

New Student Convocation 2002

September 3, 2002

Thank you Joe, and good afternoon. Welcome to campus – and to New Student Convocation.

This ceremonial assembly is our opportunity to officially welcome you – our new students – and your families and loved ones to campus as we ready ourselves for the challenges and excitement of the coming school year

I would like to begin my remarks by introducing members of the platform party, who as you can see are smartly dressed in their official academic regalia. Incidentally, you can refer to your program for more about the significance of the many different robes you see today.

Now, would members of the platform party please stand and be recognized when your name is called? Please hold your applause until everyone has been introduced.

Starting in the back row:

- Elaine Didier, Dean of Kresge Library
- David Downing, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences
- Mary Otto, Dean of the School of Education and Human Services
- John Gardner, Dean of the School of Business Administration
- Catherine Vincent, Associate Dean, School of Nursing
- Pieter Frick, Dean of the School of Engineering and Computer Science

In the second row:

- Ron Olson, Dean of the School of Health Sciences
- Lynne Schaefer, Vice President for Finance and Administration
- Ann Nicholson, Chair of the Board of Trustees
- Penny Crissman, Member of the Board of Trustees
- Susan Goepp, Vice President for Development, Alumni and Community Engagement and Executive Director of the Oakland University Foundation

And finally, in the first row:

- Virinder Moudgil, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Joseph Van Marcke, master of ceremonies for today's program
- Mary Beth Snyder, Vice President for Student Affairs
- Brian Tomina, Student Congress President

As you will come to know, these men and women are vital to your success and the success of our university. Please join me in recognizing their efforts on your behalf.

I will address my remarks this afternoon to some very special people who sit before me – our new students.

While I don't know most of you personally, I do know that you share one simple hope and dream – to be successful in life.

I can say, without hesitation, that you have come to the right place to achieve this goal. How do I know this?

Because the ingredients for your future success are at your fingertips. *You*, as recent high school graduates, have come prepared for higher education. You've demonstrated to us, through your impressive grades, test scores and high school involvement that you are prepared for what we on this campus call the "Oakland experience." So, *you* are the first and most important ingredient.

We, in turn, as committed and caring faculty and staff – are here for you. Use the passion and talent that you see in your professors... Tap into it, and it will enrich your life intellectually and personally. This is the **second** ingredient.

The **third** and final ingredient (and it is closely tied to the first) are the many doors of opportunity open to you at Oakland. Your time and experience here will not stop at the classroom door. Let me talk some more about this.

I encourage you to get involved in one or more of our student and professional organizations... there are dozens to choose from. Or, some of our cultural offerings, available through the Meadow Brooks and our Department of Music, Theatre and Dance. If sports is your interest, the excitement of Division I intercollegiate athletics and intramural sports is here for you.

We also have numerous leadership and volunteer opportunities on campus and in surrounding communities, as well as hundreds of internship and employment opportunities available through Fortune 500 companies, foreign firms, health care organizations, public schools and government agencies.

So now you know the three ingredients for future success. You are the first, what you bring to the table and the choices you make here. The **second** is Oakland University, our commitment to provide you with a distinctive undergraduate education, and **third** are the opportunities awaiting you for intellectual, social and leadership growth.

Since our founding in 1957, Oakland has been blessed with a tradition of curricular innovation and faculty creativity. Over the years, we have enriched our offerings by adding outstanding technological resources; inspired, world-renown faculty, cutting-edge facilities and laboratories; and strong partnerships with business, industry and the community.

Even with this innovation, at Oakland, you will not be a nameless, faceless body in a sea of large lecture halls. You will learn and interact elbow-to-elbow with your teachers and classmates. You matter here.

And, at Oakland you have the opportunity to conduct research as an undergraduate... an opportunity you would not find at many other universities. This means that your academic opportunities will be unusual, cutting-edge and we think among the richest and most fulfilling in the country.

In Oakland's classrooms and laboratories today, students are learning from faculty, learning by doing and discovering how they will influence the future.

There's no doubt that with your hard work, Oakland's commitment to providing a distinctive undergraduate experience, and the many opportunities that abound here, that you can go on to become tomorrow's world-renowned scientists, teachers, artists and workforce leaders.

It's up to you... and I know you can do it. Ask our 60,000 graduates, who have come before you. They are some of the world's best in their professions. Ask the people who employ them, and work with them in the community.

Their success has helped build this institution. They are our proudest achievement and our greatest ambassadors, and you are about to join them as part of the Oakland family. It's an association and a connection that will last a lifetime.

Your journey through Oakland's visionary and distinctive programs will take you places no other university can.

Consider that we are one of the largest universities in this country, yet recognized by our students and graduates as having a small campus feel that encourages personal interaction with professors

Oakland is consistently rated among top public universities by *U.S. News and World Report* – regionally and nationally.

And, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching recognizes OU as one of the country's 110 doctoral research-intensive universities, which as I mentioned earlier, gives you many opportunities to work directly on research projects with expert faculty.

Here you will learn how to think, how to innovate, how to work hard to achieve your goals, how to interact with different kinds of people, how to lead and how to care about the world.

Welcome to Oakland University. We are pleased and proud that you have chosen us to be a part of your educational journey. You have made a *great* choice.

