

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS

NEW STUDENT CONVOCATION

September 5, 2023

PRESIDENT ORA HIRSCH PESCOVITZ'S REMARKS

- On behalf of the faculty, administration, staff and board of trustees.... Welcome to Oakland University.
- We are so proud that you are here.
- You...being here...is a great responsibility for us.
- Today.... you begin a unique journey to discover the world....
 - ...explore your academic interests...
 - ...identify your career pursuits
 - ...and learn about yourself on a deeper level than you could ever imagine...
- I spent some time reading the prepared remarks of the students who will be speaking later in the program.
- And truly, I am overwhelmed by how Oakland has supported them and helped them attain their goals.
- You'll hear from James in a few minutes...I was struck that he wrote, "I didn't choose OU....OU chose me....They saw potential in me as a high school student..."
- Syeda (Sigh-ee-da) noted that Oakland is the "perfect blend of familiar and expansive opportunities" and she has made many "meaningful connections," including an internship that combines her interest in design and political science.
- A common observation was that college is more than what you accomplish in the classroom, it's how you embrace the experience and take that experience and learn how to develop your talents.
- That, right there, is a life lesson.... College teaches you how to learn... How to be open to new ideas, new experiences, new cultures and people... new ways of looking at the world and yourself.

- This is a moment to embrace.
- You've arrived at a new chapter in your life...
- ...a new crossroad...
- ...a new community...
- ...and we want you to remember that from this day forward, our hands are extended and our hearts are open.
- Our role is to do all that we can to make sure you succeed...
- Your success is our success.
- And not just today, but tomorrow...and, every day until graduation...and beyond.
- And we want you to be committed to doing all you can to be healthy – physically and mentally and socially.
- In the next few weeks make sure you know of the range of our Healthy Campus resources.
- And... one way, we're raising awareness of the need to be mentally healthy is the Green Bandana project.
- Display the green bandana as a sign that you are a safe person to approach with mental health related needs and that you are someone who knows where to find campus resources.
- Let's break the stigma associated with mental illness, and help each other be healthy.

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- This year's convocation theme is "Living Our Best Life."
- Exactly how do you get to "live your best life?"
- On one level, you have to be engaged.
- Engaged in your academics.
- Engaged in meeting new friends, and establishing new relationships.
- Engaged in the many events on campus.
- On another level, you probably already know, that you – all of us – need support from many people.

- Reaching your potential and discovering your path is in many ways a solitary journey, but it's also a journey that you don't take alone.
- You'll need the support of family and friends.
- You'll need mentors.
- You'll need challenging experiences that push you beyond where you think you can go.
- And, you'll need time to regroup, reflect, learn and grow.
- At the end of the day, it's not necessarily the challenge that defines the person, but the character of the person that defines the challenge.
- As someone who has been in higher education for a long time, I am often asked for what is the best advice for new undergraduate students. Here's what I've come up with:
- Be a good listener, which translates into being a good friend.
- Ask questions. Be curious. Make discoveries.
- Know that you are not alone.
- Don't be afraid to try, and don't be afraid to fail.
- Embrace change.
- And, remember to believe in yourself.
 - Believe.
 - In.
 - Yourself.
- And know that we believe in you.
- Again, welcome to Oakland University....
- We are so proud that you have chosen us as the place where you begin your journey.