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Catherine Riordan is Named WWU Provost, Vice President for Academic Affairs

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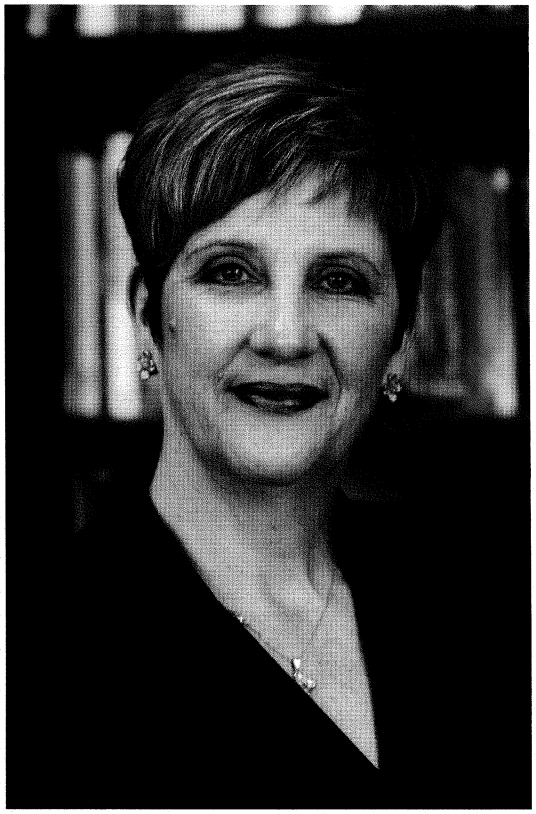

Riordan

BELLINGHAM – Catherine Riordan, who has extensive experience in higher education administration, teaching and research, has been appointed as provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at Western Washington University, President Bruce Shepard announced.

"Catherine Riordan has the vision, leadership, knowledge and breadth of experience to be a great fit for Western. I am delighted she will be joining the Western community and look forward to working with her," Shepard said.

Riordan, now the vice provost for Academic Affairs at Central Michigan University, will begin her new duties in August. She was selected after a nationwide search.

"I feel privileged to have been asked to join the community of talented students, faculty and staff who are responsible for Western Washington University's excellent national reputation among public universities. The widespread engagement of the campus in further strengthening the university even in these tight financial times speaks volumes about the future possibilities for Western. The university's leadership team is exceptionally strong and I look forward to joining them in August," Riordan said.

Riordan succeeds Dennis Murphy, who has been provost at Western since Aug. 15, 2007, after a distinguished career as dean of the College of Business and Economics at Western.

Riordan has a doctorate in Social Psychology from the State University of New York at Albany. She has been vice provost at Central Michigan University since 2001. In that role, she has responsibility for a range of programs, including university-wide strategic planning, academic program planning and review, assessment of student learning outcomes, undergraduate curricula, the Faculty Center for Innovative Teaching, the First Year Experience Program, General Education, the Honors Program, interdisciplinary programs, and regional and specialized accreditation. At Central Michigan she also served as the assistant vice president for Curriculum and Assessment.

From 1991-2000 she was director of Management Systems at the University of Missouri-Rolla, where she established that university's first interdisciplinary program, which has grown to one of the campus's largest programs. She also was the assistant to the chancellor for Affirmative Action 1988 to 1991.

At both Central Michigan University and the University of Missouri-Rolla, Riordan held the rank of tenured full professor of Psychology. Riordan taught for 21 years, until 2000, primarily at the undergraduate level, but she also taught and supervised the thesis work of master's and doctoral students. She has conducted and published research with students at all levels. Over the course of her career she received awards for distinguished teaching, advising, research, and service. She also was a Missouri Youth Initiative Kellogg Fellow and a visiting scholar, University College Dublin, Ireland.

Riordan is married to Philip Thompson, associate professor of Economics at Central Michigan University and an authority on energy and regulatory economics.

The provost and vice president for Academic Affairs is the chief academic officer of Western Washington University and has senior leadership responsibility, particularly having policy and decision responsibility for academic programs, faculty, academic relations with other organizations, academic budgets and academic facilities planning. The provost serves as a member of the senior management team and fulfills an important role in university wide matters. She also represents the university to appropriate external people and organizations and serves as president when the president is unavailable.

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