7-16-2009

Innovation Michigan

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Innovation Michigan  
Dr. John M. Dunn  
July 16, 2009

(There will be displays featuring both of our initiatives at the Innovation Michigan 2009 event.)

**KCC/WMU Engineering Cooperative**

- KCC President Edward Haring and Vice President for Instruction Dennis Bona will be there as well.

**WMU/KCC engineering agreement**

- Initiative between KCC and WMU through which we are working to provide a seamless path to a four-year engineering degree for engineering students. That program is one that will help us develop a template for programs with other community colleges to provide similar opportunities in a range of disciplines. The timing is perfectly in tune with President Obama's message from earlier this week.

- We're very excited about a new population of Bruin Broncos--students who are dual enrolled, have access to the resources and personnel of both institutions and have the comfort level with a four-year university that will put them on the WMU campus whenever they have a need or desire to be there.

- Engineering was the logical choice because WMU has a top-notch engineering school with a reputation for turning our job-ready graduates who hit the ground running when they land their first jobs. We know from our colleagues at KCC that engineering is one of the programs about which their students most frequently request transfer information. And we know that engineering is one of those fields that will help Michigan move forward into the new economy.
But the range of programs and disciplines covered by such programs established in the future, again, will be limited only by our imaginations and ability to think outside any walls or barriers that harriers that we mistakenly think of as a traditional relationship between a community college and a research university.

**Seita Scholarship Program**

- From the program, Ronicka Hamilton and Jamie Crandell will be there. Ronicka is a staff member with the effort. Jamie is a former foster care student from Battle Creek, a 2009 MSW alum, a Presidential Scholar in Social Work, a new graduate student and the founder of the Seita Scholars Student Association.

- Named for John Seita, a young person who was a product of the foster care system, a three-time WMU alum who is one of the nation's leading advocates for foster youth.

- Program now a year old. We've learned from the first year. Our campus community has embraced the effort. Our extended University family has reached out to help, and a growing list of private and public organizations have signed on to support our efforts. They include

  - Michigan Campus Compact, on of today's sponsors, as well as,
  - The AT&T Foundation,
  - Speckhard-Knight Charitable Foundation of Ann Arbor, and the Kalamazoo Community Foundation
• What we've learned over the past year, also reaffirms our starting position--the facts that made us dig into this issue. We now that about 70 percent of young people in foster care want to go to college. Only 20 percent of those in foster care who graduate from high school actually enroll in college and only a quarter of those who enroll earn a degree. About 500 Michigan age out of foster care each year.

• Until now, only about 13 of that 500 would typically earn a degree. That is simply unacceptable. We cannot, as a society, afford to lose the potential these young people represent.

• Just more than 50 percent of our first Seita Scholars will be back at WMU this fall. Some others will be attending school elsewhere. Others have indicated they would like to return at some point. When we started, experts in the field said a 25 percent retention rate would be good. We've achieved 50 percent, but it's not good enough. We want all of our Seita Scholars to Succeed.