



Soundings

A quarterly report to the families of Western Washington University students

Vol. 27, No. 2

Fall 2008

Morse Institute will highlight leadership research and development

Western Washington University has launched a new campus institute devoted to the teaching and understanding of leadership.

The Karen W. Morse Institute for Leadership, named in honor of WWU President Emeritus Karen Morse, "will be a magnet for exploration and innovation in teaching, and conducting scholarship in this important field," says President Bruce Shepard.

Funded with a total of \$1.9 million in philanthropic support, the institute will also help prepare students to exercise responsible leadership in their careers and communities, he says.

The new institute will

tie in with WWU's Leadership Advantage program, a comprehensive campus-wide program designed to provide students a variety of leadership development opportunities.

A \$1 million gift from Jack and Jo Ann Bowman, the largest single gift from a living donor in Western's history, helped establish the institute. The couple's gift also fully endows the Bowman Family Distinguished Professor of Leadership Studies.

The institute also received major funding from David and Denise Cole and Rick and Sylvia Hagen.



Photo by David Scherrer

Plans are packed for another year

Moving In: Maddy Mixer, left, gets help from her father, Phil Mixer as she moves in to Buchanan Towers Sept. 27. Maddy, a freshman from Pullman, was among approximately 4,120 students settling into University Residences last month. She's thinking about a career in pharmacy, and is studying biology this quarter.

Welcome (lots of) neighbors! University Residences are full

More Western students than expected have signed up to live in University Residences, which means a few students are getting a crash course in close living this fall.

Forty double rooms were converted to triples at the beginning of fall quarter, and another 27 students were set to live in a nearby hotel – along with a resident adviser, said Willy Hart, director of University Residences. Most of the students are freshmen, Hart says.

Fewer students than expected cancelled their on-campus housing this year, Hart says. This year, perhaps because students are hoping to save money on gas and utilities, there are about 100 more returning students in University Residences than expected.

About 200 students who had applied for housing were turned away Hart says. Most were students who had lived off campus and wanted to return, and late transfer applicants. The requests had been carefully reviewed to make sure the inability to house the students on campus wouldn't stand in the way of their education, he says.

International students were affected, too. Twenty students in the Intensive English Program will be housed in apartments next to campus.

Housing staff will analyze whether the crunch is a one-year anomaly or part of a trend.

"If we feel this is a trend, and not a blip, we will get this organized before July of next year," he says.

A 100-bed addition at Buchanan Towers is planned to be open for fall 2010.

Hart knows the arrangement is not what some students and their families were expecting. But he thinks it will be short-lived. About 40 students typically move out of residence halls in the first four weeks, he says, and the students in the hotel will move on campus as room becomes available.

The last time University Residences converted doubles to triples at the last minute was 2000, and those triple-roomed students later reported the same levels of satisfaction as other students with their living experience, Hart says.

"I'm confident once they get here and settled, they will do fine," he says.



Photo by David Scherrer

Peek inside Western's newest building: The opening reception for the Academic Instructional Center will be Oct. 25, during Fall Family Open House. The program will include continental breakfast, academic department displays and tours of the state-of-the-art building.

CALENDAR

October 2008

24 to 26 Fall Family Open House.

November 2008

11 Veteran's Day holiday, no classes.

26 to 30 Thanksgiving break begins at noon Wednesday.

December 2008

8 to 12 Final exams.

12 Fall quarter ends. Residence halls close at 4 p.m., except Buchanan Towers and Birnam Wood.

13 Fall Commencement.

13 - Jan. 5 Winter break.

January 2009

4 Winter move-in. Residence halls open at 10 a.m.

6 First day of classes, winter quarter

6 Tuition and fees due.

19 Martin Luther King Day holiday, no classes.

23 Final due date for winter quarter tuition, fees and housing payments before late fees are charged.

Homework assignment: Disaster planning on campus

Abby Vincent's old shoes are a big part of her emergency preparedness plan.

Vincent, a 21-year-old Environmental Planning and Policy major with an emphasis in Disaster Reduction and Emergency Planning, learned that the most common injuries following an earthquake are cuts on hands and feet from broken glass.

So, with those old shoes under the bed, Vincent can worry a bit less about whether the mirrored closet doors in her bedroom would hold up in an earthquake. She also keeps a few extra canned goods, bottled water and a hand-crank radio and flashlight in her Happy Valley apartment.

But Vincent, who just completed an internship with the city of Bellingham to work on community-wide disaster planning, knows she's done more than most students.

"I've done a lot for myself to prepare, just because it's my job to get other people to," she says. Families, who often have children, pets and property to take care of, are typically better prepared

than students, "who are on their own and have the invincible mindset," she says.

But emergency preparation officials at Western hope to change that by encouraging students to do some disaster preparation on their own.

"My vision for our students is for them to be ready for what life brings, even if it's a disaster," says Gayle Shipley, Western's director of environmental health and safety.

The university has its own disaster plans, Shipley says, "but when emergency services are overwhelmed, each of us needs to be prepared. Even good responses take time to implement.

So keeping at least three days' worth of water and food on hand is a good idea for students and their

families, Shipley says.

She also recommends students take a critical look at their living spaces – books and heavy objects stacked up high could crash down on them in an earthquake. And families need to update their disaster plans if they haven't done so since their student moved away to college, she added.

"I think the most important thing," she says, "is making a start."

Emergency kits are available at Western's AS bookstore

Pre-packaged emergency kits are a good start in gathering the recommended three days' worth of disaster supplies, says Gayle Shipley, Western's director of environmental health and safety. Western's bookstore sells such a kit, which includes some water and food, a first-aid kit, thermal blanket, body warmers and a battery-powered flashlight, for \$36.50. It's available at the store or online: www.bookstore.wvu.edu.

License plates take your Viking pride on the road



WWU Collegiate License Plates showcase your connection with Western while raising scholarship funds. The plates cost \$40 in addition to regular licensing fees the first year, then \$30 on top of regular fees each time you renew.

Learn more by going to your local Department of Licensing or online at www.dol.wa.gov and searching for "special design plates."

It pays to be smart about student loans

Do your students know the consequences of not paying the interest on unsubsidized student loans during college?

If not, staff members from Western's Student Accounts office would be happy to enlighten them. *Soundings* recently asked Jenny Hebert, interim bursar, and June Fraser Thistle, student accounts supervisor, for some tips for families on how to best manage student loan debt.

Are there any common mistakes students and families make?

Thistle: Not paying interest on unsubsidized student loans while they're students. Six months after they leave school, if they haven't paid the interest yet it capitalizes and gets added to the principal on the loan. They end up paying more money in the long run. I tell students, think of it as a living expense, like rent and food.

Hebert: It can be deceiving, because the notice doesn't look like a bill. It may even say at the top, "This is not an invoice." And remember, if you fall below half-time status, or cease to be a student, even if you haven't graduated, you've entered your six-month grace period before loan payments begin. This is something to consider before taking a year off school.

Should students get a job to avoid student loans?

Thistle: Statistics say students who work 20 hours or less actually do better in school. More than 20 hours is too much, though. Try to find a job where they'll accommodate your needs, so if you have a heavy quarter you can cut back on your hours. Most places in Bellingham are very accommodating. Some students become so independent, they don't even get help, but there are free tutoring and all kinds of things they can get into if they need help.

Hebert: Just because a loan is disbursed, you don't have to spend it all. If you've got some left over, pay it back. You don't need it.



June Fraser Thistle

Any advice for families who make too much for need-based aid, but still struggle to pay the bills?

Hebert: Talk to your financial planner. Parents have to be watchful of money that they have sitting in an account that is not invested. And start early. There's nothing saying you can't start filling out the FAFSA to see what your unmet need looks like when your student is still a freshman in high school.

Scholarships are nice, but they can count against need-based awards. Start talking early to your financial aid officer about how scholarships could affect your financial aid package.

When do you typically start talking to students about debt management? Do students wait until it's too late?

Thistle: Normally, freshmen have their blinders on, sophomores start to think about it but still don't come in, and juniors are quaking in their boots. That's when most students come in. But some graduate and still don't now how much they owe. The National Student Loan Data System allows you to keep track of exactly how much student loan debt you have, even if you've been to more than one school. (www.nsls.ed.gov) It's critical to keep monitoring it.

Which are better, student loans or parent loans?

Hebert: Student loans have a better interest rate. And if parents want to help pay those off, kudos.

Any other advice for families?

Thistle: Have your student take charge so they're fully aware of the cost of attending. It's amazing how many of them, once they realize how much it costs to go to school, how much better they do. So forget that whole micromanaging thing. Hand it over.



Jenny Hebert

Western Fall Welcome gives prospective students a sneak peak at campus this month

Western Fall Welcome, hosted by the Office of Admissions, is Saturday, Oct. 25, the same weekend as Fall Family Open House. The event draws hundreds of prospective students and their families to campus to discover why Western is an exceptional place to learn and grow.

Western Fall Welcome, the fall's largest recruitment program, provides the opportunity to learn about academics first-hand from current Western students and faculty representing their programs. Guests are welcome to attend the Cam-

pus Fair in the Viking Union, or drop by departments hosting Open Houses across campus.

The Office of Admissions will also host campus walking tours throughout the day and facilitate Application Review workshops in the afternoon. These workshops will give prospective students an insider's look on what to consider as they prepare their college applications.

Reservations for this event are required. For program details or to register online, please visit admissions.wvu.edu/visit/.

Parents can sign up to get emergency text messages

Students and families can now get text messages with critical information during an emergency on Western's campus.

Students can register their cell phone numbers at the MyWestern portal at www.wvu.edu.

Families may go to Western's emergency information site, emergency.wvu.edu, click on "Questions and Comments" and select "Emergency Contact Form" from the dropdown menu.

Summer took Western students around the world

Study trips, internships and research excursions took Western Washington University students all over the world this summer.

Top right, a group of Western students traveled with Political Science Professor Vernon Johnson to study social and political issues in South Africa. Here, they're pictured with a host family in Mphopomeni Township, in KwaZulu Natal Province.

Kayleigh King, right, traveled to Costa Rica for an internship with EcoTeach, a tourism company that includes conservation service projects in its tours. Here, King carefully prepares a newly hatched leatherback turtle for measuring and weighing at a hatchery at Estacion Las Tortugas on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica.

Bottom right, graduate student Logan Berner extracts an increment core from a larch tree in northeastern Siberia as part of the Polaris Project. Data from these trees are being used to understand climate change in the Arctic. Berner went to Siberia with Assistant Professor of Environmental Science Andy Bunn.

Below, several Western students who travelled to Japan to study art and art history prepare for a traditional celebration on the eve of the Gion Festival in Kyoto. The trip was led by assistant Art professors Julia Sapin and Seiko Atsuta Purdue.

For more information about summer study tours, contact WWU's Extended Education and Summer Programs at (360) 650-3308 or visit www.acadweb.wvu.edu/eesp/



If we want to be the best of our kind in the U.S., we'll decide together how to get there

My wife Cyndie and I were delighted to meet many of you the start of fall quarter, our first at Western Washington University. By now I trust your students are settling into the rhythms of a new academic year.

As the work of fall quarter begins in earnest, I've been preparing for the challenges and opportunities ahead. One of the things that drew me to Western was the stated goal to be the nation's best university of its type. And since we've arrived in Bellingham, my many conversations with students and their families, alumni, faculty, staff and others have shown that goal is widely held.

We're already the finest master's-granting public university in the Pacific Northwest, offering the kinds of hands-on learning undergraduates rarely get at larger universities. Our graduates are sought after by top employers and graduate schools.

So how do we get even better, to become the best in the nation?

Our next steps will be determined not by me, but by all of us. I firmly believe that leadership in complex situations begins by asking questions instead of giving answers. If you



By Bruce Shepard
WWU President

want to know who I am as president, there is no more fundamental point — I have questions, you have answers.

As family of Western's current students, you have an important part in this as well. I want to know your views on Western, if it is fulfilling its promises, and where you'd like to see us in the future, as your students will be our proud alumni. Please visit my website, www.wwu.edu/president, and read more about what I've learned so far about Western from my conversations with hundreds of people, and be sure to share your own thoughts.

And I'd also like to invite all parents to visit their students and learn about the many innovative programs and activities

at Western during our Fall Family Open House on Oct. 24 to 26. I look forward to seeing you there!



Photo by Laurie Rossman

Meeting the new president

Introductions: New WWU freshman Hannah Urie, center, met President Bruce Shepard on a boat cruise in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, sponsored by the WWU Alumni Association. She was joined by her mother, Kim Tuccio, left, and father Mike Tuccio, right. The cruise was one of two this summer sponsored by the alumni association for incoming students and their families.

Correction, please

Soundings regrets that Christopher and Ann E. Wenrick were not included in this summer's list of generous donors to the Parent Annual Fund. We thank them and all donors, whose names can be found at www.foundation.wwu.edu.

Prepare now for fellowships

The Fellowships Office provides information about nationally competitive scholarships for undergraduate and graduate study in the United States and abroad as well as assistance in completing applications, writing proposals, and drafting personal essays required by fellowships applications.

Students with strong academic records are encouraged to visit the Fellowships Office early in their college experience to learn about the opportunities available and how best to prepare themselves to become strong candidates.

Additional information can be found on the web: www.wwu.edu/fellowships.

Forums will feature what's new in business and management ed

The College of Business and Economics' Teaching Scholarship Day Oct. 24 will feature several forums, including:

- The Academy for Success in Business, Western's summer business education and outreach program for high school students.

- Globalization and what it means for business and management education.

- Presentations to the college's Distinguished Teaching Fellow, Associate Professor of Marketing Sandra Mottner, and the Distinguished Research Fellow, Professor

of Decision Sciences Floyd Lewis. The fellows will play important leadership roles in research and teaching at the college during the three-year fellowship period.

- A discussion of Mighty Tieton, an economic development enterprise in the Central Washington town of Tieton.

The forums, free and open to the public, will be in Parks Hall from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., followed by a reception.

Learn more about Teaching Scholarship Day at www.cbe.wwu.edu

Rick Steves will headline Fall Family weekend

Rick Steves, the Edmonds-based travel writer of dozens of guidebooks and the host of a public television travel series, will speak at this month's Fall Family Open House.

His talk, "Travel as a Political Act," will draw from his beliefs that thoughtful travel challenges and shapes our world view, ultimately enabling us to become better citizens of the planet. He'll speak Oct. 24 at 8 p.m. in the PAC Concert Hall.

Soundings recently asked Steves about the connection between travel and citizenship:

Q: Why is it important for college students to travel abroad?

Steves: As people destined to contribute mightily to their communities, a global perspective is a valuable tool. While you can try to get this without leaving home, there is nothing like seeing your country, culture, and values from lands that find different truths to be "god-given and self-evident." With an ever more interconnected world and an America ever less connected with that

More Fall Family Open House events

- Theatrical presentations, including "36 Views" a sensuous and mature exploration of authenticity, and "Plays 4 Us," a collection of short performances written, directed and produced by Western students.

- Sports events including a football game against Humboldt State University, a women's soccer game against Simon Fraser University and a women's volleyball game against Western Oregon University.

- An Academic Campus Fair, providing an opportunity for students and

world, I believe our next generation of business leaders, parents, and decision-makers will benefit mightily from international travel and study abroad.

Q: Are parents too nervous about international travel to encourage their students to go abroad?

Steves: As a student traveler with anxious parents long ago, as a parent with globe-trotting children today and as a tour guide who for 20 years has advocated for Americans -- especially young Americans -- to explore the world, I know that loving parents can be overly nervous. From my experience, most parental anxiety is based on sensational local media and the nerves of loved ones who don't understand that from a violence and crime point of view we are safer overseas than we are at home.

Q: How should students prepare for a trip overseas?

Steves: Before a student trip I'd recommend adjusting your recreational reading and movie-going to enhance your understanding of today's culture in the land you'll be visiting. Commit

families to learn more about academic majors and student support services. Also hear about internships, fellowships and campus sustainability efforts. And consider sitting in on a presentation from the Political Science Department about the 2008 Presidential election.

- Other events will include Make A Difference Day service projects and a nature and bird watching cruise.

To learn more about Fall Family Open House, call New Student Services/Family Outreach at (360) 650-3846 or visit the website at www.nssfo.wvu.edu



Photo Courtesy Rick Steves

Steves on Germany's Rhine River.

yourself to collecting your thoughts and impressions in a journal or blog, which is a great way to let loved ones travel with you. And vow to break away from the part of Europe (that looks and feels a lot like the United States) and venture into scenes where you find young locals rather than just groups of other international students.

This publication is available in an alternate format. For information, call (360) 650-3307.

Soundings is published online at www.wvu.edu/Soundings.

For more information about *Soundings*, call 650-3350 or e-mail Mary.Gallagher@wvu.edu



Vol. 27, No. 2

Fall 2008

Soundings is produced four times a year by Western's Vice President for Student Affairs/Academic Support Services and the Office of University Communications.

Editor: Mary Lane Gallagher

Editorial Board: Anna Carey, Paul Cocke, Karen Copetas, John Thompson

Printing and Production
WWU Printing and Publication Services

AA/EO Institution

Western Washington University
516 High Street
Bellingham, WA 98225-9030

Change Service Requested

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
WESTERN WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY