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11-14-2014

Push for America Abilities Challenge Welcome

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WMU ScholarWorks Citation

Dunn, John M., "Push for America Abilities Challenge Welcome" (2014). *WMU President John Dunn*. 772.
<https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dunn/772>

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Ability Challenge Welcome
John M. Dunn
Nov. 14, 2014

Good afternoon. I usually begin by thanking the group I'm speaking to for inviting me to be part of their event. I do appreciate this invitation, but my opening message to you is simple.

Thank you for your efforts this afternoon to support an important initiative that is all about ability--enabling those with disabilities of any kind to lead fuller and more comfortable lives. I know that Pi Kappa Phi is the only Greek organization that has successfully created and maintained its own nonprofit organization. That organization, founded as Push America and now known as the Ability Experience, has been fulfilling its focus on ability and serving as an advocacy organization since 1977--that's 37 years.

As I look through our campus records, I find your organization has worked vigorously here at Western Michigan University time and again to raise money and awareness for your cause. You've used initiatives like this one, bike-a-thons and special events featuring inspirational speakers. Your fraternity's values of "Character, Leadership, Academics, Sportsmanship, and Service" are certainly well represented today and in all that you do.

You've gathered people together this afternoon for the very best of purposes--to get them thinking creatively about how they can use their knowledge and skill sets to help people with disabilities. It is a cause near to my own heart. As some of you may know, my academic background and much of my career has been focused on service to people with disabilities.

- (Describe a bit of your background and the way that has set your direction and conviction about service to others.)
- You know Some of the world's most brilliant humanists--Albert Schweitzer and Mother Teresa, to name just two, remind us time and time again that true happiness is gained only when we give generously to others. Thank you for making this message part of your core and for doing so early in your lives. And thank you for inviting me to be here with you today. Have a great competition.