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2014 Orientation Welcome

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Good afternoon, Broncos! I'm John Dunn, president of Western Michigan University. I suspect you've been roundly welcomed several times already, but it is my pleasure to offer you --students and families--an official welcome to YOUR campus community.

Students, this is your first official day as a Bronco. You made a wonderful decision by accepting our invitation to Go West and discover your own frontier. You'll be empowered to find a path that will allow you to achieve your dreams, and you'll have plenty of help along the way.

We've built this orientation program in a way that will help you understand all the resources available to you. By the time you leave tomorrow, you'll be an enrolled student--ready to hit the ground running when you return in the fall.

If you're wondering what you might discover about yourself when you return in the fall, let me give you an idea by telling you about one young man from New Baltimore, Mich., who was sitting exactly where you are just a few years ago. If he were here, he'd tell you about his journey from being a young musician who wasn't sure what he wanted to do, to graduating--with honor--last month from our industrial and entrepreneurial engineering program. Kyle Croes says he "didn't think he was smart enough to be an engineer," but he quickly discovered a program here that fit him and his interests perfectly. This week, he's taking a few days off from his job at Eaton Corp. to travel to Montreal to be honored by the Institute for Industrial Engineers. That organization has named him the top industrial engineering student in the United States. That's what he found when he went looking for his "West"--his frontier--at WMU.
• You're coming to WMU at a particularly exciting time. You'll hear us urge you repeatedly over the coming years to take advantage of all the opportunities that come with being part of a university that is learner centered, discovery driven and globally engaged. Those opportunities grow all the time. I know we've been telling you about our "more than 240 programs." Actually, though, we're now at more than 250 programs--after adding several new programs that will begin this fall. They include Entrepreneurship, Freshwater Science and Sustainability, and Multimedia Arts Technology in Music.

• We're not done. Right after you begin school this fall, we will open our new medical school--and that school will enhance this university's overall programming and stature. We're also very close to completing an affiliation with the nation's largest law school. By the time you return this fall, it is likely there will be a Western Michigan University Thomas Cooley Law School--and new opportunities for students that grow out of that affiliation.

• From my past experience, I know there are a number of alumni parents here who had their own remarkable experiences at WMU. Welcome back. Alumni parents, and all parents and family members, you've done a wonderful job in preparing your students for this next step of their lives. Students, please join me and all of the University personnel here today in a quick round of applause for your families to show our gratitude for their outstanding work over the years.

• Students, I look forward to seeing you this fall. Be sure to introduce yourself or simply take a moment to say "hello" when we pass each other on campus. If I can help you or your family in any way, please send me an email message. My address is
simple--john.dunn@wmich.edu--and I read and respond personally to my email messages.

• Welcome to Western Michigan University and Grab the reins!