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# Western Michigan University Commencement Exercises-9am

John M. Dunn

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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

Saturday, December 19, 2015

John M. Dunn, President, Presiding

PROCESSIONAL  
Western Brass Ensemble  
Steve Wolfinbarger, Conductor

President Dunn: "Good morning, 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 sixteenth (316th) commencement ceremony.

Will the audience please stand, as able, for the National Anthem, sung by the Brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia conducted by Jeremy Stevens."

(President Dunn steps away from the microphone)

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM  
Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia  
Jeremy Stevens, 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 and remain standing.

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 more than 1800 degrees today.

Nearly 1400 of you will receive bachelor's degrees.

445 will receive master's degrees; one individual will receive a specialist's degree.

And 35 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. 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 and representatives of the Faculty Senate, who are our partners in shared governance.

We also welcome representatives of 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. Representing the Board of Trustees at this ceremony are Vice Chair Ken Miller and Trustees Mary Asmonga-Knapp and Bill Johnston.

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 acknowledge 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 Vice Chair Ken Miller to share with you some Western Michigan University "Points of Pride" that will remind you how special this university truly is."

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

Vice Chair Miller:        WMU POINTS OF PRIDE

"Good morning, 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.

Graduates, you 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.

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 130,000 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. Families have traveled from around the globe to celebrate with us--and some of those family members are returning alumni themselves.
- So who else will be joining our alumni base today?
- Let's begin with an important group we always want to acknowledge--our veterans. There are 64 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 35 people will receive doctoral degrees. These graduates represent 19 different disciplines.
- Graduating today are 49 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 10 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 our state, nation and world.

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. [PAUSE]

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."

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## 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 Doctoral or 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 Doctoral or 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, 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 Ming Li, College of Education and Human Development, please come forward."

Dean Li: "Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through the College of Education and Human Development 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 introduces Dean Washington and returns to his seat)

Provost Greene: "Will Dean Earlie Washington, College of Health and Human Services, please come forward."

Dean Washington: "Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through the College of Health and Human Services 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."

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.”

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## PRESENTATION OF DOCTORAL DIPLOMAS (NAMES ANNOUNCED)

President Dunn: “Will the doctoral candidates please come forward as Dr. Susan Stapleton, Dean of the Graduate College, announces their names.

The graduates’ advisors will place the hoods on the shoulders of these doctoral graduates.”

(SHORT MUSICAL INTERLUDE AS GRADUATES COME TO STAGE)

(President Dunn and Trustee Asmonga-Knapp [for College of Education] to diploma table and Dean Stapleton to podium. Dean Stapleton will call candidates/ advisors forward. She will indicate the candidates by name and announce their degrees. The advisors will place the hoods on the shoulders of the doctoral graduates. President Dunn will present labeled diplomas from diploma table and shake their hands. Trustee Asmonga-Knapp will also shake hands of the Education doctoral graduates.

Trustee Johnston will shake the hands of the Health and Human Services doctoral graduates.

College of Education and Human Development

Trustee Asmonga-Knapp:

Lisa Augustyniak  
Mark Barajas  
Frederick Clarke  
Kenneth Flowers  
Ronald Gorman  
Diyana Kamarudin  
Anne Lundquist  
Michael Martel  
Nakia Matthews  
Jennifer McCaul  
Susan Mendoza  
Timothy Travis  
Bonnie VanderWal  
Garrett Weatherhead

College of Health and Human Services

Trustee Bill Johnston:

Diane Al Sayed Hassan  
Jennifer Harrison  
Thomas Sather  
Lydia Schuck  
Katie Strong

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PRESENTATION OF MASTER'S DIPLOMAS  
(NAMES ANNOUNCED)

Provost Greene: "Will the graduates receiving Master's degrees please come forward to receive their diplomas as Dr. David Little and Ms. Tammy Smith announce their names."

(SHORT MUSICAL INTERLUDE AS GRADUATES COME TO STAGE)

(Dr. Little and Ms. Smith go to microphone. Deans Powell, Li and Washington [two at one time] will assist President Dunn with the presentation of diplomas.)

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## 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."

(SHORT MUSICAL INTERLUDE AS GRADUATES COME TO STAGE)

(Deans Powell, Li and Washington [two at one time] will assist President Dunn with the presentation of diplomas.)

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## ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INDUCTION

President Dunn: "Will Jennifer Lentner, president of the WMU Alumni Association, please come forward. Ms. Lentner is Senior Director of Marketing Communications at the Stryker Company in Kalamazoo, and a proud graduate of our College of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

(President returns to his seat and Ms. Lentner to the podium)

Ms. Lentner:                   REMARKS  
(Ms. Lentner returns to her seat and President returns to podium.)

President Dunn:                "Thank you, Jennifer."

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### CONCLUDING REMARKS

President Dunn:

"We are nearing the end of our commencement and, if you will permit me, I would like to share a few parting words. I promise to follow the counsel of the great president and orator, Franklin D. Roosevelt – who advised that those giving speeches should "Be sincere, be brief, and be seated." So here goes.

You are graduating at one of the most challenging times in the history of the world. We see forces and factions around the globe that are working against the peoples of the world-- all of the people. We have incredibly large, and growing, differentials between wealth and poverty. Some go to bed at night hungry and uncertain about where they will spend the next night. Many nations are struggling with sectarian conflict and wars that seem to have no end or reason. Our weather patterns are changing, and world leaders have concluded important talks recently about carbon emission and our responsibility to protect future generations. Our own nation is deeply divided and unable to break out of gridlock to solve a host of problems.

That may sound like a dark message for you on a day of joy and accomplishment. I list these seemingly insurmountable challenges however, because I see part of the solution right before my eyes-- seated here in Miller Auditorium. Graduates, you give all of us hope and a reason to know the future will be better.

In the middle of all this strife, outstanding young people-- you-- are rallying to remind all of us that as a people, we can and must do better. I am proud of you, your commitment to the larger issues of the world and the manner in which you conduct yourselves.

And graduates, your years as part of the Bronco learning community have left you with an approach to the world I hope remains a permanent part of your mantra and daily behavior.

*Listen first, question with civility, and make judgments one person at a time, not one ideology or one nation at a time.*

Our faculty has done a marvelous job of helping prepare today's graduates for the future. As an institution, we require all graduates to be grounded in the arts, social sciences and humanities as well as their chosen field of study. We need engineers and scientists who can embrace the challenges of the world from a broader perspective than technology alone. We also need social scientists and graduates of our professional schools who apply their skills to the challenges confronting a technologically advanced marketplace. Graduates, you are those broadly educated professionals ready to embrace and yes, change, the world.

So where do you go from here. I have a few suggestions that I think may help.

First, solving global problems requires teamwork and you—Broncos-- have earned your position on the team! You can be the agent of change in your family, your community, at work and in reaches far beyond. Each small effort makes a difference.

Second, expect resistance. Allow others to disagree with you and remember always to be open and considerate, even when the dialogue is not going your way. Life will be much better for all of us if we take time to listen. I sometimes think we would all be better off with bigger ears and smaller mouths. And remember when you are really "heated", re-read your tweet or email message one more time. Give it a night's rest, before you hit the send button.

Third, performing acts of kindness will serve you well throughout your life. Great inspirational leaders-- Mother Teresa and Albert Schweitzer, to name only two-- remind us that true happiness can be achieved only through giving. And giving is measured in many ways: by sharing time, your

talents, your wealth, and being there to support others emotionally in time of need.

Finally, treat others with respect. Words that are not carefully chosen can hurt others deeply. Think before you speak and when you say something hurtful – and you are human – you will, remember the power of a sincere “I’m sorry.”

You are Broncos, and Broncos have big hearts, boundless energy and a sense of being both independent and committed to the larger community. We’ll continue to watch your accomplishments with pride and hope for the better future you will build. You are well prepared. You have met the standard of a great university. What more can I say than ‘Consider it DUNN.’”

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)

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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 Jeremy Stevens 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.



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

Also, I wish to express special gratitude to Betty Kocher. Betty has served as Secretary to the WMU Board of Trustees for more than three decades and she's also been responsible for the oversight of graduation exercises during that time. After today is done, Betty can finally relax and experience retirement. Thank you, Betty, for your faithful commitment to our students.

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

(President Dunn and Trustee Miller lead to march off stage.)