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Transformational Initiative Fund I Announcement

Dear Colleagues:

This morning, it's my pleasure to let you know about two new campus efforts that will be funded and implemented through the Transformational Initiative Fund I announced at Fall Convocation. As you'll recall, I asked for your best ideas about steps we can take to improve student success, find alternative revenue streams, and make WMU the school of choice for the diverse constituent groups we serve.

That call for proposals brought us scores of good ideas, and has sparked much good discussion and additional collaboration and creativity. While I'm announcing funding for two initiatives, one of those initiatives combines the basic elements of 10 different proposals that shared a common focus on enhancing the student experience. Those proposals were combined in a way that will help us make a real difference in the lives of students.

Two initiatives being funded through the TIF:

Success @ WMU

Success @ WMU is a large-scale campus commitment to build on past WMU success with small learning communities. The initiative ensures that all new undergraduate students have access to a learning community led by a peer leader assisted by faculty and staff. The learning communities are intended to not only help welcome and orient new students, but also to help them build skills essential for success in college. The effort will use the University's successful track record in supporting such groups as student athletes, former foster care youth, honors students, first-generation college students and Kalamazoo Promise students. Success @ WMU will dramatically expand our capacity for such outreach. We currently serve 1,650 this way. This coming fall, our goal is to serve 5,500.

Esports @ WMU

Esports @ WMU is a pilot effort that will extend the community-building effort to students' recreational hours, with WMU becoming one of a relatively small number of colleges and universities nationwide to formally sponsor video gaming. At WMU, we will designate an existing location to equip with 22 stations that can be used in the short term for competitions and skill development at the club sport level. Moving into the future, the facility will allow us to evaluate and consider the development of academic programming designed to meet the career demands of a field that will double its revenues to become a \$1.5 billion industry by 2020.

I've committed \$818,500 to Success @ WMU and \$250,000 to the esports initiative. You'll be able to read more detail this afternoon at <http://www.wmich.edu/news>. I want you to know as

well that additional ideas submitted were good, solid concepts we realized would improve campus life and service to our students. For five of those proposals, one or more of our vice presidents have stepped forward to provide funding and direction to ensure the idea becomes operational.

I am deeply grateful to members of my cabinet and senior staff for the time and effort they put into analyzing and screening the ideas offered and making thoughtful recommendations to me about which of the ideas offered has the potential to set us apart and make a significant difference in the lives of our students.

Thank you for your part in developing ideas to strengthen our campus and have a positive impact on our current and future students. We hope you all will continue to share your ideas. Now it's time to get started with implementing these initiatives. We look forward to bringing the entire campus community together to enhance Western Michigan University's capacity to transform lives.

Warmest regards,

Edward Montgomery
President
Western Michigan University