

Tech Topics

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Michigan Tech's Faculty-Staff Newsletter

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Vision Fund

Presentations Feb. 22

All members of the MTU community are invited to attend the following presentations. The proposals are under consideration for support through the MTU Vision Fund. For more information on the proposals, visit www.mtu.edu/stratplan/proposal_11.html

The presentations will be held on Friday, Feb. 22, in Memorial Union Ballroom A.

- 2 p.m., "Building National Ranking for Michigan Tech's Graduate Programs through Collaborative Emphasis on Civil/Environmental Engineering and Decision Support for Public Policy," **Robert Bailod**
- 2:15 p.m., "National Exposure of MTU through Hosting a National Collegiate BattleBots Tournament," **William Endres**
- 2:30 p.m., "Interdisciplinary Training and Research on Mathematical/Physical/Engineering Sciences with a Nanotechnology Direction," **Elias Aifantis**
- 2:45 p.m., "Greening Michigan Tech: Environmental Sustainability in Campus Operations and Activities," **Shalini Suryanarayana**
- 3 p.m., "Tech Trails Model Forest," **James Schmierer**
- 3:15 p.m., Break
- 3:30 p.m. "Minor or Certificate in Health Policy, Management and Technology," **Carolyn Weissbach**
- 3:45 p.m., "A New Undergraduate Software Engineering Degree Program," **Charles Wallace**
- 4 p.m., "Diversification of Degree Programs in Engineering Technology," **Lawrence Sutter**
- 4:15 p.m., "Bolstering Recruitment of Graduate Students," **Neil Hutzler**
- 4:30 p.m., "Michigan Tech Outing Club," **Glenn Mroz, Michael Abbott**
- 4:45 p.m., "Development of a Nationally Recognized Transportation Materials Research Center," **Stanley Vitton**

Wise sayings often fall on barren ground, but a kind word is never thrown away.

—SIR ARTHUR HELPS

Committee Formed to Help Prevent Violence at MTU

On Jan. 16, a student at the Appalachian School of Law was arrested for the murder of a fellow student, a faculty member and the dean. His classmates, while shocked, were not surprised. The suspect charged in the shooting deaths had a history of angry behavior.

It was this incident at a small Virginia school that prompted several MTU administrators to form a committee to help head off possible violence at Michigan Tech.

They call it "going postal," says **Don Williams**, director of counseling services. But the post office has nothing to do with it. "Potentially violent people aren't just students, not just employees, not just spouses," he said. "They can be anyone."

They could especially be anyone at MTU. The typical perpetrator of workplace violence is a male, between 30 and 50 years old and of above-average intelligence with access to firearms. Often they are introverted and set in their ways.

"That's most of Michigan Tech employees," Williams notes wryly. However, he stressed, violence is not limited to males of a certain age; incidents have arisen here involving younger students and women as well.

So, what do you do?

First, don't assume that there's nothing you can do. If anyone (a student or a faculty member, a co-worker, subordinate or a supervisor) is behaving strangely or threatening others, contact a member of the committee: Williams, Human Resources Director **Ellen Horsch**, Public Safety Director **Jon Ahola**, Affirmative Action Officer **Sherry Kauppi** or Vice Provost and Dean for Student Affairs **Martha Janners**.

"It's important that we have early reporting and prevention," Williams said. Most people who threaten others are coping unsuccessfully with personal problems, such as academic failure, heavy drinking, divorce, etc. They lash out and blame others for their troubles.

In the News

A story on the MTU Ski Trails and the Nordic ski program appeared Feb. 3 in the Booth Newspapers. By Jim DuFresne, "At Michigan Tech, Students Hit Books, Ski Trails without Leaving Campus" quoted cross-country ski coach **Gary Nicholas**, team member **Skye Malette** and **Mike Abbott**, manager of quality services and recreation. You can read it at www.mlive.com/outdoors/statewide/index.ssf?xml/story.ssf/html_standard.xml?/base/sports/1012410301187010.xml

The Tech Topics story about Assistant Professor **Brad King's** (ME-EM) work, "Ions in the Sky," was picked up by SpaceDaily. You can see it <http://www.spacedaily.com/news/fuel-02b.html>

A photo of President **Curt Tompkins** appeared in The Mining Journal Jan. 22 in connection with his Jan. 21 speech to the Marquette Economic Club.

Often, however, they can be helped.

"This isn't about firing or suspending people," Williams said. "We're trying to help. Most of the time these people are hurting, and they don't mean to be malicious or mean."

Once they know there's a problem, the committee can then determine a course of action, which may include counseling. This doesn't mean that destructive actions will be tolerated indefinitely, however.

"The issue is behavior," Williams said. If a student or an employee persists in disrupting the University community, no matter what the excuse, they run the risk of being expelled or let go.

Williams recommends that offices and departments get together to talk about what to do when faced with a threatening or disruptive person. By discussing the issue openly, people will be more comfortable reporting questionable behavior.

Some questions to consider:

- Could you be a target of violence? Most gatekeepers (anyone who must sometimes say no as part of their job) are vulnerable to one degree or another. If so, is your desk placed so you could leave your office without being cornered by an assailant? Do you have an alert system, so you can notify others if you're in trouble?
- When do you call Public Safety?
- When do you close your doors?
- When do you evacuate your area?

It's also important to talk about what kind of behavior is unacceptable. For instance, when does thoughtlessness (e.g., chatting during a lecture) cross over into hostility (e.g., loudly interrupting a class)?

"Most people—students, faculty and staff alike—give plenty of warning signs before they commit a violent act," Williams said. "By talking about this issue openly and by reporting threatening behavior early, we could prevent a tragedy."

Faculty Scholarship Grants Awarded

The Faculty Scholarship Grant Committee has selected the following proposals to receive a total of \$23,800 in Faculty Scholarship grants:

- **Heidi Bostic**, Humanities, \$2,500, "Sharing the Way: Gender Subjectivity, Community Project Book"
- **Margaret Gale**, SFWP, \$1,000, "Wetlands of the Mississippi River and Southeastern Coastal Region"
- **Glenda Gill**, Humanities, \$2,000, "Leonard dePauer: Arranger, Composer, Impresario"
- **Ulrich Hansmann**, Physics, \$1,300, "Computer Simulations of Proteins"
- **Dana Johnson**, SBE, \$2,000, "Integrating Business, Quality, Manufacturing, Environmental, and E-Commerce, Phase II"
- **Daniel Makagon**, Humanities, \$2,200, "When the Ball Drops: Disrupting Times Square's Fantasy"
- **Timothy Scarlett**, Social Sciences, \$3,000, "Technical and Photographic Record of Utah's Mormon Pottery"
- **Jennifer Slack**, Humanities, \$1,600, "Thinking Geometrically/Animations"
- **Sheryl Sorby**, Engineering Fundamentals, \$1,300, "Sabbatical Support"
- **Andrew Storer, David Karnosky**, SFWP, \$3,000, "Constraints Imposed on Plantation Mahogany Production in West Africa"
- **John van de Lindt**, Civil and Environmental Engineering, \$2,000, "Proof of New Structural Damage Model Concept"
- **Charles Wallace**, Computer Science, \$1,900, "A Formal Specification of the New Java Memory Models"

Weight Watchers Meet Feb. 18

Weight Watchers will meet at noon on Monday, Feb. 18, in the ROTC Blue Room 101. This is the start of the new session; please bring your payment of \$113 to the first meeting unless you have already made prior arrangements.

MichiganTech

Bill Curnow, executive director, University Relations
Marcia Goodrich, *Tech Topics* editor
Tech Topics Web site: www.mtu.edu/level3/ttopics.html

To get *Tech Topics* via e-mail, send a message to MAJORDOMO@MTU.EDU saying `SUBSCRIBE TECH-TOPICS-L`. Information to be included in *Tech Topics* should be submitted to the *Tech Topics* editor in one of the following ways:

- By e-mail to ttopics@mtu.edu
- By campus mail, send typed copies to *Tech Topics*, University Relations.

Each week, the deadline for submitting information is **Friday at 5:00 p.m.** for publication the following Friday.

Course-Based Assessment

By William Kennedy, director

Center for Teaching, Learning,
and Faculty Development



When the regional and professional accrediting agencies began turning up the burners on

the assessment of student learning issue, many faculty responded, "We already do assessment of student learning; it's called testing and grading!" The "new assessment" proponents countered that although course-based testing and grading procedures may satisfy the needs of instructors, course grades fall short of providing the kind of information that can be used to fuel continuous systematic course improvement. Tests and graded assignments vary widely from section to section, they said, and grading standards and procedures vary wildly depending on the instructor and the institutional culture. They were right.

At MTU, for example, the average grade for all the lower-division undergraduate courses last semester was 2.8. One multiple-section course populated primarily by hundreds of first-year students had an average grade level of 2.31 while another large-enrollment course serving the same students issued an average grade of 3.23. In the first course, that meant that the odds of earning a grade lower than a C was over 21 percent. In the latter, less than 7 percent. Surface analysis of within-course variations can be similarly striking but even more misleading. For example, one section of a multiple-section course had average grades of 1.48 while another section of the very same course taught in the same term resulted in a 2.85 average grade. In the first section, fewer than half the students got grades of C or better, while in the other section, more than three-quarters got these grades. But before you jump to conclusions about easy grading v. hard grading, let me burst your bubble by telling you that these sections shared a common final exam. So was it good teaching v. bad teaching? All the bad students in one section? Who knows?

Using grades to better understand student

* Randal C. Archibold, "Just Because the Grades Are Up, Are Princeton Students Smarter?" *New York Times*, February 18, 1998.

MTU Notables

A print ad, part of University Relations' student marketing campaign, was selected for the Ad Review Section in the November edition of *Admissions Marketing Report*.

A paper written by Professor **Kurt Pregitzer** (SFWP) and others has been selected as one of the 25 top papers worldwide on the subject of global warming by Thomson Scientific. Thomson Scientific is a leading provider of databases and software tools that enable the scientific research community to access and manage published materials. The selection is based on citations.

The paper, "Atmospheric CO₂, Soil Nitrogen and Turnover of Fine Roots," appeared in *New Phytologist*, Vol. 129, 1995. One of the coauthors was former MTU scientist M. E. Kubiske, now with the U.S. Forest Service. For more information, visit <http://www.esi-topics.com/gwarm/papers/a1.html>

MTU Celebrates Black History Month

Michigan Tech will mark Black History Month with an exhibit of African American books, art, memorabilia, music and movies opening Monday, Feb. 18, at noon in Memorial Union Ballroom B. A series of lunch-time lectures will also be held in Ballroom B during the week, featuring free salad and hot breadsticks; all are welcome.

The theme of the event is "Looking Back, Moving Forward." The reading room closes at 5 p.m. Monday. It will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Feb. 19–22.

Officer James R. Harris, of the California Highway Patrol, will present "DWB—Driving While Black or Brown," at noon on Tuesday, Feb. 19.

Lt. **Zabrina Robinson** (AFROTC) will give a talk, "One, Before Another," about being a black woman in the military, at noon on Wednesday, Feb. 20.

Student readings will be held on Thursday, Feb. 21.

The final talk of the week, "Sept. 11: My Pentagon Office Will Never Be the Same," will be given by Lt. Col. Richard Matthews, of the U.S. Army. The gospel group "Praise in Effect" will also perform.

Black History Month events are sponsored by Outreach and Multiethnic Programs.

Millennium Jazz Concert Friday

Michigan Tech's jazz bands will celebrate "Jazz for the New Millennium" in concert at 8 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 15, in the Rozsa Center. **Mike Irish** will direct the Jazz Lab Band, the combo Jaztec, and the Research and Development Big Band, with jazz pianist Ron Caviani of Iron Mountain as guest artist.

MTU's three award-winning bands will take an entertaining look at the new synthesis emerging in jazz. Irish notes that in the past, stylistic trends such as swing in the 1930s, bebop in the '40s and acid jazz in the 1980s emerged and became dominant for a time. Today, the trend is that there is no dominant trend. "Today's jazz blends national and international styles, traditional jazz with futuristic. It honors great jazz legends as it introduces young lions of the art," Irish says. This rich mixture will be on display in "Jazz for the New Millennium," with Irish's commentary adding to the fun.

Caviani is professor emeritus at University of the Pacific and has enjoyed a career as jazz pianist, composer and arranger (he's included in Who's Who In American Composition). He is also former director of the NMU Jazz Ensemble.

Tickets are available from MTU box offices (487-3200) for \$8 general, \$4 students (\$1 more at the door), or on the Web at www.tickets.mtu.edu.

"Gentleman Sam" Dies

Legendary accounting professor **Sam Tidwell** passed away Feb. 6 in Spring Lake.

He was born in Winona, Miss., earned a BSC from Western Kentucky State University and an MA from Vanderbilt University and joined the Michigan Tech faculty in 1956, where he served until his retirement in 1984.

"He came from down South, of course, and in the early days he was sometimes called Gentleman Sam, because he had a southern drawl and always dressed with a suit and tie," said Professor **Paul Nelson** (SBE), who came to MTU in 1972. "He added a little class in an area where faculty were used to wearing jeans and flannel shirts."

"He was terrific," said **Dan Greenlee**, a former Tidwell student and now controller and interim chief financial officer at MTU. "He brought a lot of humor into the classroom. A lot of us imitated his southern drawl, much to his delight.

"He was very interested in the students and very willing to help," he said. "He brought what was happening outside in the accounting world into the classroom."

Tidwell only gave one lecture per term in class, Nelson recalled. After that, he asked questions. "So you'd better be prepared," he said.

Jim Junttila, a freelance writer living in Laurium, was a student of Tidwell's in 1964 and recalls what it was like when you hadn't done your homework. "He'd say, 'Why, Mr. Junttila, how re-MAHK-ably unprepared you ah.' And if you were even a second late, it was 'Mr. Junttila, it's so nice of you to fit my lowly class into your busy, busy calendar.'"

No one was safe from Tidwell's wit, but his purpose was noble.

"It was his way of making you come prepared," said **Ed Robinson** BSBA '66. "I can recall many times sitting in his classes and not having an answer. He'd let you sit there and suffer; he'd let you wallow through it."

"When someone would give him a totally harebrained description of something, he'd say 'You're flying sideways,' and take out a plastic model airplane. He had a string tied on it, so it hung sideways," Greenlee remembers, "and he had a voice just like Foghorn Leghorn."

"He was my best professor," Greenlee added. "He was always very supportive and interested in what you were doing."

"He was a student's professor," Robinson said. "His whole interest revolved around the students. I remember spaghetti dinners at his home, his hospitality. He maintained contact with all his students, and that didn't stop after graduation. He extended himself tremendously. If anyone could be held up as a model teacher, it would be Sam Tidwell."

Tidwell insisted that all his former students

send him a red tie when they passed their CPA exam. "He would wear it into the classroom, and he'd talk about who sent in the tie, what firm they had gone to," Greenlee said. "He gave you a real enthusiasm to go out and do something like that."

Administrative Associate **Judy Chapman** (SBE) calls Tidwell "the most caring teacher I had."

"I came back to school as an older student, and he was very concerned that I was comfortable with the class. He stressed things that we needed to know on the job, not just what you could read in the book."

Punctuality and attendance were very important to Tidwell, she remembers. Chapman took five courses with Tidwell and was absent only once. "He called me later, and I could hardly talk," she said. "I told him I had laryngitis, and he said he'd told the class there had to be something terribly wrong for me not to be in class.

"He was a sweetie."

Tidwell was the reason many MTU students went on to become accountants.

"I switched out of engineering and moved to business and accounting because of Sam," said Robinson, who now lives in Arden Hills, Minn., and has a consulting practice.

"He tried to sell the profession of accounting, not just teach classes," Nelson said. "For literally hundreds of students he was an extremely effective role model. Many who were maybe on the hockey or football team, just trying to get their tickets punched, suddenly had a goal in mind. Quite a number of student athletes became accountants and rose in the profession."

Though Tidwell was known for his teaching ability, he also had an impact on the accounting world.

"He was a leader in the field of public school accounting," Robinson said. "He put on seminars at MTU every summer for school administrators and caused a massive improvement nationally in public school fund accounting." Tidwell authored four editions of the first textbook in the field.

Robinson chaired the fundraising effort for the Sam Tidwell Center for Business Excellence, which includes an endowment for scholarships and student services. In lieu of other expressions of sympathy, the Tidwell family has asked that donations be made to that fund. For more information, contact the Michigan Tech Fund or the SBE.

Tidwell is survived by his wife, Mary; one daughter, Mary Ann (Mark) Rankin of Muskegon; one son, Sam (Denise) Tidwell of Omaha, Neb.; five grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held this summer in Eagle Harbor.

Renowned Concert Pianist to Perform with KSO

Submitted by *Fine Arts*

Dickran Atamian, one of America's most distinguished concert pianists, will perform with the Keweenaw Symphony Orchestra in the Rozsa Center on Saturday, Feb. 23, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 24, at 3 p.m. Described by critics as "a pianist of dazzling style, meaningful and exquisite musical insights, incomparable mercurial gifts, and an unmatched visceral excitement," he will play Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 1 under the baton of KSO Music Director **Jeffrey Bell-Hanson**. Atamian's appearance is made possible by a grant from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.

Atamian burst on the international music scene in 1975 when he won first prize in the 50th Anniversary Naumberg International Piano Competition held at Carnegie Hall. In an active career, he has played hundreds of concerts with leading American and international orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic, Leningrad Philharmonic and many others. Since his debut with the Phoenix Symphony at age 11, his fiery musicianship has brought enthusiastic audiences to such venues as Lincoln Center's Avery

Fisher Hall, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center and the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, and the Great Hall in Moscow. Maestro Claudio Arrau wrote, "I can truly say that he is one of the greatest piano talents I have ever encountered."

His solo recordings for RCA Red Seal, Lyra House, Ltd., and Delos International labels have been universally praised. In 1979, he gave the world premiere of Stravinsky's Rite of Spring for solo piano at Carnegie Hall, followed by its world television premiere on PBS (one of five recital specials voted "Best of PBS" in 1981) and its world premiere recording for RCA Red Seal (the first digital solo piano recording ever made.) Of this recording, the San Francisco Examiner said, "These remain 31 of the most exciting minutes of piano playing ever recorded."

In the Rozsa Center concerts on Feb. 23-24, the KSO will present two works in addition to the Liszt Piano Concerto: Tchaikovsky's Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture and Debussy's Petite Suite. Tickets are available from Rozsa Center Ticketing Services, 487-3200, the Calumet Theatre, the SDC Central Ticket Office, and on the Web at www.tickets.mtu.edu.

Eco-Lit Reading Group Forms

An organizational meeting for the Keweenaw Eco-Lit Reading Group, for those interested in nature writing and ecology, will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 19, at 7 p.m. at the Peterson Memorial Library, Walker 318.

For more information, contact Fred Young at 337-4563 or fjyoung@mtu.edu.

BPA Holding Pancake Breakfast

The MTU chapter of Business Professionals of America is holding an All-You-Can-Eat Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, Feb. 23, at the American Legion Post in Hancock from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. For ticket information, e-mail hemongia@mtu.edu or call 487-3501.

NO NEW POSITIONS THIS WEEK

Job descriptions will be available at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, or by e-mail at <JOBS@MTU.EDU>.

No new positions are posted this week at Michigan Tech. Vacancy announcements are normally posted every Friday at 1 p.m. in the Human Resources Office. Complete job descriptions are available in the Human Resources Office or by calling 487-2280. More information regarding employment opportunities is available by calling the Job Line at 487-2895. Michigan Technological University is an equal opportunity educational institution/equal opportunity employer.

In Print

Assistant Professor **Brent Lefkin** and Ashish Tiwari (University of Iowa) published a paper, "Binomial Option Pricing Biases and Inconsistent Implied Volatilities," in *European Financial Management*, Vol. 7, No. 4, December 2001.

Associate Professor **Barry Solomon** (Social Sciences) coauthored a paper, "The California Electric Power Crisis: Lessons for Other States," with Michael Heiman (Dickinson College), which was published in *The Professional Geographer*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (Nov. 2001).

Assistant Professor **William Cooke** (Biomedical Engineering), J. F. Cox (Virginia Commonwealth University), B. D. Levine, C. G. Blomqvist (University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center) and D. L. Eckberg (Medical College of Virginia) coauthored a paper, "Influence of Microgravity on Astronauts' Sympathetic and Vagal Responses to Valsalva's Manoeuvre," published in the *Journal of Physiology*, Vol. 538, 2002. In the same journal, Cooke, Levine, Eckberg and Blomqvist also coauthored "Human Muscle Sympathetic Neural and Haemodynamic Responses to Upright Tilt Following Spaceflight."

Associate Professor **Barry Solomon** (Social Sciences) published a review of the book "International Investment and Climate Change: Energy Technologies in Developing Countries," by Tim Forsyth, in the fall 2001 issue of *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management*, Vol. 13, No. 3.

February

Black History Month

- 14 Thursday**
5:30 p.m.—Women's basketball: Lake Superior State at MTU—SDC
7 p.m.—Auditions for "Arsenic and Old Lace"—Walker 210
7:30 p.m.—Men's basketball: Lake Superior State at MTU—SDC
- 15 Friday**
3 p.m.—Zhong Lin Wang, "Semiconducting Oxide Nano Belts and Nano Wires"—Dow 641
7:15 p.m.—Club Indigo: "Some Like It Hot"—Calumet Theatre
- 16 Saturday**
1 p.m.—Women's basketball: Northwood at MTU—SDC
3 p.m.—Men's basketball: Northwood at MTU—SDC
7 p.m.—"Diversity Rawks" rock band show—Keweenaw Commons
8 p.m.—National Dance Company of Mozambique—Rozsa Center
- 18 Monday**
noon—Black History Month Reading Room opens—Memorial Union Ballroom B
noon—Weight Watchers—ROTC Blue Room
- 19 Tuesday**
10 a.m.–5 p.m.—Black History Month Reading Room open—Memorial Union Ballroom B
noon—Officer James Harris, "DWB—Driving While Black or Brown"—Memorial Union Ballroom B
- 19 Wednesday**
10 a.m.–5 p.m.—Black History Month Reading Room open—Memorial Union Ballroom B
noon—Lt. Zabrainna Robinson, "One, Before Another"—Memorial Union Ballroom B
7 p.m.—Keweenaw Eco-Lit Reading Group organizational meeting—Walker 318
- 20 Thursday**
10 a.m.–5 p.m.—Black History Month Reading Room open—Memorial Union Ballroom B
noon—Student readings for Black History Month—Memorial Union Ballroom B
- 22 Friday**
10 a.m.–5 p.m.—Black History Month Reading Room open—Memorial Union Ballroom B
noon—Lt. Col. Richard Matthews, "Sept. 11: My Pentagon Office Will Never Be the Same"—Memorial Union Ballroom B
2–5 p.m.—Vision Fund presentations—Memorial Union Ballroom A
7:05 p.m.—Hockey: Mankato at MTU—Student Ice Arena
8 p.m.—Jazz for the New Millennium concert—Rozsa Center
- 23 Saturday**
9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.—BPA Pancake Breakfast—American Legion Hall, Hancock