

Submitted by: Margaret E. Winters, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Informational Report

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Wayne State University has received three grants totaling nearly \$1.4 million from the DTE Energy Foundation to support programs and scholarships designed to improve retention and graduation rates. Of the \$1.4 million, \$1.2 million was awarded to the College of Engineering to support the DTE Energy Foundation Eos Program for Student Success, a pilot program for all aspiring engineers; \$100,000 was given to the Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies' Summer Enrichment Program (SEP) to help incoming first-generation college students succeed in core classes; and \$48,000 was provided to Wayne State's Mike Ilitch School of Business for scholarships that will alleviate tuition costs and help students stay in school until graduation.

A recently released report details how universities can use microgrants to ensure that low-income students nearing graduation have the opportunity to complete their degrees. Wayne State is included as one of 10 model institutions successfully assisting these students in the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities and the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities report. For many students facing modest financial shortfalls, a microgrant makes the difference between staying on the path toward graduation and dropping out.

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Wayne State's College of Nursing is one of only 32 schools of nursing nationwide to receive a grant to increase the number of nurses holding Ph.D.s. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Future of Nursing Scholars program provides financial support, mentoring and leadership development to nurses who commit to earn their Ph.D. in three years. The college will select one nursing student to receive this prestigious scholarship.

Do you have a teacher who changed your life for the better? Wayne State's College of Education is asking people to publicly recognize your favorite teachers by sharing their stories online. It's part of a campaign called "Because of You, I..." — aimed at reminding people of the difference teachers make, and to inspire people to consider a career in education. "Teaching is not the most glamorous or financially rewarding profession, but there's a reason why polls consistently find it is one of the most satisfying professions in the world," said R. Doug Whitman, dean of the College of Education. "Teachers make a difference in students' lives and improve society as a whole, and that's very fulfilling."

FACULTY

Wayne State has formed the Flint Area Community Health and Environment Partnership (FACHEP). The research group, led by Wayne State researchers specializing in environmental engineering and public health, is conducting an independent study to evaluate the possible association between changes in Flint's water system and public health, specifically the recent Legionnaires' disease outbreak. The first phase of the investigation began March 1st, with FACHEP researchers engaging the community to set up enhanced disease and environmental surveillance in Flint and Genesee County.

Saeed Khan, lecturer in Wayne State's Department of Classical and Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, and an expert in Islam, has said that mercy is central to the Muslim faith - a mercy with roots in Catholicism and which is opposed to the misguided, fundamentalist interpretations of some extremist groups. Khan spoke in Rome in February and met Pope Francis at a conference organized by the Pontifical Council Cor Unum in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the publication of retired pontiff Benedict XVI's first encyclical, "Deus Caritas Est," meaning "God is love." Mercy is "the core of Islam," Khan said, adding that the Muslim concept of mercy "is actually an expansion of Catholic notions of mercy."

STUDENTS

Wayne State University has announced it will continue a 30-percent tuition discount for 2016 spring and summer courses. To be eligible for the tuition break, students must have registered and be on track to complete 24 credits between fall 2015 and winter 2016, and have a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5 at the end of fall 2015. This year, the discount extends to post-bachelor students. Students are also allowed to repeat a course they've already taken. Campus housing also will be discounted for students for the spring and summer terms by 30 percent.

During a humanitarian crisis, social workers are among the first responders to community health concerns, mobilizing quickly to help those afflicted by violence, hunger and homelessness. With millions of dead, displaced and "disappeared" citizens, the absence of trained social workers in Syria is alarming. Marijo Upshaw, a graduate student at Wayne State's School of Social Work, and her husband, Syrian-born Detroit cardiologist Khaldoon Alaswadis, are helping to bring Syrian nationals to the United States and Canada for social work training they can take back and apply to a post-conflict Syria. To this end, the couple is teaming up with the International Community Action Network (ICAN) at Montreal's McGill University to give dozens of Syrian nationals graduate social work training in Canada.