Western Michigan University Commencement Exercises-6pm

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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

Saturday, April 26, 2008, 6 p.m.
John M. Dunn, President, Presiding

PROCESSIONAL
The Western Brass Ensemble
Steve Wolfinbarger, Conductor

President Dunn: “Good afternoon, I am John Dunn, president of Western Michigan University. I am completing my first year as your president and I am delighted and honored to be associated with such an outstanding institution.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the entire University community I want to welcome you to our two hundred ninety-second (292nd) commencement ceremony.

Will the audience please stand, as able, for the National Anthem, sung by the Brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia conducted by Marcus Jordan.”

(President Dunn steps away from the microphone)

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM
Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia
Marcus Jordan, Conductor
WELCOMING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTIONS

President Dunn:

“Commencement is a very special occasion - a time for celebration, a time for reflection, a time for closure, and a time for new beginnings.

Graduates, I applaud and thank you for choosing to participate in today’s event. Your presence allows us to recognize you and, equally important, to permit expressions of happiness, pride, and love which are so evident in the faces of those gathered here to observe you graduate.

This is YOUR day! You have only two responsibilities: 1) to allow us to honor you and; 2) to reflect and say thanks to those---and you know best who they are---who have contributed to your academic, professional and personal development.

The latter first---the THANKS part. Graduates, please stand and those in front of me, turn and face the audience and remain standing. Would the Moms and Dads in the audience please stand? (PAUSE) How about the Grandparents? And Great Grandparents? (PAUSE) Spouses, those special partners, and children? (PAUSE) Brothers and Sisters? (PAUSE) Aunts, Uncles and other Relatives? (PAUSE) And, Friends? (PAUSE)

This day is a very special day for you, our graduates, and it is my privilege and honor to preside at your commencement ceremony.

You will join more than 165,000 WMU alumni from all over Michigan and from around the world.

We shall award over 2600 degrees today.

More than 2100 of you will receive bachelor's degrees.
455 will receive master's degrees.

And 17 of you will be receiving doctoral degrees today.

The next group that deserves recognition is our faculty. They are the very heart of this University. Their intellect, creativity and passion for teaching inspire each of us. Their faith and confidence in your abilities throughout your college years have built the foundation for your professional future. Without them this institution would not exist. Therefore, it is to our faculty that we express special appreciation today. I ask the faculty members to stand and all of you to please join me in applauding them for the fine education they have provided to you! (PAUSE)

Let me now turn to my other colleagues on the stage and I ask each of them to rise as I mention them by category.

They are the executive officers, deans and chairs of the University, and representatives of the Faculty Senate, the University Chapter of the American Association of University Professors, the Administrative Professional Association, the Professional Support Staff Organization, and the Alumni Association. (PAUSE)

Our University is governed by an autonomous Board of Trustees, appointed by the governor of the State of Michigan. The trustees are private citizens who serve the University without remuneration and who set policy direction for the campus. The University is very grateful to these men and women. Representing the Board of Trustees is Trustee Larry Tolbert. (PAUSE)

At this time, I would like to recognize those of you who are graduating with honors. Will those with honor cords, McNair Scholars and all honorary society members, please rise so that we can recognize the special distinctions you have earned. (PAUSE)

We also wish to acknowledge participants of our "Study Abroad Programs." These graduates participated in study programs around the globe. (PAUSE)
All of our graduates have their own stories of the determination, commitment and sacrifice that go into achieving what we celebrate today. I now ask Vice President for Student Affairs Diane Anderson to share a few stories that reflect the spirit each of you and your families have brought to today’s commencement and to remind you how special the class of 2008 truly is.”

(President Dunn to his seat and Vice President Anderson to the podium.)

Vice President Anderson: STUDENT STORIES

“All of our graduates have inspiring stories to tell about the dedication, hard work and support that it took for them to get here for this important occasion. There isn't time to tell everyone's story, so I'll just share a little information about a few of the wonderful people we're graduating today.

But before I do, I'd like to mention that WMU enrolls some 230 veterans who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan since 2001. This is the highest number of these veterans at a four-year institution in Michigan.

In all, more than 350 military veterans are attending college here. A total of 46 of them are graduating today, and several will be redeployed once they receive their diplomas. In addition, four of today's graduates have been participating in the Army ROTC program offered through our Department of Military Science and will be commissioned as second lieutenants.

They include Thomas Leiter (LEYE-ter) of Battle Creek, Michigan, who's earning a bachelor's degree in interpersonal communication and will be serving in the Army's quartermaster branch, and Michael Pultusker of West Bloomfield, Michigan, who's earning a bachelor's degree in political science and will be serving in the Army's armor branch.

We're immensely proud of those cadets, as we are of everyone who participates in ROTC and everyone who has served in the military. We're
enormously grateful for your dedication and the sacrifices you've made on our behalf.

We also take great pride in our College of Arts and sciences. With more than 40 undergraduate programs that span everything from Africana studies to telecommunications and information management, this college is known for attracting students whose desire to give back to others is as impressive as their academic abilities. Such is the case with Jacqui Volkmann of Holland, Michigan, and Ashley Spohn of Plymouth, Michigan, who are both earning bachelor's degrees in communication. One of WMU's larger academic units, the School of Communication is home to more than 1,500 undergraduate majors and minors, and 100 graduate students.

**Jacqui** is a double major in organizational communication and Spanish. She's a member of the Golden Key International Honour Society, Phi Kappa Phi and the Lambda Pi Eta national communication honors society. Jacqui has been recognized by Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges and was named this year's Student Leader of the Year. Jacqui has served as president of the Campus Activities Board, been a member of the Drive Safe Kalamazoo executive board, and for the last four years, helped with the orientation and first-year experience programs. Through these campus activities, she's made major contributions to promoting school pride and developing a safe and welcoming environment for her fellow students.

**Ashley** has also made remarkable investments in WMU's student organizations. As president of the Student Alumni Association, she developed inventive new projects that contributed to the University's recruitment and development efforts, and won her group the Golden Bronco Award for Best Registered Student Organization. Ashley's advisors tell me that she has also displayed exceptional perseverance and leadership as a member of our commendable Greek community.

Another facet of WMU college life would be our top-notch athletics programs and student-athletes. Our sports-minded scholars excel in the classroom as well as in competition. Among them is Anthony Gebhart of Addison, Illinois, who's earning a bachelor's degree in economics. Anthony
transferred from Lake Forest College just before the start of the 2005-2006 football season. As a walk-on, his ethic on the field earned him a scholarship and playing time. Last season he was named team captain. But Anthony has been a role model in the classroom as well. He's earned First Team Academic All-America status and was twice named First Team Academic All-District by ESPN Magazine. In addition, he was honored this winter as the Division OneA Scholar Athlete of the Year by the Michigan Chapter of the National Football Foundation.

We also have 17 doctoral candidates receiving their degrees today. The road to obtaining a doctor of philosophy or doctor of education degree requires an extraordinary amount of persistence and hard work. For Jonathon Muterera, an international student now living in Sterling Heights, Michigan, it also required patience and a sense of humor. Close to completing his Ph.D. in public administration, Jonathon returned to Africa following the death of a family member. Being a conscientious student, he had the foresight to get a letter from his doctoral committee before he left so Immigrations and Customs Enforcement officials would know exactly when he needed to take his comprehensive exam. In spite of this, Jonathon was singled out to receive an extensive background investigation and updated security clearance when he tried to re-enter the United States. He ended up stranded overseas a lot longer than anyone anticipated, necessitating one of the most flexible comprehensive exams WMU has ever administered. Jonathon's doctoral committee ended up having to ship part of his exam, and e-mail the rest. The stranded student then had to drive six hours to find a computer that he could use to complete the test.

It's particularly fitting that we also mention Zill-e-Huma (ZIHL-lay WHO-mah) Kamal of Glendale, Colorado, who's earning a doctoral degree in computer science. ZIHL-lay WHO-mah came to WMU by way of Sunway College in Malaysia, with which we have our oldest transnational education partnership.

ZIHL-lay WHO-mah knew about WMU well before she completed her bachelor's degree here. Years ago, her father came to our University to add a doctoral degree to the two master's degrees he already had. Her father had his heart set on getting a Ph.D. in nuclear physics, but due to
unexpected circumstances, he had to leave after earning his master's in that discipline. Now, ZIHL-lay WHO-mah is fulfilling her father's doctoral dream. And that's a pretty good way to thank the person who suggested that she—a true computer novice—pursue computer science in college. As a WMU doctoral candidate, she's taught programming and introductory computer science courses, earning praise in the process from students as well as faculty colleagues, and through her research, ZIHL-lay WHO-mah has helped lay the foundation for a concept called "Opportunistic Networks," which holds great promise in the area of backup communication connectivity for emergency preparedness and response teams.

Speaking of international students, I'd like to end by mentioning two of our U.S. scholars who have reveled in broadening their horizons by participating in overseas study and working with our study abroad office.

First is Jacob Tardani (tahr-DAHN-ee) of Muskegon, Michigan, who is earning his bachelor's degree. Jake worked with our advisors to complete a student-planned major in Arabic language and culture. He has a flair for languages, and last year won a Gilman scholarship to study for a semester at the Alexandria Center for Languages in Egypt. In addition, Jake worked as a student staff member in the study abroad office, and helped many of his fellow students take advantage of WMU's numerous overseas study programs.

Last, but certainly not least, is Gregory Flynn of Kalamazoo, who's earning a bachelor's degree in English with a creative writing emphasis. Greg is one of our star Japanese language students. Greg spent a year studying at one of our sister schools in Japan, and has been active on campus in several ways. He's served as a contact person for the study abroad office, providing information to students interested in going to school in Japan; as a member and vice president of the Japan Club; and as a grass-roots organizer promoting exchanges between the American and Japanese students on our campus. Greg's skills and enthusiasm to keep learning helped him be approved recently for the Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program, where young college and university graduates live in Japan for a year while teaching English to students in Japanese schools.
Congratulations and the best of luck to all of you.”

(Vice President Anderson to her seat and President Dunn to the podium.)

President Dunn: “There are many more stories that could be told. Many of you held down jobs working long hours while being full- or part-time students.

Some finished your studies in record time while others enjoyed the University so much that you extended your stay and became what we affectionately call our "super seniors." (PAUSE)

A great number of you are international students who have studied far away from your home and family for many years. Some of your parents have traveled half way around the world to be here with you today. As you journey back to your home countries, you have our best wishes and the hope that you take fond memories of Michigan and your University with you. (PAUSE)

And many of our graduates are non-traditional students with family and job obligations and for whom being a student came after family and work. We have great admiration for your achievements. (PAUSE)

While you have worked hard we hope that you have also enjoyed your time here at the University. For many of you, this has been your first experience away from home and family. So while you have learned much from your course work, we are sure that you have also learned much about life and living. (PAUSE)
We hope that the many friendships you have formed will stand the test of time and that you will include among them associations that you have made with our faculty and staff. For just as we have been an important part of your life, you too have become a part of ours. (PAUSE)

Trustee Larry Tolbert will now extend a welcome to you on behalf of the Board.”

(President Dunn to his seat and Trustee Tolbert to podium)

Trustee Tolbert: “Good afternoon!

This is a great day for all of us because Western Michigan University--its governing board, faculty and staff--and your families, friends and peers are all very proud of your academic achievements. Congratulations to the members of the Class of 2008. Please accept our best wishes for your continued success. We hope that you will keep in contact with our alma mater and that you will come back to visit us from time to time. Again, congratulations, and good luck!”

(President Dunn goes to podium)

CONFERRING OF DEGREES

President Dunn: “It is now time to call upon Vice Provost James Gilchrist to come forward for the conferring of degrees.”

(Vice Provost Gilchrist joins President Dunn at podium.)
Vice Provost Gilchrist: “Will those receiving a Doctoral or Master's Degree please rise, as able. (PAUSE)

President Dunn, it is my pleasure to present these candidates who have completed all the requirements for a Doctoral or Master's Degree as prescribed by the graduate faculty of this University.” (PAUSE)

President Dunn: “By the authority of the State of Michigan, vested in the Board of Trustees, I hereby confer upon you the appropriate degrees indicated in your programs with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities appertaining thereto.

Please be seated.”

Vice Provost Gilchrist: “Will Dean Thomas Kent of the College of Arts and Sciences, please come forward.”

(Province Provost Gilchrist introduces Dean Kent and then returns to his seat as the dean comes forward.)

Dean Kent: “Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through the College of Arts and Sciences, please rise. (PAUSE)

President Dunn, it is my pleasure to present these candidates who have completed all requirements for the Bachelor's degree as prescribed by the faculty of this College.”

(Only one college - do not say “please, be seated”)
President Dunn: “By the authority of the State of Michigan, vested in the Board of Trustees, I hereby confer upon you the appropriate degrees indicated in your programs with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities appertaining thereto.

Please be seated.” (PAUSE)

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PRESENTATION OF DOCTORAL DIPLOMAS (NO MUSIC - NAMES ANNOUNCED)

President Dunn: “Will the doctoral candidates please come forward as Dr. Lewis Pyenson, Dean of the Graduate College announces their names.

Trustee Tolbert and the graduates’ advisors will place the hoods on the shoulders of the doctoral graduates.” (PAUSE)

(President Dunn and Trustee Tolbert to diploma table and Dean Pyenson to podium. The doctoral candidates will rise and proceed to the stage. Guides will assist in directing the candidates. Dean Pyenson will call candidates/advisors forward. He will indicate the candidates by name and announce their degrees. President Dunn will present labeled diplomas on diploma table. Trustee Tolbert and advisors will place hoods on shoulders of doctoral graduates.)

Trustee Tolbert and Advisors:

Shai Brosh (April)
Kristen DeVall
Nuria Ibañez Quintana
Emily Lenning
Jonathon Muterera
John Risley
Rajeev Sooreea  (April)

PRESENTATION OF MASTER’S DIPLOMAS
(NO MUSIC – NAMES ANNOUNCED)

Vice Provost Gilchrist:  “Will the graduates receiving Master’s degrees please come forward to receive their diplomas as Ms. Michele McLaughlin announces their names.” (PAUSE)

(Ms. McLaughlin will go to microphone at right of platform.  Dean Kent and Vice President Rinker will assist President Dunn and Trustee Tolbert with presentation of diplomas.)

PRESENTATION OF UNDERGRADUATE DIPLOMAS
(NO MUSIC – NAMES ANNOUNCED)

Vice Provost Gilchrist:  “Will the graduates receiving Bachelor’s degrees please come forward to receive their diplomas as their names are announced by Ms. McLaughlin and Mr. James Williams.” (PAUSE)

(Mr. Williams joins Ms. McLaughlin at microphones.  Dean Kent and Dean McCloud will assist President Dunn and Trustee Tolbert with presentation of diplomas.)
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INDUCTION

President Dunn: “Will Mr. Kirk Hoffman, president of the Western Michigan University Alumni Association, please come forward. Mr. Hoffman is vice president of the King Trust Company, Spring Arbor.

(President Dunn returns to his seat and Mr. Hoffman to the podium)

Mr. Hoffman: REMARKS

(Mr. Hoffman returns to his seat and President Dunn returns to podium.)

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CONCLUDING REMARKS

“Congratulations, Class of 2008!

We are at the end of our ceremony. Please permit me a few minutes to share a final thought or two. I intend to heed the words of Thomas Jefferson who said never use two words when one will do. Therefore, I intend to be brief.

This is the end of my first academic year as president. You are the first class I have been able to know and follow throughout the year. It has been my privilege to do so. Thank you for the warm reception and for your support! And, special thanks to those of you who have accepted me as one of your Facebook Friends!

There are two students graduating today to whom, in particular, I owe a debt of gratitude for making this year so memorable: Rosana Alsaud, who served this year as chair of the Graduate Student Advisory Committee, and
Chris Praedel, who served as president of the Western Student Association. I could not have asked for the assistance of a better set of student leaders. Their counsel, input, friendship and commitment to you--our students--and to the University have been commendable. They have been responsive, enterprising, helpful and a joy to know. I will miss them both.

Graduates, we are proud of you. Earning a degree is a significant accomplishment; an honor for which you should be justifiably proud. You are the recipient of a first-class education at a world-class university, provided by an outstanding faculty and made possible through the support and affection of family and friends--many of whom are gathered here.

You join an elite group of men and women who have successfully earned undergraduate or graduate degrees here. You have accomplished this in a very challenging time in the history of the world. Domestic and international crises consume much of our media attention and thoughts.

Yet, we see positive signs that inspire and motivate us to even greater heights. As you make your way in the world, I promise you will be struck by how often you learn about or meet a fellow WMU alum. They are literally everywhere and playing significant roles in their professions and world affairs.

You'll find our nearly 165,000 alumni in some surprising places.

• If accounting is your field, you might want to know about 1974 alumnus Dennis Nally, who is the chairman and senior partner of the US firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers. He visited campus this semester and told our business students that his WMU education “served him incredibly well” during his celebrated career.

• As you watch news reports this weekend about the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk making a high-profile and diplomatically tricky port call in Hong Kong, take note of the commander in charge of that warship, its 5,000-sailor crew, and its full complement of aircraft. He's Capt. Todd Zecchin (ZECH-in), a 1980 WMU alumnus.
• Should you head to the University of Minnesota for graduate school, you might want to know that the Big Ten University's president, Dr. Robert Bruininks, is a fellow alum. He graduated from WMU in 1964.

• If you're assigned to help your company or organization improve its use of information technology, you may work with Matthew Male, a 1998 alumnus in business administration and computer information systems who is president and CEO of BlueGranite. His company, which is headquartered in our Business Technology and Research Park, was part of Michigan's inaugural list of "50 Companies to Watch," and has been named one of West Michigan's "101 Best and Brightest Companies to Work For."

• If you're a fan of television's "The Shield," you're already familiar with L. Michael Burt, a 2003 alum in organizational communication. He's just finished his second season as the actor in the role of Moses for the FX show that's been called the best police drama on TV.

• Laura Stemmler earned her BA in Broadcast/Cable Production in 1999. Today, she's in Bristol, Conn., as an associate director for ESPN and she has two Emmy's sitting on her mantle for her work on the SportsCenter post game show.

• And for all of us so concerned about the health of our environment, it's comforting to know there's a Bronco playing a significant role. Cara Mroczek (ROE-zak), who earned her B.A. in political science and environmental studies at WMU in 2002, is a trial attorney in the Environmental Enforcement Section of the Environmental and Natural Resources Division of the Department of Justice. Her responsibilities include litigation on behalf of the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water acts, as well as the Superfund law.

That's just a snapshot--information about a few WMU alumni who, like you, left WMU determined to do great things. Doing great things requires dedication of one's chosen profession. It also means committing to serve others--your family, friends and those less fortunate. Be generous with your time, talent and resources, and if you do, the rewards--extrinsically
and intrinsically-- will be plentiful. Some of the world’s most brilliant humanists --Albert Schweitzer, Mother Teresa to name just two--remind us time and time again that true happiness is gained only when we give generously to others. George Carver Washington may have said it best, “How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and the strong. Because, someday in your life, you will have been all of these.”

Your faculty and all of our honored guests join with me in wishing you a life filled with service, success and happiness. Here on campus, we’ll be watching proudly as you move forward with your careers. We ask only that you remain true to yourself and the values you cherish, and that you live each day in a way that makes you proud of who you are.

As Robert F. Kennedy put it, “Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation.”

Continue to challenge and nurture your mind. Remember, too, that good health is essential throughout your life. Take time daily to exercise. We all know that physical activity is good for your heart. Experts now agree that activity is equally good for your mind--giving you clearer thinking and a better memory. I believe that activity and discipline also nurture a person’s soul. So, please, make your total health a top priority in your life.

Finally, although you have graduated from this University, we invite you to stay connected to us. We need your help in preparing the next generation of professionals. You are partners in this endeavor and we--the faculty and I--want you to know that you will always be a part of us. Keep active, keep learning, and keep in touch!

And, finally, what a great day to be a BRONCO!!
And now, please enjoy the slide presentation prepared for you and remember the good times, the people, places and things from your years here at Western Michigan University.”

(Slide Show - Music by Professor Steve Zegree)

President Dunn: “In closing, there are many people who work very hard to make this commencement ceremony meaningful and memorable for you.

Thank you to Marcus Jordan and the brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Professor Steve Wolfinbarger and the Western Brass Ensemble, Professor Steve Zegree, pianist for the slide production, the commencement committee, and the many people who work behind the scenes and contribute so much to our commencement. (PAUSE)

And finally graduates, thank you for all that you have given to us and for all that you will be giving to society in the years to come. Make your mark on this world, fulfill your dreams and always remember those who helped to make this all possible for you!

May you enjoy happiness, peace, and health.

At this time the Brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia will present the Alma Mater of Western Michigan University. After their performance, the Alma Mater will be repeated, at which time, all of you are invited to sing. Please rise for the Alma Mater and remain standing until the platform party leaves the stage.”
ALMA MATER
Western, we sing to you Brown and Gold
Western, we bring to you faith untold,
You challenge and inspire,
Your hope is our desire,
We sing to you our Alma Mater, Brown and Gold

RECESSIONAL
Western Brass Ensemble
Steve Wolfinbarger, Conductor

(President Dunn and Trustee Tolbert lead to march off stage.)