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Mevlana Exchange Program Signing

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Good afternoon. I'd like to say how pleased I am to be able to welcome Rector Orbey and his colleagues here to this ceremony to sign this agreement. I'm also pleased that so many on our campus have endorsed and recognized the import of this initiative with their presence here today.

The details of the agreement we're signing have been in the works for about six months. But as is the case with any such formal agreement, it is based on a longer personal relationships and a record of trust developed over time. The Mallinson Institute for Science Education has been welcoming scholars from Turkey each year since 2006. Four years ago, Mallinson Director William Cobern traveled to Turkey as a Fulbright Scholar. It was there that the friendship between Western Michigan University and Amasya (pronounced A-majal) University really had its beginnings.

Today we establish the platform upon which both faculty and student exchanges can take place in the years ahead. Those exchanges will enrich both of our universities and enhance our students' ability to thrive and prosper as citizens in a global economy. As we learn more about each other's cultures and heritage, our position as international universities will be enhanced.

On a personal level, I'm pleased to see my own academic discipline—physical education and sport science—among the areas of interest for future exchanges. I will enjoy meeting Turkish scholars in that area as they visit our campus in the coming years, and I look forward to hearing about the experience of WMU colleagues who have a chance to study at Amasya University.

Our signatures today will take our friendship and partnership to the next level.