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Higher Education Forum Introduction for Mike Boulus

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Good afternoon and welcome to the campus of Western Michigan University. I'm glad you are all here today to consider a topic that is critical to our future as a state. I'd like to welcome some special guests who are going to speak today.

- Michael Boulus, executive director of the Presidents Council of State Universities of Michigan;
- David Hecker, president of the Michigan affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers;
- Dr. Howard Bunsis, chair of the Collective Bargaining Congress of the American Association of University Professors.

We'll be telling you a bit more about these guests in a few moments.

I'd also like to acknowledge and welcome five people who are incredibly busy for the next five weeks, but who they chose to come and participate in our discussion today.

- Thomas Batten, Democratic candidate for the House 61st District;
- Robert Jones, Democratic candidate for the Senate 20th District;
- Sean McCann, Democratic candidate for the House 60th District;
- Margaret O'Brien, Republican candidate for the House 61st District; and
- Tonya Schuitmaker, Republican candidate for the Senate 20th District.

I know the topic today is "Higher Education: A Solution to the Michigan Crisis." I think we all know the unequivocal comeback to that statement is a very simple one--"Why yes, it is." Today's discussion will look deeply at the potential and challenges of that proposition.
I can't think of anyone better prepared to start the discussion than Mike Boulus of the Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan. For those of you who might not know, The Presidents Council is the coordinating body for the state’s 15 public universities and serves as a forum for the presidents and chancellors of those universities to discuss and frame positions on key higher education finance and policy issues.

Mike has served as the executive director of the Presidents Council since January 2003. Prior to joining the Presidents Council, he served as deputy state treasurer for the Michigan Department of Treasury, where he oversaw the Bureau of Student Financial Assistance, the Michigan School Bond Loan Program, Local Government Services, Office of Revenue and Tax Analysis, the state educational assessment program for K-12 education and the Michigan Merit Award.

Mike is the former executive director of the Middle Cities Education Association and former deputy executive director of the Michigan Association of School Administrators. He is founder and first president of the Michigan Schools Energy Cooperative and serves on the board of directors for Next Energy, a business incubator for energy related start up companies. He is also on the board of Your Child, a statewide coalition committed to improving the conversation around the culture of education in Michigan.

Mike holds a doctoral degree from Michigan State University, a master's degree from Eastern Michigan University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame. He is the recipient of several awards, including the National Leadership Award for Educational Leadership, the University of Notre Dame Exemplar Award,
and the Michigan State University College of Education Distinguished Alumni Award.

Please join me in welcoming Mike Boulus.