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Kalamazoo Chamber Higher Education Update

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Dr. John M. Dunn  
Kalamazoo Chamber Higher Education Update  
(Topics are "strategic priorities, progress and points of collaboration")  
Nov. 1, 2012

• Good morning. It is wonderful to be back here at this Chamber event with my two favorite higher education colleagues. We meet and talk regularly, and I think its safe for me to say that all of us have a lot to share with you.

• This has been and continues to be a high-energy year for Western Michigan University, with progress being made on a host of new and continuing initiatives.

• The School of Medicine--the most recent big news is that our School of Medicine that we're developing with our partners at Borgess and Bronson, has received preliminary accreditation from the LCME, and we may now recruit our firsts class of students to begin in fall 2014. What seemed like a good idea five years ago is rapidly on its way to becoming a reality.

• We announced that early last month on the same day we broke ground for a $68 million renovation of the building in downtown Kalamazoo that was give to WMU by Bill Parfet and MPI to house the School of Medicine. That former Pfizer research facility is located at 300 Portage St. Construction is due for completion in spring of 2014.

• Our long-awaited major on-campus construction project was completed for the beginning of the fall semester when we opened Sangren Hall. This 230,000 square-foot instructional building is home to our College of Education and Human Development, but it will also be used by students in nearly every program on
campus. Sangren and the new pedestrian mall in front of it have literally transformed our campus. Come and visit it you have not already had a chance to do so.

• We've continued to build our reputation as one of the most environmentally proactive campuses in the nation. Sangren Hall was designed to be a LEED gold building, and we have a number of other LEED designation applications in progress. We've been turning heads among campus operations people nationwide with our stormwater management work, and this past spring, we increased our free on-campus electric vehicle charging stations to 20.

• We continue to help build our economy and create jobs. Our Business Technology and Research Park just welcomed its 37th and 38th corporate partners- -mophie and Lynx--and is now nearly full. And our Bioscience Research and Commercialization Center has helped launch more than 30 life science companies generating more than 220 Michigan jobs.

• We've also begun construction on the Oakland Drive Campus for the new Charles C. and Lynn L. Zhang Legacy Collection Center, which will become the home for the historical treasures--archives--that are housed at WMU. We've recently made a major addition to those collections by accepting the archives of the Kalamazoo Gazette. The center and all housed within will be an asset for all of Southwest Michigan.

• You'll hear a lot in the coming months and years about Western Michigan University's strategic plan and the way we've carefully identified ourselves to move forward as a learner centered, discovery driven and globally engaged
university. Those three pillars really identify our core and provide a framework for all that we do as an institution both internally and in our interaction with others.

• One good example and a collaboration to highlight is our work with veterans, which very much fits into our learner centered identity. We have more veterans--more than 500--of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars than any other university in the state. Working with Congressman Upton and our partners at Kalamazoo Valley Community College and Kellogg Community College in Battle Creek, we've been able to leverage the veterans' services of all three institutions and secure an unusual designation by the Veterans Administration as a Vet Success site. Together, the three colleges serve more than 1,000 vets. Our new Vet Success program puts a full-time VA counselor to work for those vets, providing services on all three campuses--two days at WMU, two days at KVCC and a day at KCC.

• Other things to look for at WMU will be growing numbers of international students, which benefit our students by helping them develop a more global perspective and enhance our community by providing that perspective as well as boosting the local economy. This year we have nearly 1,600 international students from 95 countries, with our largest international populations coming from Saudi Arabia, China, the Dominican Republic, India and Japan.

If time allows, mention--

• **K and WMU relations**
• **Annual MLK celebration**
• **Lifelong Learning Academy**
• **Service Learning**
• **Walker Institute?**
**Suggested follow-up questions (if time permits):**

Where does enrollment currently stand? Do you have any enrollment estimates for the year to come?

In what ways have you collaborated with each other or other community partners in the past year? In the next year?

Are there any legislative priorities you have with the new legislative session in 2013? Any predictions on the next budget year?

Do you anticipate any major capital projects in the coming year?

Any particular points of pride you wish to share about your institution?

- Washington Monthly ranking this fall--Top 100 schools across the country that are best for students and for the nation.

- Seita program

- Six of WMU's health and human services graduate programs are among the best--top 50--in the nation according to U.S. News & World Report. Those six include both of our OT programs--one in Kalamazoo and a brand new one in GR.