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President's Perspective (September 2013)

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President's Perspective - Sept. 3, 2013



Dr. Dunn

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the fall 2013 semester and what promises to be a banner year in the history of our University. I was in the Dominican Republic briefly last week to meet with our higher education colleagues there so I missed some earlier opportunities to welcome you back, but the campus was in good hands while I was gone.

For the past week, our residence halls and many of the neighborhoods surrounding campus have been filling with new and returning students. We've welcomed, oriented and advised them and helped them settle in and get ready for the semester. Today, they're ready to begin the 2013-14 academic year. My thanks go to all of you who have helped set the stage for their success.

We won't be able to share enrollment numbers with you for a few weeks, but early analysis suggests strong growth in our number of new freshmen, graduate students and international students. Consistent with our forecast, overall enrollment, however, will likely show a slight decrease as smaller classes from earlier years move through the pipeline.

The coming weeks offer time to celebrate

Before your calendar is completely filled, please take a few moments to block off the time to take part in some of our fall traditions. These are opportunities to join with your students and colleagues and really get the year off to a rousing start. There are some changes this year to some timing and locations, so you'll want to take note.

- This weekend—Saturday—we'll celebrate our strong community traditions with the **CommUniverCity** football game at Waldo Stadium Saturday night. This year the game against Nicholls State will introduce new football coach P.J. Fleck to the home field for the start of what we expect to be a wonderful new era in the Bronco athletic story.
- We'll also launch our campus **United Way** campaign and show our support for important community services. As Campus Campaign Chair Joe Reish is fond of saying, we're "going west to grab the reins and row the boat for United Way." The kickoff event is at noon Wednesday, Sept. 4, in front of Sangren Hall.
- From 3 to 7 p.m. Friday, Sept. 13, our annual **Bronco Bash** will take place at a new location—the pedestrian mall in front of Sangren Hall. This spectacular space is the new location for large outdoor gatherings. You'll see it in use for such events as pep rallies in the future as well.
- **Academic Convocation** has been set for 2 p.m. Friday, Oct. 4, in the Dalton Center. That formal kickoff for the academic year will feature the presentation of 13 all-University awards to standout members of our faculty and staff—your colleagues. Those award winners will be announced in the coming weeks. Please plan to honor them by attending convocation. Your presence will also allow us to come together, as a university community, to review our plans and accomplishments. And

of course we'll close the occasion with a social event—Friday with Friends—in the Richmond Center. Invite a new colleague to attend with you and help us make this a campuswide celebration.



These and other upcoming events will give the entire community an opportunity to spend some time seeing our campus at its most beautiful. Our landscaping people have truly outdone themselves getting ready for the start of the semester.

Parents and other visitors have taken note and praised the obvious effort that goes into putting our best foot forward. I want to add my own note of thanks to our crews who have and continue to work so hard to keep the campus attractive.

That constant care and attention to our physical plant is a big job—and one that is growing. Take a moment to admire our new student housing and community center in Western View II, and drive by our new Zhang Legacy Collections Center on the Oakland Drive Campus.

Both are tremendous new additions to our campus. We also have a number of projects in process. The renovation of Fountain Plaza near Miller Auditorium is moving along nicely and will be done in late October.

For East Campus, the design process for our new Alumni Center in East Hall is underway, and you'll have a chance to be part of that process through a series of community input sessions—the first to be held on Oct. 1.

Recent news has been positive

The news never stops here, even when many of you are on summer hiatus. And the news about our University and its people continues to be positive.



We're ranked 46 nationally

As everyone was returning to campus last week, we were met by some nice accolades in national media. On a single day last week, two national media outlets broke stories calling Western Michigan University one of the nation's schools that offered students "the best bang for the buck."

Washington Monthly pegged us at No. 46 among national universities. Millennial blog **PolicyMic** put us at No. 5.

Washington Monthly went on to include us once again on its list of top national universities that are both effective and contributing to the national good.

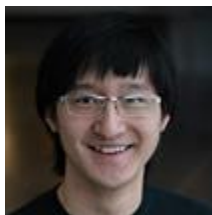


Dr. Smith and Dr. Manley

We also have just learned of two important appointments for our faculty.

Gov. Rick Snyder announced the appointment of **Dr. Ola Smith**, associate professor of accountancy, to Michigan's Board of Accountancy, a nine-member board that oversees licensure and certification for CPAs and accounting firms.

And last week, we were informed that **Dr. R. Adam Manley**, assistant professor of family and consumer sciences, has been named to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.



Mingyuan Yang

And I want to make sure you are aware of a spectacular achievement by a student in our School of Music (which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year).

During the summer, **Mingyuan Yang**, a bassoon student who came to us as a freshman last year, won the International Double Reed Society Young Artist

Competition.

He bested two other finalists, students at the prestigious Oberlin Conservatory of Music, to be judged the best young bassoonist in the world.

Looking ahead to some signature events

Over the next few months, we'll be moving ahead on some important campuswide initiatives, and we want you to be a part of the celebrations.

- On Tuesday, Sept. 17, at 4 p.m., we'll hold celebration at the Fetzer Center of our affiliation agreement with the **Thomas M. Cooley Law School**,
- We'll pause on Oct. 2 to head downtown to the W. E. Upjohn Campus for the new **WMU School of Medicine**, where a 1 p.m. topping-off ceremony will mark the placement of the final external beam on the building that will be the school's home, and



- Late this fall, we'll mark the **50th anniversary of our own Martin Luther King Jr. event**—his visit to our campus on Dec. 18, 1963.

And, true to our nature as a center for discovery and learning, our academic community will work hard this year to make their disciplines more vibrant and enhance the impact this University has across the state and nation. Two events I'd like to note are initiatives that give me great pride.

- The **First Michigan Autism Conference** will take place on our campus Oct. 10-11. It will certainly leverage the reputation our faculty have developed for cutting-edge of research and service to families.
- Our graduate student leaders and their very strong organization were successful in winning a bid to host this fall's conference for the **National Association of Graduate and Professional Students** Nov. 7-10. Now in its 27th year, the event annually attracts about 150 graduate students from all types of colleges and universities around the nation.

Again, welcome to the new academic year. We need your passion and enthusiastic involvement to keep us moving forward as a learner centered, discovery driven and globally engaged university. This will be a year full of potential. I look forward to working with you to realize that potential and make 2013-14 a year for the record books in the life of our University.

Continuing best,

John M. Dunn
President