Junior Spotlight Welcome

John M. Dunn
Western Michigan University, john.dunn@wmich.edu
Good morning. Welcome to Western Michigan University and to Kalamazoo. For some of you, let me also welcome you to Michigan. I am delighted to have you here on campus for the second of our Junior Spotlight events.

First, Dads and Moms—I want to congratulate you and thank you for the critical role you played in bringing these students to this place in their lives. The young people you have accompanied here today are individuals who are going to need to be eager, adaptable, confident and well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the years ahead.

Today, let me borrow a phrase from the Marines. We're not looking for a few good men, but we are looking for a more than few good students with the character, curiosity, initiative and ability to take full advantage of the opportunities that Western Michigan University offers.

**What WMU offers**

I hope you have a chance to make some discoveries today as you learn more about WMU—and I predict those discoveries will revolve around the people you meet or learn about as you become more familiar with our campus. We have a beautiful campus and some of the best instructional facilities you'll find anywhere. Our new chemistry building, our engineering campus, our College of Health & Human Services Building and our Richmond Center for Visual Arts are among our spectacular facilities—the finest you'll find anywhere. And, you explore the WMU campus today you’re sure to see two new construction projects: Campus View Apartments, slated for its first Bronco occupants this coming Fall; and the “new”
Sangren Hall. And, in case you have not heard, a WMU School of Medicine is not far off on our horizon. In short, this is a university that is on the move, and moving in the right direction.

While facilities and technology are important, it is the quality of the people who make up this university that will make all the difference in our students' lives. A university is, after all, its people. You'll meet some of them today.

Student success is what this University is about. It is a place that has all of the resources of a much larger research University but still has kept the focus squarely fixed on teaching and helping each and every student find success. We have more than 165,000 alumni around the world who will attest to that. In fact, we've discovered our alumni are our greatest marketing tool. They are willing to regale just about anyone who will listen with stories of the personal connections they made with faculty members here--connections that have lasted a lifetime.

For instance, recently a young woman who graduated from WMU and went on to graduate school at Syracuse University was discussing a move and a new job opportunity with two of her friends--both graduates of one of Michigan's very large research universities. At one point in the conversation, all three wondered what their favorite undergrad professors would recommend. The WMU alumna picked up her cell phone and called the former chair of WMU's School of Communication, who had been a favorite professor of hers. Our alum and her former professor chatted for a bit while her friends watched and listened incredulously. "Get out. My favorite professors wouldn't have a clue who I am," one finally said. "And you can just pick up your phone and call yours--and he answers?"

That, ladies and gentlemen, is the WMU difference--what we like to call the Western Edge. This is a place where faculty and staff alike are focused on what it will take to
help your student succeed. Our faculty members are world-class researchers who found a University where they can generate new knowledge, teach what they've learned and have close working relationships with students. Relationships like the one I just described are a two-way street, of course. They take initiative on both sides, but they happen here with great regularity.

Western Michigan University has faculty at the top of their game and staff members ready to help your student take advantage of every opportunity. We have programs internationally recognized for excellence, and we'll help your student graduate in a timely way and with the credentials that will help them move successfully to their next levels of achievement.

Finally, let me urge you to take a careful look at our home community while you're here today. This is a wonderful college town with people who go out of their way to make students an important part of the social fabric.

Please don't hesitate to let any of us know if there is additional information we can supply in the coming weeks and months. We want you to be well-informed and enthusiastic members of the WMU community.

Enjoy your day today. I hope you feel welcome and go back to your communities and your high schools knowing that Western Michigan University is where you belong.

Thank you.