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Alpha Lambda Delta Ceremony

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Alpha Lambda Delta Ceremony
John M. Dunn
Feb. 10, 2008

Good Afternoon

- I am enormously pleased to be here this afternoon to celebrate success. Student success is my mantra, and you've heard me talk about my commitment to your success before.

- I have to congratulate:

Students--nearly 200 of you who earned a 3.5 GPA or better during your first semester here.

- You worked hard, learned to balance studies with a host of new social and cultural opportunities
- You learned to take advantage of the opportunities here--wonderful faculty, great instructional facilities, people committed to helping you achieve success.

Parents and family members who helped prepare you for success.

- This is what you've worked so hard to achieve. You nurtured your sons and daughters and prepared them for success.
- You can certainly expect your students to be recognized again and again as they move through undergraduate years.

- You're being inducted today into Alpha Lambda Delta, one of the most prestigious honor societies in the nation.

- A national organization that's been in existence since 1924.
- Recognize those students who have succeeded in maintaining a 3.5 or higher GPA, and are in the top 20% of their class, in their first year.

-Mission is "encourage superior academic achievement... to promote intelligent living and a continued high standard of learning, and to assist students in recognizing and developing meaningful goals for their unique roles in society."

-As an Alpha Lambda Delta member, you join students at 250 chapters established around the nation at the nation's top colleges and universities.

- I like to talk about the Western Edge--the advantage you get by being a student at this university. That advantage extends even to being a member of this university's chapter of Alpha Lambda Delta. Every year, the national organization selects just a handful of chapters as the nation's best chapters. The honor goes to chapters that have demonstrated excellence in the areas of programming, internal communication and campus visibility. For 2007, the Western Michigan University chapter earned that distinction--the Order of the Torch--along with four other schools, including UCLA and the University of Texas-El Paso.

- You have the best of all possible worlds--a great university with a wonderful faculty and staff who stand behind you and a wide variety of resources like Alpha Lambda Delta to help support you as you move through your studies. As you advance through your undergraduate years, you'll discover more support opportunities and awards available to you. Some of you will be inducted into Phi Kappa Phi, another prestigious and highly selective honor society. Or you may be inducted into Phi Beta Kappa. I am enormously proud of the fact that there are only 97 public universities in the nation authorized to shelter a Phi Beta Kappa chapter, and WMU is one of that 97.

- I know many of you are members as well of the Lee Honors College, which also offers a network of support for top students like you. Our Honors College is one of

the oldest collegiate honors programs in the nation and, I think, emblematic of the kind of support this university has always provided for students like you.

- I have just returned from a quick trip to Florida where I met with alumni and friends of WMU. It was my privilege to spend time with Carl and Winifred Lee, for whom the Honors College is named. They maintain an intense interest in our campus, the Honors College and the kind of success students are finding here. They would be thrilled to be here today if they could and see the joy of accomplishment and the pride that is in every corner of this room.

- Alpha Lambda Delta, the Honors College, friends like the Lees, the faculty who teach you, the staff members who work to make campus life run smoothly for you, our academic facilities and your fellow students are all part of the Western Edge.

- You know we have talked a lot on and off the campus about the Western Edge. Most of the discussion lately has been on the four-year degree commitment and the retention scholarship, for which I suspect many of you may be eligible next year. But when I talk about the Western Edge, I'm always careful to point out that the Western Edge is more. It is the total experience that comes from being part of the WMU community.

- The Western Edge is something you'll carry with you when you leave us. We've spent a lot of time over the past year researching what brings students to WMU and just what kind of feelings they take away. Our alumni are extraordinarily positive about the spirit of this University that first attracted them, the caliber of the academic experience they found here and the level of success they've achieved as a result of their time as students here.

- You've taken the first bold steps toward what I know will be a successful undergraduate career for each and every one of you. We have high hopes for your time with us and great expectation for what you'll achieve in the future.
- Congratulations and KEEP IT UP. I'll be looking for honors cords on each of you as I shake your hand at commencement. That will happen sooner than you would have ever imagined possible.
- Thank you for choosing Western Michigan University and thank you for extending our campus culture of success.