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11-8-2013

National Association of Graduate-Professional Students

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WMU ScholarWorks Citation

Dunn, John M., "National Association of Graduate-Professional Students" (2013). *WMU President John Dunn*. 554.

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National Association of Graduate-Professional Students
John M. Dunn Welcome
Nov. 8, 2013

- Good morning. It's my absolute privilege to welcome you to Kalamazoo and, on behalf of our entire academic community, to the campus of Western Michigan University. You are, indeed, the future, and we're delighted that you selected this academic community to meet and formulate your plans for the coming year.
- I might say, "Welcome, at last..." It's been nearly a year since we learned the proposal by the WMU Graduate Student Advisory Committee to serve as host to your 27th annual conference had been a successful one. Their excitement has been contagious, and members of this campus community have been eagerly awaiting your visit for months now.
- As president of Western Michigan University, I have been fortunate to work with student leaders of enormous talent. That has been extraordinarily true of our graduate student leadership. They, in turn, have found their involvement with NAGPS of enormous inspiration and benefit--each year returning from your conference full of ideas and enthusiasm. Thank you. After perusing your conference schedule, I'm certain you all will have that same type of experience this weekend.
- I know from your conference as well that you'll spend a bit of time exploring our community. You made your first sightseeing stop, I believe, at an establishment (The Beer Exchange) in a historic Kalamazoo building. And this evening's scheduled activities will take you to several additional historic locations (Kalamazoo Pub Crawl).

- I hope you are also able to spend your daylight hours exploring and learning too. You will soon see that there are no finer models of graduate student excellence than you will find right here at Western Michigan University, so allow them to be your mentors.

- I also encourage you to wander the WMU campus freely. Stop in and visit our departments in your discipline of interest, visit our art exhibits, take our outdoor sculpture tour. We welcome you now and at any point in the future you might want to make a return visit.

- If there's a message you take away from your visit to Kalamazoo it should be that this is a community that is deeply committed to education. In fact, it has been dubbed "The Education Community." Kalamazoo is:
 - Home to four institutions of higher education (WMU, KVCC, K & Davenport)
 - It's the community that gave birth to the concept of free public high schools for the nation, and
 - The home to the Kalamazoo Promise that gives graduates of Kalamazoo Public Schools free tuition to attend any of Michigan's public colleges and universities.

- And now for three days, we're home to the future of higher education—YOU—energized and inquisitive students from scores of diverse colleges and universities who have gathered at WMU to maximize their graduate college experience.

Thank you for visiting us and please have an enormously successful conference. Come back and see us any time.