he earned his Ph.D. in criminal justice and this fall began his career as an assistant professor at Pennsylvania State University Wilkes-Barre.

“Greg Lindsteadt and Joanne Katz fostered and facilitated those research opportunities,” he said. “They put me on the path and opened the doors, and it is a debt I will never fully repay.”

Dr. Dierenfeldt, a Bettendorf, Missouri native, said he was “heads above” his cohorts in his doctoral program at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, thanks to his research experiences and several of his courses at Missouri Western.

In 2007, about a year before he enrolled at Missouri Western, he married Cindy Peters ’05/’15, who had attended Missouri Western, he had a plan. At the time, he was working full-time as a police officer, and he wanted to earn an associate degree so he could get promoted. It was a good plan, but it didn’t quite work out that way.

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Ryan Rumpf '02: Helping English language learners
continued from p. 28

And there are plenty of students to keep him busy. Currently, there are more than 29,000 students in Missouri with limited English proficiency, up from approximately 21,000 in 2011, Rumpf said. In St. Joseph, the current number is more than 600, which is more than double the number in 2011.

His job also requires visiting with teachers throughout the state, and this past fall, he came to campus and met with Dr. Adrienne Johnson, assistant professor of education who teaches several courses in Missouri Western's TESOL (Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages) graduate program.

“The field is changing and evolving,” he says of the English language learning field. “It’s come a long way. It has a long way to go, but I’m glad to be a part of the conversation.”

In Memory

We remember those who have passed away. If you want to include someone in this listing, please call (816) 271-5651, mail the information to Diane Holtz, Missouri Western State University, 4525 Downs Drive, St. Joseph, MO 64507, or email holtz@missouriwestern.edu.

Mirium H. Arnold ’46, Albuquerque, New Mexico, March 26, 2016.
Dr. David Benz, Longwood, Florida, July 17, 2016. Dr. Benz was a music professor and director of choral studies at Missouri Western. He is survived by his wife, Mary Ann ’81.
David Bird ’92, Falls City, Nebraska, Sept. 28, 2016.
April Jean Eiman ’96, Savannah, Missouri, Sept. 7, 2016.
Achsah Mickey Heckel, Nevada, Missouri, Aug. 12, 2016. Heckel was a longtime chemistry professor at Missouri Western, retiring in 1987.
William J. Hurley, St. Joseph, Missouri, Aug. 25, 2016. Hurley was a former member of Missouri Western’s Board of Regents.
Oscar Kirschner ’55, Chicago, Nov. 27, 2015.
Blaine J. Yarrington ’37, Lafayette, California, Jan. 15, 2016. Yarrington received the Distinguished Alumni Award in 1983, its inaugural year.

Thomas Eagleton Indoor Pool

For more details, see article on p.6.
Victory Plaza was created as part of the renovation of Spratt Memorial Stadium. Bricks are still available for purchase! Go to missouriwestern.edu/foundation and click on “Order a Brick” for pricing and order information, or call Kim Weddle ‘00 at (816) 271-5648.