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WMU 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.

• When you make that decision, I hope you think carefully about this University. There are two critical pieces of information I want you to take home with you today.

- **First**, this is a place where you will have choices--great choices. Whatever field you're considering, we're likely to have a program that will prepare you to succeed. We have 140 undergraduate majors--the second highest of any Michigan university. And those programs are among the best anywhere. If there were a tournament and a "Final Four" for degree programs in aviation, engineering management, vocal jazz, accountancy, pathology, psychology, marketing, communication, science education or dozens of other programs, we'd be in that final four every year.

- **Second**, this is a university that is set up to make you successful. You'll develop close relationships with faculty members who are at the top of their game. Because this is a research university, our faculty are generating new knowledge. What you learn in the classroom will be taught by people who really knows their stuff--in fact, they probably did "write the book" on whatever topic they're teaching.
• As president of WMU, I'm in a unique position. I get to meet and interact with students at every point in the higher education process. On the front end, I 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 place where you will find the faculty and support structure that will make you feel at home. They will help you succeed.

• At the other end of the continuum, I get to see alumni 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.

  - A couple of weeks ago, for instance, two brothers--both business alumni--were back on campus as guest speakers. They described how they helped build their family glass business into a one of the largest glazing companies in the United States, with annual sales in excess of $200 million.

  - Another very young alum was back on campus about a month ago. You may have heard of him--Matt Geraud, who was one of the finalists on last year's American Idol. He came back to visit one of his former music professors and also to make a guest appearance with our vocal jazz ensemble Gold Company

• 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.
I recently had the honor of presiding over a convocation of 46 Presidential Scholars—graduating seniors who have earned the highest award we give to an undergraduate. Each academic department was allowed to pick just one Presidential Scholar to honor as their best and brightest student. 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 is a budding physician-scientist who already has done important chemistry-related research at WMU and Baylor College and has presented his research at Argonne National Laboratory.

- Another Presidential Scholar is an up-and-coming musician who was co-music writer and percussionist for the musical "Brunch," which premiered Off Broadway in New York in 2008.

- Still another student we're honoring has been working with the Michigan Department of Transportation to analyze areas on the state's highway system that have a high number of automobile crashes annually.

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.