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CONTACT:
Karen Mulligan (248) 356-3114

NEWS RELEASE

New Resource To Help Make Decisions About College
We Are The Independents highlights campus tours and offers new scholarship.

SOUTHFIELD, MI – A group of Michigan's top independent universities and colleges has launched a campaign to increase awareness of higher education options in Michigan, dispel myths about private education and help prospective students find the right college.

The campaign, conducted by the Michigan Colleges Alliance (MCA) reminds high school juniors and seniors that bigger isn’t necessarily better when it comes to college.

“We are blessed in Michigan with many outstanding college options,” said Robert Bartlett, MCA president, “but too often, the higher education conversation is dominated by the big state universities. The smaller independent colleges and universities emphasize community over crowds and their much smaller class sizes are simply a better fit for many students.”

And that fit can make all the difference. Research suggests that the "fit factor" (choosing a college most compatible with a student’s learning, social, and extracurricular needs) is one of the most important determinants of academic success and earning an undergraduate degree. The proof is in the graduation rates. On average, the percentage of students who graduate from Michigan's top 15 independent colleges and universities in four years is nearly double that of public institutions.

The campaign includes a website, wearetheindependents.com, that highlights the appeal of private colleges and universities, and features notable alumni and students, college admission tips and campus event schedules.

“We Are the Independents” is more than a slogan. It encapsulates the type of unique students who flourish at MCA institutions: Those who chart their own path, set themselves apart from the crowd and pursue careers on their own terms.

“Creating awareness through such a compelling theme and format will allow students to make the best decisions for college success," Bartlett said.

The campaign and the website also dispel stereotypes about private colleges that may prevent them from being considered by prospective students. Chief among them: affordability. The net cost of an education at independent colleges and universities can be as affordable as public institutions. Students at private institutions receive far more financial aid, on average. At most of MCA member schools, more than 93 percent of students receive aid.
Additionally, the “We Are the Independents” campaign is giving away four $2,000 scholarships each month from November to May of 2015. The scholarship offers “stacked aid” over and above institutional grants and public support offered to nearly all students in MCA schools. Students can sign up on the website to be eligible for the drawing and can earn more entries by going on a campus tour.

Private donations from foundations, corporations and philanthropists are entirely funding the campaign.

About Michigan Colleges Alliance (MCA)
Founded in 1949, Michigan Colleges Alliance represents 15 top independent colleges and universities in Michigan with more than 40,000 students – collectively the state’s “third largest university”. MCA members include Adrian College, Albion College, Alma College, Andrews University, Aquinas College, Calvin College, Hillsdale College, Hope College, Kalamazoo College, Madonna University, Marygrove College, Olivet College, Siena Heights University, Spring Arbor University and University of Detroit Mercy. Learn more at michigancolleges.org

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