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New Faculty Orientation Welcome

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New Faculty Orientation Welcome
Dr. John M. Dunn
8/22/11

- Good afternoon. It is my absolute pleasure to welcome you to your role as new members of the faculty of Western Michigan University. I am proud that you accepted the opportunity we extended for you to teach and continue your scholarship here as part of our campus community.
- We are convinced you are a good match for this University community--that's why we extended our offer. You, clearly, were savvy enough to recognize the caliber of this University and community, the tremendous potential for career and family satisfaction here, and the unique and appealing nature of becoming a citizen of Kalamazoo, Mich.
- This is a tremendous University to work for, and you join a faculty body that is highly accomplished and one that is preparing a generation of young people to do great things. I am continually reminded of just how good our faculty is and what accomplished students we produce. This summer has been no exception. Just last week, for instance, a troupe from our University Theatre returned from performing at Scotland's prestigious **Edinburgh Fringe Festival**. The group earned rave reviews from a couple of Scottish reviewers. My favorite review is one that singled out both our students and their director/faculty mentor. It read:
"This is a masterpiece, performed to perfection by 14 students from Western Michigan University (on whose research it is based) and directed with understatement, precision and flair by Joan Herrington."

- This is a place you will want to embrace and make your own. It is a university around which you can build your career and make a significant impact. Here's an example. This past spring, our most senior faculty member retired. When I say "senior," I am talking about our longest serving faculty member ever. Dr Paul Maier is a Harvard educated, internationally renowned historian who is the epitome of what any university would want its professors to be and one of the world's leading authorities on early Christianity. He retired in May after more than 50 years as a WMU faculty member. For years, he has been sought out by national media. As technology has changed, his name has gone from the Rolodex to the speed dial to the Smartphone directory for members of the national press.

- Just before I was invited to speak about him at a special tribute dinner, I found out that he went through his life as a Bronco, incredulous that we paid him for doing what he loves. He remarked to a staff member that he didn't think there was any better job than being a university professor. He said, "I've actually had a little pang of conscience all these years about cashing my paychecks."

- Now I'm not going to ask you to adopt that particular philosophy, BUT....

- You have a full schedule for orientation and you'll be filled in on lots of upcoming events and initiatives. I'd like to close, though, by adding my personal invitation to one more very important event. On Friday, Sept. 16 at 2 p.m., in the Dalton Center Recital Hall, we'll hold Academic Convocation--the traditional celebration of the start of a new academic year. It is also the occasion at which we honor your colleagues, ranging from seasoned academic stars like the one I've just described to up-and-coming "Emerging Faculty Scholars." Please join us in the audience that day. And plan to be among those we honor at a future convocation.

Again, welcome to our University community, and have a wonderful WMU career.