

President Russi

2003 Convocation Remarks

*September 2, 2003*

Thank you, Steven, 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 Oakland University.

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 and caps 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:

- Linda Thompson, dean of the School of Nursing;
- 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;
- Elaine Didier, dean of Kresge Library;
- 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;
- Virinder Moudgil, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs;
- Susan Goepp, vice president for Development, Alumni and Community Engagement and executive director of the Oakland University Foundation.

And, finally, in the first row:

- Dennis Muchmore, Board of Trustees;
- Penny Crissman, Board of Trustees;
- Steven Townsend, master of ceremonies for today’s program;
- Mary Beth Snyder, vice president for Student Affairs;

- Mary Stein, associate professor of teacher development and educational studies;
- And, Jonathan Parks, 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 time and again I have seen students grow and develop at Oakland University and go on to become leaders in their field of work, their communities and their families.

What you learn here – both in and outside of the classroom – will serve you well and last you a lifetime.

But the key is you and what you make of your time here.

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.

I also encourage you to get involved in one or more of our student and professional organizations... there are dozens to choose from.

And, take advantage of some of our cultural offerings, available through the Meadow Brooks and our Department of Music, Theatre and Dance.

If sports are your interest, the excitement of Division I intercollegiate athletics and intramural sports is here for you.

Your journey through Oakland's wide-ranging 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, I’m pleased to announce that Oakland was just listed among the nation’s 20 most underrated schools in the 2004 edition of “The Unofficial Unbiased Guide to the 328 Most Interesting Colleges,” published by Kaplan Publishing/Simon and Schuster.

Also, we have just been named one of the best colleges in the Midwest by the “Princeton Review.”

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

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.