



Wednesday, September 4, 2002

## Students get valuable advice at Convocation

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

At Oakland University's New Student Convocation, students took in more than the traditional processional that marks the beginning of their academic careers. They also received some important advice from university administrators and other OU students on opportunities and strategies to help make their OU experience enjoyable and successful.

In what was the most popular segment of this year's Convocation, Vice President for Student Affairs Mary Beth Snyder presented four challenges that, when met, make for successful students: developing time management skills, becoming involved, asking for assistance when needed and seeking out diversity. To support her address, Snyder presented video segments that featured OU students dispensing advice designed to help freshmen succeed in their first year.

"I liked the videos and the messages about getting involved and using the facilities that are available to us," said Sarah Dell, an industrial health and science major from Flushing who attended Convocation with her parents, Dave and Sandra. "I'm interested in playing intramural sports and excited about coming to Oakland. The Science Department drew me here, and the size of the university is just right for me."

OU Student Congress President Brian Tomina spoke of the many people and resources at OU that are available to help students.

"Administrators and staff at Oakland are very accessible and supportive," Tomina said. "Here it is easy to reach departments and people. Your phone calls are returned. It also is really true that your professors care about you, and in turn, you feel like you can approach them if you need to."

Candice Seay, a communications major from Lake Orion, said she was inspired by Snyder and Tomina's remarks to become involved in student activities.

"I will definitely look into becoming a member of student congress," Seay said. "All the videos kept me interested and I enjoyed the remarks by Mary Beth Snyder. It is reassuring to know that there are places to go to get help when we need it. It was nice to see the professors in attendance, too. That gave me the impression that they really care about my education."

In his Convocation remarks, OU President Gary Russi outlined the ingredients for future success at OU: the preparedness of OU students to meet the challenges of higher education, OU's committed and caring faculty and staff, and the bountiful opportunities to become involved and develop leadership skills and social growth.

"I know that you share one simple hope and dream – to be successful in life," Russi said. "I can say, without hesitation, that you have come to the right place to achieve this goal. The basic ingredients for your future success are at your fingertips. 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."

Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Virinder Moudgil reinforced Russi's remarks by highlighting the many opportunities OU offers that help students discover their passion and find success. A video presentation accompanying his remarks touched on the various partnerships, new technologies, research opportunities and cultural experiences that await OU students.

"Oakland University graduates – because they work hard and have so many different opportunities here – really can go anywhere with an Oakland degree," Moudgil said. "I keep in touch with dozens of my former undergraduates and graduate students – some who were in my classes, some who assisted with my research, and others who I met in various official and unofficial capacities on campus. And, from these students, I hear the same thing. They tell me 'what I learned at Oakland, and the real opportunities I had there, made me the success I am today.'"

The **Office of New Student Programs** awarded OU Bookstore gift certificates to the winners and runners-up of the New Student Orientation Spirit Award. The two most spirited students from this summer's orientation were Tasha Schatzberg of Sterling Heights and Bryan Mitchell of Detroit.

Images, the OU Dance Team, also was on-hand with "The Grizz," OU's mascot, to perform the OU Fight Song, toss Frisbee giveaways, and provide a spirited conclusion before a reception and picnic in the lower level lobby of the Recreation and Athletics Center.

"The event was very well organized and enlightening," said Audrey Pitts, an engineering major and transfer student from Macomb Community College. "I transferred because I thought coming to Oakland would help accelerate my career in the right direction. I liked hearing from the students in the video presentations and agree that time management is one of the most important things for a student to practice."

For more information on student services that can help students succeed in their academic endeavors at Oakland University, visit the **Office of New Student Programs** Web site or contact them at (248) 370-3260 or [nsp@oakland.edu](mailto:nsp@oakland.edu).

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Created by CareTech Administrator ([webservices@caretechsolutions.com](mailto:webservices@caretechsolutions.com)) on Wednesday, September 4, 2002  
Modified by CareTech Administrator ([webservices@caretechsolutions.com](mailto:webservices@caretechsolutions.com)) on Wednesday, September 4, 2002  
Article Start Date: Wednesday, October 29, 2003