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## Florida Trip Reception Remarks/Bullets

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Florida Trip Reception Remarks/Bullets  
Dr. John M. Dunn  
March 2009

- It's a pleasure for Linda and me to be here, to be surrounded by those who are so proud of and care so deeply for your University, Western Michigan University. Although our relationship with Western began just over two years ago, when I became a candidate for the presidency, Linda and I share your commitment to and your love for our great University.
- I always look forward to gatherings with our graduates and friends and to the opportunity to give you a sense of what is happening on campus. Tonight I want to share with you a few examples student and faculty success and recognition.
- But before I do that, I would like to offer a personal tribute to Diether.
- (Naples if Lees in attendance: Seeing Carl and Winnie Lee in the audience) I will begin by talking about the Honors College, the Lee Honors College named in recognition and tribute to the generosity of the Lees, who shared Diether's dream for a new home for the college. Western Michigan University's honors college is one of the oldest honors programs in the nation.

The academic credentials of students in our **Lee Honors College** equal or surpass those of students in some of the state and nation's most elite private colleges. In mid-January, we had 512 of the top students from ten states on our campus to compete for our Medallion Scholarships--\$40,000 over four years.

Just 15 of those students will be named Medallion Scholars, but we expect many of the rest to become members of our honors program. To qualify for the competition

and an automatic invitation to our honors college requires a 3.7 or higher high school GPA and a score of at least a 26 ACT or 1170 SAT.

- The stories of student successes are plentiful, but I will share just a few:
  - Just this past week, **Sarah Gerbig**, a senior mechanical engineering student from Grand Blanc MI was one of only 24 student leaders chosen nationwide to participate in the annual Society of Automotive Engineers International Leadership Development Program.

This program recognizes promising student leaders. Sarah joins students selected from schools such as University of Michigan, Ohio State University, Auburn and the University of Alabama. Impressive company and she will no doubt be equally impressive.

- Our football team was not the only bowl eligible team on campus this year. The three Western Michigan University students who comprise **our Ethics Bowl** team are spending their spring break in Cincinnati Ohio where they will compete for the national Ethic Bowl Championship.

The team qualified for the national competition by finishing among the top three teams in regional competition last November. (Competition is Thursday, March 5)

- Speaking of students successfully competing on the national stage, we are extremely proud of the successful athletic seasons on the football field and on the volleyball court. Members of these two Bronco teams have shown themselves to be leaders both in and out of the classroom.

Our **football** team, which had a solid season and was invited to play Rice University at the Texas Bowl, was led by players like offensive lineman and Academic All-American Phil Swanson and quarterback Tim Hiller, an MBA student carrying a 4.0 GPA.

Our **volleyball** team just won its 10th Mid-American Conference title, advanced to the Sweet 16 round of the NCAA championship was ranked among the nation's top 25 teams. My heart was warmed even more by fact that two of the team's stars—

Katie Eberling and Jillian Mitchell--were to the Academic All-MAC volleyball team. Katie was also named to ESPN the Magazine's Academic All-District IV first team earlier this season.

- The success of our students as well as the success of our graduates – your achievements, your accomplishments – speaks to the quality of our University, and most directly to the quality of our faculty. The Council for International Exchange of Scholars in Washington, D.C., recently announced the faculty members from across the country named as **2008-09 Fulbright Scholars**.

Among these honored professors who will travel, research and teach abroad are three Western Michigan University educators--from the disciplines of chemistry, comparative religion and history. Among Michigan's research universities, only the University of Michigan, with five, had more faculty members named Fulbright Scholars this year. WMU and Wayne State University have three each and Michigan State University has two.

- One of our faculty members who was a Fulbright Scholar two years ago is **Dr. Matthew Mingus**. He's an expert on government reform will take a break from the college classroom and put his knowledge to work by serving as an advisor to develop Iraqi local and provincial governments for the next year.

Dr. Mingus will serve as a governance advisor for the U.S. Department of State in Iraq for 2009. He left Jan. 21 to start mandatory training in the Washington, D.C., area and should be on the ground in Iraq by mid-February.

Mingus, a 10-year veteran of the WMU faculty and director of the School of Public Affairs and Administration, will take a yearlong unpaid leave to take a post with the embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team based at Camp Taji in Iraq. His fellow team members include U.S. Foreign Service officers and specialists in political affairs, governance, agricultural and economic development, education, health and the rule of law.

- I also want to mention **Dr. Quentin Smith**, professor of philosophy, is internationally known for his work on the philosophy of time and the origins of the universe. He's currently featured on 14 different episodes of the new PBS series "Closer to Truth" and late last year, a Scottish crew flew into Kalamazoo to interview him for a 2009 BBC program called "The Search for Truth."

All of this, of course, means he is being seen by millions of television viewers and extending his reputation--and the University's among audiences around the world. He's been attracting this kind of attention for about a decade and has been featured in the New York Times, the Chicago Tribune and on an earlier PBS series.

- Let me also say a few words about our work on building a **green campus**.

Western Michigan University is making huge strides in setting the standard for campus sustainability. Our energy saving initiatives continue to attract the attention of both the private sector and our sister institutions around the country.

On nearly a monthly basis, we entertain operations teams from around the country who visit our high-tech energy center to ask: "How do you grow your campus by 19 percent at the same time you reduce your energy consumption by 17 percent?" We're developing "best practices" for campus energy savings. We just avoided nearly \$500,000 in costs over the holiday recess through aggressive approaches to energy savings.

- I'll Close with an update about **enrollment**. Last year when I was here I pledged we would have an increase in enrollment for Fall 2008 and I am pleased to report that we had growth in all important facets – new freshmen, graduate students, international students and minority students.

Enrollment – admission and retention continue to be a priority for the entire University community, including many of our alumni who communicate with admitted students as part of the Alumni Association's Alumni Admission Ambassador.

I am so proud to share some news with you that we haven't had a chance to announce it publicly yet as we learned just days ago that our admission materials won several national awards.

- Stop here and open it up for your questions and comments.