

Presidential Remarks

Launch of Oakland80 Navigators

July 13, 2022

LOCATION: OCC Southfield campus

Jared Barnett, Student who has graduated

Lynn Cherry, Associate Academic Dean of Health Professions at Oakland Community College

Dave Coulter, Oakland County Executive

Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D., President of Oakland University

Peter Provenzano, Chancellor of Oakland Community College

Cal Talley, Oakland80 Navigator

- Thank you... Dave.
- We appreciate your leadership and support for Oakland University... and your collaboration on bringing significant and positive change to Oakland County.
- It's so good to be among some of the staunchest advocates for higher education...
- We are here today to mark a beginning of what we believe will be a transformation in Oakland County and the catalyst is Oakland80.
- Our collective action in support of Oakland80 places education at the center of the county's effort to improve the quality of life for all residents.

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- As many of you know, in 2018, Governor Whitmer announced Michigan's "60 by 30" initiative, a plan for 60 percent of working-age Michiganders to attain a professional certificate or college degree by 2030.

- Under the leadership of Oakland County Executive Dave Coulter, we, in Oakland County, are raising the bar. Already 61 percent of the county's residents have a certificate or degree. Now our goal is 80 percent by the end of the decade.
- We have a lot of work ahead of us.... The road to achieving our goal might seem steep, but our determination and common purpose give us great confidence that we will succeed.

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- The impact of higher education on a person, family and community is simply transformative. We see this every day at Oakland University.
- In a few minutes, you will be meeting a remarkable young man...I'd like to share his story with you because it illustrates the power of education on a personal level.
- Jared Barnett is one of three brothers.
- He transferred to Oakland University after graduating from Pontiac High School.
- Jared's parents died when he was just 13, leaving Jared and his two brothers without any parents.
- Jared's oldest brother, unfortunately, never went to college.
- Jared was raised largely by his middle brother, who was a terrific young man.
- Remarkably, both Jared and his middle brother, despite not having a parent in their household, graduated from college.
- In May, Jared graduated from Oakland University with a 3.92 GPA. Not only that, he worked full-time at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, and received one of the highest university awards we offer, the Alfred G. Wilson Award, for his leadership during the pandemic, and tutoring Pontiac students on academic and life skills.

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- It is clear that education changed both Barnett brothers' life trajectories and their stories offer a compelling lesson.
- To the person thinking about going back to college or getting training, my advice is simple: Invest in yourself by investing in your education. Whether you are considering a community college or a four-year university, your investment will yield an enormous return on your investment!
- As THE university of Oakland County, Oakland University is working diligently with the talented Oakland80 staff to address the barriers many students might confront in attaining a degree or a professional certification... issues like student debt, transportation, a clear path to a degree and the practical realities of needing child care.
- Oakland University already has many student advising services, from academic advising to career counseling. We are thrilled to now be able to add a Career and Education Navigator. We consider this another way to be responsive to our students' needs as they navigate a path toward completing their degrees and ensuring they will be successful in their careers.

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- The values of Oakland80 and Oakland University not only complement each other but they are inseparable.
- Oakland University's partnership with Oakland80 is a collaboration that aims to inspire people to imagine what is possible, and with an education, make their dreams come true...For Oakland County, that translates into creating a talent pipeline vital to economic development and prosperity to elevate the quality of life for people throughout Oakland County.
- Thank you.

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- And now, I'd like to introduce Cal Talley...who will present the details of the Oakland80 Navigator program