

Presidential Remarks

Sustainability Awareness Month Rally

October 13, 2022

- Thank you, Steve.
- And thank you to everyone for your support and enthusiasm for the kick off to Sustainability Awareness Month.

< P A U S E >

- At my core, I am a scientist.
- I look for facts, and piece together a hypothesis in my investigations to solve a problem.
- The environmental problems facing all of us require that we do more than look at the facts about climate change.
- There is no question or doubt that we must address what is needed on our campus, communities, society and our planet to be truly sustainable.
- We are educators.... And as educators, it is our responsibility to make sure our students, and our communities know the facts about climate change and sustainability.
- In the past year, we conducted an assessment of sustainability practices at OU.
- It is merely a benchmark, a starting point...
 - We must raise sustainability as a priority, and find innovative approaches to making sure Oakland is not only a sustainable university, but a model for all other universities and communities.
- As we move into the mid 21st century, our environmental concerns must be at the heart of a broad public discussion about what policies, practices and behavioral habits are suitable and sustainable in a world changing rapidly from the impact of climate change.
- As an institution of higher education, our role is to appeal to objective facts and reason....and work for a deeper and broader understanding of the environmental challenges facing us, and how we can and must work together.

- Look around... Today's gathering is a representation of our campus community... Students, faculty and staff... All coming together for a common cause.
- In thinking about how best to introduce Sustainability Month, I was inspired by "Earthrise," a poem by Amanda Gorman, who many of you will remember for her inspired recitation of her poem delivered at President Biden's Inaugural Address.
- I think this excerpt from her poem sets the tone for today:
- Of this, you're certainly aware.

It's saddening, but I cannot spare you

From knowing an inconvenient fact, because

It's getting the facts straight that gets us to act and not
to wait.

- So I tell you this not to scare you,

But to prepare you, to dare you

To dream a different reality,

- Where despite disparities

We all care to protect this world,

This riddled blue marble, this little true marvel

To muster the verve and the nerve

To see how we can serve

Our planet. You don't need to be a politician

To make it your mission to conserve, to protect,

To preserve that one and only home

That is ours,

To use your unique power

To give next generations the planet they deserve.

- Thank you