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Medallion Scholarship Competition Welcome

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Medallion Scholarship Competition Welcome
John M. Dunn
January 24 & 31, 2015

Good morning. Welcome to Western Michigan University and to Kalamazoo. For some of you, let me also welcome you to Michigan. For those of you from warmer climates, let me assure you--this is not as cold and snowy as it gets in Kalamazoo. This is what we in Michigan call, "The January Thaw."

Students, I wish you the best of luck as you tackle today's Medallion competition.

Parents and families, I want to congratulate you and thank you for the critical role you played in bringing your students to this point in their lives. By anyone's standards, these young people are some of the brightest students, not just in Michigan or the Midwest but also in the nation.

The Medallion Competition

Today, let me borrow a phrase from the Marines. We're looking for a few good men and women. We are on the lookout for bright students with the character, curiosity, initiative and ability to take full advantage of the opportunities that Western Michigan University presents.

Our Medallion scholars, along with other top WMU students, go on to win prestigious national and international scholarships like the Truman, Goldwater, Udall and Gates Cambridge Scholarships-- the Cambridge University equivalent of the Rhodes scholarship.

What WMU offers

You'll make some discoveries today as you learn more about WMU--and those discoveries will revolve around the people you meet as you become more familiar with our campus. We have some of the best instructional facilities you'll find anywhere, but it is the quality of the people who make up this university that makes all the difference in our students' lives.

We're learner centered, globally engaged and discovery driven. This is a place that has all of the resources of a much larger research University but still has kept the focus squarely on teaching and making our students successful.

Students, this is a place where you will discover things you might not yet know you're searching for. This is a place where faculty and staff alike are focused on what it will take to help you succeed. They will help you take control of your own academic success and you'll find you can literally "Discover Gold" once you decide to "Go West!"

(Pick one example for for each week)

- Four years ago, Nicole Carp of Lawrence, Michigan, was sitting exactly where you're sitting this morning. She went on to win a Medallion Scholarship, and today, she is working the chair of our Department of Biological Sciences, to examine how certain types of proteins, called neurotrophic factors, influence neuron survival and development. She's also devoted her time to working at the Kalamazoo Youth Development Center to engage under-privileged students and cultivate a love for science at an early age.
- Three years ago, Sarah Hughey of Portage, Michigan, was here for the competition. She won a Medallion and today she's working on three majors--entrepreneurship, history and elementary education. She chose those three majors to prepare for a career in international development and work in supporting clean water initiatives

around the world. In her spare time, she tutors K-12 students and helps run a Registered Student Organization.

An Entrepreneurial University

We pride ourselves on being an entrepreneurial university that is agile enough to take advantage of opportunity--regardless of the timing and obstacles that may stand in the way. For example, with our two local world-class teaching hospitals, we have launched a private medical school initiative that will welcome its first students this fall. This private medical school at a public university made national headlines in 2011 with our announcement of a \$100 million gift from anonymous donors, as well as the gift of a major science research facility that has been transformed into the home of the Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine. We opened that school last fall with 54 students from around the nation--selected from among the more than 3,500 applicants for the inaugural class. Please don't leave town without driving by this impressive facility.

And we have recently affiliated with the nation's largest private law school. By next fall, we expect to be offering first-year law classes through the Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School here in Kalamazoo. And we'll also be offering a law minor to undergraduates that will allow our students to earn both a bachelor's degree and a law degree in as few as six years.

Closing

Finally, let me urge you to take a careful look at our home community while you're here today. This is a wonderful college town with people who go out of their way to make students an important part of the social fabric.

Enjoy your day today. I hope you feel the kind of welcome and focus on success we want all of our students and their families to feel. Regardless of today's outcome, we want you to be part of our campus community.

My message to today's competitors is a simple one. I want to invite you here for four years that I promise will be the most meaningful in your life. Good luck today. I look forward to seeing each one of you on our campus in the fall.

In spite of some chilly weather outside, I say today what I say every day: "It's a great day to be a Bronco!"

Thank you.