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Welcome to Community College Counselors

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Welcome to Community College Counselors
Dr. John M. Dunn
April 27, 2012

- Good morning and welcome to Western Michigan University. I'm confident you will be seeing Western Michigan University at its best today. You'll see lots of smiling faces, and you are free to think it's because everyone is delighted to see you. I'm talking about seriously happy people at WMU today. It's the end of finals week, and tomorrow, more than 2,700 students will leave here with degrees in hand.
- This is a great weekend for a University that prides itself on being a heads-up campus where people greet each other as they hurry about. I think you'd notice and perhaps remark on that any time you're on campus. But this weekend, our campus community is jubilant. Our students have achieved their goals and found success. They'll be celebrating all day tomorrow in four ceremonies at Miller Auditorium. And I'll be shaking 2,700 hands.
- Those 2,700 graduates include hundreds of students who began their college careers on your campuses. We take real pride in working with students who made a good decision when they selected your schools and then are looking for the next step to take in their smart plan. Each fall brings us about 2,000 new transfer students-- three quarters of them from Michigan community colleges.
- Our stance as a university is to honor and celebrate the choices students make and to welcome them here on our campus whenever the time is right for them. This is about students and what they need to be successful.
- To that end, we've been stepping up our collaborative work with many of your schools. As time goes by, expect to see more and more programs like the two dual

enrollment programs we have with Kellogg Community College. In the disciplines of engineering and aviation, we recruit together, admit students to both schools and offer students all the benefits of both campuses right from the start. These dually enrolled students enjoy advising, library access, use of computer labs and student IDs from both schools. We're not making the transition seamless. We're eliminating it.

- There's also what we call a "reverse transfer" agreement in place with two schools that allows--encourages--students who began with you and transferred here to use some of their WMU credits to complete their associate degree so that they have that great credential from your school to bolster them throughout their careers.
- This is a really exciting time for students to become part of our campus community at any level. I know that you're interested in "What's New at WMU," so let me share with you a few important developments.
- One of the things we've spent some thoughtful time and effort on over the past year is strategic planning and articulating our core values. It's a valuable exercise that's led us to a package of important goals and a commitment to our identity as a university that is "learner centered, discovery driven and globally engaged." We think that really is the essence of Western Michigan University, and we frame everything we do in the context of those qualities.
- When we tell people stories about our campus community, they fit into one of those three areas of focus. Go to our Home page, and you'll see a series of stories about the learners we embrace--one story is about a new transfer student-- and about our focus on discovery and global engagement.

- Perhaps the most challenging and most exciting initiative we have under way is our focus on developing a medical school here on the WMU campus and in partnership with our two community hospitals--Bronson and Borgess. Those hospitals are really world-class teaching hospitals.
- As a community, we recognized the incredible potential as we develop a new medical school that will meet future needs AND serve as an additional building block upon which this region's century-long heritage in life sciences research and medical equipment innovation can be enhanced. The benefits will be enormous.
- Just imagine the value added if you are studying nursing in the setting of a medical school, or if you are preparing to be an audiologist or hospital social worker and part of your basic training allows you to be part of a complete medical team.
- The initiative that once seemed so far in the future is quickly becoming a reality. In the past year, we received a \$100 million anonymous gift to support it. We've been given a wonderful downtown Kalamazoo science facility that is being transformed into the School of Medicine's home. We've submitted our accreditation materials to the Liaison Committee on Medical Education. And we plan to admit our first class in 2014.
- There's more happening in every corner of our campus. I know you'll hear later about our Military Advocacy work--something we're enormously proud of. You'll learn about our new VetSuccess designation with our partners at Kalamazoo Valley Community College and Kellogg Community College. Together, we are one of only 12 sites in the nation to be able to offer student veterans the enhanced level of service from the Veterans Administration this program provides.

- There are some wonderful physical improvements to the campus as well that have been designed to enhance campus life for our students. As you are touring, you will literally pick your way around a massive construction site right next door in the heart of our campus. That's the new Sangren Hall, which will be our largest classroom building that serves all students, as well as the home to our College of Education and Human Development. It's almost done and will open this fall. The minute you and those 2,700 graduates leave our campus, the construction zone will be dramatically expanded to allow us to complete a center-campus landscaped area in front of Sangren that will become a pedestrian mall and gathering place.

- With the completion of Sangren, all of our major academic facilities will have been updated or rebuilt. I know you'll see some spectacular spaces on your tour today.

- What does all of this mean for our student--those learners who join us to prepare for their futures? Well this is where I allow myself a chance to brag. The past 10 days been a period of terrific news about their accomplishments.

- A team of our engineering students traveled to California and won the Human Assisted Green Energy Vehicle design competition sponsored by the Parker Hannifin Corp. They beat teams from the universities of Cincinnati, Illinois and Minnesota as well as California Polytechnic State, San Luis Obispo; Case Western Reserve; Northwestern; and Purdue universities. Minnesota came in second overall and Cal Poly third.

- Two of our student filmmakers just won a national competition sponsored by CNN, Reporters Without Borders and the Ford Foundation. They made an original Public Service Announcement about Press Freedom that topped the work of film students from around the nation. Next Tuesday, they'll be flown

to New York to be honored at a banquet and to have their PSA shown by Anderson Cooper to mark Press Freedom Day.

-This week, we learned our student chapter of the Society for Automotive Engineers was named the top student chapter at the SAE World Congress being held in Detroit.

-And we just learned one of our young playwrights has won a national student competition and has been honored at the Kennedy Center.

- There's more, but I'll stop here and let you make some discoveries on your own. Please walk around, enjoy the atmosphere, meet some of these wonderful students and ask questions. Enjoy your time here today. Come back often.

Thank you.

11 minutes