

## **WELCOME RECEPTION FOR PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS**

Welcome to Oakland University, and the next step in your life's journey.

Every experience you've had has led you to this moment.... a moment of discovering your limitless potential where you will explore a wide range of academic disciplines, ponder your future and realize the possibilities of your life.

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, each of us have faced great uncertainty over the last year. As you have focused on your high school education or your courses at a community college, the world has undergone a profound transformation.

It's been a difficult year.

And I know this about each of you. You are determined, hard-working and passionate. Those are the traits that got you here. And those are the traits that will get you to where you need to go.

During the unprecedented public health crisis, your decision to continue your education just might be the single most important decision of your life. And, you need to know that we will take every necessary precaution to make sure your experience here is safe....that you are healthy...and that you thrive.

In fact, in a recent survey conducted by Campus magazine, OU is ranked the safest campus in Michigan, and the third safest campus in the country.

First impressions are important.

The first impression of Oakland University that I would like you to remember is that we are asking you to think of OU as your home. We are a welcoming campus where professors and staff are dedicated to making sure you have the support you need to feel comfortable and successful. And, because we consider it a great responsibility to support you, we want you to know that we make sure you will never feel alone. We are here for you, whether it's for academic advice, or to counsel you at a difficult or confusing moment...and to make sure you know the range of career opportunities as you pursue your degree.

Going to college is an adventure. It is new, exciting, and, at times, it will cause you stress and anxiety. But it's all part of maturing and growing. If you remain open to learning, you'll be amazed at what you can accomplish.

Everyone who you come in contact with at Oakland has stood in your shoes, to some degree. When I was your age, I wondered what my future would be. I, too, went to a university, realized the joy of discovering new knowledge, and learned more and more about the world and myself. Even to this day, I think fondly about my undergraduate days and reflect on how my studies, friendships and college experiences shaped the course of my life.

Enjoy these days. You are at one of the most exciting and fascinating stages of your life. And, we at OU want to make sure you get the most out of your experience.

Each of you has proven yourself as an outstanding student. You are, after all, Presidential Scholars. I want you to keep in mind that we are so proud to have an opportunity to play a role in your academic and personal development.

It's not just a role, it's our mission... and we are so passionate about serving the best interests of our students and the OU community.

Joining me are Oakland University's Provost Britt Rios-Ellis, Vice President of Student Affairs Glenn McIntosh. It's important you know that the measure of our success as a university is whether our students are succeeding – all of our students.

We take the time to look at each student... and we know that success is measured one student at a time... That means academic success.... and ultimately, career and life success.

Thank you for choosing Oakland University.

It is so good to be with you ... and share this moment.

We look forward to being part of your remarkable and memorable journey.