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Smith, McComas promoted to permanent roles in Academic Affairs

Two Marshall administrators have accepted permanent appointments to roles in which they had been serving on an interim basis, Dr. Gayle Ormiston, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at Marshall, has announced.

Dr. Sherri Smith, former executive director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, has been the interim associate vice president for academic affairs and dean of undergraduate studies since July 28, 2014. Ormiston said she assumed those roles permanently July 1.

Dr. Karen McComas, former assistant director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, has been interim executive director of the center since July 28 of last year. She became the center’s permanent executive director, also July 1.

“I look forward to the leadership and innovative approaches Dr. Smith and Dr. McComas, respectively, will bring to the success of Marshall’s students and faculty,” Ormiston said.

Smith has worked at Marshall for 16 years. As a member of the English department faculty from 1999 to 2008, she taught numerous courses at Marshall, including British Literature; 19th Century British Novel, Pre-Raphaelite Literature and Introduction to Women’s Studies. She moved into full-time administration in the Center for Teaching and Learning in 2008.

Working closely with students, and then later exclusively with faculty, I have learned how to balance the perspectives of the university’s two most important stakeholders,” Smith said. “Now in my current role, that bird’s-eye view is everything. My job is to figure out how different procedures, policies, and programs are helping or hindering student success and progression toward the degree, and then to convey that global insight to others. I
think I’m good at that sort of synthesizing, and the challenge draws on both my pragmatic side and my creative side.

“During most of my time in the Center for Teaching and Learning, I reported to Dr. Frances Hensley, former senior associate vice president for academic affairs and dean of undergraduate studies. Her mentorship, both then and now, has been invaluable in helping me to develop a sense of proportion and an appreciation for fair-minded policies. She has also encouraged me to really listen, particularly to faculty who come to Academic Affairs with concerns that seem to have no other home, or to advisers who see firsthand the countless barriers that students face in pursuing their intellectual and collegiate goals.”

McComas said she is thankful for the opportunity to build upon the work begun by her predecessors, Dr. Elaine Baker and Smith.

“The Center for Teaching and Learning provides professional development experiences in the areas of key institutional initiatives, such as Critical Thinking, Writing Across the Curriculum, and Service Learning,” McComas said. “I am looking forward to expanding our orientation for new faculty, hosting faculty learning communities about innovative teaching practices, and promoting the inclusion of high impact teaching practices, such as undergraduate research, in more courses.”

McComas joined the faculty of Marshall University in August of 1986, teaching and supervising in the undergraduate and graduate programs in the Communication Disorders department. Previously, she worked as a speech-language pathologist in the public school systems of Carter County, Kentucky, and Lincoln County, West Virginia, from 1978 to 1986. McComas earned a B.A. in 1977 and an M.A. in 1978 in Speech Pathology and Audiology from Marshall. In 2011, she earned a doctoral degree, majoring in Curriculum and Instruction with an area of emphasis in social inquiry. She has taught numerous courses at Marshall, including the capstone course for undergraduate students majoring in Communication Disorders, phonological disorders, and therapeutic procedures. McComas’ research interests include the relationship between narrative and identity, the cultural practices of a community of research practice, and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

In addition to her duties in the Center for Teaching and Learning, McComas also serves as the university’s NCAA Faculty Athletic Representative.

Smith said the Office of Academic Affairs plays an important role in facilitating the work and mission of the colleges.
“After a year in the interim position, I am eager to contribute more fully to systemic improvements on behalf of our faculty, students, advisers and administrators,” she said.

She praised McComas as the right person to lead the Center for Teaching and Learning.

“I can think of no better person than Dr. Karen McComas to lead the Center for Teaching and Learning into a new era of faculty community building and emphasis on the integration of teaching, research, and service,” she said. “I may have had the good fortune to hire her as assistant director in 2012, but she was the one who ignited my passion for faculty development back in 1999 when I attended the annual Writing Across the Curriculum Retreat and became ‘WAC certified’ under her direction. That’s the beauty of faculty development; it is a reiterative and collaborative process, and it truly depends upon a sustained community of practice.”

As part of a service learning course that she taught, Smith founded Dress for Success River Cities in 2006 and also served as executive director until July 2009. This nonprofit organization provides appropriate attire and a social network to disadvantaged women who are seeking a new career.

Smith earned a B.A. in 1986 in English and Journalism Education from Marshall; an M.A. in 1989 in Theology and Ethics from Northern Theological Seminary; an M.A. in 1993 in English from Northwestern University; and a Ph.D. in 2000 in Victorian Literature, with a doctoral certification in women’s studies, from Indiana University.

School of Pharmacy names Oklahoma scientist to administrative position

M.O. Faruk Khan, M. Pharm, B. Pharm, Ph.D., M.B.A, chairman of the department of pharmaceutical sciences at the Southwestern Oklahoma State University College of Pharmacy, has been named chairman of the department of pharmaceutical sciences and research at the Marhall University School of Pharmacy, according to Kevin W. Yingling, R.Ph., M.D., dean of the school.

The appointment is effective Aug. 3.

“I’m encouraged and emboldened by Dr. Khan joining us here at Marshall,” Yingling said. “He is a highly qualified researcher and educator who will be a great asset to our faculty and brings a wealth of experience in the education and research arenas.”
Khan completed a doctorate in 1999 at the University of Manchester in England and post-doctoral research at the University of Mississippi. His area of research specialization is in medicinal chemistry and rational drug design, organic and peptide synthesis and enzymology. Khan also earned a master’s in business administration from Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

Khan has more than 15 years of postdoctoral academic experience in teaching, research and service in pharmacy education. Prior to joining the faculty at Southwestern Oklahoma, he spent two years at the Florida A & M University College of Pharmacy.

Khan has published more than 50 scholarly research articles and has been the primary investigator on several grants. Additionally, he founded and served as coordinator of the Southwestern Oklahoma State University Center for Research in Pharmaceutical Sciences (SCRiPS) and was named the inaugural recipient of the Timmons Endowed Professorship at Southwestern.

He has created innovative exchange programs with several international institutions including the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, and is working as a consultant for the Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (of the World Bank) implemented by the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh.

“I am excited about this opportunity to collaborate with the existing outstanding leadership team of the school to lead a well-functioning team of pharmaceutical sciences faculties,” Khan said. “Working together, we will be successful in fulfilling its mission to advance direct pharmacy patient care by developing innovative practitioners, researchers and educators, and thus to shape the future of pharmacy education.”

The School of Pharmacy welcomed its first class in 2012 and will graduate its inaugural class in 2016.

Chute presents success of project to review sexual assault cases at national DNA Technical Conference

Forensic Science Center DNA Technical Leader Jason Chute delivered a presentation about a successful pilot project to review and expedite sexual assault kit cases recently at the 12th Annual DNA Technical Workshop Bode West in Coronado, Calif.

Chute was asked to present at the conference because this approach to reviewing cases has never been taken before. The presentation provided an overview of the strategies, challenges and successes that were encountered during development and implementation of the novel project.
A few years ago, the Michigan State Police (MSP) was faced with addressing a backlog of over 8,000 sexual assault kits from Detroit that needed to be tested. To start addressing the backlog, MUFSC’s Forensic DNA Laboratory had previously worked with the MSP to provide assistance with the processing and DNA analysis of over 800 untested sexual assault kits for a project funded by the National Institute of Justice. More recently, the MSP outsourced DNA testing of thousands of kits to private labs, and analytical reports from the cases needed to be reviewed. To help expedite the review process of cases, the MSP approached MUFSC about participation in a pilot project to help complete reviews of the outsourced analytical data. Over a one-year period, MUFSC completed reviews of about 2,400 cases tested by the private labs for MSP. The project helped to expedite these cases for entry into CODIS (Combined DNA Index System). A CODIS hit links either a DNA profile from a forensic case to another case or to an offender profile. These hits provide investigative leads for law enforcement officers to follow.

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Department of Surgery welcomes new clinical faculty members

The Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine welcomed two new surgeons to its clinical faculty July 1 in the Department of Surgery. The new physicians are:

James C. Kitchen, M.D., a fellowship-trained vascular surgeon, joins the Department of Surgery and the medical staff at Cabell Huntington Hospital. Kitchen graduated from Marshall’s School of Medicine in 2008 where he was president of Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society, Beta Chapter. While at Marshall, he also received the School of Medicine’s Faculty Choice Award his senior year. Following graduation from medical school, Kitchen completed a general surgery residency at Marshall and then completed training in vascular surgery at Duke University in North Carolina. He is accepting new patients in the offices of Marshall Surgery, located at the Medical Center.

Nathaniel Seth Adkins, M.D., a fellowship-trained critical care surgeon, also joins the Department of Surgery and the medical staff at Cabell Huntington Hospital. He earned his medical degree and completed residency training in general surgery, both at Marshall. While in medical school, Adkins received the Homer Cummings Surgical Award. Following the general surgery residency, Adkins completed a fellowship in critical care at Indiana University. He too is accepting new patients in the offices of Marshall Surgery.

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Katherine Steele named Resident of the Month

Third-year family medicine resident physician Katherine J. Steele, M.D., has been selected as the July 2015 Resident of the Month, according to Paulette S. Wehner, M.D., vice dean for graduate medical education at the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine.

Steele was officially recognized at the family medicine grand rounds on July 16.

“A major part of the resident’s responsibility is to teach medical students and other residents,” Wehner said. “Residents like Dr. Steele who excel at teaching will play a critical role in educating medical students and junior residents and getting them excited about a career in medicine. The nomination submitted on Dr. Steele’s behalf reiterates that her ability and enthusiasm to teach ultimately enhances the educational and clinical experience of both fellow residents and medical students.”

In her nomination of Steele, Adrienne M. Mays, M.D., assistant professor in the department of family and community health, praised Steele’s excellence in providing clinical care in both inpatient and outpatient settings.

“Kate is a great resident that provides excellent care to her patients … She is dedicated to being a good provider and as a faculty member, I always look forward to working with her. As the faculty advisor for the family medicine interest group, I am aware that Kate also spends a lot of time working with the students and is always available to attend or host the student group.”

Steele is a 2013 graduate of the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine, where she was recognized for community service with REACH Cabell County and Marshall Medical Outreach programs. Prior to medical school, Steele served in the Peace Corps in Mozambique and volunteered with Doctors Without Borders.

As part of her recognition as the July Resident of the Month, she will receive items including a Certificate of Recognition and a designated parking spot.

*Photo:* Mitch Shaver, M.D. (left), director of the family medicine residency program, is pictured with Katherine Steele, M.D., the July Resident of the Month at the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine.

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Four Marshall School of Medicine research students receive NASA research grants

Four biomedical science Ph.D. students from the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine have received West Virginia Space Grant Consortium Graduate Research Fellowship grants to fund their continued dissertation research in a variety of disease-related areas.

Each student received a $12,000 grant from NASA West Virginia Space Grant Consortium for their projects, which vary from the study of protein functions to metabolic diseases to growth factors in cancer cells. The awards are supplemented by the School of Medicine and each student will work closely with a faculty member to conduct his or her research.

“These students are conducting valuable research to help move modern medicine forward,” said Richard Egleton, Ph.D., co-director of biomedical sciences. “Through these grants, both NASA and our institution help promote a dynamic environment for research among the next generation of researchers.”

The student recipients are:

- **Deborah L. Amos**, who is working in the lab of Nalini Santanam, Ph.D., will use her NASA grant to gain deeper insight into how exercise affects metabolic diseases, such as obesity, investigate the impact of exercise on lean/fat body mass and skeletal muscle function in a “stress less” mouse model and provide a means of improving skeletal muscle function and lean body mass.

- **Caroline A. Hunter**, with the lab of Emine Koc, Ph.D., will use the grant to study the synthesis of protein functions in the mitochondria, metabolic syndrome and potential treatments that could prevent the development of these and related diseases.

- **Rachel A. Murphy**, working with Monica Valentovic, Ph.D., will utilize the grant for her study: “Tenofovir Nephrotoxicity: A Mechanistic Study.” Murphy will investigate how and why Tenofovir (a drug used to treat HIV) results in kidney toxicity.

- **Justin K. Tomblin**, with the lab of Travis Salisbury, Ph.D., will use the grant to study how growth factors regulate the expression and activity of the aryl hydrocarbon receptor in breast cancer cells.

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A new event, featuring fun for the whole family and a spirited cornhole tournament, is coming to Marshall’s Huntington campus Saturday, Aug. 1.

The Marco Cornhole Classic and Marshall Family Fun Day, presented by Huntington Bank, will feature an afternoon of activities for Marshall alums, faculty, family and friends from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Harless Field, according to the Marshall University Alumni Association. Designed to bring members of the Herd family together, the day will feature the Cornhole Classic tournament, which is open to everyone. Organizers say that there will be activities for children of all ages, which will include inflatables for multiple age groups, games, face painting. The event will also include music, food, and free ice cream, in addition to visits from some familiar faces including Spiderman and Marco.

“We are very excited to bring the Marco Classic and Family Fun Day to Huntington,” said Matt Hayes, executive director of the alumni association. “We are always looking for fun ways to get our alumni and Marshall supporters in the community out to enjoy a great time and get back on the Huntington campus. We hope people will bring their entire families out to enjoy a fun afternoon and some great food, courtesy of the Marshall University Alumni Association and Huntington Bank.”

The cornhole tournament will feature a double elimination format and is open to players of all skill levels. Entry into the tournament is $20 per team, with prizes to the top three teams. Prizes will include trophies, custom Marshall cornhole boards and $200 worth of gift cards to the MU Bookstore.

The event is brought to participants by the MU Alumni Association, the Marshall Recreation Center, M&M Inflatables, Heroes 4 Higher, Stewart’s Hot Dogs, Home City Ice, MU Bookstore, 93.7 The Dawg, Coca-Cola Bottling company and Dale Schobe.
Marshall ROTC makes plans to honor Joyce B. Wills

A campaign is currently underway to raise funds to purchase a bronze plaque dedicated to Joyce B. Wills, who served as the Military Personnel Technician in the U.S. Army ROTC Detachment at Marshall from 1975 to 2001. She is characterized as having made a significant impact on the lives of thousands of ROTC cadets during that 26-year period. The memorial plaque honoring her will be mounted in an appropriate area within the ROTC Department. Former Marshall cadets and cadre, along with others who are interested in donating to the fund, should contact former assistant professor of military science, retired Lt. Col. Charles R. Stone, by phone at 978-575-0565 or via email at lstone@mass.rr.com.

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School supply drive for Huntington East Middle School to run until July 31

Marshall’s Department of Internal Medicine is taking part in a project to collect school supplies for students at Huntington East Middle School and they’re welcoming donations.

Supported by Mattress Warehouse and Dr. Jennifer Daniel Dental, the back-to-school drive will run through Friday, July 31. Any surplus supplies will go to the Huntington City Mission and Branches Domestic Violence Center in support of their school-age residents.

Items needed include pencils, notebook paper, 2- and 3-inch ring binders, zip-up binders, colored pencils, highlighters, scissors and rulers.

Drop-off locations are:
- GME office, 1600 Medical Center Drive, Suite 2582, Marshall Medical Center
- Byrd Clinical Center, 1249 15th Street
- Mattress Warehouse, 3507 U.S. Route 60 and 10 1/2 Mall Road; 304-733-1750
- Dr. Jennifer Daniel Dental, 6353 Pea Ridge Road; 304-736-4794

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H.E.L.P. program to offer ACT preparation this fall

The H.E.L.P. Program will offer test preparation courses for the ACT this fall. Sessions will cover basic test-taking strategies for the areas of reading comprehension, English, mathematics and science.

Two four-week sessions are expected to be offered. Session 1 is Aug. 18 through Sept. 10. Session 2 is Sept. 29 through Oct. 22. Depending on student interest, a tentative Session 3 is planned for Nov. 10 through Dec. 10 (no class week of Nov. 24). All sessions meet Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6 to 8 p.m. The cost is $350 per five-week session.

All sessions are held in Myers Hall on the Huntington campus. Limited spots are available. Contact Susie Bruhin for additional information at ext. 6-6473.

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The next regular issue of We Are...Marshall will be distributed August 5, 2015. Please send any materials for consideration to Pat Dickson by 5 p.m. Monday, August 3.