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Launch of the Western Michigan Institute, Guizhou University of Finance and Economics

John M. Dunn
Western Michigan University, john.dunn@wmich.edu

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Good morning/afternoon/evening. I am enormously pleased to be here with you today to mark the success of what we have done together over the past three years and to celebrate the start of an enhanced relationship between Guizhou University of Finance and Economics and Western Michigan University.

It is my honor, as well, to know that celebrating here with us today are officials from the Ministry of Education and from the Guizhou provincial government. Their presence adds immeasurably to the occasion and affirms the importance of what we are developing and the potential of the students who will be part of both outstanding universities.

We're here for the opening ceremony of our universities' joint institute that we will celebrate for years to come. The sign unveiled today will greet students, who will carry with them, for a lifetime, the mark of both our universities. We know how well this will work, because we've already developed a model with the joint program in accountancy that was launched in 2015. For that program alone, our two universities have attracted nearly 200 students to be part of the first two cohorts.

Now, with the blessing of the Ministry of Education received in May, we're expanding the opportunity for students by adding joint programs in electronic business marketing, finance and personal financial planning. The institute we open today will serve as an academic home not only for the accountancy students
already immersed in their studies, but also for hundreds of students in the years to come who will study in the new disciplines now part of our partnership.

I've been thinking a lot lately about initiatives such as this one. WMU has been engaged in such international partnerships for many years. One thing we have learned is that the strengths of the individual institutions play a critical role in making such initiatives succeed. We are certain we have found, in GUFE, a partner that offers such strengths, shares our vision and values, and is ready to work together with us for many years to come to prepare students who will become leaders in a global economy.

Over the past three years, many of us have had the opportunity to visit each other's campuses. President Cai Shaohong, for instance, was in Kalamazoo last August with a small delegation from GUFE. They were able to tour our Haworth College of Business and get to know our surrounding community.

But many of you here today know only a little about Western Michigan University, so I'd like to take a few moments to tell you about the institution I have been privileged to lead for just over 10 years. I want to tell you about both the University as a whole and our Haworth College of Business, GUFE's partner in this new initiative.

**First, the University**

Founded in 1903, Western Michigan University is a learner-centered, discovery driven and globally engaged research institution with an enrollment of more than 23,000. WMU is classified as a "higher research" university by the Carnegie Foundation--my nation's gold standard for defining higher education.
Through our campus in Kalamazoo, and regional locations around Michigan and soon, in Florida, WMU offers more than 250 degree programs, including 31 at the doctoral level. Many of our degree programs enjoy international renown, in such diverse disciplines as accountancy, aviation, evaluation, psychology, music, supply chain management and Medieval Studies.

We're committed to diversity in all its forms, and we attract students from 100 other nations, and those students already on our campus include more than 230 from China. Our commitment to global education goes back nearly to our beginning. Our first degree was awarded to an international student in 1911, our first study abroad program was launched in 1945, and we have had exchange relationships with international institutions since 1961. Those relationships have endured and left us with proud alumni on every continent.

On our way to China this week, in fact, we stopped in Kuala Lumpur to help celebrate the 30th anniversary of Malaysia's Sunway University. We were the first international partner and have continued as a partner to that outstanding university since its founding. There are more than 2,600 Western Michigan University alumni in Malaysia now, and we welcome more students from that nation every year.

Our more than 900 faculty members have been trained at some of the world’s leading universities. Classes are taught on the main campus in Kalamazoo as well as at eight regional locations around Michigan. This fall, we will open a new location in Florida.
In 2014, we launched a private medical school, the WMU Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine, in partnership with our home community and its two world-class teaching hospitals. The University also has a formal affiliation with one of the nation's largest and most diverse law schools to create another private entity, the WMU Thomas M. Cooley Law School. U.S. News & World Report has listed WMU as one of the nation's best national universities for 26 consecutive years. More recently, Washington Monthly has ranked WMU as one of the top-100 universities in the United States.

**The Haworth College of Business**

We take enormous pride in our Haworth College of Business. It is one of the largest colleges of business in the United States and the academic home to nearly 4,000 undergraduate students majoring in 17 specialized areas of business. An additional 500 graduate students study the Masters in Business Administration and the Masters of Accountancy.

The Haworth College of Business is among an elite group of fewer than 5 percent of business colleges worldwide that are accredited at both the undergraduate and graduate levels by the AACSB International--The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. It is among a select 1 percent of business colleges worldwide that have additional specialized AACSB accreditation for their accountancy programs. Our business college programs enjoy national and international rankings in a variety of business disciplines.

Our business students take classes in an outstanding instructional facility called Schneider Hall. It was designed to look and feel like a modern corporate headquarters--like the locations in which our students will someday work. College
facilities include a state-of-the-art stock trading facility and a business incubator for student entrepreneurs. That's the setting that will welcome students from GUFE when they arrive on our campus.

The Western Michigan Institute, Guizhou University of Finance and Economics
Those are some of the academic, physical and visionary qualities WMU brings to the joint institute we formally open here today. I am convinced that GUFE and WMU strengths combined will produce talented young professionals who will be at home in the world and confident in the skills and knowledge they bring to their careers and to their nation's priorities.

There are, for the second summer, WMU faculty here at GUFE teaching from our curriculum. As the program matures, we will continue to have a distinguished faculty and staff in place that is commensurate with the extraordinary quality and potential of the institute we are founding together.

I mentioned earlier that WMU has an international commitment that dates back more than 100 years. We're now firmly into our second century of global education. We look forward to our partnership with GUFE being an important part of our third century of global education.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today, and thank you for your friendship and partnership. I look forward to seeing students and faculty from GUFE on our campus in Kalamazoo sometime soon.

(About 10.5 minutes)