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Orientation Leaders Welcome

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Orientation Leaders Welcome

Dr. John M. Dunn

5/2/14

- Good afternoon. Thank you for being 2014 Orientation Leaders. Your role at Western Michigan University over the coming weeks and months will be incredibly important to us a University community.
- Last weekend at commencement, we said goodbye to 2,700 students and more will graduate at the end of June--just a few weeks away. The incoming students you work with this summer are ready to get on that same pathway to success. We're all about finding every avenue to help them reach that destination--to Grab the Reins, to Go West, and take charge of their lives. That's our core message to them--that has to be at the core of your interactions with them. This is a heads-up, can-do campus that is ready to energize and enlighten every one of our students.
- You are vital to our recruitment efforts as we help build our incoming class of freshmen. Some of the students who you'll meet will already be committed Broncos. They can't wait to be here as students. Others will still be making up their minds, and you'll be the ones to let them know this University is the best choice .
- There's an exciting year ahead, and we're counting on you to help convey that sense of excitement and let those incoming students know how some of the events of the year will impact them--and you.
- **Tobacco-free campus**
One new development we're tremendously proud of is our commitment to be a tobacco-free campus, beginning Sept. 1. It's all about being a healthy sustainable environment. The move means that WMU will join more than 1,100 campuses

nationwide that are smoke free or tobacco free. That number represents about a quarter of all American colleges and universities. In Michigan, 25 colleges and universities are among that group.

- **Sustainability achievements**

One commitment I hope you share with our incoming students is the Bronco commitment to sustainability. It's woven into everything we do.

This has been a landmark year in our sustainability efforts, thanks to so many faculty and staff members and students who are committed and engaged. We are, in fact a finalist in the doctoral university category for the national Second Nature Climate Leadership Award. We'll learn our final placement later this spring, but the video we produced as part of the competition won the viewer voting competition hosted by environmental website Planet Forward. Nearly 9,000 votes were garnered for our video.

- **Stryker School of Medicine gala opening**

There's a new group of students this fall who won't go through Orientation. They're part of the 50-member, inaugural class of the Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine. You and the students you welcome to campus in Orientation will have front row seats to this history-making development that will enhance the reputation and academic resources of our University. There's a Sept. 18 gala opening downtown. The entire campus is invited.

- **Cooley Law School Affiliation**

Another initiative that will have a direct impact on the learning environment at WMU this year is our pending affiliation with the Thomas Cooley Law School. When that is finalized--perhaps as early as this summer--there will be new opportunities for our students--a possible 3+3 program that will allow incoming

undergraduates to earn both a bachelor's degree and a law degree in six years rather than seven, for instance.

And like Stryker Medical School initiative, the Cooley affiliation will mean enhanced academic prestige for the University from which you earn a degree. WMU will be one of only 83 public universities in the nation affiliated with both a law school and a medical school. Our law school affiliation will be with the largest and most diverse law school in the country, and it will give us new opportunities in the five locations in Michigan and Florida, where Cooley has major facilities.

Buildings that will make an impact

New residence halls will be lynchpins for organizing the campus into "neighborhoods"--each with its own unique features. Our on-campus housing is evolving in a way that offers a variety of options to students who want to remain on campus and close to the action. We know staying on campus will have a tremendous influence on the student experience.

And the new WMU Alumni Center that will open next summer in a completely renovated East Hall will give our current and future alumni--you—and them—a forever home on this campus, no matter how often you return.

Those are just SOME of the reasons we're excited about the upcoming academic year--and beyond. You, I know, have so much more to share with incoming students.

I hope the information I just shared reinforces your feeling that you made a smart decision--the right decision--by choosing to come to Western Michigan University.

You are better positioned than anyone to share both the tangible benefits of being a Bronco--like academic quality--and those wonderful intangible qualities that make our University so special. The students who attend Orientation will be hungry for the kind of information only you can share.

Coming from you, those messages carry an enormous amount of weight. You have real credibility with potential students because you were in their shoes just a couple of years ago. You're the real deal--a student who has become a successful Bronco.

You won't know all the answers to the questions you're asked, but there's a whole university behind you, so just ask for help when you need it. We're behind you and we're counting on you to help put the University's best foot forward.

Thank you for being Orientation leaders, have fun on the job, and always remember, everyday is a great day to be a Bronco!