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2014 Matriculation Ceremony

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President John M. Dunn
2014 Matriculation Ceremony
Sept. 28, 2014 – Miller Auditorium

- Thank you. I'm John M. Dunn, president of Western Michigan University--your University. This is the first official, ceremonial gathering of the Class of 2018. It's my pleasure today to say, "Welcome" to each of you and "Welcome" to all of you who are new transfer students and international students. You, and your families, too, are now part of the Bronco community.
- The first thing I want to do is let you know about a few of the people who are here on the stage this afternoon. They are all committed to ensuring your college career gets off to a good start.
- You'll hear from several of these people in a few moments. The people gathered here include the chair of the University's Board of Trustees--as well as its newest member James Bolger, who I'll ask to stand and be recognized. The mayor of Kalamazoo is here along with faculty and staff leaders, a student government leader and the deans who lead our academic colleges. And finally--and most important-- here to welcome you to our community today are the people who will play the most critical role in your studies and who serve as the heart of this institution--members of the faculty of Western Michigan University.
- Opportunities--the kind you expect and those that are unexpected--are what your time at WMU will be all about. Your ability to recognize new opportunities is central to getting the most out of your time here as a student. And our commitment to providing more and more opportunity is at the core of our promise to you.

- You'll find during your time here that this University--like all great universities--is constantly changing. This year is one of enormous change. We've just welcomed our first class of students to the WMU Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine. Three of those students were WMU freshmen just a few years ago. And the medical school has a special preferred status for future WMU graduates.
- We've also just formally affiliated with the nation's largest and most diverse law school. We're excited about the new opportunities for you that our agreements with the Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School will bring.
- And change here isn't always about new academics. Sometimes it's about the fundamental quality of life. You are the first incoming students who will have the opportunity to spend all of your undergraduate years in a tobacco-free environment. As of Monday, Sept. 1, WMU will become tobacco free--for the health of it.
- You'll see even more changes in the coming years. You came here with high expectations of us, and we will fulfill them. But it will be the things you don't expect that may, in the end, have the most lasting effect on your future. My advice to you is to leave yourself wide open--to breathe deep and literally inhale all there is to take in.

So, what do you have to do to make the most of every opportunity?

- 1) Ask questions.
- 2) Find a path that is broader than the one you envision right now by sampling the whole range of entertainment, social, cultural and athletic opportunities available.
- 3) Sustain your current friendships--and make new ones.
- 4) Enjoy yourself, but do so responsibly.

- 5) And finally, take chances. I'm not suggesting risky behavior here. I'm suggesting risky ways of thinking. Accomplish things you have not yet considered and solve problems not yet discovered.

To paraphrase the words of Thomas Edison, 'If there is a way to do something... find it!'

Welcome to the Western Michigan University community. We are delighted to have you here and eager to get to know you.

(Closing set-up for Board Chair Hettinger)

Today, you begin your time as a member of this University community, AND as a new member of the Kalamazoo community. There is a special bond between this University, the city that is its home and the entire West Michigan region. Mr. James Hettinger is the chair of the Western Michigan University Board of Trustees and a longtime economic development expert for this entire region and state. He knows how important you are to the companies and organizations out there waiting to hire you.

Trustee Hettinger spent 30 years as the head of Battle Creek Unlimited and is credited with attracting nearly 100 companies and 9,400 jobs to Battle Creek's Fort Custer Industrial Park during his tenure. For his work in economic development, Trustee Hettinger received letters of commendation from two U.S. presidents—Bill Clinton and George W. Bush—and in 1995, he was selected as Michigan's Economic Developer of the Year.

I'll leave you with one thought that I know Trustee Hettinger will echo as well.
Remember, it's always a great day to be a Bronco! Students, please welcome Mr.
James Hettinger.