Medallion Scholarship Competition Welcome

John M. Dunn
Western Michigan University, john.dunn@wmich.edu

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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. Let me also note that you are today visiting the newly designated 8th snowiest college in the United States. AccuWeather.com ranked us in that position earlier this week (last week for the Feb. 1 event). After first being designated the 7th snowiest college, our position melted to 8th after supporters of another university noted their schools' credentials. We're still having fun with the designation. Today's weather is our attempt to boost our rankings.

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 bright 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 and international scholarships like the Truman, Goldwater,
Udall and Gates Cambridge Scholarships-- the Cambridge University equivalent of the Rhodes scholarship.

**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 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 "Discover Gold" once you decide to “Go West!” Just this week, for instance, a young man who two years ago was sitting right where you are today, was showcasing an engineering innovation he's worked on--a product likely to be patented--to our Board of Trustees. *(FYI This is the snowplow valve cover. The student is Matthew Garven of Traverse City)*

**An Entrepreneurial University**
We 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, we have launched a private medical school initiative that will welcome its first students this
fall. 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 is being transformed into the home of the School of Medicine.

And we are now in the final stages of affiliating with the nation's largest private law school. By this fall, we expect to welcome the Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School to the WMU family.

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.

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.

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.