Medallion Scholarship Competition Welcome

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Good morning. Welcome to Western Michigan University and to Kalamazoo. For some of you, let me also welcome you to Michigan.

Students, I wish you the best of luck as you tackle today's Medallion competition.

Parents and families, I want to congratulate you and thank you for the critical role you played in bringing your students to this point in their lives. By anyone’s standards, these young people are some of the brightest students, not just in Michigan or the Midwest but also in the nation.

**The Medallion Competition**

Today, let me borrow a phrase from the Marines. We're looking for a few good men and women. We are on the lookout for "Smart" students with the character, curiosity, initiative and ability to take full advantage of the opportunities that Western Michigan University presents.

Our Medallion scholars, along with other top WMU students, go on to win prestigious national scholarships like the Truman, Goldwater and Udall awards. Twice in the past five years, WMU students have won Gates Cambridge Scholarships-- the Cambridge University equivalent of the Rhodes scholarship--and last fall one of our students was a Rhodes scholarship finalist.

**What WMU offers**

You'll make some discoveries today as you learn more about WMU--and those discoveries will revolve around the people you meet as you become more familiar
with our campus. We have a wonderful physical plant and some of the best instructional facilities you'll find anywhere, but it is the quality of the people who make up this university that makes all the difference in our students' lives.

We're learner centered, globally engaged and discovery driven. This is a place that has all of the resources of a much larger research University but still has kept the focus squarely on teaching and making our students successful.

Students, this is a place where you will discover things you might not yet know you're searching for. This is a place where faculty and staff alike are focused on what it will take to help you succeed. They will help you take control of your own academic success and you'll find you can literally "Grab the Reins" at Western Michigan University.

An Entrepreneurial University
We also pride ourselves on being an entrepreneurial university that is agile enough to take advantage of opportunity--regardless of the timing and obstacles that may stand in the way. For example, with our two local world-class teaching hospitals, Borgess and Bronson, we have launched a private medical school initiative that will welcome its first students in the fall of 2014. This private medical school at a public university made national headlines in 2011 with our announcement of a $100 million gift from anonymous donors, as well as the gift of a major science research facility that will be transformed into the home of the School of Medicine.

Closing
Finally, let me urge you to take a careful look at our home community while you're here today. This is a wonderful college town with people who go out of their way to make students an important part of the social fabric. People who know other college
towns well often remark on how willing this community is to embrace and engage our students.

Enjoy your day today. I hope you feel the kind of welcome and focus on success we want all of our students and their families to feel. Regardless of today's outcome, we want you to be part of our campus community.

How many of you watched this year's Super Bowl? The winning Head Coach of the Baltimore Ravens, John Harbaugh, got his coaching start as an assistant right here at WMU in 1984. In a recent interview with the Washington Post, Coach Harbaugh recalled his time at Western Michigan University and proudly proclaimed that it was "probably the most meaningful three years I had in coaching... or in my life."

My message to today's competitors is a simple one. I want to invite you here for four years that I promise will be the most meaningful in your life. Good luck today. I look forward to seeing each one of you on our campus in the fall.

In spite of some chilly weather outside, I say today what I say every day: “It’s a great day to be a Bronco!”

Thank you.