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Spring Welcome Fest Remarks

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• Good morning, Broncos! We are all glad you're here and ready to help you be successful students and, ultimately, become successful WMU alumni.

• I've had a chance to meet some of you at earlier events--campus visits or orientation, for instance. Each time, I've tried to let you know how eager this University is to embrace you and make you part of our campus community--our family.

• Today's a little different. It's a celebration of the start of a new semester and the start of your student career here. And this is the first time we've ever had an event like this. Each fall we hold a Bronco Bash to welcome everyone and celebrate the start of a school year. We do some serious celebrating to get things started right in the fall. But we decided we need to expand our thinking--and our celebrating--a bit to welcome you and mark the start of your first semester here as well.

• If you look around you this morning, you'll see all kinds of people, representing WMU departments from across the campus. They're eager to get to know you and try to answer any questions you have. Test them. Ask them some tough questions. They're ready. You'll also see representatives of student organizations who want you to get involved and are eager to let you know how to get started.

• During this program, you'll hear from a representative of the Western Student Association--the best student government at any Michigan university. I'll vouch for
them. And you'll also hear from some first-year, transfer and international students who will tell you a little bit about student life at WMU.

• My role is to welcome you. Please consider yourself welcomed. I've also been asked to "deliver the academic charge." That's a pretty serious term to convey one simple message I have for you. Take advantage of every opportunity you find at Western Michigan University.

• This is a great University, full of people doing amazing things. You'll meet and get to know faculty members who are known around the world for their expertise. They'll welcome you into their classrooms and their labs, and they will be delighted if you should find your calling in their field. The education you receive from them will truly last a lifetime. The degree or degrees you earn here will be credentials that will serve you well no matter what your next steps in life are. Count on it.

• But your education will not happen only in the classroom. 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 it—sports, plays lectures, clubs, concerts, exhibits, service projects and social opportunities. Take it all in. There will be few times in your later life when the opportunities are so plentiful and few times when you can so easily meet and get to know people from such diverse backgrounds.

2009 is going to be a great year for you and for Western Michigan University. It will be full of challenges, of course, but, in the words of philosopher Joshua
Marine, “Challenges are what make life interesting; overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.”

May your life at WMU be interesting and the life it takes you to meaningful. Enjoy being a Bronco.

Thank you.