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Orientation Welcome

John M. Dunn

Western Michigan University, john.dunn@wmich.edu

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Orientation Welcome
Dr. John M. Dunn
June '08

Good afternoon. It's my job and my delight today is to offer the official formal welcome to you as beginning students. We're glad you're here. You made a great decision when you chose Western Michigan University. We expect great things from you while you're a student here, and we know you'll accomplish great things when you're a proud Bronco alum--and believe me, that will happen sooner than you might think it possible at this point. Your next few years will be full ones and they will fly by with exceptional speed.

You are now part of the Bronco family.

Your orientation is a time to become more familiar with the campus. We like to let you get comfortable before you are introduced to both the rigors and the fun of academic life. We also encourage you to get it right, right from the start. We want you to take advantage of everything we offer here so you can realize the full WMU experience--what we call The Western Edge.

If you do your part and live up to your part of the bargain, you will succeed here. Our faculty members are outstanding. I'm so confident of our faculty's ability to help you succeed that we launched a program last summer to ensure you graduate in the shortest time frame possible. That graduation compact is an official part of the Western Edge. It says if you do your part, we'll make sure you have the support and guidance and the classes you need to graduate quickly.

What do you have to do to fill your part of the deal? Well you've begun your work already by enrolling.

But this is the simplest way for me to explain what it will take for you to succeed and take advantage of this university and the Western Edge. I share this information with every new student, and I've been known to bring it up a few more times as I speak to students during each semester. Here it is, and yes, there will be a quiz. It's the three-part WMU formula for success.

- You've got to go to class.
- You've got to find the library and plan to spend time there.
- You've got to take advantage of all the advising and career exploration resources we have ready to help you.

Beyond that, there's a formal program we call the Western Edge. It's designed to help you achieve your goals by adopting some basic behaviors that will help you succeed. You can take advantage of part of it or all of it--whatever works best to help you succeed. You will learn more about it during orientation, but here are the basics:

- If you take 30 credits a year, see your advisor every semester and lock in a major early, you'll be walking across this stage in four years-- less if you're transferring here with credits already earned or a bit more if you opt into a curriculum designed to take longer.
- If you achieve a 3.0 GPA on the first 30 credits in your first year, we'll provide \$500 to help toward your second-year costs.

- If you live in the residence halls this year and decide to live there again next year and after, we'll freeze your room and board rates for up to four years.
- And we'll guarantee that if you decide to become part of the Western Edge graduation compact, meet the requirements and stick to your degree plan, we'll make sure the classes you need to take are available when you need them.
- Finally, to accomplish all of this, you will have access to advisors who will help you plan your path to a degree.

When you earn that degree, the world will be yours. You'll own a degree from Western Michigan University and that's a degree that will open doors and give you an edge in life. If you plan to go to graduate school, a WMU degree will mean something when you apply. If you want to begin your career right away, a WMU degree will be your ticket, because employers know the caliber of the people who graduate from this University and they'll be eager to hire you. That's all part of what we call the Western Edge as well.

I'm still somewhat new here, but I've known about WMU and its reputation in the world for many years. I'm so proud to be part of this great University. I want you to feel that pride as well. I hope you feel it now, and I hope that pride swells with each year you're here. You made the right choice by coming here. Years from now when you look back on your college years, you'll understand the benefits of being a Bronco more fully. You'll know then the kind of impact WMU had on your life.

We hear from our alumni all the time how this University and what they learned and experienced here changed their lives.

Take advantage of everything this university offers. Your studies come first, of course, but being a successful person means being able to balance work and fun. It means trying new things, meeting new people and learning outside the classroom. Don't miss a chance to do any of that.

I hope to see you here in Miller watching Broadway shows; across the plaza at the Richmond Center for Visual Arts or at the Dalton Center; in Bronco Stadium, Lawson Arena and Read Fieldhouse for athletic events; on the intramural fields having fun; and downtown enjoying the Kalamazoo community. Think about joining a student organization and plan on playing a leadership role now or in the future. Consider a study abroad program. Explore. Make friends with a faculty member (you'll be surprised at how easy it is). Read the paper everyday to find out what's happening and who's speaking on campus. Go to everything that sounds even remotely interesting. In short, take advantage of everything WMU has to offer. You will never regret it.

Today, I'd like you to take a few simple facts away with you. Take them to heart and hold them close for the next few years. You're part of WMU now, and I've got another three-part mantra for you to repeat today and everyday.

- I'm a student at one of the nation's top universities.
- I'm surrounded by people ready to help me.
- I'm on my way to success

I'm looking forward to getting to know as many of you as possible. When you see me on campus, don't be shy about introducing yourself and talking. I try to greet and talk with as many students as I can, but I'd love it if you tap me on the shoulder as we're standing in line at Bigbees and just tell me who you are and how your student experience is going. As the years speed by--and believe me they will--I will watch your progress with pride. In due course, I'll be standing on the Miller Auditorium stage to shake your hand and present your diploma. It will be a moment in which we both will feel a great sense of accomplishment.

Welcome to WMU. Enjoy your orientation activities, and get ready for the ride of a lifetime.