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Communities in Schools Campaign Launch

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WMU President John M. Dunn
Communities in Schools Campaign Launch
Nov. 6, 2013

- Good morning. I'm so pleased to see you all here and ready to work for such an important goal--filling the pipeline full of students who are ready for and headed to college.
- That's a laudable goal for any community. For this community, though, it's an imperative. We've been given a great gift with the Kalamazoo Promise, and it's the responsibility of all of us to make sure every young person eligible is able to take full advantage of it. It doesn't matter what college our young people choose (although I'll admit to being somewhat partial to at least **one, world-class research university** on the list of institutions they have to consider.) What matters is that they know from the very start of their days in school that college is their goal. It is our role to serve as examples, mentors, teachers and advocates so that they are aware of the possibilities and familiar with what it takes to achieve those possibilities.
- Our community's goal of filling that college-going pipeline is made so much easier by the existence of the Kalamazoo Promise. Perhaps the greatest perceived barrier to a college education for so many families--the ability to finance a college career--has been lifted. Our role is to help all families seize the opportunity and make sure their young people never waiver from the goal. For those families whose children are the first generation to attend college, we must always stand ready to help establish the college-bound culture and network of support that will make their children successful.
- At WMU, we like to say the promise is fulfilled. Right now, we have more than 450 promise students working toward a bachelor's degree. A total of 166 promise students have already earned that degree at WMU and have moved on to begin careers or attend graduate school. In fact the very first bachelor's degree earned by a promise student was

awarded to a WMU student in Dec. 2009--four years and four weeks after this wonderful gift was announced.

Thank you for your willingness to work so hard to make sure even more Kalamazoo young people see their personal version of the promise fulfilled. The WMU community stands ready to work with you in any way possible.