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WMU Junior Spotlight Event

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• I'm happy to see you here today and so pleased that you are considering Western Michigan University for your college education. You've already made a good decision by putting WMU on your shortlist. I know what you experience today will keep you interested, and I hope to see you back on campus again in the coming months as you move into the critical final months of your decision-making process.

• As president of WMU, I'm in a fairly unique position to meet and interact with students at every point in the higher education process. On the front end, I get to meet student and families who are just beginning the college search process--students and families like you. There aren't many things I like more than introducing prospective students to this University, because I know this is the kind of place where you will find the faculty and support structure that will help you succeed.

• At the other end of the continuum, I get to see former students who found success on our campus and have turned their experiences here into successful careers. I have the opportunity to meet and get to know our alumni all over the world. They are living successful lives and earning recognition in their chosen fields. Just this week, for instance, we
celebrated the accomplishments of two alumni with wildly differing backgrounds.

-One of our very recent alumni and an incredibly talented young performer named Matt Giraud was attracting attention all over the United States as a standout on Fox's "American Idol." Matt earned a communication degree from WMU in 2007 and was a member of our acclaimed Gold Company vocal jazz ensemble. You'll be hearing more about him.

-While we were following Matt, we learned from the Wall Street Journal, MSNBC and other international news organizations that Dennis M. Nally, who earned an accounting degree here in 1974, has just been named the global leader of PricewaterhouseCoopers, the multinational accounting giant. He joined PWC right out of college and came back last year to tell business students that his WMU education has served him "incredibly well" all the way up to the top of his profession.

- I see students thinking about attending WMU and I meet our successful alumni. But by far, my greatest privilege is getting to know students during their time here on campus and standing on the stage of Miller Auditorium to congratulate them when they earn their degrees.
• On Tuesday, I will preside over a convocation of 46 Presidential Scholars—graduating seniors who have earned the highest award we give to an undergraduate. Each academic department is allowed to pick just one Presidential Scholar to honor as their best and brightest students. Five or six years ago, those Presidential Scholars were doing just what you're doing today—checking us out. Now they're getting ready to graduate after college careers filled with incredible accomplishments.

- One student has presented his research at Argonne National Laboratory.
- Another is both a pilot and an award-winning dancer.
- There's another who wants to be a diplomat and is earning degrees from both WMU and a Ukranian university.

They all sat right where you're sitting not so long ago. Today, they're getting ready to leave us, and we can't wait to see what they do next.

• They'll be successful because they took full advantage of WMU. This is one of fewer than just 200 national research universities, and one that has managed to keep its focus on student learning and student success.

• You can succeed here, and I look forward to seeing your walk across the Miller Auditorium stage sometime in the future—but not before
we've had a chance to get to know you and find out just what you can accomplish.

• Enjoy your day here. Be sure to ask all the questions you want to. We'll make sure you get the answers that will help you succeed.