

## ACADEMIC AFFAIRS REPORT

### Wayne State launches DetroitEd411 service

Wayne State University has launched a new public information service — called DetroitEd411 — to provide the community with free, 24/7 access to resources about post-secondary education opportunities via Facebook Messenger. DetroitEd411 seeks to empower the community and strengthen the city's workforce by providing guidance and resources addressing all tracks of education, including vocational training, GED opportunities, community colleges and traditional four-year institutions.

The service is the result of a broader collaborative partnership between WSU and the Detroit Regional Chamber (DRC) to support adult learners and improve college attainment and career readiness in Detroit. The city was recently named a Talent Hub by the Lumina Foundation and Kresge Foundation — a national designation recognizing cities meeting rigorous standards for creating environments that attract, retain and cultivate talent among today's students.

“As we continue shifting to a knowledge-based economy, there's an increasing demand for workers with an education beyond high school,” said Keith Whitfield, WSU's provost and senior vice president for academic affairs. “We're working to ensure that all people in Detroit — no matter where they are on their educational pathway — have equal access to resources that have the ability to change their lives. We want to ensure everyone is prepared to succeed and to positively impact our community.”

To access the service, users will engage through Facebook Messenger with “Spirit,” named after the Spirit of Detroit, to ask questions and access educational information. Created with students of all ages in mind, Spirit is equipped to answer questions about everything from financial aid and housing to childcare. While designed to assist those in Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and Washtenaw counties, much of the content within DetroitEd411 can assist anyone in need of post-secondary information.

WSU created the DetroitEd411 after receiving a Collaborative Opportunity Grant from the Coalition of Urban-Serving Universities (USU), in partnership with the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities.

“The Detroit411 project stands out as an innovative approach that is part of a broader sea of change we're seeing in higher education,” said Shannon Looney, APLU's Deputy Director of Urban Initiatives. “WSU's partnership with the Chamber uniquely leverages both existing relationships and emerging technologies to better serve all types of students. Detroit411 could serve as a national model for other programs as more institutions seek to strengthen their community outreach strategies.”

Powered by an innovative blend of artificial intelligence and supervised machine learning, DetroitEd411's database will continue to grow, and Spirit will learn more about users' needs as people engage with the service. This adaptive database was developed using the concept for WSU's W chatbot, which launched in fall 2018 as an interactive tool to help

incoming freshmen successfully transition to college by answering questions via text message about important college milestones.

“One of the best things about using this adaptive technology is that we’re able to meet people wherever they are and answer questions in real time, without judgment,” said Dawn Medley, WSU’s vice president of enrollment management. “The amount of information Spirit is able to provide is limitless, and the database of answers and resources will only continue to grow, adapt and expand as more people take advantage of DetroitEd411.”

Both Spirit and W are powered by the ed-tech startup [AdmitHub](#). AdmitHub was eager to work with WSU and the DRC to expand the chatbot technology to help more people.

“Artificial intelligence can play a powerful role as a complement to the work of advisors, counselors and admissions officers as they help students navigate the college experience,” said Drew Magliozzi, CEO and co-founder of AdmitHub. “This is about enabling colleges to respond to students’ questions quickly, efficiently and at unprecedented scale — freeing up time for support staff to focus on the students who need it most.”

### **STEAM Challenge**

The Wayne State University STEAM Challenge is a pitch competition funded by the Provost’s office where interdisciplinary student groups come together to bridge STEM disciplines with the arts, humanities and social sciences. Winners were announced at the STEAM Challenge Final Pitch Competition on March 25. Hosted this year by the University Libraries, top six the teams included students from nearly 20 majors making 10-minute pitches to showcase how their ideas best fit the 2018/19 theme of the STEAM Challenge “Energize Detroit: Energizing the city by empowering mental and physical fitness and well-being.” While Dean Cawthorne’s team initially planned to award \$10,000 to the top winner, \$3,000 for the second-place winner and \$1,000 for the third-place winner, WSU Provost Keith Whitfield surprised all attendees by adding another \$5,000 award, allowing four teams to take home prize money to help turn their ideas into a reality.

#### **First place, \$10,000: DiscoverMi (featured above)**

- Malik Mattan – Global Supply Chain Management
- Afreen Fatima – Electrical and Biomedical Engineering
- Campbell Culling – Graphic Design
- Kayla Tripp – Marketing

DiscoverMI challenges the negative stereotypes placed on Detroit by encouraging tourists and locals to explore the city's hidden gems in an augmented reality app that provides users with rewards and challenges that keep them wanting to learn more about the city.

#### **Second place, \$5,000: Surgicure Technologies**

- Nikhil Yedulla – Biological Sciences
- Shehr Asghar – Public Health
- Rishika Pulvender – Economics

Surgicure’s bite block device attempts to energize Detroit hospitals by saving millions of dollars from reduced length of stays and injuries from traditional bite blocks, which can cause skin and dental damage.

### **Third place, \$3,000: Blessing Box**

- Obaidah Bitar – Economics
- Ramaiz Imran – Civil Engineering
- Yusuf Yasarlar – Psychology
- Bilal Kawsara – Biochemistry

Blessing Box Detroit's mission is twofold: to relieve hunger within food desert communities by providing 24-hour accessibility to food and to allow anonymity to counter the stigma of food assistance. Their freestanding boxes allow people to take what they need and leave what they can.

### **Fourth Place, \$1,000: ToDoolie**

- Sergio Rodriguez – Biomedical Engineering
- Jose Romo-Puerta – Business Management
- Armando Arteaga – Computer Science

ToDoolie is an online platform that helps busy people get through their to-do lists by connecting homeowners to a self-curated labor pool of local student helpers ready to assist with everyday projects in metro Detroit and beyond.

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### **Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)**

On March 26, all faculty will receive an email requesting their participation in the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE). FSSE will help WSU survey the effectiveness of teaching practices and how students perceive and interact with others on campus. "We've done a lot to create a culture of student success here on campus," said Monica Brockmeyer, Senior Associate Provost for Student Success. "This survey will help Wayne State identify its progress and continue to make improvements." The survey, which is voluntary and confidential, will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes and include mostly multiple-choice questions. Faculty will have until May 15 to complete the survey, which will ask questions about experiences with students, teaching styles, support services and more.

FSSE, and the accompanying National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), will be conducted by Wayne State's Testing, Evaluation and Research Services. NSSE, which was designed to evaluate academic engagement experienced by students at both the freshman and senior levels, will be available from Feb. 14 through May 15. Faculty are asked to please encourage their students to participate by completing the survey. Higher participation rates improve the usefulness of reports shared with departments and colleges.

Survey results will be used to help WSU identify strengths and weaknesses and spark conversation about ways to further improve the quality of our student experience.

### **STUDENT LIFE AND STUDENT SERVICES**

The Dean of Students Office presented the first ever Michigan Colleges School Spirit Roundtable (MiCSSR) on Monday, April 8. This daylong conference focused on students,

student life staff, and athletic department staff meeting collectively to discuss creating campus traditions, school spirit, and student attendance at athletic events. Attending universities included University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, Dearborn, and Flint, Michigan State University, Eastern Michigan University, Central Michigan University, Northern Michigan University, Lake Superior State University, Oakland University, University of Detroit-Mercy, Henry Ford College, Lawrence Technological University, Kettering University, Northwood University and Henry Ford College.

The W Food Pantry celebrated its 2nd anniversary on April 2. In its two years, The W Food Pantry has serviced over 1,300 students and distributed over 20,000 pounds of food.

The second Study Center Takeover was successfully held on April 22, 2019. Debuting in fall 2018, the entire student center facility was transformed into spaces and activities to help students prepare for their final exams. On-site academic peer advising and tutoring, granola grams and roving coffee and snack carts, a Zen Den with chair massages, an animal petting area, free blue book and scantron giveaways, spirit wear sales, and a silent dance party were provided by over a dozen participating departments and student organizations. Housing & Residential Life announced a summer pilot for graduate student residents to test a new monthly rent billing option at the request of our graduate student residents. Priority room selection is on-going for fall 2019 campus residents. With the closing of DeRoy and Chatsworth Apartments, the current residents were given priority consideration for selecting University Tower Apartments for next year. Resident Assistant selection for 2019-20 was completed in April, with 41 staff returning and 42 new RAs being selected from a record number of applications.

## **SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND DEPARTMENTS SPOTLIGHT**

**Elizabeth Stoycheff:** As a communication professor and quantitative social scientist, Elizabeth Stoycheff's work examines how people consume online news, how people react to disinformation, and digital privacy in regard to the steps people may or may not take to secure their browsing behaviors and online identities. Stoycheff is the recent recipient of a grant from WhatsApp — the free messenger application that is owned by Facebook — to tackle misinformation and privacy. Specifically, Stoycheff's team will interview Indonesian campaign officials about their strategies for using WhatsApp leading up to the 2019 national elections, followed by a face-to-face, nationally representative public opinion survey that assesses voters' interactions with fake and misleading information on the platform. It will investigate how to limit the spread of fake news given WhatsApp's commitment to user privacy, encryption and non-monitoring.

## **Faculty Development and Faculty Success**

- New series on professional and leadership development attracted:
  - 166 attendees in Fall 2018
  - 172 attendees in Winter 2019 (2 seminars remaining)
  - Topics including but not limited to finding good professional mentors, creating a strategic plan for the semester, academic harassment of women and how to address it, parenting on the tenure/ESS track, academic leadership strategies, new faculty coffee hours and department chair chats
- Faculty, staff, and graduate student participation in our institutional membership in the [National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity](#):

- Activations more than doubled since September 2018 to 785 individual accounts.
- Participants have attended 1,862 online sessions.
- 14-Day Writing Challenge (web-based peer mentoring) participation nearly doubled to 110 participants (October 28: 63, March 2018: 31)
- New Academic Leadership Academy (ALA)
  - 34 applications from faculty and staff on a range of topics including but not limited to undergraduate student success, diversifying the grad student pipeline, community and global health equity, career path education for undergraduates, faculty engagement and development, digital badging initiatives, fundraising to support students
  - Selection process was completed in April
  - ALA begins August 2019
- Faculty and staff recognition
  - 33 faculty and academic staff were recognized for their outstanding research, teaching, and service contributions at the Academic Recognition Ceremony in April.
  - Over 40 faculty and staff participated as reviewers of materials

## **EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH (EO)**

### Transfer Student Success Center (TSSC)

Working to re-engage former students with the university, the TSSC hosted its first “Return to Your Future,” workshop in March at the Advanced Technology Education Center (ATEC) in Warren. Created for WSU stop-outs who have earned credits from Macomb Community College, the TSSC partnered with Macomb to encourage students in this category to take advantage of the reverse transfer program that could allow them to receive an associate degree while pursuing their bachelor’s; follow the Michigan Transfer Agreement to ensure specific credits transfer between institutions; and learn more about other WSU programs that benefit transfer students. A second activity will be held this spring, and rolled out to other community college partners in the future.

The TSSC collaborated with Enrollment Management and the Academic Success Center to host a Returning Student Open House in March. This event also was created to re-engage stop-outs and encourage them to re-enroll and complete their degrees.

WOW – Walk Over to Wayne, specifically created for prospective transfer students from Macomb and Schoolcraft, drew more than 100 students to WSU satellite centers on/near those campuses. Attendees met representatives from admissions, scholarships and financial aid, advising and a variety of academic departments. Follow-up contact includes a push-to-apply and assistance with the transfer process.

### Office of International Programs (OIP)

In collaboration with the Office of Multicultural Student Engagement and the Academic Success Center, OIP launched an inaugural study abroad program to Toronto for students in the Warrior VIP (Vision and Impact Program) program. Warrior VIPs are first-generation students and/or from underrepresented groups, and this was their first time out of the country for most of the two dozen students on the trip. OIP provided free passports for the students in advance of the spring break study opportunity. Participants learned about Canada’s culture, sustainability efforts, ethnic communities and visited York university

where they joined Canadian (York) student counterparts in a workshop on diversity. Student Keyontae Johnson summed up the experience: “Leading up to the trip, I was anxious. I did not know what to expect other than the fact that I would be safe with my mentors, and that was good enough for me! Being in a foreign place and you only know 24 people compels you to bond with your group, but I did not know I would love them the way I do now. What I took away from my trip was that the world is much bigger than I realize and as long as I am able to, I will explore it. The trip with Warrior VIP gave me a sense of security, that I can handle myself internationally, and it gave me more confidence to travel on my own.”

Recruiting students in the Middle East was the focus of a trip by OIP representatives in April. Staff met with prospective students at Q8 EduEx – Kuwait’s International Higher Education Expo in Kuwait City, and at the International Exhibition & Conference on Higher Education in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Those countries are among the top 10 in terms of number of students attending WSU. While in Kuwait, OIP staff also met with American International College of Kuwait senior leadership to discuss current initiatives between our institutions.