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2-19-2016

Fulbright Scholar Reception

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WMU ScholarWorks Citation

Dunn, John M., "Fulbright Scholar Reception" (2016). *WMU President John Dunn*. 672.

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Fulbright Reception
John M. Dunn
Feb. 19, 2016

Good afternoon.

- It is a pleasure to see you all here this afternoon. And thank you for choosing Western Michigan University as your university--the place to prepare you for a successful future.

- This academic year, we've been pleased to have **27** new and continuing Fulbright Fellows studying on campus--representing **17** countries and engaged in graduate education in 15 fields of study. A total of 13 of you are working on doctoral degrees and 14 of you are working on master's degrees. In addition, we've welcomed one Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant.

We are also pleased to have Fulbright Scholars from Ethiopia and Senegal here who are sponsored by WMU faculty members. I understand you'll all have an opportunity to introduce yourselves in just a few moments.

- I take real pride in knowing that we have the programs you want, and we can offer you the experience on campus that will make you successful and shape your actions for years to come. And I know the value that you bring to our campus community. Your presence here helps ensure we have a diverse student body from around globe.

- For those of you I have not yet met, I do want to offer my personal welcome. I hope you'll share with me your experiences here and let me know how we can make student life easier and how we can ensure your experience is all that you hoped for when you made the decision to come to WMU.

- We are a globally engaged university and one that offers the level of academic excellence you want. That's why you chose to come here. But there is so much to be experienced beyond the classroom. Your presence and participation in campus life is important to our domestic students as well. I speak from experience, since I was once a student from a small town in southern Illinois with literally no opportunity to connect with people from different cultures. My life and world view were transformed forever by the opportunity to attend a large university and live, work and become friends with people--people like you--from around the world.

- That experience has stayed with me. The commitment to a diverse global campus has been part of my entire academic career. I predict this experience will stay with you for decades to come as well.

- Because we've been a globally engaged university for a very long time, I am sometimes able--and honored--to meet students who, like you, came here to study and expand their horizons as international students or Fulbright Fellows in the 1980s or the 1990s. They return occasionally for a reason I consider the very best sign that their experience here was a meaningful one. They are here to watch their own children receive their degrees from Western Michigan University. They tell me what a difference this University made in their careers and how determined they are to see their sons and daughters have the same experience and opportunities.

- I hope that decades from now, one of my successors is able to greet you as you return to campus to see a loved one achieve the goals you are working so hard to achieve today. Or come back just to visit. This will always be your home.

- Thank you for being here and thank you for making this an even more vibrant international university. Please enjoy this opportunity to meet some of your fellow

scholars this afternoon. I look forward to seeing you on campus and chatting with you in the coming months.

- Now let me close with a WMU tradition and remind you that it's always a great day to be a Bronco.