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## International Student Welcome

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International Student Welcome  
John M. Dunn  
Jan. 9, 2008

- I am delighted to be here this evening to welcome you to the Western Michigan University campus for spring 2009 and many semesters to come.
- You made a good decision when you selected Western Michigan University as the place to study. We have a long tradition of welcoming international students and giving them the tools they need to succeed. Around the world today, you'll find WMU graduates who are leaders in their governments, prominent business people in their home nations and successful artists and writers. We have alumni who are ambassadors, journalists, engineers and scientists.
- We have alumni who are now parents of prospective college students who are looking for their own international experience. I chalk that up to the fact that they had wonderful student experiences during their years with us. I am confident you will have a similar experience as a student and that you will take those life-changing experiences back to your home nations and make them part of your personal world view.
- I know from working with international students in the past that the first few weeks here are the most challenging. You are getting to know both a new school and a new nation. There's lots to learn and lot of investigating to do. We want to help. As you travel around campus in the coming weeks, look for faculty and staff members wearing the big brown and gold Welcome button.

We want to answer your questions and help you in any way we can. You also have a wonderful International Student Services staff at the Haenicke Institute. They will be your first point of reference in the coming months and years. And by the way, I like to point out to new international students that the Haenicke Institute is named

for former WMU President Diether Haenicke, a native of Germany who exemplifies the term "international scholar."

- You are joining a university community with students and faculty members who come from more than 80 countries. You bring with you the rich traditions of your home nations, your communities and your families. You bring to our campus an incredible sense of vitality. You may come to us to expand your own horizons, but your presence here expands the world for many of our students. You'll meet American students who come from small communities and have not traveled internationally or had the opportunity to live and work with people from other cultures. You'll find them eager to get to know you.

- Believe me, I know. I was a student like that once. I grew up in a small town in Illinois, and I had opportunities to live and work with international students like you when I began my studies at Northern Illinois University. It changed my life.

- Today, I am passionate about the importance of students having the opportunity to talk, live, study and eat with people from diverse backgrounds. The ability to do that is the greatest gift we give our students. I have the privilege of leading a campus with more than 1,000 international students and 500 U.S. students who study abroad each year. I want both of those numbers to increase.

We'd like to welcome even more international students here to study, and we want even more of our domestic students to travel and study in your homelands.

- I'm looking forward to getting to know you. When you see me on campus, please stop me, introduce yourself and let me know how things are going for you. I really want to know what is working for you and whether there are things we can do better.

- Enjoy the rest of this reception and have a wonderful stay at Western Michigan University.

