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Lee Honors College Groundbreaking

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Good afternoon.

• It's such a pleasure to be here and to be part of a ceremony that says two very important things:

First: Our wonderful honors college is growing at a phenomenal rate--40 percent over the past three years.

And second: There are wonderful people in our University community who care deeply about honors education and are willing to support and build upon past support to continue to make this college the star attraction that it has become for Western Michigan University.

I'm frequently asked to share WMU Points of Pride with audiences in the community and around the nation. This college and what it represents is always near the top of the list. What do I tell them? Here's a sample.

"WMU's Lee Honors College was one of the nation's first collegiate honors programs, and today is home to more than 1,400 of the nation’s best and brightest students, with academic credentials that equal or top those of any of the nation's most selective private colleges."

With a description like that, I'd say the fact that this wonderful college has outgrown its home of two decades is a positive development--not a problem but an opportunity to build a space that will allow us to serve even more top-notch students.

It is our honor that Carl E Lee, whose generosity made it possible to build this beautiful building in 1991, is here with us today. While his wife Winnie could not
attend this afternoon, we know how dear she holds this enterprise and how keenly she is interested in its well being. Carl, we ask that you take our love and warm wishes back to her when you go home this afternoon.

It's also appropriate that we have two students here to be part of this celebration. Charlotte Munn-Wood is a Medallion Scholar and a Lee Honors College member. She represents the student body that is at the heart of honors education here. And Alex Zhang is a member of ATYP--our Academically Talented Youth Program. He represents the future (we hope) of WMU honors education.

Thank you all for being here to celebrate the beginning of this project and the beginning of a new chapter in the Lee Honors College story.