

Governance and the Deanship

- After a year of serving as the Interim Dean, in February 2025, Robert G. Sawyer, MD, informed the Board of Directors of his desire to resume his role as Senior Associate Dean, Research. In collaboration with the recruitment firm WittKieffer, a 14-member Search Committee with representatives from across the medical school and our collaborators – WMU, Beacon Health, and Bronson Healthcare – is guiding the national search for the future medical school dean.
- New members of the WMed Board of Directors appointed in 2024 include Jeff Patton, CEO of Integrated Services of Kalamazoo, serving as a public member and Michael Redinger, MD, appointed as the faculty member. As of July 1, 2025, the new President of WMU, Russ Kavalhuna, JD, is serving as the Chair of the Board, and Kreg Gruber, CEO of Beacon Health System, has joined the Board of Directors.

Leadership

- As part of the strategic margin improvement process, the dean completed a review of our leadership structure which resulted in a realignment of functions within executive roles and reserving the dean titles for the highest-level academic and research positions. The academic affairs structure was also updated. The Interim Vice President, People and Culture, Surangi Pradhan, has oversight of all internal efforts impacting our people including Human Resources, Occupational Health and Infection Control, and Culture and Wellbeing. Michele Serbenski, as Vice President, Institutional Affairs, has oversight of compliance and policies in addition to former duties.
- Under the leadership of Chair Gitonga Munene, MD, a new academic Department of Surgical Sciences was formed and includes divisions for General Surgery, Gynecologic Oncology, Medical Engineering, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Orthopaedic Surgery, and Surgical Oncology.
- In addition to changes related to the strategic margin improvement review, the following leadership positions were named:
 - Kelly Brown, MD, Associate Dean, Graduate Medical Education and Designated Institutional Official.
 - Mike Busha, MD, and Lauren Piper, DO, Interim Co-chairs, Department of Family and Community Medicine.
 - Kathryn Redinger, MD, Chair, Department of Medical Education.
 - Richard S. Vander Heide, MD, PhD, MBA, Chair, Department of Pathology.
 - John D. Hoyle, Jr., MD, Inaugural David T. Overton Endowed Chair of Emergency Medicine and Associate Dean, Simulation.
 - Neil Hughes, MD, Assistant Dean, Simulation.
 - Holly Yettaw Luts, MD, Division Chief, Obstetrics and Gynecology.
 - Carly Davis, MD, Program Director, Obstetrics and Gynecology Residency.
 - Erica VanderKooy, MD, Program Director, Pediatrics Residency.
 - Jayce Deleon, MD, and Nicole Garton, MD, Associate Program Directors, Pediatrics Residency.
 - Elyse Perry, Interim Vice President, Development.
 - Kally Graham, Interim Director, Human Resources.
 - Val Horwath, Director, Admissions.
 - Theresa McGoff, Director, Data Analytics Services Unit.
 - Chris Schneider, Interim Senior Director, Research Compliance.
- Searches are underway or in planning for the Vice President, Development; Chair, Department of Family and Community Medicine; Chair, Department of Biomedical Sciences and Assistant Dean for Foundations of Medicine; and Senior Director, Research Compliance.
- In response to the race in admissions SCOTUS decision and the executive order related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, leaders reviewed admissions, scholarships, employment and other pertinent processes and policies to adjust them, as necessary, to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

Strategic Margin Improvement Initiative

Led by Dean Robert Sawyer, MD, and the executive team, strategic margin improvement was an institution-wide initiative from mid-August through December 2024 to increase revenue and reduce expenses while hardwiring processes to ensure sustained results. The institutional goal was to identify \$3,502,000 in net margin improvement to be implemented in the calendar year 2025. WMed exceeded its goal by identifying \$4,018,460 in projected cost savings and revenue enhancements by the 2025-26 year which included 128 approved ideas and 180 ideas for future implementation.

Medical Education

- On July 8, 2024, the medical school welcomed its 11th MD class of 86 students and six students in the one-year Hal B. Jenson, MD, Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences degree program.
- WMed honored its eighth class of MD graduates during the commencement ceremony awarding 84 Doctor of Medicine degrees and six Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences degrees.
- MD program Class of 2024 first-time test takers of USMLE Step 1 achieved 96% pass rate compared to the national average of 93%; and on USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge achieved 98% pass rate matching the national average of 98%. The MD program Class of 2025 first-time test takers of USMLE Step 1 achieved 99% pass rate compared to the national average of 92%; and on USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge achieved 100% pass rate compared to the national average of 97%.
- 98% residency match rate for the Class of 2025 compared to the national average of 94.3%. Six students matched to residency slots at WMed, and 21 students will remain in Michigan. Thirty-five students will complete their training in a specialty that could lead to a career in primary care. Four students received scholarships from the F. Edward Hebert Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship Program and will complete their residency training at military medical centers.
- Scholarships supporting the success of our students for academic year 2024-25 included 24 full-tuition scholarships and 34 scholarships for one-eighth, one-quarter, or half-tuition. Merit scholarships of \$1000, \$5000, or \$10,000 were awarded to 276 MD students. Sixty-seven students with the highest loan debt received \$5000 awards.
- The LCME approved a new 3-Year Advanced Residency Admission MD parallel curricula which provides an option for high-performing medical students that are interested in and committed to completing their residency training in WMed primary care residency programs.
- Starting in March 2025, WMed and Corewell Health™ Lakeland Graduate Medical Education began offering clinical training for medical students at a new regional campus located in St. Joseph. This partnership gives second-, third- and fourth-year medical students an opportunity to complete their core and advanced clinical clerkship rotations alongside experienced physicians at Corewell Health Lakeland Hospitals – St. Joseph Hospital, Corewell Health Lakeland Hospitals – Niles Hospital, and Corewell Health – Watervliet Hospital.
- WMed is collaborating with Fenix Alma Solutions Inc. to utilize their VidaNovaVLE™ software suite to replace Elentra, serving as the foundational learning and assessment management system for WMed supporting the curriculum to enhance the educational experience for both learners and faculty.
- The former Student Policy Manual is a web-based resource that includes student policies and information serving as the reference guide to the roles and responsibilities of WMed students.
- In June 2025, more than 70 residents and fellows were honored for completing their residency and fellowship training in one of the medical school's 10 residency or five fellowship programs.
- 100% of our categorical residency program slots were filled through the NRMP Match and the medical school welcomed the new residents and fellows in late June 2025.
- The Simulation Center was granted full reaccreditation from the Society for Simulation in Healthcare.
- Eight medical students and two residents experienced global education in four international locations.
- Bobby Mukkamala, MD, the president-elect of the American Medical Association, spoke to medical students about the role of physicians in shaping public policy.
- A Student Advisory Workgroup consisting of two students per class was created by the academic success team to advise on current and potential programs, presentations, resources, communication, Step 1 and clerkship preparation, and strategies for WMed students.
- Early Introduction to Health Careers pathway programs celebrated their 10th anniversary in August 2024. They empowered 1,478 students from 12 schools over those years, and 21 undergraduates benefitted from the Science Research Enrichment program.

Patient Care

- Outreach Medicine expanded to include the new student-led Firehouse Clinic launched in August 2024 through a partnership between students in the Community Health Interest Group and Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries.
- The WMed Health Mall Drive practice was transitioned to WMed Health at Oakland Drive.
- WMed Health Family Medicine Crosstown Parkway hosted a free skin spot check clinic and opened a new Family Medicine substance use treatment practice.
- WMed Health at Oakland Drive started a new pediatric obesity practice.
- WMed Health entered a contract with Bronson's billing team to manage its patient billing effective July 1, 2024.
- WMed Health primary care practices implemented a Medical Assistant Extern program in partnership with KVCC and Ross as part of their medical assistant curriculum requirements.
- A team comprised of WMed Health clinical support staff and health information technologists began the roll out of a program to improve patient experience and quality of care. Early results of this effort included an additional 1200 childhood vaccines being administered in 2024 compared to 2023.

Research

- In fiscal year 2025, WMed faculty published 423 scholarly publications, including 400 peer-reviewed journal articles, 20 book chapters, and contributions to three publications as the author or editor of books.
- WMed was awarded 29 grants totaling \$6,840,943 in fiscal year 2024-25.
- Annual federal research expenditure increased to \$2,922,215. This included direct funding from both NIH and AHRQ, alongside consortium projects with partner organizations across the country.
- The Department of Investigative Medicine received a \$2.97 million NIH grant to pinpoint the origins and functions of B cell subsets, and a \$3.8 million NIH R01 grant plus a \$418,000 R21 grant to fund research on B cells and the antibodies they produce.
- Groundbreaking research by a WMed team uncovered the cause of autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease.
- The Population Health team received a primary data collection contract for community health needs assessments in Allegan, Cass, and Calhoun counties.
- A pilot research project at WMed will explore the impact of socioeconomic status on placental development and long-term health of offspring.
- Plans for the Southwest Michigan Institute for Health Equity Research were shared with the medical school community and state, federal, and private funding opportunities are being pursued.
- 43rd Annual Kalamazoo Community Medical and Health Sciences Research Day hosted 300 attendees with more than 100 abstracts, 25 oral presentations, 50 poster presentations, and 40 digital presentations.
- A new policy RES08 Financial Conflicts of Interest in Research and Sponsored Programs was published.

Community Partnership and Engagement

- The Community Advisory Council, a collaboration between WMed and Bronson Healthcare, was created to identify health disparities, promote true health equity, and improve health outcomes in Kalamazoo.
- More than 150 people participated in the 7th Annual Health Equity Summit focused on mental health equity.
- More than 240 members of the medical school community and the larger Kalamazoo community attended the 3rd Annual Well-Being Promotion Symposium for important discussions on the multifaceted topic of wellness.
- WMed honored Gwendolyn Hooker, CEO and Founder of Helping Other People Exceed Thru Navigation, during the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration.
- WMed/Mt. Zion Community Health Conversations continued with discussions on ADHD and behavioral health, as well as mental health.
- The Office of Development hosted a Dean's Circle winter reception and a special "Evening of Elegance, Engagement, and Entertainment" to engage donors, share updates about key initiatives, and to foster philanthropic support for the medical school.
- David Overton, MD, provided a generous gift to establish and name the David T. Overton Endowed Chair of Emergency Medicine.

- The annual White Coat Sponsorship Program was expanded to engage more donors and raise funds for new scholarships. Dr. Susan and Mr. David Thoms are serving as the co-chairs for the 2025 White Coast Sponsorship Campaign.
- The Mark E. Loehrke, MD, Endowed Lectureship fund was launched to support an annual series of distinguished speakers, fostering learning and collaboration among faculty, students, and the broader community, with a particular focus on Internal Medicine and Medicine-Pediatrics.
- The new Dr. David Ohmart Endowed Scholarship Fund for Medical Students will benefit fourth-year medical students who pursue residency training in pediatrics after graduation.

People and Culture

- WMed hired 239 employed faculty, residents, and staff and celebrated seven retirements.
- WMed appointed 160 new faculty members, and 11 faculty members achieved promotions.
- The Faculty Policy Manual was significantly revised and approved by the Faculty Academic Council. It has transitioned to an easily accessible web-based resource
- More than 600 recharge kits were distributed internally at WMed to support wellness and stress reduction.
- A climate survey was administered to all employees to assess progress in culture and wellbeing, to remain aligned with the needs of our community, and promote an inclusive and supportive learning and working environment.
- Thifa Sligh, Manager of Culture and Wellbeing, was hired to assess culture and wellbeing initiatives and improve their effectiveness.
- A second cohort of 23 leaders participated in the leadership development initiative LEAD 2.0.
- The annual Gallup Q12 survey showed an Engagement Index of 11.8:1, a significant improvement from the 7.4:1 Engagement Index from the previous year. This reflects a 7% increase in “engaged” employees (59%), a favorable 5% decrease in “not engaged” employees (36%), and a 2% decline in “actively disengaged” employees (5%). The focus for institution-wide improvement is Q1: “I know what is expected of me at work.”
- Orientation for new employees was enhanced with a new Day 2 Project that includes department-specific orientation and additional communication with new recruits from Human Resources.
- A Buddy Program was launched to strengthen employee onboarding.
- Human Resources successfully launched the planning phase on two major initiatives aimed at enhancing operational efficiency, streamlining processes, and enhancing customer service including a new recruiting platform (UKG Ready) and new provider credentialing platform (Qgenda).
- We proudly recognized 41 staff and faculty members for achieving milestone work anniversaries (5, 10, 15 years, and beyond). These recognitions underscore our commitment to honoring long-term contributions and fostering a culture of appreciation.
- In our journey to becoming a Strengths-based organization, 275 employees have participated in Strengths coaching by our internal Strengths certified coaches (using Gallup’s Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment) along with multiple Team Blends, to promote collaboration, engagement, and team effectiveness.