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Campus Campaign Kickoff

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• Good afternoon. Let me start by saying thank you for being part of today's kickoff. Please know I would be here in person with you if I could, but Linda and I are in Illinois, joining members of my extended family for the funeral of my uncle.

• Today is all about saying thank you--in advance--to our 19 Advisory Board Members and 35 Campaign Advocates who have agreed to help make the 2016 Broncos4Broncos campaign a success. Thank you for your commitment to giving back to WMU for the benefit of our students. Your leadership and your ability to tell your colleagues the student stories that inspire you will help us continue the kind of growth in faculty and staff giving we saw last year.

In 2015, 27 percent of our faculty and staff made gifts to WMU. That was up from 18 percent the year before. And this year, I know that together, you have set the ambitious goal of moving that number up to 35 percent. I know we can do this. I think more and more members of our community truly want to invest in our university and provide more opportunity for our students to succeed.

Linda and I have chosen to focus our giving on student scholarships because we know the need is there. But student opportunity is also about top-notch facilities, funds for study abroad, money to bring visiting scholars to campus and a host of other items that make up the University experience. Every gift--regardless of the size--has the potential to make an impact.

Being on the front lines every day, each of you knows what that impact can be. You know the stories that our students bring to the table, and you know the stories they
will tell in the future when they're asked how they were able to succeed. Their answers will be about people who taught them and people who cared for the campus and set the stage for their success. They'll describe people who loved this university, loved working here and loved seeing students reach their potential. They'll be telling stories about you.

Thank you for the gift of your time and commitment. And thank you for making the 2016 campus campaign the resounding success we know it can be.