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Dominican Republic University Presidents

"Financing and Cooperation Trends for Higher Education Institutions"

President John M. Dunn

Aug. 28, 2013

- **(Slide #1)** Good morning. Thank you for that very kind introduction and for inviting me to speak with you today. It is a pleasure to be in the company, as well, of Minister Melo, who leads the Dominican Republic's higher education initiatives. I look forward to many years of continuing cooperation and thoughtful discussion about new possibilities.

I have traveled frequently to your nation over the past five years--this is my second trip here this summer--and it is beginning to feel like a second home. I'll talk more about the business reasons I come here so often in a few moments, but first I must say that every trip here is characterized by the warmest of welcomes and unparalleled hospitality. The reputation of your beautiful nation is well established in my community and I predict you'll be meeting more and more of my colleagues in the coming years.

Just to give you an idea, I must tell you that this week, on my home campus, we're welcoming some 3,500 new students. Since I will miss the formal welcoming ceremony, my extended staff arranged for me to deliver my welcome message to them via videotape. That was their second choice. Their first suggestion was that they all accompany me to your nation and "live stream" that welcome message back to Kalamazoo.

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- **(Slide #2)** About WMU

One of the first things I always like to do with a new audience is share just the basics about Western Michigan University so that you know the perspective I bring to the topic at hand. As an institution, Western Michigan University is best described as learner centered, discovery driven and globally engaged. You'll hear those three phrases a lot because they are the three tenants of our strategic plan. Nearly all that we do falls under one of those three goals.

- **(Slide #3)**

- **(Slide #4)**

And I always like to share our basic statistics

- We have nearly 25,000 students

 - 20,000 undergrads

 - 5,000 graduate students

- We're one of just 207 research universities in the United States according to the Carnegie Foundation rating system, the gold standard in higher education.

- We offer more than 240 degree programs. 102 of those are at the graduate level, including 30 that lead to a doctoral degree.

- And we're internationally known in an enormous range of disciplines. They range from physics and jazz studies to engineering management, accountancy and medieval studies.

- **(Slide #5)**

- **(Slide #6)** International credentials

Western Michigan University is globally engaged. We attract students from around the world, and our students travel and study abroad at some 60 sites located on every continent. During this academic year, our campus in Kalamazoo will have nearly 1,700 students from 95 countries

- **(Slide #7)**

The nations with the largest contingents of students at WMU are Saudi Arabia, China, the Dominican Republic, India and Japan.

- **(Slide #8)** Special relationship with the Dominican Republic

You will have noticed that the Dominican Republic is third in the number of students it sends to WMU. That's the result of a very special alliance. In 2008, we were privileged to become part of the Dominican Scholars Program, taking part in your nation's commitment to expanded higher education opportunity. We began welcoming a sizeable contingent of DR students to our campus each semester.

- Since then, we've welcomed 307 DR students to our campus.

- We're continuing that tradition this fall--this week, in fact--with 43 new DR students on campus.

- **(Slide #9)** Results

Those students have been enormously successful, and we've enjoyed seeing their growing numbers at each commencement ceremony.

- **(Slide #10)** Earlier this summer, we published this ad in The Listin Diario newspaper listing the names of all the WMU graduates from the Dominican Republic. The names and areas of study were listed for all 137 graduates. Their degrees were earned in such disciplines as aviation management, finance,

economics, aeronautical and electrical engineering, telecommunications and business management.

- **(Slide #11)** They celebrate with us, with each other and with their families. And we're beginning to see families coming back to see their second or third child earn a degree.
- **(Slide #12)** We've built high levels of respect between our nations. We've also learned that there are many additional programs and initiatives with great potential simply waiting for discussion and further development.
- **(Slide #13)** This year, we added a new component to our partnership when ITSC--the Dominican Republic's first community college--opened its doors, with Victor Hugo DeLancer as its president. Now ITSC has more than 2,000 students, and we've been working closely with the faculty at that school. President DeLancer is very interested in making connections with Western Michigan University. In June, We took three faculty members and two graduate students to ITSC for a five-day inservice workshop for instructors that covered topics of interest across the higher ed spectrum--teaching styles, student interaction, handling plagiarism, etc.
- **(Slide #14)** ITSC, in turn, sent four of its faculty leaders to Western Michigan University at the end of July. Both visits were extraordinarily productive, and we anticipate an ongoing relationship with our colleagues in the Dominican Republic.

(Transition into collaboration and financial trends)

That partnership with a community college is one that is comfortable ground for us at Western Michigan University. We operate in a state with a strong community

college system. We have discovered that community colleges are not competitors but promising partners in the world of higher education. That is just one of the emerging trends I want to focus on today. These are cooperation and growth trends that make financial sense in a world of fiscal constraint and an era of increasing specialization. There are four such trends I'd like to talk about.

- **(Slide #15)** Cooperation and growth trends that make financial sense

- 1) Leverage the opportunities that partnerships between community colleges and universities can offer for growth and seamless transitions
- 2) Expand opportunity by launching new, privately funded graduate or professional programs
- 3) Partner with industry to both promote collaboration between business and academia and build seamless transition to careers for students
- 4) Affiliate with other schools to expand professional and graduate opportunities

- **(Slide #16)** Let's start with the topic that helped segue into these trends-- community colleges. We have a long history of working with community colleges as partners. We've opted to honor the choices and education paths our students and their families make and worked very hard to make transfer to the University a seamless event. To that end, we've developed dual degree programs in which the students are admitted as both community college students and university students, enjoying the advising and academic resources of both schools. We've also developed reverse transfer agreements through which students can pick up their two-year degree as a credential even though they transfer to WMU before completing that degree program.

I raise this topic for one very important reason. The Dominican Republic now has a community college. That community college has more than 2,000 students. When they meet with initial higher education success, many of them will be eager to continue on to earn a four-year degree. Someone is going to make it easy for them to do that. If I were a university president in the Dominican Republic, I might be looking very closely at courting such students. They will bring a vibrancy and whole new dimension to schools that reach out to them. The success of this first community college leads me to believe there will be more.

- **(Slide #17)** Another option for growth is to find private funding to launch professional education that can be transformational. At Western Michigan University, we are in the midst of such transformation. Five years ago, we began working with our local hospitals and life sciences business infrastructure. Together, we decided to leverage our community's 135-plus years of life sciences development by opening a School of Medicine. Government funding for such initiatives is nonexistent in this environment, but we saw this window of opportunity as something that would not remain open for long.

- **(Slide #18)** Even though WMU is a publicly funded university we turned to the private sector to help realize this dream. Not only was it a transformational opportunity for our University, it was a transformational opportunity for the economic development of our home community. We found donors who recognized the potential and stepped up with the needed funding. They made a \$100 million anonymous gift to serve as base funding. Next fall, we will open with our first class of medical students, and we've already received more than 2,500 applications for 50 slots in that first class.

- **(Slide #19)** Private support did not stop with that \$100 million gift. Eighteen months ago, the scion of our local corporate pharmaceutical family donated a home for our medical school. This former Pfizer research facility will become our W.E. Upjohn Campus. It is being renovated now, and is scheduled for completion next summer--just in time to welcome that first class.

- **(Slide #20)** Our medical school will have a natural partner in our existing College of Health and Human Services. This small, highly regarded college is home to some of our most widely respected academic programs. Six of our graduate degree programs are among the top 100 of their kind in the nation, according to U.S. News & World Report. To give you an idea of how competitive some of those programs are, let me note that it is not uncommon for us to have up to 800 students vying for one of just 45 seats in an incoming class of prospective physician assistants.

- **(Slide #21)** A third and incredibly important trend is the partnership between higher education and private industry. It's good for both partners and brings some powerful benefits to students. Western Michigan University has a long track record with industry, and we're now more than a decade into actually having a physical location where such collaboration can play out every day.

- **(Slide #22)** Our Business Technology and Research Park is a 265-acre development that is home to our College of Engineering and Applied Sciences as well as some 40 companies that were attracted to the park by two major considerations

- 1) the ability to work with University researchers and

2) the ability to recruit the most promising students very early in their academic careers.

These companies provide professors, full classes and individual students with opportunities to work on real-world business and engineering challenges. And they offer internships and jobs, allowing students to find a good fit and the companies to find talented young hires.

- **(Slide #23)** The companies in the Business Technology and Research Park range from small life science startups to major civil and environmental engineering firms. Our newest industry partner is Newell Rubbermaid, which is about to begin building its global design and innovation center on our campus. The Atlanta-based firm--the corporate umbrella for some 40 internationally known consumer brands--will open a state-of-the-art 40,000-square-foot facility at the park in early 2014

- **(Slide #24)** Other recent and emerging developments at Western Michigan University illustrate the fourth collaborative trend that makes financial sense--affiliating with another school to expand professional development and graduate education options.

- **(Slide #25)** We are putting the finishing touches on an affiliation with the Thomas M. Cooley Law School. Discussions about having a law school at WMU date back to the 1970s. Over the past three years Cooley's president, Don LeDuc began the conversation with me again, at first informally, but then in earnest. We have 10 years of successful partnerships to work from--dual degree programs and shared facilities, for instance. The upshot is that very soon there will be a Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School. Both boards have already

approved the idea and we're working through the details now. Like our medical school, this will be a private entity within a public university.

- **(Slide #26)** The Cooley alliance will give us four additional platforms in Michigan and one in Florida. Our shared values will certainly mean that Cooley's current status as the largest (3,000-plus) and most diverse law school in the nation will continue.

- **(Slide #27)** Very closely related to that affiliation trend is a far simpler type of alliance--and one that we're looking at in partnership with Dominican Republic universities. Sometimes, rather than starting a new program, it makes sense to tap the resources and expertise of a school that has exactly the degree program your students may need.

We have lately been talking with our colleagues in the Dominican Republic about the possibility of offering one of our signature doctoral programs here. We are internationally known for our doctoral program in educational leadership. There are students here in the Dominican Republic who have a desire and need to pursue such a program. Why not combine resources and goals to make that happen quickly and efficiently while we innovate in the way that program is delivered--some here in the Dominican Republic and some at Western Michigan University. And, of course, underlying that program offerings would be the talent of both DR and WMU educators.

Schools in nations around the world are exploring such innovations. Throughout Europe, for instance, the Bologna Accord of 2010 is leading to greater inter-institutional cooperation. That multination agreement is designed to increase

opportunity, promote mobility and assure quality across the higher education landscape. The philosophy behind the accord is that students, regardless of where they are enrolled should be able to be free to pursue course work at the institution with the highest quality in the discipline. What's more, the idea is to harmonize program and degree requirements, so the real meaning of such a credential will be known across the system.

At the same time we are discussing bringing our Ph.D. to the Dominican Republic, we're also investigating new opportunities to bring our students to this nation to further their academic careers in some of your programs. I like to view our partnerships as something of a Western Hemisphere Bologna Accord.

- **(Slide #28)** I could continue on, but I want to stop here and make sure there's time to address your questions. I want to be respectful of your time and make sure I address the topics you want to know about, so at this point, I want to open the floor to your questions.