



The Western Scholar
Graduate Studies and Research
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The Western

SCHOLAR

THE SPIRIT OF SCHOLARSHIP & RESEARCH AT WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY



IT IS WITH A GREAT DEAL OF PRIDE THAT I INTRODUCE the third issue of *The Western Scholar*. This magazine reveals the breadth of scholarship and creative activity among the faculty and students. This issue and the scholarship it describes support our strategic goals of increasing student learning, assuring high quality faculty and staff, and improving Western's institutional effectiveness and significance for our surrounding community. As we emerge as a nationally competitive university, *The Western Scholar* has truly brought our goals alive to a growing audience of readers throughout the country. Faculty members and students you read about in this issue have many stories to tell. Their interests have taken them to sites close to home and around the world. They have collectively shown how ideas germinate and are nurtured into finished projects that have hitherto escaped the public domain. This issue is filled with truly exciting descriptions of the intellectual activity on the three WKU campuses and beyond.

I think that you will find this issue no different from the first two in enlivening our academic enterprise. Researchers and students representing each of our academic colleges are featured. The Ogden College of Science and Engineering is represented with the story about Dr. Shivendra Sahi and his student researchers who work on improving polluted environments by giving plants new properties to stimulate life.

Did you ever think accounting would catch up with technology? Well, it has, with Gordon Ford College of Business accounting professor Jan Colbert's applied research to make access to accounting journals easier for academic accountants and for the practitioners on which we depend in the community at large. Her publications and web site have facilitated access to the field. Her work involving business fraud and auditing standards sets a new standard for her profession.

Behavioral scientists in the College of Education and Behavioral Science are represented by stories about two psychology professors, Dr. Elizabeth Lemerise and Dr. J. Farley Norman. Although hailing from the same department, their grant-funded research bridges the life span. Dr. Lemerise and her students conduct experiments to determine how school children can get along better with their peers to increase achievement. On the other hand, you will see that Professor Norman and his students are trying to improve the lives of our senior population by examining how they perceive three-dimensional objects to prevent mishaps.



Western is making innovations in the humanities by delving into religious and social diversity in the region. Potter College of Arts and Humanities Philosophy and Religion Professors Larry Snyder and Tom Russell and their students have a grant from Harvard enabling them to examine the growth of religious diversity between Louisville and Nashville, once known as "the buckle of the Bible Belt." The story shows that the growing religious diversity in the region is unbuckling traditional beliefs. Social historian Carlton Jackson is featured for his many books on individuals and events that only he could make come alive. You will read about how he has produced new dimensions of history in highly readable books by researching subjects that can only improve our self-understanding. And finally, Department of Communication Graduate Student Suzan Kiesel is writing a master's thesis that knows no bounds but outer space. Her research with astronauts, including Western's own Terry Wilcutt, is helping NASA to strengthen relationships not only between American astronauts but also between astronauts of the growing number of countries that are cooperating to go where no one has gone before.

Western's Library is represented through the research of Professor Nancy Baird, Special Collections Librarian. Professor Baird has literally traveled the world to create her current project of *Women on the South African Frontier*, a topic that has escaped the literature of

the Second British Empire but that will shed new light on women's history and the development of that region.

All in all, the stories in this issue show that Western's interests span the globe and delve into our immediate surroundings as well. The stories really depict "the spirit making the master" as our researchers contribute to an enlightened sense of community and the larger community enlightens and edifies Western's mission. This interplay is really the spirit of higher education today as we define where we are going together in our community, around the world, and in space. Please read on for more.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Gary A. Ransdell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'G'.

Gary A. Ransdell
President

