

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS

CELEBRATING “ASPIRE. ADVANCE. ACHIEVE.”

January 22, 2024

In November of 2018, we gathered right here in the Oakland Center ballrooms for a black-tie kickoff to the “Aspire. Advance. Achieve.” campaign.

We listened to our special guest, author Malcolm Gladwell... who offered... among his many insights... his views on how philanthropy at Oakland University can have a major impact, perhaps a much stronger and longer-lasting impact than philanthropy at larger universities.

Since then, we **aspired** to raise more money than any other time in Oakland history.

We **advanced** the mission of the university as we appealed to our Oakland University community and expanded our reach, enlisting the support to include more than 60 percent of first-time contributors ...A rate that far exceeds the average for first-time donors compared to other universities.

And, of course, we achieved great things—just how great you will learn very soon—while broadening our foundation of supporters, and bolstering our claim as being affordable and accessible to students from all backgrounds and social strata.

Today, we proudly report that the status of the “Aspire. Advance. Achieve.” Campaign for Oakland University can be summed up in two words: mission accomplished.

Four years and two months later after our mission began, we have achieved an unprecedented accomplishment. Our campaign has had a transformational impact on the university, and allows us to position the university to respond to the inevitable and unforeseen challenges ahead as we continue to transform Oakland University as a preeminent 21st-century institution of higher learning.

On the one hand, the campaign can be considered in terms of numbers. But we must keep in mind that numbers alone do not tell the story.

Our story is one of dedication.

A story of people who are determined to make a difference.

And a story of how those dedicated to a cause are attracting supporters and creating a learning institution that is engaged, relevant and worth the investment of time and money.

Despite great social and economic uncertainty, our Advancement team moved ahead relentlessly, attracting 19,871 donors, and of those donors, 61 percent are first-time givers to the university, and about 15 percent were young alumni.

When we put together the high percent of first-time givers with the engagement of young alumni we find compelling proof that donors are responding to the appeal of giving to a university that is on the move, elevating its reputation as an inspiring place to learn, and heading into the future with a clear vision of how to inspire our students, support our faculty and engage in our communities in truly transformative ways.