

I am pleased and excited to introduce the first issue of the **Western Scholar**, a new publication devoted to recognizing some of the variety of scholarly contributions being made at Western Kentucky University. As reflected in Western's Mission, "The University places a premium on teaching and learning, (and) its faculty engage in creative activities and diverse scholarship, including basic and applied research, designed to expand knowledge, improve instruction, increase learning, and provide optimum services to the state and nation." This commitment also forms the core of the University's Strategic Plan, **Challenging the Spirit**, in which Western "aspires to be the best comprehensive public institution in Kentucky and among the best in the nation" and "shall be the University of choice for students and faculty who are dedicated to academic excellence."

In this and subsequent issues of the **Western Scholar** there will be articles featuring some of the outstanding scholarship of the faculty, staff, students and alumni of the University. This work can run the gamut from traditional basic research, to problem-oriented applied research, to the development and adaptation of technology, to the scholarship of teaching, and to the expansion of learning opportunities for students. What unites those engaged in this scholarly work is the creative application of knowledge, skill, and intellect to enhance our understanding of the world around us, to solve problems, to respond to needs of the community, and to incorporate students as learners and contributors to the process.

You will find included in this issue articles focusing on pioneering work in the area of elemental analysis being done by Dr. George Vourvopoulos of Western's Applied Physics Institute; the creativity reflected in the widely-recognized musical compositions of Dr. Michael Kallstrom from the Department of Music; the significant scholarship being produced in the fields of organizational behavior and conflict management by Dr.



Afzalur Rahim from the Department of Management and Information Systems; the successful efforts of Dr. Julia Roberts of Western's Center for Gifted Studies to provide recognition and support for high potential gifted and talented students, their parents, and their teachers; the innovative work of Professor Haiwang Yuan, University Libraries Web Site and Virtual Library Coordinator, to adapt new technologies for accessing library resources while also bridging cultural gaps between his native China and the United States; the inventions and discoveries of Dr. Frank Etscorn III, WKU alumnus and inventor of the highly successful nicotine patch that helps people stop smoking; and a notable research project by a graduate student in applied experimental psychology, Donna Gregory, studying certain behavioral characteristics of young children.

Thanks to all those who contributed to the creation of this new publication. It will fill an important niche in the life of the University and give appropriate recognition to the creativity, research, and commitment to excellence in scholarship that defines Western Kentucky University.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara G. Burch".

Barbara G. Burch
Provost and Vice President
for Academic Affairs