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49th Food Marketing Conference

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49th Food Marketing Conference
Welcome by President John M. Dunn
March 31, 2014

- Good evening, it is my absolute pleasure to welcome you here to attend the 49th Annual Food Marketing Conference. This has become a rite of spring here in Kalamazoo and at Western Michigan University. Many of you attend regularly. Welcome back. For those of you who are first time attendees, we are glad to see you. I hope you take the opportunity to visit the campus, explore the community and get to know us better.

- We are enormously proud of Western Michigan University's Food and Consumer Packaged Goods Marketing Program. It is part of our Department of Marketing in the Haworth College of Business. Our marketing department is one of the 20 largest such marketing departments in the country. The Food Marketing and Consumer Package Good program is more than 50 years old and is considered one of the top programs of its kind in the nation.

- With the help of more than 40 members of the industry on our program's advisory board, we're able to ensure our classes are relevant and tailored to fit industry needs. And generous support from the industry means our students enjoy about \$90,000 worth of scholarship opportunities every year.

- How good is our program? It has close to a 100 percent placement rate and a number of its graduates have gone on to become entrepreneurs and CEOs and executives at major corporations and industry organizations. If past experience holds, 2/3 of those who will graduate from the program next month

have had jobs lined up for about two months already. The industry--you--clearly know how valuable those students will be as future employees.

- Those close, year-round ties with industry make this the quality program that it is. Many of you visit as guest speakers. Others are mentors to student interns. And still others serve on that advisory board. Your participation in this annual event that is such an inspiration to students is yet another contribution. It is truly your investment in our program that gives it its national reputation.

- You may also be interested to know that we pride ourselves in being learner centered, discovery driven and globally engaged. The food marketing program fits beautifully into that description with significant research that has an impact on your industry. One of our faculty members, Ann Veeck (vehk), is an expert on food consumption and retail patterns in Asia. Another, Ron Larson is a food marketing strategy expert who focuses on the demand for convenient food as well as crisis management in the food industry. Elsewhere on our campus--in our engineering area, Margaret Joyce is doing breakthrough research and development in the area of printed electronics and the fabrication of flexible electronic devices created on a printing press. Those devices will provide you with enhanced ability to track food for both food safety issues and supply chain management.

- I could continue, but I want you to have a chance to enjoy your dinner and savor the conference. You have an amazing group of speakers this evening and throughout the day tomorrow. Many old friends of the conference will be here along with some new high-profile industry figures. Tomorrow morning, for instance, you will hear from Carlos Gutierrez, former U.S. Secretary of

Commerce and former president and CEO of the Kellogg Co. We welcome him back to West Michigan and to Kalamazoo. And I also like to note we welcome him back in his additional role as the proud parent of a WMU alumna--his daughter Erika.

Welcome to you all. Please enjoy yourself in our community.

Thank you.