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## Gold Pride Receptions—Grand Rapids

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Gold Pride Receptions—Grand Rapids  
John M. Dunn  
Feb. 29, 2013

Good evening.

- I am enormously pleased to welcome you—students and families—to this Western Michigan University Gold Pride reception. I would prefer to be with you in person tonight, however the rescheduling of this event catches me on an evening with prior commitments. I hope you will understand.
- As families, you've been on a long journey together to prepare for this exciting point in your lives. I want to congratulate all of you on a job well done. You've laid the groundwork. You're here because you know great potential can be enhanced by a making the right college choice and selecting a school with wonderful faculty, great instructional facilities and people who really care about student success.
- Western Michigan University is that school. We want you to succeed. Our entire University community is devoted to helping our students live up to their potential by offering an environment that is learner centered, discovery driven and globally engaged.
- Tonight our theme is "Go West". This is not a set of travel directions. "West" is whatever your personal frontier is--the place that takes you outside of your comfort zone and puts you on the path to discovery. "West" is a state of mind not a geographic direction. Uncovering and exploring that personal frontier is what Western Michigan University is all about.

You may find your "West" by following the sun as a member of our solar racecar team or by performing at New York's Lincoln Center with one of our vocal jazz ensembles. Your "West" may be working in a nanotechnology lab or producing a literary journal.

"Go West" is a direction for your internal compass. So it doesn't matter whether you drive north, south, east or west to reach Kalamazoo, Western Michigan University is where your personal frontier—your West—awaits you.

- Let me brag a little bit. Here are a few things about WMU you should know.

- WMU is a research university--one of fewer than 200 in the nation to win that designation from the Carnegie Foundation. That means you'll be taught by professors who are making the latest discoveries and are at the top of their game.

- We have an Honors College that is one of the oldest collegiate honors programs in the country and the credentials of our honors college classes equal or surpass those at the nation's most elite private colleges.

- We have the right program for you. There are more than 240 academic programs from which to choose--141 at the undergraduate level.

- We have nationally and internationally known programs that range from aviation and engineering management to vocal jazz, geosciences and medieval studies. In fact, if there were a "Final Four" for academic programs, WMU would be in one of the top slots every year.

- I could go on, but what I want you to know is that all of the resources I just mentioned and many more are just the tip of the iceberg. In addition to world-class academics, we have wonderful social, cultural and athletic opportunities to enjoy. Over the past few weeks, our students have flocked to Miller Auditorium to see the Broadway touring production of "Les Mis." They turned out in force to see our nationally ranked hockey team sweep the University of Michigan. At our Winter Carnival, a few days ago, some very brave students joined ME for a polar plunge in our

Goldworth Pond to raise money for Special Olympics. All of these opportunities are part of the total experience that comes from being a member of the WMU community. Such opportunities will help you find your West--your success.

- One of the great joys of being a university president is seeing students like like you make a great decision. I'll be looking for you during Fall Welcome on our campus and I'll look forward to seeing you frequently after that. I'll be on the stage at Miller Auditorium to shake your hand when you receive your bachelor's degree a little more than four years from now.
- Thank you for your interest in Western Michigan University. Ask lots of questions. I know you'll be impressed by the answers you receive.