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MLK Higher Education Open House Welcome

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• Good Morning and welcome to Western Michigan University. We are so pleased to have you here with us today.

• We've been a partner in the Kalamazoo community's Martin Luther King Jr. celebration for many years--since the start of this communitywide event. And we've been hosting this college information event for several years now as well.

• For students, this is our way of reaching out to let you know that going to college and earning a degree is your golden opportunity to enjoy the life that Dr. King and so many others have worked to open up to every young person in our community. For families, this event is also a chance for us to commit to helping you through the college-going process.

• I don't think there's any more appropriate way of remembering Dr. King than helping families navigate the path to college and realize the benefits education can bring. He believed that education is a birthright. In accepting his Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo in 1964, he said:

“I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits.”

• Dr. King fought for the right of all children to be well educated and to have the opportunity to realize their potential. Because of the Kalamazoo Promise, we have
the gift, as a community, to ensure that we can provide that opportunity to every one of our children.

• The Promise and events like today's are not about where young people choose to attend college--although I'll be honest and say I hope they choose their hometown university and would be honored to welcome your family into the Bronco community. This is more about making sure our children fully understand the wealth of opportunity that is available to them with a college degree, no matter what school they choose to attend. We want them to begin working on the particulars--deciding exactly how they are going to realize the Promise and fulfill their dreams.

• I know many of you have become part of WMU this year as fans of our phenomenal football team. We all got to see a marvelous group of young men fulfill one of their dreams. Those young men have other dreams they're working on every day at WMU as well. They dream of being teachers, engineers, businessmen or artists. They've learned that dreams aren't limited, and this is the place to make more than one dream come true.

• Enjoy the open house and the opportunity to get the kind of information that's important for your family to have as you take advantage of what higher education offers. And please, as you're browsing and taking part in some of the activities, stop and chat with me and introduce me to your family. I'm eager to get to know you.

Thank you.