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Western Michigan University Commencement Exercises-12:30pm

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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

Saturday, May 2, 2015

John M. Dunn, President, Presiding

PROCESSIONAL
Western Brass Ensemble
Steve Wolfinbarger, Conductor

President Dunn: “Good afternoon, I am John Dunn, president of Western Michigan University.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the entire University community I want to welcome you to our three hundred and thirteenth (313th) commencement ceremony.

Will the audience please stand, as able, for the National Anthem, sung by the Brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia conducted by Derek Pothoff.”

(President Dunn steps away from the microphone)

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM
Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia
Derek Pothoff, Conductor
WELCOMING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTIONS

President Dunn:

“Commencement is a very special occasion - a time for celebration, a time for reflection, a time for closure, and a time for new beginnings.

Graduates, I applaud and thank you for meeting the standards of this great university. Your presence today allows us to recognize you and, equally important, to permit expressions of happiness, pride, and love which are so evident in the faces of those gathered here to observe you graduate.

Graduates, this is YOUR day! You have only two responsibilities: 1) to enjoy the day and allow us to honor you and; 2) to reflect and say thanks to those---and you know best who they are---who have contributed to your academic, professional and personal development.

The latter first---the THANKS part. Graduates, please stand as able and face the audience. Would the Moms and Dads in the audience please stand? How about the Grandparents? And Great Grandparents? Spouses, special partners, and children? Brothers and Sisters? Aunts, Uncles and other Relatives? And, Friends?

We also realize that there are loved ones who cannot be with us today but who we remember now and thank for their support and affection.

This day is a very special day for you, our graduates, and it is my privilege and honor to preside at your commencement.

You will join alumni from all over Michigan and from around the world.

We shall award nearly 2,700 degrees today.

More than 2,100 of you will receive bachelor's degrees.
More than 560 will receive master’s degrees.

And 40 of you will be receiving doctoral degrees.

Please join me as we turn our attention to our faculty. They are the very heart of this University. Their intellect, creativity and passion for teaching and research inspire each of us. Their faith and confidence in your abilities throughout your college years have built the foundation for your professional future. Therefore, it is to our faculty that we express special appreciation today. I ask the faculty members to stand and all of you to please join me in applauding them for the fine education they have provided to you!

Besides your professors, there have been many, many others on this campus who have protected, encouraged, facilitated, and brightened the academic journey that has led you to this moment of celebration. They are the cooks, the custodians, office personnel, medical staff, police officers, landscape crews...the list goes on and on. They give their all, every day, to make your educational experience at WMU what you deserve: the BEST. Although many of these dedicated people are not in attendance, I would like to recognize them with a round of applause.

Let me now turn to my other colleagues on the stage and I ask each of them to rise as I mention them by category.

They are the executive officers, deans and chairs of the University; our partners in shared governance: representatives of the Faculty Senate; the University Chapter of the American Association of University Professors; the Administrative Professional Association; the Professional Support Staff Organization; and the Alumni Association.

Our University is governed by an autonomous Board of Trustees, appointed by the governor of the State of Michigan. The trustees are private citizens who serve the University without remuneration and who set policy direction
for the campus. The University is very grateful to these men and women and we appreciate their exemplary service.

At this time, I would like to recognize those of you who are graduating with honors. Will those with honor cords, honorary society members, and those with recognition cords please rise so that we can recognize the special distinctions you have earned.

Western Michigan University is truly an international institution. We enthusiastically welcome students from other lands and we encourage all other students to experience a portion of their learning in one of our many study abroad locations around the globe. Will those students who were participants in one of our fine study abroad programs and all our international students please stand and be recognized.

I now ask Dr. Diane Anderson, Vice President for Student Services, to share with you some Western Michigan University “Points of Pride” that will remind you of how special this university truly is.”

(President Dunn to his seat; Vice President Anderson to the podium.)

Vice President Anderson: WMU POINTS OF PRIDE

“Good afternoon, Broncos!

Graduates, you and your families should be proud of what you’ve accomplished. You’ve successfully completed your degree requirements, and you will leave this auditorium today as WMU alumni. All of us here on the stage share your families’ pride and look forward to seeing you succeed as you move on to the next passages in your lives.

Today’s graduates come from an array of backgrounds. The stories that brought you here today are tales of personal accomplishment and proud supporting families and friends. I could share hundreds of wonderful
stories about your achievements, but there isn't time to do them justice. So instead, I'll relate the kind of information you can share as you start your career, head for graduate school or take a short break to plan your next steps in life.

Too often, we take it for granted that you all know the truly special points of pride about Western Michigan University. Let me take a few moments, one last time before you graduate, to remind you of some facts you can share whenever someone asks about your University.

Let's start with the basics. Graduates, you become alumni of one of the country's top public universities. In a nation that has more than 4,000 colleges and universities, your alma mater is one of just over 200 schools designated a research university by the Carnegie Foundation classification system that is the nation's gold standard for defining higher education.

All of you graduating today will take your place among a proud group of WMU alumni that now stands at about 200,000 living worldwide. More than 125,000 WMU graduates live in Michigan, but there's not a state or territory in the nation that is missing the Bronco touch.

• And no matter where you travel in the world, you should not be surprised to encounter a fellow alum. We have students from 100 nations, and today's graduates hail from countries that include Brazil, Germany, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Tajikistan and Ecuador. Families have traveled from around the globe to celebrate with us--and some of those family members are returning alumni as well.

• So who else will be joining our alumni base today?

• Let's start with an important group we always need to acknowledge--our veterans. There are 60 veterans who will graduate today. We're proud of the service our graduates and their fellow veterans have given our nation and enormously proud that they chose WMU to prepare for their futures, and we are especially grateful for their service.
• Today 40 people will receive doctoral degrees. These graduates represent more than 21 disciplines. Thus, we are well on our way to awarding more than 100 doctoral degrees this year.

• Graduating today are 86 members of the Lee Honors College. It is one of the nation's oldest collegiate honors programs and boasts a student profile that is similar or even more impressive than that of students attending the most elite private colleges in the United States.

• Today's graduates include 9 members of Phi Beta Kappa. Phi Beta Kappa is the oldest and most prestigious academic honor society in the nation. Just 100 other public universities in America have been authorized to have a Phi Beta Kappa chapter, and Western Michigan University is one of them.

We pride ourselves on being learner centered, discovery driven and globally engaged. Our incredibly talented faculty leads the way on all three fronts. Great people and programs--our points of pride--define Western Michigan University. We intend to share these Points of Pride every chance we get, because we know that the more people know about Western Michigan University, the more likely they are to recognize what an incredibly valuable asset WMU graduates are for the state and nation.

Telling our story works and I invite you to share our story--and add to it. Starting today, you're a Bronco alum--one of our newest points of pride. We look forward to following your progress, and we plan on boasting about your success in life for many years to come. Congratulations on reaching this significant milestone!

(President Dunn to the podium)

President Dunn: "Graduates, we are proud of all of you. You have demonstrated the determination and commitment to achieve what we celebrate here today. Many of you held down jobs working long hours while being full- or part-time students. And what is important, you finished, you accomplished your goal."
A great number of you are international students who have studied far away from your home and family for many years. Your families are proud of your accomplishments. As you journey back to your home countries, you have our best wishes and the hope that you take fond memories of Michigan, Kalamazoo, and your University with you.

Many of our graduates are non-traditional students with spouses and job obligations and for whom being a student came after family and work. We have great admiration for your achievements.

While you have worked hard we hope that you have also enjoyed your time here at the University. For many of you, this has been your first experience away from home. So while you have learned much from your course work, we are sure that you have also learned much about life and living.

We hope that the many friendships you have formed will stand the test of time and that you will include among them associations that you have made with our faculty and staff. For just as we have been an important part of your life, you too have become a part of ours.

We have now reached the signature moment in today’s ceremony, the conferring of your degree—the degree that you have worked so diligently to earn; the document that is sure to become one of your most important lifetime credentials.

So, let us begin.”
CONFERRING OF DEGREES

President Dunn: “Provost Greene, please come forward for the conferring of degrees.”

(Provost Greene joins President Dunn at podium.)

Provost Greene: “Will those receiving a Master's Degree please rise, as able.

President Dunn, it is my pleasure to present these candidates who have completed all the requirements for a Master's Degree as prescribed by the graduate faculty of this University.”

President Dunn: “By the authority of the State of Michigan, vested in the Board of Trustees, I hereby confer upon you the appropriate degrees indicated in your programs with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities appertaining thereto.

Please be seated.”

Provost Greene: “Will Dean David Powell of the College of Aviation, please come forward.”

Dean Powell: “Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through the College of Aviation please rise.

President Dunn, it is my pleasure to present these candidates who have completed all requirements for the Bachelor's degree as prescribed by the faculty of this College.
Please be seated.”

Provost Greene:  “Will Dean Kay Palan of the Haworth College of Business please come forward.”

Dean Palan:  “Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through the Haworth College of Business please rise.

President Dunn, it is my pleasure to present these candidates who have completed all requirements for the Bachelor's degree as prescribed by the faculty of this College.

Please be seated.”

(Provost Greene introduces Assoc. Dean Gaymer and returns to his seat.)

Provost Greene:  “Will Associate Dean Dawn Gaymer please come forward.”

Assoc Dean Gaymer:  “Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through the Extended University Programs please rise.

President Dunn, it is my pleasure to present these candidates who have completed all requirements for the Bachelor's degree as prescribed by the faculty of this University.

Please be seated.”
President Dunn: “Will those receiving a Bachelor’s degree rise once again please.

By the authority of the State of Michigan, vested in the Board of Trustees, I hereby confer upon you the appropriate degrees indicated in your programs with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities appertaining thereto.

Please be seated.”

(No Doctoral Degrees in this Ceremony)

PRESENTATION OF MASTER’S DIPLOMAS
(NAMES ANNOUNCED)

Provost Greene: “Will the graduates receiving Master’s degrees please come forward to receive their diplomas as Ms. Michele McLaughlin and Dr. David Little announce their names.”

(SHORT MUSICAL INTERLUDE AS GRADUATES COME TO STAGE)

(Ms. McLaughlin and Dr. Little will go to microphone. Dean Powell, Dean Palan and Associate Dean Gaymer [two at a time] will assist President Dunn with the presentation of diplomas.)

PRESENTATION OF UNDERGRADUATE DIPLOMAS
(NAMES ANNOUNCED)
Provost Greene: “Will the graduates receiving Bachelor's degrees please come forward to receive their diplomas as their names are announced by Ms. McLaughlin and Dr. Little.”

(SHORT MUSICAL INTERLUDE AS GRADUATES COME TO STAGE)

(Dean Powell, Dean Palan and Associate Dean Gaymer [two at a time] will assist President Dunn with the presentation of diplomas.)

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ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INDUCTION

President Dunn: “Will Mark Jackson, president of the WMU Alumni Association, please come forward. Mr. Jackson is the City Administrator of Story City, Iowa.

(President returns to his seat and Mr. Jackson to the podium)

Mr. Jackson: REMARKS

(Mr. Jackson returns to his seat and President returns to podium.)

President Dunn: “Thank you, Mark.”

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CONCLUDING REMARKS

President Dunn:

“It is always difficult for me to close an august celebration such as this-- and consider it Dunn-- without imparting a few final thoughts.

First, it should be abundantly clear to you – our graduates – that we are indeed very proud of you. You have navigated well through the maze of a great university, learned much and contributed much. In addition, we
believe that during your time here, you have benefited from a well-balanced education – a broad liberal education that includes an academic major (or majors), plus minor areas of study and a rich selection of general education courses.

The type of education you received here is the right education--one that will serve you for decades to come and for career paths you cannot yet predict or even imagine. Sadly though, strong voices in the national news today call for a more limited education for the students who follow you. Higher education, those voices say, should focus only on your major, and that major should preferably be in a limited few fields of study – science, mathematics and engineering.

Clearly, there is a need for students in the STEM fields, and we excel in offering those programs at WMU. Many of you are testaments to just how well we do that. We also know that without a strong foundation in the humanities, social sciences, and the arts, your education would not be complete. Great minds have long recognized the importance of balancing emerging technology with the classical elements of a broad education. Many years ago, after watching technology race toward disturbing new developments, Albert Einstein observed, “It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity.”

In short, our world needs STEM majors with a thorough grounding in the arts and humanities. AND we need arts and humanities graduates with a solid understanding of science and math.

For those of you who have sampled diverse courses outside the focus of your major, I'm confident that what you've learned here will help you match your primary skill set with a range of roles--now and for many years to come. My wish for all of you, those in every major, is that you remember that the word “vocation” comes from Latin, *vocatio*, which means a calling - something for which you have passion!

I am proud that your University is committed to a broad based liberal education with rich and rigorous academic offerings. I hope you’ll join me in helping policy makers, educational leaders, and the general public appreciate and support the type of well-rounded education you have
received here. Your actions, alone, will speak volumes about the WMU "touch" and your readiness to take on what the wide world has to offer. I am confident you will make enormous contributions to both your professions and your communities. As you move into the next phase of your life, there are a few tips--reminders--that I consider to be part the legacy of your Bronco education. I know you won't be surprised by any of these because they have been central to the campus culture we've enjoyed together. There are six:

• Give to others: Be generous with your time, talent and, to the extent possible, your resources. Albert Schweitzer, Mother Teresa and others remind us that true happiness is realized through giving.

• Practice civility, courtesy and kindness: Although you will disagree with others, be gentle and respectful in discourse. Avoid using words and actions that hurt or alienate others. Henry James observed “three things in human life are important: The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind, and the third is to be kind.”

• Acknowledge and respect all humanity: Throughout your life you will encounter individuals who are different from you with respect to race, ethnicity, religion, gender and sexuality. Appreciate and learn from those differences. Be open throughout your life to those who have been forgotten or marginalized.

• Be Humble: As a Bronco you will achieve great things in life and receive many accolades. Please remember, however, that all great things are accomplished through team efforts. Acknowledge others for their contributions to your success.

• Keep Calm and Carry On: Not all days will be rosy. You may sometimes be judged harshly and, perhaps, unfairly. When that happens, dig deep and continue to do what you know is right. If you have offended others, say, “I'm sorry.” And when disagreements occur – and they will – avoid keeping score!

• And, most important, remember that you are a Bronco and it is always "a great day to be a BRONCO!"
And now, please enjoy the slide presentation prepared for you and remember the good times, the people, places and things from your years here at Western Michigan University.”

(Platform party remains seated and views slide presentation from monitors on the stage)

(Slide Show- Music by Jeremy Siskind)

President Dunn: “In closing, I would like to thank the many people who work very hard to make this commencement ceremony meaningful and memorable for you.

Thank you to Derek Pothoff and the brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia; Professor Steve Wolfinbarger and the Western Brass Ensemble; and Assistant Professor Jeremy Siskind, pianist for the slide production. We also offer a special remembrance to the late Professor Steve Zegree, whose talents, as a musician and an educator, energized our campus for decades.

Thanks also to the commencement committee; and the many people who work behind the scenes and contribute so much to our commencement.

And finally graduates, thank you for all that you have given to us and for all that you will be giving to society in the years to come. Make your mark on this world, fulfill your dreams and always remember those who helped to make this all possible for you!
May you always enjoy happiness, peace, and good health.

At this time the Brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia will present the Alma Mater of Western Michigan University. After their performance, the Alma Mater will be repeated, at which time, all of you are invited to sing. Please rise for the Alma Mater and remain standing until the platform party leaves the stage.”

ALMA MATER
Western, we sing to you Brown and Gold
Western, we bring to you faith untold,
You challenge and inspire,
Your hope is our desire,
We sing to you our Alma Mater, Brown and Gold

RECESSIONAL
Western Brass Ensemble

(Provost Dunn and Provost Greene lead to march off stage.)