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Multiculturalism Leaders Scholarship Welcome

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Good morning.

- I am enormously pleased that you are here today, and delighted to be able to welcome you--students and families--to Western Michigan University.

- As families, you've been on a long journey together to prepare for this exciting point in your lives. I want to congratulate all of you on a job well done. You've laid the groundwork for success. You've worked hard and made the right choices. You're ready.

- Now you're getting ready to make a series of really important choices--selecting a college, settling on a major and working together as a family to make it happen. Believe me everyone of us here at the University knows how important these choices are. We all know that we wouldn't be where we are today without the help of families and others who reached out and helped us make some of these choices.

- I count myself among those who remember well exactly what it means to be where you are today. One of the reasons I feel so strongly about our scholarship competitions and making sure we help students connect with our financial aid resources is that I was your age, such a scholarship made all the difference to me. It was the reason I was able to get a university education and begin the professional life that brought me here today to speak to you.

- Parents, many of us have also been parents to students who have been through this exciting time of life. And we want to help supply the kinds of information and advice that you, as families, need to make this a smooth transition.
• You have heard or read about the benefits of being a student at WMU--wonderful faculty, great instructional facilities and people who really care about our students in and out of the classroom.

• This is a university that is welcoming, accessible and focused on student success. We are committed devoted to helping our students live up to their potential by offering an environment that is learner centered, discovery driven and globally engaged.

• Let me brag a little bit. I want to know when I'm talking to people about this University that they're aware of some of the critical pieces of information about WMU. Here are a few things you should know.

  -WMU is a research university--one of fewer than 200 in the nation to win that designation from the Carnegie Foundation. Why is that important to you? It means you'll be taught by professors who are making the latest discoveries and are at the top of their game.

  -We have the right program for you. There are more than 230 academic programs from which to choose--141 at the undergraduate level.
  -We have nationally and internationally known programs that range from aviation and engineering management to vocal jazz, geosciences and medieval studies. In fact, if there were a "Final Four" for academic programs, WMU would have programs in the top slots every year.

• I could go on and on, but what I want you to know is that all of the resources I just mentioned and many more, are just the tip of the iceberg. In addition to great academics, we have wonderful social, cultural and athletic opportunities to enjoy and
our student life staff is the best around. It is the total experience that comes from being part of the WMU community that will spark your success.

• One of the great joys of being a university president is seeing students like you make a great decision. I'll be looking for you during Welcome Week on our campus next fall and I'll look forward to seeing you on campus after that.

• I'll also will be on the stage at Miller Auditorium to shake your hand when you receive your bachelor's degree a little more than four years from now.

• Thank you for your interest in Western Michigan University and thank you for being here today. Best of luck in the competition, students. Parents and family members, enjoy yourselves, look around, relax and ask lots of questions. We'll have people ready to find the answers.

Thank you.