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Traverse City Reception Remarks/Bullets
Dr. John M. Dunn
June 11, 2011

• Good evening. 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 Western Michigan University—our 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 having an opportunity to give you a brief overview of just a few things happening on campus. I'm going to do that quickly, because I'd like to devote most of our time together to answering questions you might have and then to continuing our informal conversations.

Points of Pride
It's become my custom to start out by sharing a couple **points of pride** about WMU. These are the kind of credentials that set us apart from so many other institutions. Sometimes we forget just how special a place Western Michigan University is. Here are two.

• First, I need to remind you that Western Michigan University is one of fewer than 200 comprehensive national research universities. Only 139 of those national research universities are public universities. That assessment of WMU comes from the Carnegie Foundation and its classification system for U.S. Higher Education--literally the nation's "gold standard" for categorizing our education resources.
• WMU is one of only 100 public universities in the nation authorized to have its own chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the oldest and most prestigious honor society in the nation. There are lots of other Michigan universities that would love to be able to say that, but it is a very difficult marker to achieve. Right now, among the publics, there are just four of us--U of M, MSU and WSU are the other three.

Quality of Students
I always like to talk about the quality of our students and their latest achievements. My problem is usually narrowing it down to just one or two. Here are just a few items, including two new accomplishments that extend longtime records of achievement.

• Our Lee Honors College boasts a student body with a set of credentials--ACTs, SATs and high school GPAs--that equal or surpass those of students in some of the state and nation's most elite private colleges.

• Our Sky Broncos have just returned from the National Intercollegiate Flying Association championship at Parks College in St. Louis. They brought home a third-place finish and added to the team record that now stands at 18 consecutive top-four finishes in national competition. That record includes two national championships.

• And the annual DownBeat Magazine feature on the best student musicians in the nation is out this month. Once again, we're well represented with two major awards. Over the past 14 years, WMU has been a multiple award winner every year but one (we only got one that year.). This year, as in most other years, we
are the only Michigan school recognized. In the jazz world, we play on an international stage, and our competition in the U.S. is with places like Miami University and the New England Conservatory.

**Student athletes excel on and off the field**

Those are just two examples of students successfully competing on a state and national level. You can find the same kind of story in each of our colleges as well as amongst our student athletes.

This year, we've been 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.

- Last month, Bronco quarterback Tim Hiller, an MBA student carrying a 4.0 GPA, was selected by the Detroit Athletic Club to be honored as Michigan's Male College Athlete of the Year.

- Our volleyball team this year was ranked No. 25 in the nation and made it into the NCAA Sweet 16, losing only to the eventual national champions from Penn State. Our seven starters will all be back next season, and two of them are members of our academic All-MAC volleyball team.

**Quality of Faculty**

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. Earlier this academic year, the Council for International Exchange of Scholars in Washington, D.C., 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 were 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.

**Doing things right and doing the right things**

There's an enormous amount of good news rolling out of the campus these days. Two stories, in particular, fill me with real pride and I think they will resonate with you as well.

- First, I have wonderful news to share about initiative for young people who have aged out of foster care--our Seita Scholars program. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation has provided $500,000 to help us continue our efforts and make them more effective than ever. The money will allow us to hire, for a five-year period, a full-time dedicated director for the program to handle critical functions like recruitment, retention and well-being support services and transitions to college and on to alumni status for our students. The money will also help us carry out an ongoing evaluation and benchmarking process that will provide important feedback to students and also help us determine the future needs and direction of the program.

We are enormously thankful to the Kellogg Foundation for helping on this front. We're proud of what we're building here, and see this a model other schools can adopt to tackle what is a national problem. Just last week, we had representatives
here from 15 Michigan colleges and universities eager to hear from our successful Seita Scholars and to hear about what we've learned in our first year.

Green Campus
• 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. Through our energy saving initiatives, monitored in our high-tech energy center, we have grown campus by 19 percent and at the same time reduced energy consumption by 17 percent.

• A major story for Western Michigan University this month is the news that our College of Health and Human Services building has been singled out by the U.S. Green Building Council as the first higher education building in the nation to meet LEED--Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards for an existing building and earn gold-level certification. This award certifies that this wonderful facility as one of the highest performing buildings in Michigan and the highest-rated LEED building in Southwest Michigan. This is a new and very difficult certification to achieve, and this campus has been working very hard to achieve this since late 2007 when the U.S. Department of Energy provided a small grant to help us do the extensive documentation and implementation of sustainable building practices needed to make this LEED certification a reality.

Enrollment
• Finally, because you care so deeply about the University, I know you must be wondering how enrollment is shaping up during this very difficult economic period. We're in the second week of Orientation on campus. Throughout month of June and during some follow-up sessions, we will have 8,000 first-year and
transfer students and their parents on campus. Enrollment—admissions and retention—continue to be a priority for the entire University community. We're still not quite sure what impact the state of Michigan’s economy might have on enrollment, but we're trending in the right direction.

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