Faculty Senate Remarks

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• **Fostering Success Michigan Summit (Friday)**

May is foster care month, and tomorrow morning, we'll be host to a statewide summit on college access for youth from foster care. We are, of course, nationally acknowledged for our leadership in that arena with our Seita Scholars program. But like everyone else, we're still learning and working hard to develop best practices and share what we've learned with our colleagues around the state. Tomorrow's event is for both students, and professionals who work with youth in foster care. It is organized by Fostering Success Michigan which is housed right here on campus as part of our Center for Fostering Success.

• **Orientation about to begin--everyone has a role**

We've had thousands of visitors on campus over the past few weeks--Medieval Congress, Michigan Youth Arts, Festival, a State Forensics competition and KVCC commencement. But by far the largest and most critical group of visitors this summer will be the thousands of incoming freshman who will visit campus with their families for Orientation. They will begin to arrive on May 30 for the first of a dozen two-day sessions. They are here to make their final decision about whether to enroll and commit their futures to WMU. So my core message is that everyone of us plays an important role in that process as we meet families exploring the campus, interacting with parents at a mixer, or play a formal role in the actual Orientation programs. What we do will have an impact on those final decisions.

• **NCAA APR rankings--honoring academic excellence in student athletes**
We just learned some wonderful news about the academic performance of our student athletes. For the first time since the inception of the Academic Progress Rate metric by the NCAA Western Michigan Athletics boasts three teams (men's tennis, women's golf and gymnastics) with perfect multi-year scores of 1000. Those three teams plus our men's basketball team scored in the top 10 percent nationally for their respective sports. In the MAC, we were one of only three schools (*Ohio and Kent State were the others*) to have four or more teams in that honored 10 percent ranking. In Michigan, only U-M Ann Arbor had more top 10 percent teams.

- **Resilient Campus Initiative--acknowledging higher ed role in addressing climate change**

We've had some very nice news on the sustainability front lately, including one item I can't yet share in detail. I do want to let you know that we are among the founding institutions for a new nationwide network of colleges and universities making a commitment to lead the nation's response to many of the challenges triggered by changing global weather patterns. The Alliance for Resilient Campuses was announced May 5, just before we learned the conclusions of the National Climate Assessment--which said climate change is already here. The purpose of the alliance is to put higher education at the leading edge of helping our communities and nation assess and deal with the impact of climate change.

- **Einstein "Between Theorems"--sculpture gift from Kapangas on CEAS campus**

A sculpture depicting a frisbee-tossing Albert Einstein by Montana artist Jim Dolan has been installed by the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences building. It was a gift from Dr. John A. Kapenga (kaPAYNGah), associate
professor of computer science, and his wife, Karen Woodin. The couple first saw the piece at the 2012 Grand Rapids ArtPrize exhibition and wanted to install it at their home. They opted instead to have it installed near the main entrance to the building that houses the engineering college to give more people the opportunity to see and to appreciate it. So enjoy it and be sure to offer your thanks to John and Karen as well.

• Air Zoo gala--signaling new partnership moving forward

Tomorrow night, we will formally launch a much stronger partnership between Western Michigan University and the Air Zoo. Oddly, we have two premier aviation resources here in SW Michigan--our College of Aviation and a wonderful air museum--and we've never leveraged the potential of two such strong entities working together. We're beginning by playing the role of presenting sponsor the Air Zoo's first Science Innovation Hall of Fame Awards Gala and Dinner. We'll be honoring new inductees into the Michigan Aviation Hall of Fame, as well as teachers and high school students from a 12-county area. Moving forward, our aviation college will be much more closely aligned with the Air Zoo.

Faculty honors

• Longtime faculty member and honors college dean Carla Koretsky will by honored internationally with the Geochemical Society's Distinguished Service Award, when the group meets in June in Sacramento. That's the largest international body of geochemical professionals.

• Elizabeth Whitten in special education and literacy has been named one of three worldwide recipients of the Excellence in Coaching and Use of the TLE TeachLivE Lab in Teacher Preparation. (That's our interactive teaching lab in
Sangren that is such a resource for our prospective teachers. The award was made by the University of Central Florida where the technology was developed.

**Student honors**

• April graduate, Kyle Croes, will be honored in Montreal at the end of May with the Institute of Industrial Engineers' top student award. This award is made to just one undergraduate in the nation who has provided distinguished service to industrial engineering

**Alumni honors**

• I had the good fortune to attend a Mid-American Conference awards ceremony in Cleveland this week and watch as Caroline Mullen-Kearney, a 1990 WMU alumna from Ireland was inducted into the MAC Hall of Fame. The All-American track and field and cross country athlete is a social work alumna who has worked since 1995 with Ireland's National Rehabilitation Board, a semi-state body that assists people with various disabilities as they get back into part-time rehabilitative employment.