PROPOSAL: Honorary Degree Recommendation for President Emeritus John M. Dunn

Background

President Emeritus John M. Dunn received nomination and was approved by the Honorary Degree Committee for consideration of an Honorary Degree at Western Michigan University. President Dunn’s leadership transformed a decade focused on building a stronger, more diverse campus with new opportunities for students and enhanced services for local, state, national and international constituencies. The period was marked by a commitment to civility, renewed focus on sustainability, and the development of productive partnerships with private and public-sector entities.

To highlight just some the accomplishments realized during John M. Dunn’s presidency at WMU:

- The establishment in 2008 of the Seita Scholars Program, which is the largest and most comprehensive college support program for former foster youth in the nation and has led to the establishment of Fostering Success Michigan as a state and national resource.

- Founding of the WMU Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine, a community partnership funded by the largest gift in University history, a $100 million gift from the Stryker family in 2011, as well as the gift that became the W.E. Upjohn M.D. Campus from MPI and Upjohn great grandson William U. Parfet. The medical school welcomed its first class in 2014.

- Expansion of WMU's national and international reputation in the area of sustainability, acknowledging WMU's commitment to energy savings, LEED certification for all new construction, solar arrays and EV charging. An Office of Sustainability was founded with a student-supported fee in 2010. Among organizations recognizing WMU over the past decade are the U.S. Green Building Council, Princeton Review, the Detroit Free Press, Second Nature and the Michigan Governor's office.

All told, under President John M. Dunn’s leadership nearly $500 million in improvements to campus infrastructure were completed from new instructional space and new residential units, renovation of the Grand Rapids location, the addition of a stock trading center in the Haworth College of Business, and the first installation of solar and EV charging equipment across campus.

Recommended Action

Western Michigan University has historically recognized the contributions of our revered presidents by venerating them with the honorary doctorate degree. It is recommended the Board of Trustees approve awarding President Emeritus John M. Dunn the Doctor of Laws, honoris causa (L.L.D.) for his legacy of defined leadership that paved the way for future organizational success.