10-12-2012

Michigan Engineering Colleges-Community Colleges Association Welcome

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Good morning. Welcome to Western Michigan University. We are incredibly pleased to have you here on our engineering campus. We're also incredibly pleased to be a part, with all of you, of the conversations about how we can work together to achieve the best possible outcomes for our students.

As I look around this morning, I see a few familiar faces, and many I hope become even more familiar. Whether we represent two-year or four-year programs, we have a common goal--ensuring that our students are successful. We want them to be successful from the first time they enter a college classroom--wherever that may be--until the moment they walk across a stage to receive their diploma. And we want them to carry that success into their professional and personal lives.

We all know the importance of the decisions facing students and families when they choose their major and select a college to attend. Those decisions can turn on questions of finances or family obligations or the desire to remain close to home or a job.

At Western Michigan University, we have chosen to celebrate the decisions students and families make and to be ready to work with students at any time in their academic journey. We have learned to respect their choices and tailor our own processes to ensure their next choice is an easy one.

For that reason, we've already "engineered" some novel ways of working with our sister institutions. We've launched dual enrollment programs with community
college partners, encouraging students to consider themselves part of both institutions from their first day in the classroom. We've been aggressive in pursuing articulation agreements that help simplify the process, but we know we must always be prepared to do more--to think and rethink what we do and always make sure prospective students know how much we want them to become a part of the WMU community.

- I hope while you're here, you'll take some time to explore this amazing facility. Each of the four wings is nearly an eighth of mile long, so be sure to allow a little time for your walk. Unfortunately, we don't have any Segways or rollerblades to offer for the excursion, but I guarantee you'll see some amazing sights along the way, and you'll encounter some productive and happy students. You'll find students deeply engaged in the pursuit of engineering degrees as well as a number of individual projects and initiatives they complete while earning those degrees. Those of you from two-year institutions may even recognize some of your former students.

- Enjoy your visit here. You have my best wishes for a productive day of conversation.