Instilling hope and promise
CMU faculty member develops interactive experience for at-risk students
Greetings from the College of Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences! One of my favorite roles as dean is the opportunity to share stories about our talented students and faculty members. I am honored to recognize their efforts in this newsletter.

This year brings many changes to the College of Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences. Rick Kurtz recently became dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Ferris State University. He served as the CHSBS associate dean from March 2011 to June 2012 and was interim associate dean from 2009 to 2010. We extend our congratulations to Dr. Kurtz for this outstanding opportunity and our deep appreciation for his service to the college.

Effective August 15, history professor Timothy Hall was named interim associate dean and English professor Marcy Taylor was named interim assistant dean of CHSBS. Dr. Hall served as assistant dean for CHSBS from 2011 to 2012 and was department chair for History from 2004 to 2010. Dr. Taylor served as department chair for English from 2005-2011.

This year also marks the beginning of a two-year major renovation of Anspach Hall, the first major construction project since the building opened in 1966. In addition to improving the heating, cooling and electrical systems, the project will provide enhanced learning environments for the students, including modernizing classrooms and adding a student lounge and study areas. The classroom section will be completed by Aug. 15, 2012, with the second portion of the construction slated for summer 2013.

We have numerous events and guest speakers scheduled for the fall semester. Many of our guest speaker presentations are recorded and saved as a free download at iTunes U. I encourage you to visit our website to learn more.

Finally, I am excited to announce that CHSBS has established a School of Public Service and Global Citizenship. Our mission is to use this administrative unit to promote innovative teaching and learning, research, and active civic engagement by cultivating global citizenship and ethical public service opportunities. While many of our programs currently are engaged in these aspects, the School of Public Service and Global Citizenship will enhance and strengthen our partnerships with international universities and institutions and create new opportunities for students to better understand people and communities at regional, national and international levels.

Pamela Gates, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences; Professor of English

Stay in touch
We want to hear from you!
Share your success stories and news updates with the university community by contacting chsbs@cmich.edu
The nation is moving forward with the 2012 race for president and Maxine Berman is looking at the election from a perspective different than most other people.

While she shares an interest in whether Barack Obama is re-elected or Republican Mitt Romney unseats the incumbent Democratic president, as the CMU Griffin Chair Berman is keeping a close eye on the invaluable lessons students and the university community can learn from the political events.

“It’s always fun to do a course on campaigns as the campaign is going on because it’s all happening in real time,” says Berman, whose term as Griffin Chair recently was extended to a fourth year. “There’s nothing like a presidential election. The course shifts and changes with the issues as they surface.”

As the Griffin Chair, Berman teaches two political science seminars and organizes two forums each year addressing public policy and political issues throughout Michigan.

Berman, the fourth individual to hold the Griffin chair, was the director of special projects for former Gov. Jennifer Granholm from 2003 to 2010. Prior to that, she served as a member of the Michigan House of Representatives from 1983 to 1996.

Monitoring and analyzing the daily developments in the presidential campaign, Berman says she agrees with people who are voicing concerns about an apparent increase in the amount of negative campaign tactics and an unwillingness among the political parties to find middle ground on major issues.

“We didn’t always agree on everything, but at the end of the day we had to work together to get things done,” she says. “More and more, the ugliness and unwillingness to bridge between the two political parties has become standard operating procedure. I keep telling my students it doesn’t have to be like this.”

Such a sentiment was echoed among the panelists at the spring Griffin Policy Forum that delved into “Predictions for the November Elections.”

The panel of political experts featured were Jill Alper, democratic strategist and media consultant at Dewey Square Group; Rick Wiener, founder of Wiener Associates; Rusty Hills, director of public affairs for Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette; and John Truscott, president and principal of Truscott Rossman. Rick Pluta, managing editor and state capitol bureau chief from Michigan Public Radio Network, served as moderator.

For the record, the panelists were evenly split on predicting who will win the election this fall.

The Griffin Endowment was created in 1999 through private donations as a tribute to distinguished CMU alumni Robert and Marjorie Griffin.
Instilling hope and promise
CMU faculty member develops interactive experience for at-risk students

While Paul Hernandez spent his youth in deep poverty – getting involved with gangs, living on the street and ultimately dropping out of school – he never imagined he’d one day have a Ph.D. Now an assistant professor of sociology at Central Michigan University, Hernandez is dedicating his life to helping at-risk youth understand that a college degree is not something beyond their reach. Hernandez founded College 101, a program that brings high school sophomores to CMU’s Mount Pleasant campus for a meaningful, personal college experience. The goal is to inspire and empower at-risk students to complete high school and pursue a college education.

“While many universities offer tours and visits for students who already plan to attend college, I wanted to create opportunities for the students labeled ‘at-risk’ of dropping out,” says Hernandez. “I want these students to know that college is a real possibility for them.” During a typical College 101 visit, the high school students spend the day learning about campus life and financial aid opportunities, with a strong emphasis on connecting their passions and interests to the academic programs, student organizations and career opportunities available at CMU.

During the 2011-2012 academic year, 500 high school students visited CMU through the College 101 program. Surveys given to the students who attend College 101 show 89 percent report a complete change in confidence to attend college. CMU student volunteers join the College 101 visitors every step of the way, hosting icebreakers, performing an open-mic music session, eating lunch in the residence halls and sharing their own stories of using education to overcome personal struggles.

The National Education Association honored assistant professor Paul Hernandez with the prestigious Reg Weaver Human and Civil Rights Award during an awards ceremony in Washington D.C. July 1. The award is presented annually to an individual whose activities around closing the poverty gaps for children in America and around the world have made a significant impact in helping poor students and eliminating poverty.

In addition to developing and facilitating College 101, Hernandez speaks to thousands of teachers annually about his Real Talk pedagogy and teaches them how to replicate the program. “I’m only one person, but being a college professor allows me to make an impact on a much larger scale,” says Hernandez. “My students can do things that I could never dream of doing. It’s phenomenal to see.”
Education is difference-maker

The message that Hernandez and the CMU student volunteers share with them is clear: Education breaks down barriers. It is a tool each one of them can use to make a difference in their lives. Hernandez tells the College 101 students that he was angry and hateful growing up because he felt like there were no opportunities for him and his teachers struggled to connect with him.

“We only had two options. Dying or going to jail,” he says. “I grew up with guys who were plenty bright enough to have been medical doctors or lawyers, but they were convinced that they couldn’t do it based on the things people said to them and the way they were treated.”

Sharing his story with the College 101 students is a basic principle of the pedagogy Hernandez developed called Real Talk. He encourages teachers to reach challenging students by connecting with them on a personal level.

Hernandez uses the Real Talk pedagogy to train the 30 CMU student volunteers who assist with everything from organizing the schedule to creating informational posters about CMU majors and serving as guides throughout each College 101 visit.

Social work major Andrew Saleh has been a College 101 volunteer for three years. He says the most fulfilling aspect of the program is seeing the students’ demeanor change throughout the visit.

“After making connections with the students and learning about their lives, it’s amazing to see the hope and promise and the desire to continue their education to do something great with their lives.”

Recent CMU graduate Erin Thomsen, ‘11, says College 101 has debunked stereotypes that she once held about student classifications and the subtext associated with those classifications.

“We all have common experiences that allow us to relate to one another on some level,” says Thomsen. “Seeing their courage, talents and brilliance unmasked during College 101 is humbling to say the least.”

Hernandez and the CMU student volunteers continue to serve as mentors for the high school students and their teachers following their campus visits.

For Saleh, this included joining a former College 101 visitor as she submitted her college application to the CMU Admissions Office. Her academic advisor promised to have an answer by the end of the day, and Saleh was with her when she returned to his office to hear the news.

“Af ter we sat down, the academic advisor welcomed the student to CMU and handed her a CMU pennant from his bookshelf,” says Saleh. “Her emotions blew me off my feet. One of the things she was very excited about was to have a place to sleep and food to eat. This made me realize how precious life really is.”

Visit www.chsbs.cmich.edu for more
Mount Pleasant quickly is becoming a sought-after performance venue for Michigan’s premiere poets and writers thanks to the efforts of English department faculty member Robert Fanning.

Fanning established the Wellspring Literary Series in 2009 to give CMU student writers an opportunity to read alongside prominent writers and to create a venue for writers to share their works with the community.

“I could see that the creative writing community at CMU was thriving, and I thought that creating a literary series downtown would be a way to share the talents of our students and Michigan writers with local residents,” says Fanning. “I walked into Art Reach one summer day in 2009, knowing it was the town’s art center, and shared my idea with Kathy Hill, the executive director. She absolutely lit up when she heard my idea.”

The series, which is free and open to the public, hosts monthly readings from September through April at the Art Reach Center. The night begins with a reading by a CMU graduate student followed by a reading from a published author or poet. Past guests include Vievee Francis, Matthew Olzmann, Keith Taylor, Jack Ridl, Francine J. Harris and Linda Nemec Foster.

Author and poet Keith Taylor, a CMU alumnus, enjoys the mix of music and poetry and appreciates the opportunity to support the creative writing program. He believes it’s important for writers to attend and participate in public readings to nurture both the writer and the creative arts.

“I come back to CMU when anyone asks because the writing program there in the 1970s was just what I needed when I needed it,” says Taylor. “CMU introduced me to the world of contemporary poetry, and I haven’t looked back.”
Lessons in human rights
CMU contributes to International Criminal Law Conference in The Hague

Four CMU students traveled to The Hague, Netherlands, with philosophy professor Hope May in March to present their work at an international student conference on the Lubanga trial, the first trial and conviction completed by the International Criminal Court.

The keynote speakers included U.S. Ambassador at Large for Global Criminal Justice Stephen J. Rapp, ICC senior trial lawyer Nicole Samson and attorney Elizabeth Evenson of Human Rights Watch.

“It is extremely significant that a public university in the heartland of the U.S. is the major sponsor of a student conference focused on the first case of the ICC,” says May, who also is an attorney and serves as director of CMU’s Center for Professional and Personal Ethics. May also is on the executive board of the ICC Student Network, which hosted the conference.

The ICC was founded in 2002 to try individuals for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. On March 14, the court announced a unanimous guilty verdict against Congolese rebel leader Thomas Lubanga Dyilo for drafting and using children as combat soldiers in The Democratic Republic of Congo.

Mount Pleasant junior Erica Maylee, who is president of CMU’s chapter of the ICC Student Network, says it was a great honor to represent the U.S. on an international stage.

“The United States has not ratified the Rome Statute and thus is not a member of the International Criminal Court, but to be able to attend this conference shows that Americans do care about what’s going on. We care about humanity, human rights and international justice,” says Maylee.

The conference, “The Lubanga Trial: Lessons Learned,” featured 22 presenters from around the world including Maylee, Grand Rapids senior Caitlin Cheevers and recent graduate Randi Shaffer of Clinton. Middleville junior Amber Duryea also attended.

Shaffer says that presenting in front of like-minded young professionals from various countries gave her an experience that no classroom could offer.

“There’s only so much you can learn in your classes,” Shaffer says. “I was able to present a paper to people who care about the subject, and people were actually listening to what I have to say. It puts a lot in perspective.”

While the U.S. has been a leader in developing an international legal framework that protects human rights, May believes there is much work left to be done, and everybody has a role in upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

“The project of international criminal law goes beyond the courtroom. Education is fundamental to the project of human rights,” May says. “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights explicitly includes educational duties for every person and every institution. This conference is but one way to perform this solemn duty which is aimed at cultivating the regime that realizes human dignity.”

The Department of Philosophy and Religion and the College of Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences provided financial support for the conference. To view video archives of the conference, visit iccsn.com/lubanga.

Visit www.chsbs.cmich.edu for more
Survival stories
Abel speaker tells of two genocide survivors

Robert Melson always had underplayed his experiences staying on guard as a Jewish person growing up in Germany during the World War II era.

He says he and his family “hid in plain sight,” posing as a Polish family and constantly fleeing from the ever-present threat of Nazi soldiers discovering the “Mendelshons’” true identity and imprisoning them in Jewish concentration camps.

“Everybody survives something, and everybody has a story,” says Melson, a Purdue University professor emeritus who recently presented at CMU as part of the Abel Endowed Lecture Series. “I had a story, I just didn’t think it was really relevant.”

Melson started to see the relevance once his family escaped from Germany and he pursued his graduate degree in the United States at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Through his studies and his fieldwork in Nigeria in 1964-65 – a year before the onset of the Nigerian-Biafran civil war – Melson soon began drawing the connections between the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide.

Melson’s major areas of teaching and research have been ethnic conflict and genocide. His Abel lecture – “The Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust Through the Extraordinary Experiences of Two Survivors Who Outwitted Their Killers” – compared and discussed two extraordinary instances from the memoirs of two survivors of genocide. They were Grigoris Balakian, who survived the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1918, and his father, Willy Mendelsohn, who survived the Holocaust with Melson and his mother.

His talk interpolated some of the history of the two genocides and asked two important questions: What do the two stories illustrate about the motives of the killers and the apparent success in outwitting them of the two survivors? And what if anything do these experiences teach us about our common humanity?

In addition to his presentation Melson also visited two of Sterling Johnson’s political science classes.

“I think it’s a good thing for students to know about genocide so they better understand it and will speak out against it,” Melson says. “They might not be able to do everything, but they can do something.”

The Dr. Harold Abel Endowed Lecture Series in the Study of Dictatorship, Democracy and Genocide invites to campus distinguished scholars to discuss the past, present and future of worldwide genocide.

Earlier in the academic year the series featured Guy Stern, who is the director of the International Institute of the Righteous at the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills. He has published several books and compilations on German literature history, especially related to literature on emigration and immigration.

View the Abel Lecture Series presenter archives at cmich.edu/chsbs.
Stephanie Jaczkowski wasn’t exactly looking for a job offer in the months leading up to graduation. The senior from Clinton Township instead eagerly anticipated – and ultimately received – a different kind of call: Jaczkowski is the fourth student in CMU history to receive a Fulbright scholarship.

This distinguished academic award will provide Jaczkowski the opportunity to teach English at the University of Gdańsk in northern Poland, where she studied abroad in 2010.

“I had a study trip to visit Gdańsk when I studied abroad two years ago, and the thought of applying for a Fulbright scholarship hadn’t even crossed my mind,” says Jaczkowski, a political science and integrative public relations double major. “Being offered this scholarship is a culmination of all the hard work I’ve done, and it shows what happens when you take advantage of opportunities people give to you.”

The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government and is designed to increase mutual understanding between U.S. citizens and the people of other countries.

She says she is proud of her Polish heritage and that Polish culture has been a part of her life since her dad, Joseph, introduced her to Polish dancing when she was 4 years old.

It is because of her interest in Poland and her strong academic background that Phame Camarena, director of the CMU Honors and National Scholarship programs, strongly encouraged Jaczkowski to apply for the Fulbright.

“When I first met Stephanie she had just returned from her trip to Poland,” Camarena says. “She was so excited and committed to continue working in Poland that it was a natural fit for her to apply for this scholarship.”

Studying in Poland through the Fulbright award will help Jaczkowski develop her Polish language skills. She says she plans to attend graduate school and study public policy as well as Russian and Eastern European studies.

Edward Clayton is a faculty member in the political science department she says was instrumental in encouraging her to pursue educational opportunities outside the classroom.

“More important than her ability, I think, is her self-confidence and determination,” he says. “She seems to always have a plan for the next thing she wants to accomplish, and she believes in herself and takes the steps she needs to take to achieve her goal.”

Throughout her years at CMU, Jaczkowski has been active in the university’s Honors Program and College Republicans as well as attending conferences throughout the state and nation.

“Everything I’ve done is interrelated, and it’s happened like a domino effect,” Jaczkowski says. “Each time I’d take advantage of one opportunity, it led to another and then another. Hopefully it all will continue on to something bigger.”
Well-rounded scholar

Anthropology student has studied on four different continents

If you ask Elizabeth Powers what her most influential experience has been during her time at CMU, she will likely tell you her latest travel story.

As an anthropology and women’s studies double major and Centralis Scholarship recipient, Powers has participated in three Alternative Break trips throughout the United States and has studied abroad three summers in a row.

“My research and my experience helped me learn more about myself and where I can be most helpful,” the Muir, Mich., senior says.

Her most recent trip was a 12-week stay in Ghana during the summer of 2011. As an intern for two different local community health organizations, she became interested in the politics surrounding the country’s public health infrastructure and the lack of resources.

Powers felt connected to the issue of community health, especially sexual health, because of her advocacy work with VOX: Voices for Planned Parenthood and her role as the student coordinator for the Safer Sex Patrol, a volunteer program run by the CMU Mary Ellen Brandell Volunteer Center. She was distressed by the relative lack of sexual health resources in Ghana, and she was happy to help in any way she could.

“My experience in Ghana really made me excited to come back to CMU and try to fully appreciate and utilize the resources we have here,” she says.

This wasn’t the first time Powers focused on community health issues overseas. During the summer of 2010, Powers traveled to China and studied Traditional Chinese Medicine and community health.

Her studies in applied anthropology began in summer 2009 during a three-week ethnographic field research with a medical anthropologist in Peru where she found a passion for midwifery.

After graduation, Powers plans to attend graduate school at the University of South Florida and pursue degrees in applied anthropology and public health.

Speaking from experience

After studying abroad three times, Elizabeth Powers became a study abroad peer advisor and focuses on correcting the two major misunderstandings many students have about studying abroad: that it is too expensive and that studying abroad sets students back in their studies.

Low-cost program options are available, and the program even offers tuition exchange programs that enable students to pay regular CMU tuition. While abroad, students also may take classes that fulfill their major or minor, University Program requirements or International Program Studies elective credits.

“Traveling, seeing other places, people and lifestyles, opens our eyes to how similar people really are and what the differences really amount to,” Powers says.
Reacting to the past in the present

CMU class engages students using nationally adopted pedagogy

What would happen if class sessions were completely run by students learning on their own terms?

According to CMU professor Jonathan Truitt it increases student information retention, promotes class engagement and improves intellectual academic skills.

Truitt uses “Reacting to the Past” pedagogy consisting of elaborate games, set in the past, where students learn by taking on roles informed by classic texts in the history of ideas. It gives students the opportunity to run class sessions with minimal instructor interference.

Katie Buning, a CMU senior in Truitt’s Latin American Experience class, was assigned the role of Pancho Villa, a prominent general in the Mexican Revolution.

“Reacting to the Past is a lot of fun,” says Buning. “I’m getting to know my classmates and learning things about the Mexican Revolution I never would have learned from the usual class lecture.”

RTTP is a method educators have implemented in more than 300 universities in the United States and abroad. Truitt decided to try RTTP to overcome the challenge of getting students to engage with assigned reading beyond a superficial level.

“I wanted discussions of the material to be more exciting and more engaging,” says Truitt. “I wanted it to be less of me asking the students questions about the reading and more about them desiring to know more about the material.”

In RTTP there is no fixed script or outcome. Students must rely on intellectual and academic skills to prevail in complex situations. While students run the class sessions, instructors guide and grade both written and oral work. Participation is mandatory and it is common for students to meet and email each other outside of class.

They have to use skills such as speaking, writing, critical thinking, problem solving, leadership and teamwork in order to achieve their character objectives.

RTTP is expanding internationally as well as at CMU. This coming July CMU’s College of Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences will host an RTTP game development workshop. The goal is to bring scholars and students from differing fields together to share and brainstorm ideas for future games.

Visit www.chsbs.cmich.edu for more
Surrounded by assorted research files and proposal documents, freshman Lauren Grotkowski meets with her faculty mentor Tom Rohrer to strategize the next step for their award-winning proposal that landed her in front of state lawmakers.

She recently had testified before the Joint Transportation Committee in Lansing to share her innovative idea to fund infrastructure needs in the state’s transportation system.

Grotkowski’s proposal aims to redirect money from used car sales and auto repairs toward the infrastructure fund. Her proposal also would include a slight increase in vehicle registration and require a few changes to current tax laws.

“I was a little nervous when I testified,” Grotkowski says. “Once I was up front testifying I didn’t look behind me because there were so many people in the room.”

She gained the attention of lawmakers after placing second in the statewide Students Reinventing Michigan competition, a competition began this year asking college students to create ways to improve the state’s infrastructure funds with public support.

“You would not expect this in your freshman year,” she says. “I feel honored and proud to represent CMU.”

Senator Tom Casperson, chair of the Joint Transportation Committee, expressed how pleased he was to hear such great ideas coming from college students.

“It’s very rare to have college students come in and talk in detail on these types of issues,” Casperson says. “As we move forward with our committee meetings, we’ll be reflecting on the reports that they turned in and use those as the foundation to make the argument on what we’re going to do and why we need to do it.”

Rohrer, who is director of CMU’s Great Lakes Institute for Sustainable Systems, says they are continuing to communicate with legislators about this proposal.

“Concerns with infrastructure, such as the bridges and roads, are problems for the entire state,” Rohrer says. “If this can improve the infrastructure without a big tax increase, who’d be against it?”

Visit www.chsbs.cmich.edu for more
Rachel Caspari is quick to point out that evolution didn’t end when the period of modern humans began some 30,000 years ago.

Humans are evolving very fast right now, says the CMU anthropology faculty member and expert in human evolution and physical anthropology.

“It’s a mistake to think that the evolutionary process has stopped, and I think people have this tendency to think that it has,” Caspari says. “Evolution is happening right now, and to understand its importance now, it’s also important to understand its past.”

The longevity of human life and its evolution has captivated Caspari throughout her career as a researcher and educator. Investigating and analyzing fossil teeth in the modern humans of the Upper Paleolithic, a period that began about 30,000 years ago, led her to make some profound conclusions about the evolution of older adults.

Such work captured the attention of Scientific American and as a result, the magazine’s 3.5 million worldwide consumers know all about Caspari’s research.

To this day Caspari still is receiving input and feedback in response to her six-page article, “The Evolution of Grandparents,” which the magazine invited her to write about her research into Neanderthals, modern human origins and the evolution of longevity.

“It’s really nice to know that people are paying attention and that people think that your work is of interest to the general public,” Caspari says about her article featured in last August’s issue of Scientific American.

Through her analysis of the teeth of Neanderthals who lived nearly 130,000 years ago in Croatia, Caspari concluded that few ever lived past 30 years of age. In fact, the new micro-CT methods they are developing to better assess age at death in fossils are corroborating their earlier findings and supporting their observations that few early humans survived to become grandparents until quite recently, in evolutionary time.

Moving forward, she says a large increase in the number of older people occurs in the Upper Paleolithic period.

“Most importantly, the demographic changes associated with increased longevity – population growth and expansion – are tied to cultural development,” she says.

Caspari was on sabbatical this past semester, where she continued with her research into the longevity of human life and its evolution.

Visit www.chsbs.cmich.edu for more
Inspirational NFL alumnus
Beach donates memorabilia to CMU museum

Former professional football player and CMU alumnus Walter Beach donated memorabilia to Central Michigan University’s Museum of Cultural and Natural History during a 2011-2012 academic year visit to campus.

His donations to the CMU museum include a Cleveland Browns jersey, sports card, photographs and news clippings.


Museum director Jay Martin invited Beach to campus to give a public presentation about his experiences and record his oral history. The CMU football team also honored Beach during his visit.

“Throughout his career, he took a stand against discrimination and worked for a better future for everyone,” said Martin. “He is an inspirational character in CMU history and beyond.”

Beach’s career was cut short when Browns owners objected to his activities in support of Civil Rights off the field. Beach sued the National Football League and won, beginning a lifelong advocacy for Civil Rights. He currently works to improve the lives of at-risk youth as CEO of The Amer-I-Can Program. •
MPA students experience Italy, Seoul

Students from the NASPAA-accredited Master of Public Administration program at CMU traveled to Europe and Asia in April to learn about international public management policies. Students were selected from a highly competitive essay contest and earn course credit as an elective for the MPA program.

In collaboration with the European and North American Research on Governance Network, one group of students spent a week in Italy, where they attended the 16th annual International Research Society for Public Management conference and participated in a case-study simulation at the University of Rome, Tor Vergata.

A separate group of students, in collaboration with the Seoul Metropolitan Government, spent a week in Seoul, where they attended briefings by Seoul City officials and visited sites of public management initiatives.

• At the Policy Management in Seoul conference, MPA students are pictured with their Seoul hosts.

Improving Anspach

Facility to undergo $14 million renovation

This summer marks the beginning of a major change on Central Michigan University’s Mount Pleasant campus. Renovations on the first floor and west entrance of Anspach Hall will launch a two-year project updating one of the most heavily used academic buildings.

The CMU Board of Trustees approved this $14 million project during its December board meeting. Renovations will include installing air conditioning, improving the heating and electrical system, modernizing the classrooms, and improving the layout for lecture halls.

“As part of the university’s long-time planning horizon, it is essential that this building remain a viable part of academic program delivery,” says Pamela Gates, dean for the College of Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences. “Improvements will enhance the comfort level and physical environment in Anspach necessary for optimum teaching and learning.”

Other upgrades planned are replacing the floors and ceiling tiles, updating the fire alarm system, installing new lights and renovating the bathrooms to follow Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines. In addition, the office division roof will be revamped and a student lounge will be created.

Sophomore history major Brianne June is excited about the Anspach Hall project.

“I am really happy to hear that Anspach will be getting updated,” June says. “Now, as a student, I feel that I will have more updated resources that will further my learning.”

This is the first major renovation project for the building that opened in 1966 and is named in honor of Charles Anspach, who served as university president from 1939 to 1959.

• Construction crews work to complete Phase I of the Anspach Hall renovation project.
Neuroscience senior Kelly Jo Baker isn’t shy about the fact that she idolizes renowned primatologist Jane Goodall. This explains why she was among the people in the front rows when Goodall – who is revered as one of the top female and top 10 overall scientists of all time – presented on campus in March as part of the CMU Speaker Series.

Though she has seen Goodall speak before, Baker was invited to attend the informal question-and-answer session Goodall had with selected CMU students before the main event.

“I couldn’t believe she was standing four feet away from me,” says Baker, who plans to attend graduate school and pursue a Ph.D. in evolutionary anthropology. “It was definitely the highlight of my CMU career.”

Nearly 5,000 people filled the CMU Events Center’s McGuirk Arena to hear Goodall share invaluable stories of her experiences and stress the importance of people “making a difference.”

In July 1960, Goodall began her landmark study of chimpanzee behavior in what is now Tanzania. Her work at Gombe Stream became the foundation of future primatological research and redefined the relationship between humans and animals.

In her presentation at CMU, Goodall recognized that past generations, including her own, have compromised the planet but expressed her hope that the youth can make a difference today.

“Every single day, every single one of us makes a difference,” said Goodall, who also is a U.N. Messenger of Peace. “We have a choice on what difference we are going to make.”

To help facilitate making a difference, Goodall in 1991 founded Roots & Shoots. Through Roots & Shoots, young people from preschool through college work with youth leaders and adult mentors to gain a better understanding of the issues and challenges that affect their immediate community, as well as the world at large.

The CMU Speaker Series is charged with bringing speakers of international prestige and broad intellectual interest to the university and surrounding community, according to Anna Monfils, a biology faculty member and Speaker Series chair.

“Jane Goodall’s message of hope is timely and appropriate, and her global perspective on conservation and humanitarian issues can provide valuable insights to the university community,” Monfils says.