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Kalamazoo Regional Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Meeting On Higher Education

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(From the Chamber: Just a reminder for Dr. Dunn, this event is designed to provide business leaders an update on WMU’s priorities, points of collaboration between the three institutions and how the business community can be most helpful in your success. )

• Good morning. Thank you for inviting the three of us to be here together to talk about what I continue to think is Kalamazoo's strongest suit--our reputation as "the Education City." I don't believe we've ever appeared like this before. Our programs are critical, along with the Kalamazoo Promise, to our reputation as a community that cares about its young people and about education in general. The three of us represent three of the strongest examples of our individual types of institutions:

- One of Michigan's oldest and the nation's strongest community colleges that has set the pace for so many developments.

- One of the nation's most highly regarded four-year liberal arts colleges with a longstanding commitment to international education for its graduates.

- A national public research university with a reputation for translational research and a well-deserved reputation in such areas as aviation, the fine arts, education, engineering, business disciplines, the health sciences and so much more.

Any one of these institutions would be a stand-alone community asset. Together, we make a statement about this community's embrace of higher education.
• The three of us share a community base and we support and provide resources for each other. We literally nurture and reinforce each other's missions. Some examples:

- KVCC is our leading source of transfer students and we have an articulation agreement that makes transfer to the University seamless.

- Through a reverse transfer degree, KVCC students have an opportunity to complete their associate degrees using WMU credits.

- K College and WMU practically share a campus. In fact, our football teams are sharing Waldo Stadium this fall as K builds a new home field.

- Our new Lifelong Learning Academy is successful because it taps the teaching expertise of faculty at all three institutions.

- WMU's new status as a Confucius Institute has brought Chinese language resources to the community and cultural performances on all three campuses.

- K College graduates continue their educations in WMU graduate programs.

- WMU became a host university last year for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowships. We recruited mid-career professionals and some new graduates to become math and science teachers. Two of the 12-member first class were new K College grads.

- Michigan's four flagship universities, including WMU, and select community colleges, including KVCC, are working together in the Michigan-Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation--MI-LSAMP--a federally funded effort to boost minority participation in the STEM fields.

- We collaborate in pairs and sometimes all three together on such important community initiatives as the annual MLK events and the recent RACE exhibit--enriching our individual campuses and our community as a whole.
• Western Michigan University's new strategic three-year plan really lays our direction for the future and our commitment to our students and our community. We've zeroed in on three phrases that embody what we do.
  - Learner Centered
  - Discovery Driven
  - Globally Engaged

Those qualities resonate here on campus, but as I look at them, I have to say they do a pretty good job of identifying this community. Think about how much these reflect what is special about the Kalamazoo community--how it's perceived and how we perceive ourselves.
  - Learner Centered--an education community
  - Discovery Driven--our entrepreneurial legacy
  - Globally Engaged--out future.

• Important directions for the University--esp. those with huge community impact
  - Medical School
  - Increased internationalization--Study Abroad and welcoming more international students, Confucius Institute focus.
  - Increased outreach to the business community--new M-CRN initiative, collaborative such as the Green Manufacturing Collaborative and the Center for Advanced Vehicle Design and Simulation Center (CAVIDS)

• How can business community support all this?
  - Celebrate and brag about our higher education resources--both the ones we have now and those we are building. It's a recruitment advantage and boosts
quality of life in the community. (Example of med school and what it will mean to health care and the economic life of Kalamazoo.)

- Continue to welcome our students and their families to our community.
- Provide internships for students.
- Hire our graduates--from all three schools. This is an extraordinarily attractive community for young professionals. Many of our students would love to stay here. The Daily Beast recently called Kalamazoo one of the top 25 cities in the nation for new graduates.

- Use our campus as your personal university--attend our fine arts events, go to our games, use our unified clinics, or sign up for Lifelong Learning, online or traditional classes. We have hundreds to choose from every semester.