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Welcome to Medieval Congress Attendees

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• Good morning. It is my pleasure to officially welcome you--and welcome many of you back--to the campus of Western Michigan University for the 46th International Congress on Medieval Studies. It is always a pleasure to see our campus transformed for four days in May into a Mecca for the world's medievalists.

• While I have always known about this amazing congress--and who in academia does not know it--this is just the fourth time I have had the privilege as president of welcoming you to our campus and community. I have always known about the congress, but until I attended the event, I did not realize the scope and vitality that this wonderful event represents. Let me give you an example.

• During my academic career, I have been deeply involved with seven universities around the nation--two while earning my degrees and five as a faculty member or administrator. As I thumb through this week's program, I find each of those seven universities represented by someone presenting a paper --and there's no telling how many more from each of those campuses are simply attending.

• The beauty of the Medieval Congress is its breadth and democratic sensibilities. It is the place where grad students often present their first papers and the return again and again, finally as senior scholars here to deliver the latest thinking on their specific fields of expertise.
• This is the 46th congress. It began in 1962 as a biennial event and later became an annual gathering. That means next year is actually the 50th anniversary of what was a very good idea that has blossomed over the years into a truly spectacular example of interdisciplinary research and collegiality.

• Thank you for being here. Enjoy our campus and our community. And please begin your planning to return next year to help us mark a half a century of the International Congress on Medieval Studies.