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Medallion Scholarship Competition Welcome

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Good morning. Welcome to Western Michigan University and to Kalamazoo. For some of you, let me also welcome you to Michigan.

Students, I wish you the best of luck as you tackle today's Medallion competition.

Parents and families, I want to congratulate you and thank you for the critical role you played in bringing your students to this point in their lives. By anyone’s standards, these young people are some of brightest students not just in Michigan or the Midwest, but in the nation.

**The Medallion Competition**

Today, let me borrow a phrase from the Marines. We're looking for a few good men and women. If you have been watching our advertisements, you'll know we are on the lookout for "Smart" students with the character, curiosity, initiative and ability to take full advantage of the opportunities that Western Michigan University presents.

Our Medallion scholars, along with other top WMU students, go on to win prestigious national scholarships like the Truman, Goldwater and Udall awards. And twice in the past four years, WMU students have won Gates Cambridge Scholarships-- the Cambridge University equivalent of the Rhodes scholarship.

**What WMU offers**

You'll make some discoveries today as you learn more about WMU--and those discoveries will revolve around the people you meet as you become more familiar with our campus. We have a wonderful physical plant and some of the best
instructional facilities you'll find anywhere, but it is the quality of the people who make up this university that makes all the difference in our students' lives.

We're learner centered, globally engaged and discovery driven. This is a place that has all of the resources of a much larger research University but still has kept the focus squarely on teaching and making our students successful.

We like to call that WMU difference the Western Edge. This is a place where faculty and staff alike are focused on what it will take to help you succeed. They will help you take control of your own academic success and you'll find you can literally "Grab the Reins."

**Top faculty**
Who are the professors our students get to know? Here are just a couple of examples.
- There's physicist Nora Berrah, who leads and international research teams at Stanford University's Linear Accelerator Center and who also loves teaching entry-level physics.
- There's author Jaimy Gordon, winner of the 2010 National Book Award for Fiction for her book, "Lord of Misrule," who is a key faculty member in our creative writing program.

This University is filled faculty at the top of their game and staff members ready to help your student take advantage of every opportunity.

**An Entrepreneurial University**
We also pride ourselves on being an entrepreneurial university. We’re agile enough to take advantage of opportunity—regardless of the timing and obstacles that may
stand in the way. With our two local world-class teaching hospitals, Borgess and Bronson, we have launched a private medical school initiative that we expect will welcome its first students in the fall of 2014. This private medical school at a public university made headlines last year with our announcement of a $100 million gift from anonymous donors as well as the gift of a major science research facility that will be transformed into the home of the WMU School of Medicine.

Closing
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. People who know compare college settings often remark on how willing the Kalamazoo community is to embrace and engage our students.

Enjoy your day today and please convey my good wishes to you sons and daughters. Regardless of the outcome of today's competition, I hope you and they feel the kind of welcome and focus on success we want all of our students and their families to feel. I look forward to seeing you on our campus in the fall.

Thank you.