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WMU Junior Spotlight

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• I'm happy to see you here today and so pleased that you are considering Western Michigan University for your college education. You've already made a good decision by putting WMU on your shortlist. I know what you experience today will keep you interested.

• When you make that important decision, I hope you think carefully about this University. There are two critical pieces of information I want you to take home with you today.

  - **First**, this is a place where you will have choices--great choices. Whatever field you're considering, we're likely to have a program that will prepare you to succeed. We have 141 undergraduate majors--the second highest of any Michigan university. And those programs are among the best anywhere. If there were a tournament and a "Final Four" for degree programs in aviation, engineering management, vocal jazz, accountancy, pathology, psychology, marketing, communication, science education or dozens of other programs, we'd be in that final four every year.

  - **Second**, this is a university that is set up to make you successful. You'll develop close relationships with faculty members who are at the top of their game. Because this is a research university, our faculty are constantly generating new knowledge. What you learn in the classroom will be taught by people who really know their stuff--in fact, they probably did "write the book" on whatever topic they're teaching.
• As president of WMU, I'm in a unique position. I get to interact with students at every point in the higher education process. On the front end, I get to meet student and families who are just beginning the college search process--students and families like you. There aren't many things I like more than introducing prospective students to this University, because I know this is the place where you will find the faculty and support structure that will help you to succeed.

• At the other end of the continuum, I get to see alumni who found success on our campus and have turned their experiences here into meaningful and fulfilling careers. I remain in touch with alumni all over the world. They are living very interesting lives and earning recognition in their chosen fields.

- Earlier this month, we had alumni back from all over the nation. They came for a reunion celebrating the 50th anniversary of our student radio station WIDR. Alumni who got their start in broadcasting there include some heavy hitters, like Jack Clifford, who founded the Food Channel.

- Another young alum, Ben Lando, graduated in 2005 and took off for Iraq--not as a member of the military, but as a reporter. He founded an online source called the Iraq Oil Report and today is seen regularly on CNN, Fox and the pages of the Wall Street Journal.

• Keeping up on accomplishments of our alumni is one thing, but by far, my greatest privilege is getting to know our terrific students during their time here on campus and standing on the stage of Miller Auditorium to congratulate them when they earn their degrees.
• Just over a week ago, I presided over a convocation of 45 Presidential Scholars--graduating seniors who have earned the highest award we give to an undergraduate. Four or five years ago, those Presidential Scholars were doing just what you're doing today--checking us out. Now they're getting ready to graduate after college careers filled with incredible accomplishments.

- One student is a budding engineer who has already worked for Eaton Corp. and completed a mechanical engineering internship at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico.

- Another Presidential Scholar is headed to graduate school and wants to specialize in political communication. As a sophomore here, she had an opportunity to travel to Washington and meet with members of Congress to share some ideas she helped develop on how to save Social Security.

- Following April commencement, another of the scholars will embark on a new job with Stryker, one of the world's leading medical technology companies. That company was eager to hire this integrated supply management major. They actually know him pretty well now after welcoming him to the company for not one, but three internships.

They all sat right where you're sitting not so long ago. Today, they're getting ready to leave us, and we can't wait to see what they do next.

• They'll be successful because they took full advantage of WMU. This is one of fewer than just 200 national research universities, and one that has managed to keep its focus on student learning and student success.
• You too can succeed here, and I look forward to seeing your walk across the Miller Auditorium stage sometime in the future--but not before we've had a chance to get to know you and find out just what you can accomplish.

• Enjoy your day here. Explore the campus and ask lots questions. We are here to make certain that you get the answers you need to choose the best university for you. Without question, we hope you choose to Grab the Reins and become a Bronco.