Western Michigan University

ScholarWorks at WMU

Stampede: E-newsletter for students

Western Michigan University

10-15-2019

Stampede October 15, 2019

Western Michigan University

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Part of the Higher Education Commons

Welcome to the first edition of a new e-newsletter for students, the Stampede. It's designed to keep you in the know about campus happenings, help you make the most of your WMU experience and highlight the achievements of you and your fellow Broncos.

Your superpower? Managing your time

Guess what time it is? Time to get focused! Say goodbye to 20/20 hindsight, to feeling overwhelmed, to procrastination, and say hello to the superpower you've always had: The ability to actually manage time.

Learn more >

Online threats—how to protect yourself and what WMU is doing to help

Students have increasingly become a target of email-based scams and phishing emails. Messages often appear to come from a legitimate source. They may seem to be official WMU correspondences, but they are not. Learn the signs of scams.

For added protection, WMU will soon institute two-factor authentication, or 2FA. It provides extra security when logging in with your Bronco NetID. It requires something you know—your password—along with something you have—your mobile device—when logging in to WMU platforms, such as GoWMU and Elearning. Students may soon enroll in 2FA to add this extra layer of protection to their account. Beginning Jan. 22, 2020, 2FA will be required for all currently enrolled students.
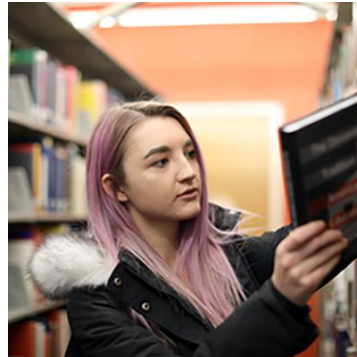
Learn more >

Gain marketable skills as a student staffer

Learn more >

Need help with textbooks? Check out the library

Learn more >

Nursing major to rep WMU on state's youth voter task force

Learn more >

WMU students in the news

The unbreakable spirit of Broncos

The Battle Creek Enquirer featured the remarkable life story of student Antonio Balabani. He experienced the horrors of war in Kosovo, but he is thriving in life and football at WMU.

Battle Creek Enquirer

Students create Bronco-themed wine

Students in the leadership and business strategy program researched, developed and are now poised to launch a wine brand called Bronconess.

WKZO

Driving driverless technology

Grad students Nick Goberville and Johan Rojas are part of the research team testing autonomous electric shuttle technology on campus.

MLive

Your superpower? Managing time

Posted by Kat Stevenson on October 10, 2019

There are 525,600 minutes in a calendar year, and if you don't know how you're spending all of them, it might be time to take a step back and get organized. This is the perfect time to set up yourself—and your schedule—for success this year.

Not sure how? Check out these tips, courtesy of our Center for Academic Success Programs:

1. Get the lay of the land
The first step is to get serious about what, exactly, is worth your time.

"When we talk with students who are successful both academically and balancing everything they do, we find that those that have a system for prioritizing things do well," says Dr. Randy Ott, director of WMU's Center for Academic Success Programs.

"We see grades go up, we even see free time go up; in fact, the busier they are, the more successful they become."

Classifying and prioritizing will help you develop a way to juggle both short- and long-term

tasks and projects. One way to do this is to start each semester by making a list of everything you need to do, then assign them different values (from 1 - 5) based on their level of importance, how much time they'll take to complete, and when they're due. Also include anything that's a regular responsibility, such as an internship or volunteering for a Registered Student Organization.

2. Build a schedule

Now that you have your list of tasks organized by level of importance, it's time to take a look at your calendar and map out how you can get all of it done.

The first step is to block out all of the times you have to be somewhere—in class, at work, at an event— and then take a look at the remaining time you have left.

Now look at your to-do list and start blocking out time to work on the items highest on the list.

"Schedule blocking works, but you'll need to experiment a bit with how it will work best for you," explains Ott. "Do you learn best in the morning or are you a night owl? Do you need breaks every 30, 60, or 90 minutes? Try a few different schedules and you'll quickly learn where your strengths lie—play to those."

Don't have enough time in the day? You'll need to cut some things off the list. Be honest with yourself and how much you can do in a day, week, or month. And, yes, you do need to sleep.

3. Stick to it!

Now comes possibly the hardest part of your time management mojo: Holding yourself accountable. Making a list and blocking out time means nothing if you don't actually hold yourself to it.

Minimizing distractions is one way you can keep yourself on track. "Some students have used apps that shut down their phones for a specific amount of time, and they've found that it really helps keep them focused," Ott says.

Another way is to reward yourself for following through. This is far better than focusing on the negative and heading down a shame spiral when you don't hit all your marks. Think of a few fun activities that you enjoy and then do them only when you've hit your goals for that week or month. Rewarding yourself for following through instead of punishing yourself for failing will

help you develop your time management superpower into a successful habit.

Need more tips? Check out these ideas from the [Academic Resource Center](#).

Signs of Phishing Emails

When you receive an email with links or prompts for information, make sure to stop and think about the links before clicking or responding. Here are some tips to help you identify the signs of a phishing email.

WHO IS THE EMAIL FROM?

Always check the email sender.

Phishing messages attempt to convince you that the message is from a trusted source. This is typically done by using a fake signature or email display name that will lead you to believe the message is from someone else, such as the Help Desk, Microsoft, an Email Admin team or something similar. Always check the sender of an email message by looking at the actual email address that sent the message, even if the email display name is a recognized name. Also, if the sender is an @wmich.edu email address, that does not confirm that the email is from a trusted source. If a phisher gains access to a WMU account, they will send further phishing messages

using that account to appear more trustworthy. When in doubt, find the contact information of the individual on the official university web site and contact them directly to verify that they sent the message.

DOES THE EMAIL ASK FOR OR PROMISE MONEY?

Never provide your financial information or make payments through unsecured systems. Do not spend money on behalf of others.

If something sounds too good to be true and it's coming from somebody you don't know, it's almost certainly a scam. Even if the message is from someone familiar, the name and email address may be impersonating the individual, to make it appear it is from them, although it is not. Always check the actual email sender or ask for verification.

Financial scams are often advertised as easy jobs that offer a profit for purchasing items or reimbursement or an acquaintance who is in a hurry. There is no legitimate reason for you to handle payments or financial transactions for somebody else. If you are asked to purchase gift cards, services, do a wire transfer, deposit money, forward money, or perform any financial transaction you are likely involved in a scam.

See job search scams and how to spot and avoid common scams for more helpful tips. See campus employment for students for official student job postings at Western Michigan University.

WHERE DOES THE LINK GO?

Always check the link.

Another tip to improve online safety is to always check the destination of a link before clicking it. This can typically be done by hovering over a link before clicking. Does the web address make sense? For example, when you log in to GoWMU, **wmich.edu** is in the web address.

Avoid any email link that asks for your Bronco NetID or any user name and password. Keep in mind, however, that some legitimate WMU services may generate emails with links that will require you to log in, such as when a colleague or classmate shares a document with you via OneDrive or Google Drive. All web services (like OneDrive) can be accessed via GoWMU, therefore we recommend accessing those services directly.

WHAT'S THE EMAIL ABOUT?

Always be suspicious of emails regarding account status that include links to log in, such as mailbox quota limits, account deactivation, etc.

The most frequently used subject in a phishing message typically pertains to the status of your email account, leading you to believe that there is some sort of action requiring you to log in. Examples include reaching a mailbox storage quota limit, impending account deactivation, or that incoming messages have been placed on hold until you log in. Western Michigan University

will never send messages of this nature. Ignore any links within an email that ask you to log in using your Bronco NetID or any other user name and password. Most online services can be accessed via GoWMU, and this is the safest way to access your account.
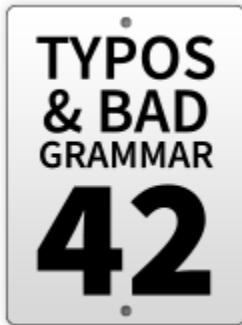
DOES THE EMAIL CONTAIN TYPOS AND POOR GRAMMAR?

Check the content of the message for misspelled words, poor grammar or odd punctuation.

Phishing messages will often include spelling errors or odd punctuation due to translation errors or due to an attempt to bypass standard email spam filters. Remember, these messages are crafted to trick you into divulging your credentials. With that said, do not trust an email message simply because the spelling and formatting are correct, this should be used with all other tips to determine the legitimacy of a message.

DOES THE EMAIL HAVE SUSPICIOUS ATTACHMENTS?

Don't open any attachments that you were not expecting.

If you receive an unsolicited email containing a suspicious attachment from a sender that you do not recognize, do not open the attachment. If the email claims to be from a WMU department,

such as Payroll or the Help Desk, we recommend reaching out to that department directly to confirm the legitimacy of the attachment.

STAYING SAFE ONLINE

To learn more about staying safe online and what WMU does to help keep you safe, read:

- Security awareness

- How to Spot and Avoid Common Scams

- Spam and abuse email

- OnGuardOnline

Two-Factor Authentication (2FA)

Video of 0mvCeNsTa1g

Two-factor authentication (2FA) at WMU is powered by Duo Security.

2FA provides an extra layer of security to protect your university data and personal information. 2FA requires something you know, your password, along with something that you have, your mobile device, to access an online application or service.

Students may enroll now to add this extra layer of protection to their account. Once enrolled it will protect all applications which use the standard WMU Login page including GoWMU and Elearning. **Beginning Jan. 22, 2020, 2FA will be required for all enrolled students.**

GET STARTED!

Get started using 2FA by enrolling now. The enrollment process is available to students, faculty and staff. In January 2FA will be required for students. Students are encouraged to enroll now to make the transition to 2FA easier before January.

ENROLL NOW

HOW CAN WE HELP?

Please see our **Self Help Resources** section for instructions on getting started with two-factor authentication. Also, additional support topics are covered on Duo's website. If you need further assistance, the Help Desk is available to help in a variety of ways:

- Call us at (269) 387-4357

- Email us at helpdesk@wmich.edu

- Live chat with us

2FA SELF HELP RESOURCES:

- Turn on 2FA for WMU Login

- Register your Smartphone or Tablet

- Alternate 2FA Methods

- How to Log In with 2FA

- Manage your 2FA Devices

Gaining marketable skills as a student staffer

Contact: Erin Flynn

August 27, 2019

Katelynn Brandt, a student employee in landscape services, distributes mulch on campus.

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Back to campus means back to work for thousands of student employees at Western Michigan University. While there are a variety of benefits to working on campus, a new career readiness certificate program being rolled out this year will give student employees unique tools to better market themselves to future employers.

The program—made possible by an assessment fellows grant—will help student employees develop and articulate career competencies sought after by employers, such as critical thinking, teamwork, leadership and communication skills.

Student supervisors are encouraged to reach out to **Dr. Ewa Urban**, interim co-director of Career and Student Employment Services at WMU, to get their student employees enrolled in the program, which consists of a one-hour workshop, several interactive online modules, competency-based resume training and a practice interview with a career specialist or employer.

STUDENT GROWTH

In the 2018-19 academic year, some 6,630 WMU students were employed on campus in areas from dining services and residence life to admissions and various colleges. Data from Career and Student Employment Services shows student employees maintain higher GPAs than their peers and also retain and graduate at a higher rate than non-employees. But the benefits extend beyond the classroom.

"Working on campus allows students to create meaningful relationships with students from diverse backgrounds and provides opportunities to observe leaders in action," says Urban. "Student employment engages students who might not be otherwise involved on campus, and it significantly contributes to the development of students' career readiness competencies."

Student supervisors echoed the impacts during a focus group last year.

"It's not about academics," said one supervisor. "It's about personal growth, it's about becoming part of a community, it's about finding out what your individual strengths are."

SERVING UP SUCCESS

Nathan

A hard and dedicated worker, WMU sophomore **Temiloluwa Nathan** hopes to work on aircraft someday. He came to the United States from his native Nigeria—like his older brother and sister—to help those dreams take off.

While he secured scholarships, Nathan still needed a way to help pay for his education. He found a home in Dining Services.

"I've met so many people, especially in dining, from different countries," says Nathan, who quickly became a dining supervisor.

Balancing work with a demanding mechanical engineering curriculum, Nathan finds solace in the dish room.

Nathan talks with a dining services employee.

"When I'm washing dishes I have time to think about my school work. I can just wash them and try to remember what I studied."

Nathan has learned the importance of discipline and planning to be successful, and he's also developed skills he'll take with him beyond WMU.

"I've learned to work with people," says Nathan, who adds that patience and understanding go a long way in managing employees. "You have to be reasonable when you're talking to people. I learned to say 'thank you, after telling them what I need them to do."

TRAINING FOR FUTURE CAREERS

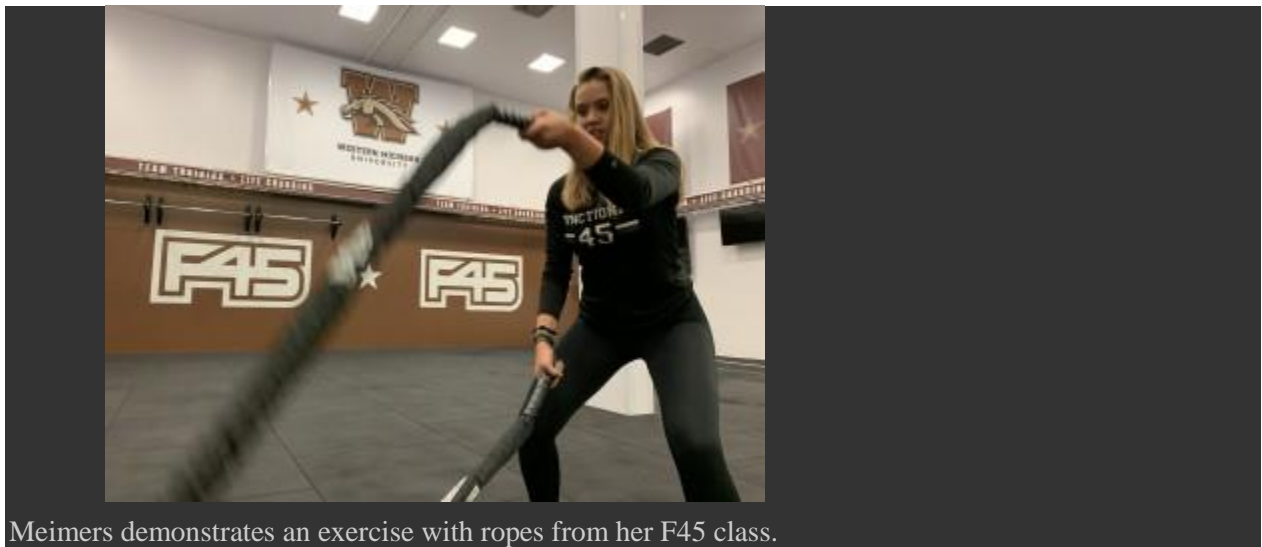Meimers

The Student Recreation Center is a hub of activity on campus. From fitness classes and free weights to a brand new climbing wall, there is something for just about everyone focused on health and wellness. WMU junior **Elizabeth Meimers** is in the thick of it all.

"The atmosphere really drew me here. You come in and see how everyone gets along. My closest friends are here," the Chicago native says.

Meimers is a facility manager and F45 instructor at the SRC. She oversees employees, tends to injuries that may occur and leads CrossFit-style classes focused on strength and endurance training. That's on top of a tough course schedule as she pursues a bachelor's degree in sociology and minors in both criminal justice and Spanish.

Meimers demonstrates an exercise with ropes from her F45 class.

"They're really flexible with hours here which is nice," says Meimers. "They really stress how important school is before work."

Student development is a focus at the SRC. Student employees learn how to create a resume, write cover letters and take part in mock interviews.

"It gets you ready for the real world, which is an important process," says Meimers, who plans to pursue graduate school and dreams of helping the immigrant population or working with the federal Witness Security Program.

Stressing the welcoming environment, Meimers encourages new students to push past the intimidation of an unfamiliar place and get involved in one of the many activities the SRC offers.

FINDING A HOME

Weatherwax

Moving from a town of just over 2,000 people to a campus of more than 20,000 is intimidating, to say the least.

"It was a really different experience because you know everybody in that kind of a small town, but you could be here four years and still meet somebody new," says **Joe Weatherwax**, a senior majoring in biomedical science.

Living on campus helped Weatherwax come into his own at WMU.

"I had some really good experiences with resident assistants who really got me involved in the councils and leadership teams," he says.

Weatherwax had such a positive experience he decided to become an RA himself.

"Before going into this position, I didn't really feel like I had that many people supporting me," says Weatherwax, who now works as an administrative resident assistant. "Now, I feel like I have so many people behind me who want me to succeed and are there for me."

His experience in residence life also shaped his path in life. Weatherwax plans to pursue a master's degree in counseling education and eventually go into clinical mental health counseling or become a college counselor.

Weatherwax puts a poster on the wall in Zimmerman Hall.

"It's really helped me realize that I want to help people out on a personal level," he says. "Some of my best moments in the position are when I get to sit down and talk with people on my floor and get to know them better and help them through tough situations."

Weatherwax says being a student employee has also helped him stay on track academically. His supervisors understand that he's a student first and check in to make sure he's keeping up with his schoolwork.

"There's this whole group of people that works together to make sure that you're getting the most you can out of your experience. I've really enjoyed being part of that."

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit [WMU News](#) online.

Need help with textbooks? Check out the library

Posted by Sara Volmering on October 11, 2019

Did you know that you can check out textbooks for over 100 courses from the University Libraries' textbook program?

If you're in need of an alternative to buying or renting books for your courses, you can check out the copies for two hours by presenting your Bronco Card at the Waldo Library Service Desk, or any other location as noted in Library Search. And, as long as no one else is waiting to use the text, you can renew it as many times as necessary.

Launched in 2013, the goal of this program is to provide free access to select textbooks and help reduce the financial burden facing WMU students. The program has been highly successful, quickly becoming a highly used library collection, with the libraries recording 21,083 total textbook checkouts from 2016 through 2019 – increasing by 24% in the last year alone.

Here's how it works: Based on established criteria, librarians identify and purchase textbooks for the program in the fall and spring semesters. The selection criteria consider the course level, enrollment, cost, and the longevity of a textbook. Using the program criteria, librarians select textbooks that will have a positive impact on as many students as possible. One challenge associated with purchasing textbooks is the frequent content updates, which result in new editions being published from year to year.

"Not only does the WMU Libraries Textbook program ease some of the financial burdens for our students, but it also contributes to their academic success by providing access to much-needed course materials that a student may not have been able to afford," said **Julie Hayward**, a user services manager in Waldo Library, who has coordinated the program since 2013.

Learn more about the program and see the full list of courses it covers by visiting https://libguides.wmich.edu/textbooks_reserve.

Student chosen to represent WMU on youth voter engagement task force

Contact: Erin Flynn

October 11, 2019

Johnson

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—A new state panel will offer recommendations to improve engagement among young voters and college students. **Ariana Johnson**, of Marshall, will represent Western Michigan University on the Collegiate Student Advisory Task Force.

She joins 32 other students from across Michigan tasked with exploring the voting process and advising state leaders on policy, program or administrative changes that could lead to more youth participation.

"We believe access, engagement and education all play important parts in the process," says Johnson, a sophomore majoring in nursing. "Education in voting, education in contacts, education in location, education in candidates."

The group, which will meet three times this fall, is also exploring barriers to access that could be deterring young people from voting.

"I am proud of the many men and women across the state who have stepped up to lead and inform our office on how to best engage students in our democracy," Michigan Secretary of State **Jocelyn Benson** said in a news release. "I am confident with their insights and involvement we will develop a robust plan to break down existing barriers and ensure our elections are accessible to all."
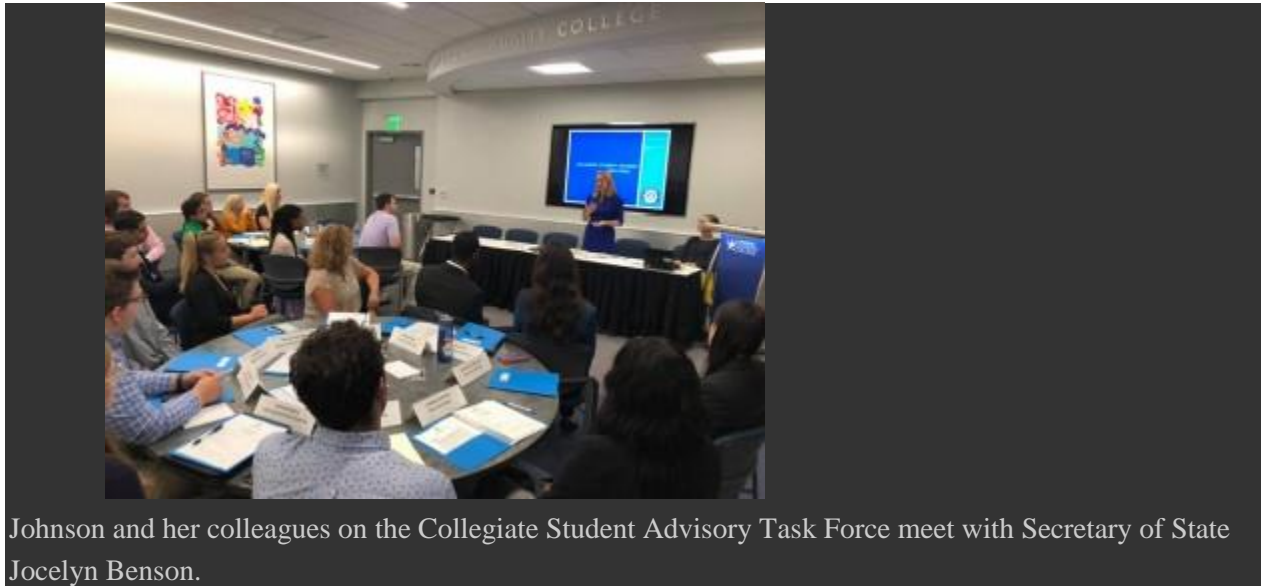
Johnson and her colleagues on the Collegiate Student Advisory Task Force meet with Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson.

Johnson plans to reach out to various groups on campus to talk about programs already in place to encourage students to participate in the voting process. She's also excited to talk with fellow students about their experiences so that she can share those stories with her colleagues on the task force.

The group will submit its final recommendations to Benson in late November. Johnson and other students on the task force will also act as civic engagement liaisons for the Secretary of State's Office in 2020.

"I think everyone should have the opportunity to voice their vote and really get involved," Johnson says. "You may be one person, but your number counts. Just like a jar of pennies; pennies add up."

Kosovo War refugee Antonio Balabani thriving in life, football at Western Michigan

[Nick Buckley](), Battle Creek Enquirer Published 7:00 a.m. ET Sept. 27, 2019 | Updated 12:18 p.m. ET Sept. 27, 2019

Senior defensive end escaped conflict in 1999. Now he and his family are thankful to be living the American dream in Michigan
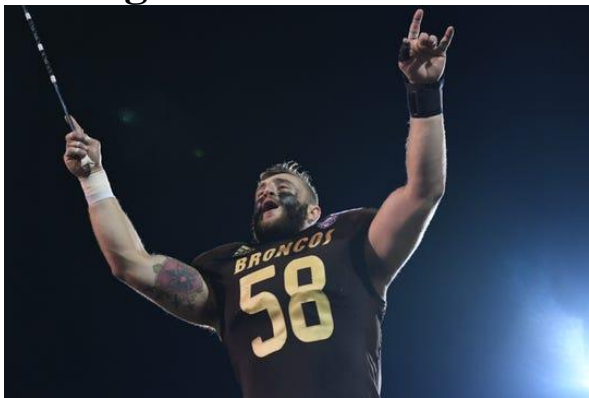
Western Michigan University senior defensive end Tony Balabani leads the band in the school fight song following the Broncos' 48-13 win over Monmouth on Saturday, Aug. 31, 2019. Balabani was born in Kosovo, but fled the war-torn country with his family in 1999. (Photo: Courtesy of WMU Athletics)

KALAMAZOO - Following his sack against Syracuse last week, an impassioned Antonio "Tony" Balabani pumped his right arm in celebration.

On the bicep of that arm is a tattoo featuring a double-headed eagle, a symbol of his Albanian ethnic heritage.

"It's really a motivation every time I look at it," he said. "It's more than just a couple colors and shapes on the arm."

Western Michigan defensive end Antonio Balabani (58) celebrates a sack against Syracuse on Saturday, Sept. 21, 2019 in Syracuse, New York. (Photo: Courtesy of WMU Athletics)

Balabani is a native of Kosovo and a fifth-year senior defensive end at Western Michigan University. It has been two decades since he and his family fled their homeland, which was then in the midst of the Kosovo War.

MORE: [CMU at WMU: How to watch, odds](#)

The conflict between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (now Serbia and Montenegro) and the Kosovo Liberation Army raged for 16 months. The KLA were rebels made up mostly of Kosovo Albanians, or Kosovars, the largest ethnic group in the nation.

Nearly 9,000 Kosovars were killed or are missing from the conflict, many as a result of ethnic cleansing.

Balabani identifies as a Kosovar. He wants his tattoo to be a beacon, a sign for others.

Antonio "Tony" Balabani (Photo: Courtesy of WMU Athletics)

"We are very proud people," Balabani said. "Albanians like to see other Albanians succeed. I want people to see my arm, whether it is on the field, on TV, another Albanian doing something like that. To give them, wherever we've been and whatever we've been through — we all haveasimilar story, the majority of us — we can get past that and do great things."

Another reminder of Balabni's roots sits on the dashboard of his car. It's a family picture unlike any other he possesses.

The photo shows him as a toddler, standing along side his older sister, Katrin, his father, Luigj, and his mother, Jacinte, who is holding his then-infant sister, Elizabeth. Behind them are makeshift beds in a tent in Tataloo, Macedonia, a refugee camp they would call home for the better part of three months.

The year was 1999, and the family had been forced to leave their village near Vitina, Kosovo, they say, under the threat of imminent death from Serbian soldiers.

'Everyone will be dead'

This 1999 photo taken at a refugee camp in Tataloo, Macedonia, shows the Balabani family after they had fled war-torn Kosovo. Pictured are (clockwise) Katrin, Jacinte, Elizabeth, Luigi and Antonio. (Photo: Courtesy of Antonio Balabani)

Luigj and his brother-in-law had been caught outside past the curfew imposed by the Yugoslavian government. His family was told to wait outside as the pair were taken to the basement and beaten.

"I have really vivid images of soldiers going around the house shutting the blinds. I remember thinking, 'This can't be good,'" said Katrin, who was 7 at the time. "We were afraid we were going to find him dead... My mom said, 'Stay inside with the kids and grandma,' and she went into the basement. I didn't listen to my mom and saw her bring my dad upstairs. He was wearing a white shirt. You could see all the blood stains and splatters on him and my uncle."

According to Luigj, the soldiers didn't mince words.

"'This night we let you go, next night if we see you, everyone will be dead,'" he recalled. "April 23, 1999, we had to leave our house... Anybody would do the same thing."

The family collected some of their belongings and left the country. Luigj, a construction worker, said it cost the family their entire savings to cross the border into Macedonia. At the refugee camp, Tony and Elizabeth initially slept on beds made of hay, while Katrin and their parents slept on mats laid across landscaping rocks.

"I remember the bus ride to the refugee camp was crowded... Women were weeping. I won't forget those faces, the look of defeat," Katrin said. "It was horrible because we weren't home. My parents didn't have any prospects, but for the time being, it was good because we were at least safe and away from the initial threat of being murdered."

This 1999 photo shows the refugee camp in Tataloo, Macedonia, where the Balabani family stayed for nearly four months before arriving in Sterling Heights, Michigan. (Photo: Courtesy of Katrin Sinishtaj)

Following the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia that ended the conflict, the United States government offered asylum to 20,000 of the Kosovo refugees in Macedonia. The Balabanis were selected, in part, because they had family already living in the U.S. and would be better equipped to assimilate.

"I didn't have a penny in my pocket," Luigj said. "They brought us here to U.S. for free. There was some kind of agreement for (airline) tickets we received from a church."

The family was on food stamps for several weeks, before Luigj found work in construction and quickly canceled the government assistance. His first paycheck went back to the church that had paid for his family of five to fly to their new home in Sterling Heights near Detroit.

"When we came here, my dad wasn't here asking, 'What can I get from America?' It was, 'How do I say thank you?'" Tony said. "The only way we know to say thank you is by working and making the most of whatever somebody gave us. We are very thankful for this country, the people here and the opportunity to be here."

Football family

Tony Balabani (back row, second from left) poses for a photo with family members following Western Michigan's game at Michigan State on Sept. 9, 2017. (Photo: Courtesy of Katrin Sinishtaj)

The Balabani family first went back to Kosovo in 2002 to visit family. They have continued to return to their homeland for summer vacations, but they planted new roots in Metro Detroit.

"My goal; I want to come here, this is the best country in the whole world," Luigj said. "Now I am American citizen. My goal was to learn English and know this history of the United States, and one day I ended up passing my test to become a US citizen."

Through their father, Tony and his sisters became naturalized citizens. His mother has permanent resident status. Luigj and Jacinte found upward mobility by working multiple jobs at a time, until Luigj started his own construction business.

Tony had shown himself to be skilled on the soccer field at a young age. But his eighth grade physical education teacher, noticing the strapping boy in class, steered him to football and told him he should quit soccer and become a defensive end for the football team.

Antonio Balabani through the years
 Fullscreen
Top of Form
Bottom of Form

Posted!

A link has been posted to your Facebook feed.

Tony Balabani (58) takes the field for Western Michigan University before the Broncos game against Georgia State on Saturday, Sept. 14, 2019 in Kalamazoo, Mich. Nick Buckley/Battle Creek Enquirer
Fullscreen
13 Photos
Antonio Balabani through the years

This 1999 photo taken at a refugee camp in Tataloo, Macedonia, shows the Balabani family after they had fled war-torn Kosovo. Pictured are (clockwise) Katrin, Jacinte, Elizabeth, Luigi and Antonio. Courtesy of Antonio Balabani
Fullscreen

This undated photo shows Antonio Balabani (right) playing soccer with cousins while on vacation in Vitina, Kosovo. Balabani, a senior defensive end at Western Michigan University, fled his home country with his family during the Kosovo War in 1999. Courtesy of Antonio Balabani

Macomb Dakota lost the regional final to Clinton Township Chippewa Valley despite the best efforts of defensive end Antonio Balabani, who returned from an ankle injury suffered two weeks earlier to face the Big Reds. Julian H. Gonzalez/Detroit Free Press

18. Tony Balabani, LB, 6-3, 230 pounds, Macomb Dakota, committed to Western Michigan. Special to the Free Press

Perry Farrell, left, and Kevin Bull, right, stand with Macomb Dakota's Antonio Balabani after receiving his award at the Detroit Free Press Football Awards Banquet on Wednesday at the Dearborn Inn in Dearborn. Tim Galloway Special for DFP

Western Michigan DL Antonio Balabani (58) gets a sack and forces a fumble that the Broncos recover in Idaho territory. Seth Graves / For the Enquirer

Western Michigan University senior defensive end Tony Balabani (58) sacks Monmouth quarterback Kenji Bahar on Saturday, Sept. 14, 2019 in Kalamazoo, Mich. Courtesy of WMU Athletics

Michigan State quarterback Brian Lewerke, left, looks to pass against Western Michigan's Antonio Balabani (58) during the first quarter of an NCAA college football game, Saturday, Sept. 7, 2019, in East Lansing, Mich. (AP Photo/Al Goldis) The Associated Press

Tony Balabani (back row, second from left) poses for a photo with family members following Western Michigan's game at Michigan State on Sept. 9, 2017. Courtesy of Katrin Sinishtaj

Western Michigan University defensive end Antonio "Tony" Balabani sacks Syracuse quarterback Tommy DeVito during a game on Saturday, Sept. 21, 2019 in Syracuse, New York. Courtesy WMU Athletics

Western Michigan defensive end Antonio Balabani (58) celebrates a sack against Syracuse on Saturday, Sept. 21, 2019 in Syracuse, New York. Courtesy of WMU Athletics
[Fullscreen](#)

Western Michigan University senior defensive end Tony Balabani leads the band in the school fight song following the Broncos' 48-13 win over Monmouth on Saturday, Aug. 31, 2019. Balabani was born in Kosovo, but fled the war-torn country with his family in 1999. Courtesy of WMU Athletics
[Fullscreen](#)

Interested in this topic? You may also want to view these photo galleries:

"When I told my dad I wanted to play football, he was like, 'No. We play soccer,'" Tony said with a laugh. "He never watched (football) or was interested."

Luigj admitted he didn't know much about the sport at the time. But he was also testing his son.

"I said no to see how much he wants to go play football," he said. "I did see when he kept saying it, so I said, 'OK try it.'"

Tony attended Dakota High School in Macomb Township, where he soon made a name for himself on the gridiron and the wrestling mat. Meanwhile, he worked construction for his father.

Perry Farrell, left, and Kevin Bull, right, stand with Macomb Dakota's Antonio Balabani after receiving his award at the Detroit Free Press Football Awards Banquet on Wednesday at the Dearborn Inn in Dearborn. (Photo: Tim Galloway Special for DFP)

"In high school coming to the games, (my dad) didn't even know what to cheer for at the time," Tony said. "He'd hear the announcer call my name, he'd yell. He didn't know what was going

on. As my career has progressed, his knowledge of the game has progressed. If I am home, my parents are watching the football network. They are all in it too."

While he was being recruited for football, Tony had yet to be offered a Division I scholarship as a junior. A devout Catholic, he was in a confessional with his priest, discussing what he felt was a crossroads in his young adult life.

"Is (football) something I should pursue? I was working heavily with my dad, should I keep working on football or keep helping my dad with the company? I needed help with my priorities," Tony said. "As I'm talking to the priest, my phone was ringing in confession. It was a phone number from Buffalo. I called back and they offered me a scholarship. If this is not a sign, what is a sign? All in, chips on the table, this is what I need to do. Then the day after the WMU offer, I committed."

At WMU, Balabani redshirted before appearing in three games in 2016, when the Broncos went 13-1, won the Mid-American Conference title and appeared in the Cotton Bowl. The following year, he became the full-time starting defensive end, despite his chiseled frame being a tad small for the position at 6-foot-3, 245 pounds.

Western Michigan DL Antonio Balabani (58) gets a sack and forces a fumble that the Broncos recover in Idaho territory. (Photo: Seth Graves / For the Enquirer)

"He makes people around him better," said WMU head coach Tim Lester. "He's always positive. If you know where he came from, you understand. You cannot put that guy in a bad mood. It's impossible. He will find a way to make every situation – good, bad or indifferent – he'll put a silver lining on it and will go back out there and play just as hard if not harder the next play."

The relentless Balabani has made a name for himself as one of the Broncos' hardest hitters. He's also on pace to have his most productive season yet. In December, he'll graduate with hopes of eventually returning to the Detroit area to work for one of the big three automotive companies.

"Very proud to be here. Very proud to be an American and to be an Albanian," Tony said. "Hopefully I can make Albanians all over the world proud, and we as a football team can make everyone proud."

Nick Buckley can be reached at nbuckley@battlecreekenquirer.com or 269-966-0652. Follow him on Twitter:[@NickJBuckley](https://twitter.com/NickJBuckley)

CENTRAL MICHIGAN (2-2) AT WESTERN MICHIGAN (2-2)

When: Saturday, noon

TV/Radio/Stream: CBS Sports Network; 96.5 FM/94.1 FM; TuneIn

Line: WMU by 17.5

WMU students create Bronco-themed wine

The wine will be launched in Michigan Saturday, Oct. 5th.

Wednesday, October 02, 2019 4:41 p.m. EDT by Will Kriss

Bottles of Bronconess wine. (Courtesy of Teresa Ventimiglia).

KALAMAZOO, MI (WKZO AM/FM) -- Students enrolled in Western Michigan University's leadership and business strategy program have created a new brand of WMU-themed wine that will be launching this weekend.

According to an official press release, the brand "Bronconess" will debut in select restaurants and stores across the state on Saturday, Oct. 5th in conjunction with WMU's 2019 Homecoming and Family Weekend.

The press release lists the following flavors that will be available:

- Bronconess Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 2014: Deep red in color with a dark core. Fervent character with full black fruit flavors, sweet undertones and firm tannins. A high-quality reserve wine with a unique expression of its boutique, hillside origin.

- Bronconess Red Wine Blend 2015: Deep ruby red color. Its aroma reminds us of spicy notes delivered by Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon that are softened by the red fruits delivered by Malbec. It has a good structure, with sweet harmonic tannins and a balanced acidity that makes it easy to drink. It is a wine that easily accompanies meats and pasta.

- Bronconess Reserve White Blend 2015: Fresh and crisp with good acidity. Aromas of lemon, lime and melon with flavors that jump right out of the glass. Ideal with shrimp cocktail, whitefish or grilled chicken.

  The press release notes that the wine was named Bronconess because it "captures the essence of how Broncos sustain their efforts when others might stop, and pursue ideas with courage and enthusiasm in the face of challenges."

  The wine is sourced from the Tremonte Vineyard in Chile, which was previously used for a study abroad course.

  Students working under Drs. Derrick McIver and Doug Lepisto at WMU were responsible for helping create the brand when tasked with introducing a new brand into the marketplace.

  "The wine is high-quality, and the profits are directed to scholarships for students in the leadership and business strategy program, but our work indicates that one of the reasons consumers will buy Bronconess wine is because the idea of Bronconess is a badge of identity for anyone who strongly affiliates with Western Michigan University," Lepisto said.

Since the brand is "cause-driven," profits from Bronconess revenue will be used to fund scholarships for leadership and business strategy students at WMU.

Some students are surprised at the success of the project.

"My first thought when presented with the challenge of developing the wine brand was that this was what I had been looking for," senior Joe Newman said. "A top reason I transferred to WMU was because of the reputation of the business school, and after the first day of the course when this project was introduced, I could tell that I had made the right decision. I wavered slightly throughout the semester as we discovered new information and were challenged to make this project a reality, but I always kept a positive outlook. After our teams partnered with Meijer, I knew we had something special. This project and course completely changed my approach to problem solving."

Following the brand launch, Bronconess will be available to purchase at the following locations:

- WMU events and venues
- University Roadhouse, 1332 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo
- Drake's Party Center, 4717 W. KL Ave., Kalamazoo
- Harding's Market, 5161 W. Main St., Kalamazoo
- MEGA-BEV stores
- Meijer stores
- Munchie Mart, 3626 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo
- Sunny Mart, 2020 E. Cork St., Kalamazoo

More information including updates of where to purchase Bronconess can be found online at https://www.bronconess.com/.

Testing of self-driving shuttles begins at Western Michigan University

Autonomous electric shuttle testing at Western Michigan

By **Kayla Miller | kmille17@mlive.com**

KALAMAZOO, MI -- Students at Western Michigan University should keep an eye out for a self-driving shuttle around campus as research on autonomous vehicles continues at the school.

With $2.1 million in funds from the Michigan Mobility Challenge, the university partnered with the Michigan Department of Transportation and engineers to research two autonomous shuttles designed to improve transportation options for people with disabilities, according to a news release from WMU.

Pratt & Miller Engineering, the University of Michigan, Kevadiya Inc., Robotic Research, Comet Mobility and Easterseals are all collaborating with WMU on this project, the university said.

https://youtu.be/ZyILfGPu7gg

"I'm pleased to see that Pratt & Miller has brought this important project to campus and appreciate the work of people across the university to pilot this important advance in mobility," WMU President Edward Montgomery said in a statement. "WMU is committed to serving our students

and society. This project is an excellent example of that; applying the knowledge of our world-class faculty and students to develop and test cutting-edge transportation technology."

Engineers at Pratt & Miller modified two shuttles for accessibility, including lengthening the wheel base, adding wheelchair restraints and redesigning the interior of the vehicles. From there, engineers collaborated with Robotic Research to integrate an autonomous system that allows the shuttles to run without a driver, the university said.

The shuttles were tested for safety and function at Robotic Research facility, but researchers now need real-world passengers for the next stage of the project, the university said.

"This project is a textbook example of how our WMU researchers collaborate with others to solve real-world problems," Terri Goss Kinzy, vice president for research at WMU, said in the release.

Zach Asher, WMU assistant professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering, and graduate students Nick Goberville and Johan Rojas conducted research for WMU's role in the project. The students helped with environmental mapping and modeling for the shuttles, the university said.

Driverless shuttle up and running at University of Michigan
Two fully-automated, 11-passenger, all-electric shuttles built by the French firm NAVYA are now running 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The first shuttle arrived on campus in September. One of the shuttles was on display at Western's campus Thursday, Oct. 3. Engineers will drive the shuttle manually with a remote control while researchers remotely collect data from sensors and begin mapping a route.

The technology does not involve a driver, pedals or a steering wheel, though a safety operator will be on board at all times. Rides are expected to begin Monday, Oct. 21, and will run for a couple of weeks, the university said.

The tentative route would run in a loop from a loading area west of Sangren Hall directly south to the fountain near Sprau Tower.

For those on campus, the engineers ask that people keep a safe distance away from the shuttle. The vehicles will not exceed 4 mph, and the technology is built to stop them whenever someone or something comes within a few feet, the university said.