3-27-2014

Sustainability Leadership Summit Welcome

John M. Dunn

Western Michigan University, john.dunn@wmich.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dunn

Part of the Higher Education Commons

WMU ScholarWorks Citation

https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dunn/528

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of the
President at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in
WMU President John Dunn by an authorized administrator of
ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact
maira.bundza@wmich.edu.
Good afternoon and welcome everyone to today's Sustainability Leadership Summit. You are principals in an event that is about the future--the resources we'll have in that future, the environment we'll have in that future and, most important, the new, young leaders we're preparing who will be guiding a new generation.

Here at Western Michigan University, we think of sustainability in the broadest possible terms. It's all about making sure every person realizes his or her full potential, every organization operates efficiently and every resource is wisely used. It's about being good stewards of what we have and what we hope to pass forward to future generations. It's about enhancing the quality of life for today and for years to come.

I'd like to thank those of you on today's panel who have so generously shared your time with us. Your perspectives on the skills and knowledge that future employees of your businesses and organizations will need is a boon to us as educators, and it is sound advice to our students. I hope many of them took copious notes because they're the ones about to hit the job market.

Your participation today demonstrates so clearly the close ties that have developed between your organizations and our campus over the years. Each time we gather for an event like this, I'm reminded again of just how strong we are as a community and just how much we have to offer our state and nation as a result of the lessons we've learned by working together. Thank you.

I'd also like to both greet and welcome my friend David Hales who is with us today as our keynote speaker. David is the president and CEO of Second Nature, which is the
supporting organization of the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment. I serve on the Steering Committee of that organization and have gotten to know David over the past few years. David is an international leader in sustainability. And, as a former director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, he brings with him a unique perspective on this state and its place in the world of sustainable entities. I assure you, you are in for a treat when he speaks later this afternoon.

• Organizing all of this is Dr. Harold Glasser, who expertly leads our Office of Sustainability. He, in turn, leads a remarkable small army of students and staff who are passionate about what they do. They work hard with our campus community to ensure we are sustainable each and every day. This event is about the future. They truly are the future. Please join me in recognizing and thanking them for all they do with a round of applause.

• This University really has been about the business of sustainability for more than 30 years. While we're enormously proud of the campus environment we've built, we're also cognizant of the fact that we may be only at the beginning of our journey of creating a culture of sustainability.

• We began the process and have made extraordinary strides in building an infrastructure in which we save energy, capture those savings and reinvest them in initiatives that allow us to save even more energy. What we've learned over the years has applications for other campuses and public and private facilities. What we've learned really constitutes a set of best practices that we have shared--gladly--with our sister institutions around the country and with the business community.
• We've become a statewide leader in areas like stormwater management and solar power--again establishing best practices and sharing our knowledge. And since our students—on the own—adopted a sustainability fee that, among other things, provides sustainability research grants for students, we've been developing best practices in that arena as well. And, they are eager to share what they’ve learned.

• If you sense a theme here, you're very perceptive. This is all information to be shared and offered for feedback by others who are working in similar environments to build a better future. We share that knowledge. Each of you is here today to share your insights on how to build a better future.

• Please enjoy the rest of the day's activities and please resolve to join us often in the future as we both tackle the thorny problems that face us and celebrate our ability to overcome them.

Thank you.