



Wednesday, September 3, 2003

Student Congress President Jonathan Parks speech

Thank you, Steven.

Dr. Russi, distinguished faculty and staff, students and parents, I thank you and bring you greetings.

Welcome to Oakland University. For incoming students, these will be the best years of your life. Parents, consider this the greatest investment of your life.

My fellow OU students, this is a new experience and I'd like to share some ingredients to help you succeed. I like to refer to it as a recipe, a simple set of directions to prepare for higher education.

Remember our primary goal as students is academic success leading to graduation. Never lose sight of this opportunity.

Henry Ford once said "obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal." In other words, to move ahead, you have to stay focused.

Did you know that for every hour you're in class you should spend two hours outside of class studying? Many of you may think that this will be impossible. Well it's not. Sherlock Holmes said, "once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth."

After you review your class schedule, the first thing you should do is block off time for studying. If you're easily distracted, take advantage of Kresge Library and study there.

That is the first step to the recipe – making time to study.

The second step is more challenging. You have to break your code of silence. Ask questions, more questions, and ask some more! Some of you may resist the urge to speak up. Remember, the only bad question is the one not asked.

Along with speaking up, you should take advantage of step three – building relationships with faculty and staff. They are here to help you – you are their number one priority.

You should meet with your adviser every semester. Once you declare your major, meet with the dean of that school. Take advantage of your professor's office hours. This shows that you're interested in going the extra mile.

The fourth step is time management. The adjustment from high school to college is a challenge. Everything happens here at a faster pace. So I recommend you get a planner to help you organize your schedule. Good organization will also prevent you from becoming stressed – which is the fifth step in the recipe.

Campus life is another activity that will help you manage stress. I highly recommend that every student take advantage of our first-class recreational center. You can lift weights, swim a couple of laps, play volleyball or basketball. How's that for a stress reliever? We also have an excellent intramural sports program, if you're a little more competitive.

Another great place to ease your mind is the Oakland Center or the "OC." You will find yourself over the course of the year in the OC for a variety of reasons. Whether it's to get something to eat, meet a study group, or take part in an activity, nine times out of 10 you will find yourself in the Oakland Center.

And, I'm pretty sure you will enjoy O'Bears, the new 24-hour computer lab and coffee shop.

Now that I have shared some things with you about adjusting to college life, I would like to speak briefly about Student Congress.

Student Congress is the voice that speaks collectively for the students of Oakland University. We work closely with various campus departments to enhance student life. You can feel free to attend meetings, which are every Monday at 4 o'clock in the Oakland Center Oakland Room. We welcome your participation.

I want to leave you with this thought – the future belongs to those who believe in their dreams. OU is a great place to pursue them. I wish you all the best, and I hope that you will never stop dreaming.

SUMMARY

New Student Congress President Jonathan Parks shared his own insights on the ingredients for academic success at Oakland during his convocation speech.

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Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Wednesday, September 3, 2003

Article Start Date: Friday, September 12, 2003