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## Budget for Next Fiscal Year

John M. Dunn

Western Michigan University, [john.dunn@wmich.edu](mailto:john.dunn@wmich.edu)

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# Budget for next fiscal year – 02/06/2014



President Dunn took his message to Lansing on Feb. 6.

## **Dear Colleagues:**

Yesterday, Gov. Snyder released his budget recommendations for the next fiscal year. He proposed an overall increase to the higher education appropriation of 6.1 percent. For WMU, the recommendation amounts to an increase of \$5.6 million or 5.8 percent.

While it's gratifying to see the state begin to make good on its promise to restore the funding that has been cut from its public universities, this recommendation only takes us part of the way to where we were just three years ago when our state appropriation was cut by 15 percent. And that major cut came after a decade of smaller, but still significant, cuts.

Looking at the big picture, the governor's recommendation would mean our state funding for next year would be slightly below the amount we received for the 1996-97 year. That's nearly 18 years without a real increase in state support. And adding to the difficulty is the fact the state also cut 90 percent of the financial aid it once provided to Michigan students. We've had to step in and provide more aid to keep our University accessible to qualified students.

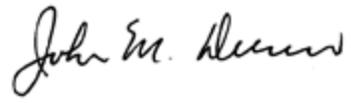
As you know, 97 percent of our operating budget comes from just two sources—state funding and tuition revenue. As the state has backed away from its funding responsibility, increased tuition has made up part of the difference. For the rest, we've balanced our budgets each year through targeted budget reductions, lean staffing and proactive savings in areas like health care and energy expenditures.

And through it all, your hard work and commitment to preserving the quality of the education we offer students has allowed us to continue to be one of the nation's best values. Without your dedication over the past years, we could not have accomplished so much.

I ask you to look closely at the facts above and be an advocate for higher education in general and this University in particular. When you hear a neighbor complain about "another increase for higher education," remind him that there hasn't really been an increase for nearly two decades. When you read about lawmakers contemplating state tax cuts because they have a nearly \$1 billion surplus to work with this year, please write or email your representatives to remind them that they still have not met their responsibility to Michigan's young people.

I will be in Lansing today to deliver those messages to state lawmakers. I will keep you posted as we move forward through the budget process this year.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John M. Dunn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a prominent "M".

John M. Dunn

President