



Western Michigan University  
ScholarWorks at WMU

---

WMU President John Dunn

Office of the President

---

2-5-2010

## Southwest Michigan Roundtable

John M. Dunn

Western Michigan University, [john.dunn@wmich.edu](mailto:john.dunn@wmich.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dunn>



Part of the Higher Education Commons

---

### WMU ScholarWorks Citation

Dunn, John M., "Southwest Michigan Roundtable" (2010). *WMU President John Dunn*. 206.

<https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dunn/206>

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of the President at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in WMU President John Dunn by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact [wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu](mailto:wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu).



## Southwest Michigan Roundtable

John M. Dunn

Feb. 5, 2010

*(Southwest Michigan First Community Roundtable--informal--the special guest is Jim Rohr, PNC Chairman and CEO—your opportunity to brag about WMU's leadership role in the community, state and beyond.)*

- WMU and its home community have a special relationship. I can truly say that it's one that's evolved over the years and has brought us to the position in which leadership is welcomed and expected in areas where we can use the special resources that a research university has to make this a better place to live.
- Western Michigan University owes its very existence to the foresight of Kalamazoo leaders who literally fought to establish this university in this city. They knew it would be an important asset to the city for the long haul. Here we are 107 years later, and I have the privilege to lead a university that is fully integrated into its home community and spends a significant amount of time and energy focusing on how we keep our hometown competitive, prosperous, healthy and inclusive.
- Our role as a leader in the arts community, the health care industry and in setting the cultural tone for Kalamazoo is a longstanding one. Over the past two decades, WMU's leadership has increased exponentially in the area of economic development.
- One of the best examples of that work can be seen in our Business Technology and Research Park and the Biosciences Research and Commercialization Center, which we built in collaboration with our community to combat the sea change in the economy that so many communities in our state and nation are facing now.

- Together we focused on our strengths--the life sciences, advanced engineering and information technology. A decade after the first shovel of dirt was turned, we have more than 30 companies in that park. Directly and indirectly, more than 1,300 jobs--good jobs--have been created or kept in Kalamazoo.
- That initiative has worked because the companies that locate there have a connection with and an opportunity to work with WMU academic programs that are closely aligned with their disciplines.
- Moving forward and again with our community partners, we've zeroed in even more on health care and the potential this community has for offering medical education. We are simply refusing to buy the arguments from our counterparts across the state that Kalamazoo can expect health care and economic development benefits from the health science visions of other communities.
- (Possible other topic--how WMU has helped and continues to help make sure the Kalamazoo Promise is used to full advantage. We're the university of choice for Promise students. We've already seen the first (early) Promise graduate and now we're poised to congratulate more than 20 Promise students on target for April graduation. To make sure, Kalamazoo students are ready for college--any college--WMU is working with schools and families across the city to make sure students begin preparing for college in middle school or earlier.)