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MLK Higher Education Open House Welcome

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MLK Higher Education Open House Welcome
John M. Dunn
1/15/2011

- Good Morning and welcome to Western Michigan University. We are so pleased to have you here with us today.
- This year, we've chosen to celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. a little differently than we have in the past. With this year's theme, "Bringing Life to the Dream," applies to any individual of any background or any age, but we thought it particularly important to create the opportunity for you wide-awake, well-prepared, highly-motivated high school juniors and seniors to fast forward a few months---to learn from the dreams of others, to really consider what you'd like to achieve, and to visualize bringing life to your those dreams.
- Nothing would be more appropriate to honor Dr. King than to recall his dream for coming generations and reflect on the words he used in accepting the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

"I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right temporarily defeated is stronger than evil triumphant."

- Those words, spoken just a year after his last visit to Western Michigan University, reveal his respect for knowledge and its power. He fought for the right of all children to be well educated and to have the opportunity to realize their potential. Because of the Kalamazoo Promise, we have the gift, as a community to ensure that we can provide that opportunity to every one of our children.

- The Promise is a gift of enormous potential. I'm an educator. I have a bias for education and what it can accomplish. I know that from personal experience. I share Dr. King's belief about how critical it is to provide all young people with the opportunity for education. He knew that without that opportunity, those he fought for could only go so far.

- Quality, integrated education had to be achieved, he said. Without it, "the drive for freedom will be undermined by the absence of a most vital and indispensable element--learning."

- So those of us here on campus thought about what we could do this year that would have meaning and value, we decided to invite you all here so that, together, we can help our young people begin the process of exploring how best they can take advantage of the Promise.

- This is not about where children choose to attend college--although I'll be honest and say I hope they choose their hometown university--this is more about making sure our children fully understand the wealth of opportunity that is available to them with a college degree, no matter what school they choose to attend. We want them to begin working on the particulars--deciding exactly how they are going to realize the Promise and bring life to their dreams.

- Please pay close attention to the talks today of Mr. Juan Pa-CHAY-co and Mr. Basheer Jones. I know they have an important message to share with you. Then, enjoy the open house and the opportunity to get the kind of information that's important for you and your family to have as you take advantage of what higher education offers. And please, as you're browsing and taking part in the activities,

stop and chat with me and introduce me to your family. I'm eager to get to know you.

Thank you.