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Phi Alpha Theta (History Honorary) Welcome

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Good morning. On behalf of the entire Western Michigan University community, it's my pleasure to welcome you to our campus for your regional conference.

I understand there are undergraduates, graduate students and faculty members from 10 colleges and universities in five states. We're proud to have you here. We have a number of our own students and faculty participating in today's activities along with some of our history alumni and friends in the community. Welcome back to all of you.

I've looked over your program for the day, and all I can say is you have some incredibly tough choices to make as you decide which presentations to attend. Paper topics cover time periods that range from the Middle Ages to the 1960s. There are papers on Deism, phrenology and the creator of the Graham cracker. And that's just scratching the surface. I wish I could stay to join you in some of these sessions, (but I can’t because my schedule for today is also varied and far-ranging.)

The variety of the topics speaks well of the vibrant history departments represented here today as well as the health and strength of your discipline. I know here at WMU, we're enormously proud of our Department of History and the accomplishments of our faculty and students in such areas as public history, Medieval European history, North American history and ethnohistory.

Our faculty members, several of whom are serving as session chairs here today, are people who came here early and built long productive careers at Western Michigan University. As a matter of fact, this University's longest-serving faculty member, Dr.
Paul Maier (*he's not scheduled to be there*), this fall will celebrate his 50th anniversary as a member of our history faculty. Students, if you are headed for a career in the academy, think for a moment about the kind of commitment and love of discipline that a career record like that requires.

- As I said, I'm proud of what we do here and proud that WMU, like some of your home institutions, has built strong campus resources--not only for historians in our academic enterprises, but also for community historians and members of the public engaged in family research. The WMU Archives and Regional History Collections, for instance, contains University, regional, and local governmental records from across Southwest Michigan and is one of the largest such collections in the state. I know others here have strong community collections as well that promote the discipline of history and provide an important bridge to the communities we serve.

- Have a wonderful conference. Enjoy yourselves today, and please come back and spend time with us in the future.