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Admitted Student Reception—Chicago

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Admitted Student Reception—Chicago area
John M. Dunn
Feb. 9, 2016

Good evening.

- I am enormously pleased to be here this evening to welcome you as potential members of the Western Michigan University family.
- First--thank you for braving the cold this evening. I take that as a sign that you are perfectly suited for a campus that in recent years has been named America's 8th snowiest college campus by AcuWeather.com. We always work to improve our many national rankings--so watch out.
- As families, you've been on a long journey together. Congratulations on a job well done. You've laid the groundwork for success. You are here because you know the next step is making the right college choice. You have heard or read about the benefits of being a student at WMU--wonderful faculty, great instructional facilities and people who really care about our students in and out of the classroom.
- Western Michigan University is focused on student success. We want you to succeed. As a student at WMU, you'll be discovering and creating your own path, but you'll also be following a longstanding tradition of Chicagoland Broncos. There are more than 7,000 WMU alumni in the state of Illinois--most of them right here in the Chicago area.
- Tonight is all about helping you understand what your next four years will be like as part of the Bronco family and a citizen of Kalamazoo, and we very much want you to be part of our community.

- Let me brag a little bit. I want you to be aware of some of the critical pieces of information about WMU. Here are a few things you should know.

-WMU is a research university--one of a relatively small number in the the nation to win that designation from the Carnegie Foundation. Why is that important to you? It means you'll be taught by professors who are making the latest discoveries and are at the top of their game. And because we're a research university of a smaller size, you'll have the opportunity to really get to know those professors. And they'll get to know and mentor you. You are much more than a number at WMU.

-We have an Honors College that is one of the oldest collegiate honors programs in the country and the credentials of our honors college classes equal or surpass those at the nation's most elite private colleges.

-We have nationally and internationally known programs that range from aviation and engineering management to vocal jazz, geosciences and medieval studies. In fact, if there were a "Final Four" for academic programs, WMU would have programs in the top slots every year. Here are two more examples--diverse examples.

-Early last month, we learned that our University Symphony Orchestra had been named the No. 3 collegiate symphony in the nation in the annual American Prize competition.

-Our Integrated Supply Management program, which combines course work from both our Haworth College of Business and our College of Engineering and Applied Science, enjoys rankings of No. 2 and No. 5 in the industry assessments of such programs.

We enjoy an international reputation, but there's one set of annual rankings that please me enormously because I think the ranking organization truly gets it and they've zeroed in on the kind of value Western Michigan University offers to students. Washington Monthly has repeatedly listed us as one of the nation's top national universities--universities that are good for the nation and "give back" by creating new knowledge and producing top graduates who are committed to public service.

Washington Monthly also calls WMU a "Best Bang for the Buck" college--coming in at No. 13 in the Midwest for providing the best value for students--"the best value for ordinary, non-wealthy students."

Just so you have a complete picture, you need also to be aware of our most recent work in graduate and professional education. In 2014, the first class of students was welcomed into the WMU Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine. That same year, we formally affiliated with a private law school that is now the WMU Thomas Cooley Law School. It is among the largest and most diverse law schools in the nation, and we've already developed the tools we need to offer an accelerated law degree for WMU students

To sum it up, we offer top programs of amazing value. We're a top national research university in a college town that's ranked among the best small college cities and one of the nation's best locations for creative people and young college graduates. That's what WMU can offer you. It's all part of the total Bronco student experience. What student experience also includes:

- Football Saturdays in Waldo Stadium and weekend evenings as a member of the Lawson Lunatics who make up what's been called "the best student section in college hockey."

- Being part of a diverse healthy and sustainable community. We've built those qualities into every facet of campus life.
- And for those of you who dream of becoming an entrepreneur, we have a student incubator--the Starting Gate--designed to help students launch their own businesses.

One of the great joys of being a university president is seeing students like you make a great decision. I'll be looking for you during Welcome Week on our campus next fall and I'll look forward to seeing you on campus after that. I'll be on the stage at Miller Auditorium to shake your hand when you receive your bachelor's degree a little more than four years from now.

Again, thank you for being here this evening. Ask lots of questions. (Ask, for instance, what it takes to become a Michigan resident and qualify for in-state tuition.) I know you'll be impressed by the answers you receive. So Grab the Reins and get ready to take charge of your future.

Let me close with a reminder that whatever the weather or time of year, it's always a great day to be a Bronco!