

## PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS

# FAREWELL TO PROVOST RIOS-ELLIS

**May 14, 2024**

I'd like to take a moment so we can all come full circle as we wish Britt well as she embarks on the next step in her career.

In 2020, we began our search for the successor to former Provost Jim Lentini shortly after the onset of the pandemic. We were faced with the possibility of postponing the search, or continuing. And when the search team met and interviewed Britt, there was no question that we were moving ahead.

What came through then, as it does now, is Britt's indefatigable passion for higher education, a pledge for doing all she can to help Oakland be accessible and affordable, a steadfastness for standing on the principle of diversity, equity and inclusion, and, for those of us who have been so fortunate to feel the warmth of her friendship, for being a model of decency and compassion.

Three-and-a-half years after she first assumed the role, Britt hasn't strayed from being that warm-and-compassionate person nor has she ever stepped away from her ideals.

On behalf of the Oakland University community, thank you, Britt, for your tireless work and advocacy for our faculty, students and staff. As Executive Vices President for Academic Affairs and Provost, some of Britt's accomplishments include:

- Strategically positioning the university for legislative, federal, state and philanthropic funding.
- Establishing a student success and equity dashboard to mitigate achievement gaps, strengthen retention and improve graduation rates, especially for underrepresented students.
- Overseeing a comprehensive assessment of the university's community engagement programs which led to the prestigious Carnegie designation.
- Navigating Academic Affairs through an 11 percent budget cuts without diminishing the quality of academic offerings.
- Elevating shared governance, which has led to improved collegiality and ratification of an amended university constitution.

Britt, your work has left a mark on Oakland University, and now, we wish you all the best as you assume your new position as president of California State University at Stanislaus, a public university located in the heart of California's Central Valley.