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Opening of MBA Program Office and Global Business Center

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Good afternoon.

• I am delighted to see you all here to celebrate this important opening of our MBA Program Office and Global Business Center. And I am delighted to be here to celebrate this event, because it speaks to one of my principal beliefs and values—respect for a diverse and changing world.

• It's a value that is at the core of this University's mission and vision. It's a value that is and must continue to be central to how our students prepare for success and how we guide them.

• International education and a global sense of perspective provides what our nation's top CEO's say are the critical ingredients to success—context and a global perspective.

"The most important thing I've learned since becoming CEO is context. It's how your company fits in with the world and how you respond to it."

-Jeffrey Immelt, chairman of the board and CEO of GE since 2001

• And Consider what CEO Michael Eskew of UPS says are the six traits he is looking for in future employees. They should be:
  - trade literate,
  - sensitive to foreign cultures,
  - conversant in different languages,
  - technology savvy,
- capable of managing complexity, and
- ethical.

It's no surprise that three of those six traits revolve around having a global perspective.

• The Haworth College of Business has long recognized the value of international education and has worked to build the globalization of the faculty, students and curriculum. Here are just a few examples.
  - For more than 20 years, the college has been part of the trans-national education programs that have made WMU a world leader in providing opportunities for international students to earn degrees at WMU.
  - For 10 years next month, the college has offered its MBA program in Singapore.
  - Since 1990, the college's Asia-Pacific Education Program has focused on providing students and the local business community with business information on that critical part of the world.

• But until now, these globalization efforts have been dispersed throughout the College and are largely based on the interests of particular faculty members, who have initiated activities such as conferences, workshops, study abroad programs, faculty exchanges and grant seeking activities.

• This new center--The Global Business Center--will now become the focal point for all those internationalization activities within the College, with other university groups and with the external community. It will serve as a coordination center for:
  ● Study Abroad Programs and international internships
  ● Student exchanges
“Twinning” Programs overseas  
Faculty exchanges  
External grant seeking initiatives  
International conferences and global lecture series at WMU  
Recruitment/retention of foreign students  

• There is a message inherent in building this center and making sure we have the best possible coordination among them. It is simply this. At Western Michigan University, we recognize the value of multicultural awareness and we're serious about ensuring all of our students have an opportunity to bring a global perspective to their careers.  

• And this new center will provide a home office for our MBA program, which is now more than 50 years old. This new center includes space for our graduate students to meet, work on team projects or hold networking events. They will be able to take full advantage of the international focus and perspective of the center and use it to build their own credential base.  

• Last fall, it was my privilege to introduce noted author and columnist Tom Friedman to a West Michigan audience. Friedman, author of "The World is Flat," is famous for explaining why education and an understanding of the globally connected business environment are critical. He tells his daughters, “Girls, when I was growing up, my parents used to say to me, ‘Tom, finish your dinner—people in China and India are starving.’ My advice to you is: Girls, finish your homework—people in China and India are starving for your jobs.”
• Thank you to all of you here in the college and those of you here to celebrate with us today, for recognizing that this University will do all that is in its power to keep its students prospering in a flat world that is full of opportunity.