Excellence in our Faculty/Staff

- Marti Burri, the RN for the Esry Student Health Center, was awarded the March of Dimes Public Health “Nurse of the Year” Award in St. Louis at the Inaugural Awards Gala. There were over 150 applicants that were nominated. Burri was the only nurse from St. Joseph to be honored with this award.
- Dr. Edwin Taylor, assistant professor of political science, was elected to the Executive Board at the Annual Meeting of the Pacific Northwest Political Science Association, in Portland, Ore.
- Teresa Harris, associate professor of art, was awarded $800 for her mixed media work in the 14th Biennial Oklahoma National Juried Art Exhibition. The juror was Kristy Deetz, professor in the art discipline at the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay.
- Dr. Prashant Tarun, assistant professor of business, was nominated as softball Honorary Coach by Griffon softball player Leah Steele.
- Dr. Prashant Tarun, assistant professor of business, co-authored an article with Dr. William Gondring ’56, local podiatrist, and Elly Trepman titled, “Touch Pressure and Sensory Density after Tarsal Tunnel Release in Diabetic Neuropathy,” published in the Foot and Ankle Surgery journal.
- Dr. Shensheng Tang, assistant professor of engineering technology, co-authored with Y. Xie, C. Tang and X. Huang a paper titled “An Efficient Algorithm for Parameterizing HsMM with Gaussian and Gamma Distributions,” which was published in the ELSEVIER Information Processing Letters.
- David Tushaus, professor of criminal justice, is in India this semester as a Fulbright-Nehru Scholar. During his time there, he published the article, “My Experience with Legal Aid Programme of Law School, Banaras Hindu University,” in BHU Law School Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 2, July-September 2012.
• Dr. Todd Eckdahl, professor of biology and department chair, Dr. Jeff Poet, professor of mathematics, and colleagues Dr. Malcolm Campbell and Laurie Heyer of Davidson College published the feature article, “Integrating Synthetic Biology into the Microbiology Curriculum,” in Microbe, the flagship journal of the American Society for Microbiology.
• Dr. Mike Cadden, professor of English and department chair, published the essay, “All is Well: The Epilogue in Children’s Fantasy Fiction” in the peer-reviewed journal Narrative.
• Teresa Harris, associate professor of art, had her mixed-media piece, “Upon Opening,” accepted into Firmly Rooted, a national juried exhibition held at the MS Rezny Gallery in Lexington, Ky. The juror, Doug Stapleton, is assistant curator of art with the Illinois State Museum Chicago Gallery. Over 320 works, both nationally and internationally, were submitted and 34 were chosen for the exhibition.
• Dr. Reza Hamzaee, professor of economics, had his article, “The U.S. Presidential Election and the Consequential Impacts on Various Businesses and Markets,” published in Tehran’s research-based journal of Tejarat’e Fardaw.
• Dr. Prashant Tarun, assistant professor of business, reviewed a research article for Omega, the International Journal of Management Science.
• Dr. Prashant Tarun, assistant professor of business, presented his research work, “Adaptive Value Function Approximation for Continuous-state Stochastic Dynamic Programming” at the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences 2012 annual meeting in Phoenix.
• Dr. Edwin Taylor, assistant professor of political science, presented a paper, “Enter the Peacemakers: Women’s Peace Activists and the Northern Ireland Good Friday Agreement” at the annual Meeting of the Pacific Northwest Political Science Association in Portland, Ore.
• Dr. Nader Vargha, associate professor of economics, spoke on “The European Economic Crisis and its Impact on the United States” at the Kansas City Eggs & Issues held at Briarcliff Cafe in Kansas City, Mo. The Kansas City Eggs & Issues was sponsored by the office of alumni relations.
• Dr. David Kratz Mathies, assistant professor of philosophy, presented the paper, “Inequality and a Just Political Order: Roles and Principles in Classical Confucian Texts,” at the annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Chicago.
• Dr. Steven Greiert, professor of history and department chair, presented a paper, “Halifax, the Pelham Brothers, and Sandwich: A Family Feud Disrupts the British Ministry but Benefits the Board of Trade,” in a session titled, “British Colonialism” at the 78th annual Meeting of the Southern Historical Association in Mobile, Ala.
• Dr. Mary Still, assistant professor of psychology, presented research at an international conference on cognitive psychology — 53rd Meeting of the
Psychonomic Society — in Minneapolis. Dr. Still was an author on a talk titled, “Attention, Competition, and Lexicality in the Same-Different Matching Task” and a poster, “Alternative Methods for Measuring the Frequency of TXTMSG Abbreviations.”

• Dr. Christine Ziemer, assistant professor of psychology, presented research at an international conference on cognitive psychology — 53rd Meeting of the Psychonomic Society — in Minneapolis. Dr. Ziemer was an author on a talk, “How Does Manipulating Perception Versus Action Impact Recalibration?”

• Aron Gerhart, instructor of psychology, was the guest speaker at the Psi Chi chapter initiation ceremony. Gerhart’s presentation was titled, “Stress: What Is It and How to Cope With It.”

• Deborah Becker, assistant professor of computer science, gave a computer, science math and physics colloquium titled, “Deception, Ethics, and Information Technology.”

• Dr. Lori McCune, assistant professor of mathematics, presented “The Hilbert-Samuel Polynomial” at the computer science, math and physics colloquium.

• Deborah Becker, assistant professor of computer science, presented a paper, “Deception, Ethics, and Information Technology: POLICY IMPLICATIONS,” at the Information Systems Educators Conference and Conference on Information Systems Applied Research in New Orleans. The theme of the conference was e-learning, and the paper addressed issues of student success, course consistency, faculty training, using published content management systems, and availability issues.

• Dr. Gavin Waters, associate professor of mathematics, was invited to lead a panel discussion at the Kansas City Regional Mathematics Technology Expo, “Concerning the Joint Statement of NCTM and MAA on College Calculus.” He also organized a workshop on inquiry-based learning.

• Dr. Susie Hennessy, professor of French, participated in the development of benchmarks and standards for French for the Defense Language Institute language assessments. French is now considered a strategic language for military and diplomatic purposes. The exams are used to measure the language capabilities of government employees and those in military service.

• Dr. Robert Bergland, professor of journalism, and journalism students, Heather Heater, Dave Hon and Andy Inman, presented, “Multimedia and Interactive Features of College Newspaper Websites: A 2012 Study” at the National College Media Convention in Chicago. Dr. Bergland, editor of College Media Review, led a session on getting published in the journal and was on a panel, “Conducting Research on College Media,” at the convention.

• Mary Stone Dockery, instructor of English, presented a poetry workshop for writers in grades seven-12 at Going for the Gold: 2013 Scholastic Writing Contest. Dr. Bill Church, assistant professor of English, presented a similar workshop on writing fiction. Dr. Church also served as a small group leader. Tom Pankiewicz, assistant professor of English and Prairie Lands Writing Project director; Amanda Moyers, associate coordinator and Central High School communication arts teacher; and Eric Williams, English education major and PLWP student aide; planned the event.
Dr. Susie Hennessy, professor of French, attended the Nineteenth-Century French Studies Colloquium in Raleigh, N.C., where she chaired a session titled, “Devouring Mother.” Dr. Hennessy presented her paper, “Bonne à Croquer: Food as Fetish and the Female Body” as part of the session.

David Tushaus, professor of criminal justice, is in India this semester as a Fulbright-Nehru Scholar. During his time there, he has made the following presentations:

- Presented the paper, “Science, Technology and the Need for Reforms in the Criminal Justice System,” at the National Seminar on Science, Technology and Law Reform, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.
- Delivered lectures on “The Death Penalty in America,” “Domestic Violence Against Women: A Comparison of India and U.S. Law,” and “Freedom of Speech as a Fundamental Right” to graduate students and faculty at the Department of Law, University of Kerala, Trivandrum.
- Delivered a lecture on “Freedom of Speech as a Fundamental Right” to graduate students and faculty at the National University of Advanced Legal Studies, Kochi.
- Delivered a lecture on “Indo-American Relations After the U.S. Presidential Election” at the 247th session of Academique, a student/faculty discussion group at Banaras Hindu University.
- Co-presented “Domestic Violence Against Women: A Comparison of India and U.S. Law” with Dr. Bibha Tripathi, Faculty of Law, Banaras Hindu University for the department of political science.
- Presented workshops for India legal professionals, educators, and policy makers at the Indian Law Institute’s Access to Justice: An Agenda for Legal Education. Opened the workshop as well as, presenting, “Promoting Access to Justice through Legal Aid Clinics in USA,” and “Advocacy against Domestic Violence, USA.”

Dr. Geraldine Dickey, assistant professor of social work, participated on an expert panel following the showing of the film “GEN SILENT,” an interdisciplinary aging project prepared in conjunction with the University of Missouri School of Medicine.

Representatives from Missouri Western have provided assistance to the Missouri Department of Higher Education staff and other institutions regarding reverse transfer policies and procedures. Dr. Cindy Heider, associate provost and associate vice president for academic affairs, has worked with staff from the Higher Learning Commission to address accreditation issues related to implementation of this policy. Dr. Heider and Susan Bracciano, registrar, serve on a committee to develop statewide policies and procedures. Mark Mabe, director of information technology, and other IT staff at Missouri Western have developed processes that allow for the electronic transfer of student records.

Dr. Kathleen O’Connor, associate professor of nursing and department chair, presided at the Missouri Association of Colleges of Nursing fall meeting. Dr. O’Connor is the president of the organization.
• Dr. Edwin Taylor, assistant professor of political science, organized and chaired a panel on Peace and Conflict at the Annual Meeting of the Pacific Northwest Political Science Association in Portland, Ore.

• Dr. Kathleen O’Connor, associate professor of nursing and department chair, attended the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Baccalaureate Conference. She served on the planning committee for this national conference and moderated several educational sessions.

• Dr. Teddi Deka, professor of psychology and director of the honors program, represented Missouri Western’s honors program at the National Collegiate Honors Council conference in Boston.

• Dr. Susie Hennessy, professor of French, attended the annual meeting of the Missouri Consortium for Foreign Languages in St. Louis. Missouri Western is one of five partners working in collaboration to offer French and German courses via distance education.

• Dr. Michael Ottinger, professor of physics and department chair, attended five sessions at the IDEA Department Chair Seminar at St. Pete Beach, Fla.: Student Evaluation of Faculty Instrument, Evaluation of College Teaching, Managing Difficult Performance Evaluation Sessions, Managing Conflict and Colleagues and Legal Issues.

• Dr. Mark Mikkelsen, professor of philosophy, attended the 70th annual meeting of the American Society for Aesthetics in St. Louis and chaired a session on “Literary Genre and History.”

• Tom Pankiewicz, assistant professor of English and Prairie Lands Writing Project director; co-directors Christie Leigan and Heidi Mick; teacher consultants Mark Henderson, Valorie Stokes, Terri McAvoy and Michele Irby; and Pershing Elementary School lead teacher Joy Bettis, attended the National Writing Project annual Meeting in Las Vegas.

• Dr. Reza Hamzaee, professor of economics, was interviewed by Fox 4 News-TV on recent developments in the job markets and on the recent drought impact on food prices at grocery stores.

• The department of economics, political science, and sociology co-sponsored the “Choose Your Vote” informational event for the presidential election.

• Tom Pankiewicz, assistant professor of English and Prairie Lands Writing Project director, facilitated a holistic scoring session for the Platte County High School English department. In the session, teachers analyzed student writing, using a recently released Smarter Balanced rubric. Missouri is one of the states affiliated with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and will begin using the Smarter Balanced-developed Common Core State Standards Assessment in 2014.
• Prairie Lands Writing Project hosted the 11th annual When Writing Teachers Write forum at Missouri Western. Amanda Moyers, a Central High School communication arts teacher and a Prairie Lands teacher consultant, hosted the event which featured the writing of the following area educators: Kyla Ward, Central High School; Brandon Haskey, Central High School; Patricia Brost, adjunct English faculty; Dasha Davis, Savannah High School; Dr. Bill Church, assistant professor of English; Joyce Stohr, Robidoux Middle School; Joe Marmaud, adjunct English faculty; Mary Stone Dockery, adjunct English faculty; Melissa Robinson, Cameron Middle School; and Amanda Moyers, Central High School.

• Prairie Lands Writing Project, sponsor of the Missouri Region of the Scholastic Writing Awards Contest, presented a Writing Fiction Workshop for high school students and teachers. Dr. Bill Church, assistant professor of English, facilitated the workshop. Dr. Church examined a Gold Medal-winning story and led a writing activity. The workshop ended with a series of small group sessions during which students read and discussed their writing. Tom Pankiewicz, assistant professor of English and Prairie Lands Writing Project director; Amanda Moyers, Central High School communication arts teacher and associate coordinator for the Missouri Region; Eric Williams, Missouri Western English education major and Prairie Lands Writing Project student assistant; and Rachel Stancliff, Missouri Western technical communication graduate student and Prairie Lands Writing Project web facilitator, planned this event.

• Jerry Wilkerson, adjunct instructor, took his MAT 463 History of Mathematics class to Linda Hall Library at University of Missouri Kansas City for a presentation and viewing of their rare books department.

• Dr. Michael Ottinger, professor of physics and department chair, has given planetarium shows and physics demonstrations to third-and-fourth graders from the St. Joseph School District as part of the “Making Scientists” program.

• The department of English, foreign language, and journalism’s Spanish Club and Spanish faculty — Dr. Eduardo Castilla-Ortiz, Vicky Perez-Calzadilla, Saundra Dibella and Ana Bausset-Page — organized a gathering for Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead). There were around 60 in attendance for the event.

• Dr. Eduardo Castilla-Ortiz, assistant professor of Spanish, and Ana Bausset-Page, assistant professor of Spanish, invited high school teachers from Maryville, Mo., St. Joseph and Atchison Kan. for a day of Spanish immersion.

• With the support of the Foundation and the Alliance Francaise de Saint Joseph, Dr. Susie Hennessy, professor of French, coordinated and hosted the evening performance of the French theater “Troupe Nerman” for the show “Rappelle-toi Prévert.” The actors interpreted the poetry of poet Jacques Prévert in French.

• Sherry Swain, National Writing Project Senior research associate and Prairie Lands Writing Project’s thinking partner for the SEED 2 Elementary Grant, visited PLWP and Pershing Elementary School. Swain consulted with the PLWP — Christie Leigan, co-director, Terri McAvoy, PD facilitator, and Tom Pankiewicz, assistant professor of English and Prairie Lands Writing Project director — about the direction and progress of our work, observed a day of
professional development activities at Pershing, and met with the PLWP/Pershing Planning Team to share her impressions of the work as well as offer suggestions.

- Tina Washburn, admissions coordinator, and Kay Dickerson, instructor, visited senior advisors and directors from the Saudi Arabia Cultural Mission, Embassy of the State of Kuwait, and the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in Washington, D.C., discussing Missouri Western’s intensive English program and possible exchange programs and summer programs.

Excellence in our Students

- Joshua Swindler, philosophy student, delivered his paper, “The Virtuous Euthyphro Dilemma,” at Truman State University’s 23rd annual Undergraduate Philosophy & Religion Conference in Kirksville, Mo.
- Hannah Bryant and Linzy Fairman, psychology students, presented their applied learning experience at the ninth Missouri Undergraduate Psychology Conference held at Westminster College in Fulton, Mo. Hannah Bryant’s presentation, “My Practicum Experience in Human Resources,” was judged as first place in her session.
- Jeremy Todd, graphic design student, attended the ninth Missouri Undergraduate Psychology Conference, and designed the award-winning logo for 2012.
- Cara Green, Nicolette Rogers, Natalie Beers, and Curtis Dennis were inducted into Psi Chi, the national honor society for psychology majors.
- Two 2011 theatre/cinema graduates, Sarah Noe and Matthew Wright, starred in the Palm Canyon Theatre’s production of “Arsenic and Old Lace.” Palm Canyon Theatre is a professional theatre company located in Palm Springs, Calif.
- Kris Miller defended his thesis, “Artifact Usability Analysis of WebCT and Moodle: Exploring the Strengths and Weaknesses from the Instructor Perspective.” Miller’s project evaluates and compares the user interface of two popular course management systems. Miller’s thesis chair was Dr. Patricia Donaher, associate professor of English. His committee members were Dr. Michael Charlton, assistant professor of English, and Dr. Cynthia Jeney, associate professor of English.
- Melissa Jackson Wine successfully defended her capstone project for the technical communication option of the Master in Applied Arts in Written Communication. Her capstone project included a professional portfolio and a scholarly research paper, “The Evolution of the Technical Writing Definition in a Technical Writing Textbook: A Humanistic Analysis.” Jackson Wine’s project director was Dr. Kaye Adkins, professor of English and director of graduate studies. Her project committee members were Dr. Michael Charlton, assistant professor of English, and Dr. Kay Siebler, associate professor of English.
- Senior nursing students partnered with Northwest Health Services to offer a Health Fair at the Grace House.
- Eric Williams, English education major and Prairie Lands Writing Project student aide, help plan a poetry workshop for writers in grades seven-12 at Going for the Gold: 2013 Scholastic Writing Contest.
• Journalism students, Heather Heater, Dave Hon and Andy Inman; presented, “Multimedia and Interactive Features of College Newspaper Websites: A 2012 Study” at the National College Media Convention in Chicago. Dr. Robert Bergland, professor of journalism, was their advisor.

Excellence in our Programs

• Prairie Lands Writing Project has been selected to participate in the National Writing Project’s $14.9 million, multi-year “College-Ready Writers Program and Evaluation,” a highly-competitive federal i3 research grant. NWP’s application was one of 20 funded from 727 submitted.

• Disability Services hosted the Alpha Delta Alpha Honor Society induction ceremony. There were seven inductees. Alpha Delta Alpha is an academic honor society for students with disabilities. To be eligible for membership, students must be in good academic standing and have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher. Inductees received a lapel pin and honor cord, and were greeted and photographed with Dr. Robert Vartabedian, president of Missouri Western.

• The Career Development Center hosted an employer panel and luncheon in the Spratt Hall Enright Rooms. Seven employers including Target, State Farm Insurance, UMB, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, Federated Insurance, Hillshire Brands and the Department of Justice spoke to 77 students about, “What Skills and Competencies Employers Look For in a Potential Employee.”

• The international students prepared booths for the International Fair held in Spratt Hall atrium. Cultural performances were held in the Kemper Recital Hall. International students performed and also spoke to attendees about their countries.

• The all-residence hall program, “No-Shave November” contest, took place in Scanlon Hall. No-Shave November is a unique way to raise cancer awareness. The goal was to grow awareness by embracing our hair, which many cancer patients lose, and letting it grow wild. Both female and male students participated and received awards in several categories including “Most Prickly Legs” and “Best Beard.”

• The Center for Student Engagement sponsored “Clearly You Crystals.” Approximately 250 students posed as if for a photograph and watched as the high-tech laser imaging system created a 3D image inside a clear optical crystal. The keepsake was a perfect memento just in time for the holidays.

• The Center for Student Engagement concluded a contest modeled after the television program “The Voice.” Gavin Morris was named “The Voice of Western” and he was presented with a $1,000 prize. The show welcomed over 200 students. In addition, Western Activities Council held their annual Black Light Dance in The Blum Union with more than 400 students participating.

• The Center for Multicultural Education hosted College for Kids for sixth-graders from Humboldt Elementary. It was a Science Day with a show at the planetarium and a science demonstration from Dr. Michael Ducey, associate professor of chemistry and department chair.
• The Center for Multicultural Education provided rides to the polls on Nov. 6 from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. for those students needing transportation. This was part of the “Vote or Shut Up” program, which promoted discourse and civic engagement of students in the presidential elections.

• The Center for Multicultural Education sponsored the American Indian Cultural Celebration, which was presented by the Haskell Indian Nations University in the Fulkerson Center. Nearly 100 persons were in attendance, including many community members.

• The Nontraditional and Commuter Student Center celebrated Nontraditional and Veterans Appreciation Week, Nov. 5-9. Prizes were awarded to nontraditional students during the week at the center. A military benefits brief was held with Christina Fierros, veteran service officer, and Captain Patrick Kershaw presented, “Anatomy of a Hero.”

• The Nontraditional and Commuter Student Center coordinated another military benefits brief conducted by Sargeant Angela Hutsell, education services counselor, Missouri National Guard, Jefferson City, Mo. Military students received assistance with the GoArmyEd portal and information regarding federal and state tuition assistance as well as veterans benefits.

• The Student Government Association sponsored three buses for 150 students to attend the football playoff game in Mankato, Minn. They departed at 3 a.m. and returned after the game. The previous week, SGA also sponsored a bus and provided hotel accommodations for the game in Arkadelphia, Ark. In addition, SGA paid for the students’ tickets to the game.

• The Student Government Association supported a tailgate prior to the playoff game at Missouri Western near Baker Family Fitness Center. They also purchased rally towels and pom poms, and printed many signs and banners that were spread around the campus and the community. The community signs supported the MIAA Conference football champions.

• The social work program collaborated with Sigma Theta Tau, the department of nursing and allied health and Advanced Health Education Center to host a one-day military conference, “Joining Forces.”

• The Organization of Student Social Workers held a bake sale to raise money for Light the Night Walk for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. In addition, some of the members also participated in the walk, which was held in Kansas City, Mo. Over $500 was raised to help this cause. The OSSW participated in Take Back the Night, assisting in the event by making signs and helping with a candlelight vigil. They also took part in the Homecoming Food Fight, with a friendly competition between seniors and underclassmen to see which group could bring in the most nonperishable items. The OSSW continued collecting plastic bags for the Salvation Army. Members volunteered with set-up, working and cleaning up activities for Green Dot Week, an operation designed to create a community that is intolerant of violence.

• VIPs assisted 2,000 high school students in the My Success event at the civic arena.

• The three-hour Study Abroad Fair resulted in 130 students indicating interest in one or more Study Abroad/Exchange Programs.
Fourteen students participated in a four-day IN-Site Art and Cultural Experience course in New York City. The course was taught by Geo Sipp, professor of art.