

Agendum
Oakland University
Board of Trustees Formal Session
April 11, 2025

**COMMENDATION OF THE DON AND JAN O'DOWD GRADUATE AWARD
TO RAENECE D. JOHNSON**
Recommendation

1. **Division and Department:** Academic Affairs and Graduate School.
2. **Introduction:** The Don and Jan O'Dowd Graduate Award is presented annually to a graduate student who has made outstanding contributions through exemplary leadership and/or service at Oakland University and/or the surrounding community. In particular, the student chosen must exemplify traits such as intellectual curiosity, enthusiasm, leadership, compassion and dedication to their field of study. The resolution set forth below is submitted for consideration and approval in honor of Raenece D. Johnson, recipient of the 2025 Don and Jan O'Dowd Graduate Award.
3. **Previous Board Action:** The Board of Trustees recognizes the Don and Jan O'Dowd Graduate Award recipient for their outstanding achievements.
4. **Budget Implications:** None.
5. **Educational Implications:** The Don and Jan O'Dowd Graduate Award recipient exemplifies superior academic and co-curricular achievement by a graduate student. Their accomplishments reflect the highest University standards of scholarship, leadership, and citizenship and serve as an outstanding example for the entire campus community.
6. **Personnel Implications:** None.
7. **University Reviews/Approvals:** The Graduate Council reviews Don and Jan O'Dowd Graduate Award candidates and recommends a nominee for final approval to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.

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8. Recommendation: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, Raenece Johnson entered Oakland University to pursue a Doctor of Philosophy in Education: Educational Leadership in the School of Education and Human Services; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Johnson has demonstrated academic excellence and an unwavering commitment to social justice and community service throughout her educational journey, earning both a Bachelor of Social Work and a Master's degree before returning to Oakland University to complete her doctorate; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Johnson has demonstrated outstanding leadership at Oakland University as a co-founder of the Golden Grizzlies Pantry, a vital resource that has provided food security to countless students, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. She played a pivotal role in securing funding, expanding the pantry's reach, and ensuring its long-term sustainability. She was also instrumental in establishing Grizz Garments, a clothing closet that provides professional and winter attire to students in need; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Johnson has extended her leadership beyond campus through her work as President of the Board for NASW-MI, leveraging her connections with social workers across the state to enact meaningful change. She has also served as a practicum coordinator and instructor, mentoring students and fostering an inclusive learning environment that encourages critical thinking, advocacy, and leadership; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Johnson exemplifies the spirit of the Don and Jan O'Dowd Graduate Award through her dedication to service, intellectual curiosity, and passion for student advocacy, particularly through her doctoral research on fostering a sense of belonging among Black and African American transfer students. Her work has had a profound and lasting impact on Oakland University and the broader community; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Johnson has been selected as a 2025 recipient of the Don and Jan O'Dowd Graduate Award, given annually to a top graduate student who has made outstanding contributions through exemplary leadership and service at Oakland University and/or the surrounding community, exhibiting traits such as intellectual curiosity, enthusiasm, compassion, and dedication to their field of study; now, therefore, be it

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RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees expresses its appreciation to Ms. Johnson for her unwavering commitment to campus life at Oakland University and the surrounding community; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees commends Raenece Johnson for the quality of her leadership and extends to her its best wishes for continued success in all of her future endeavors.

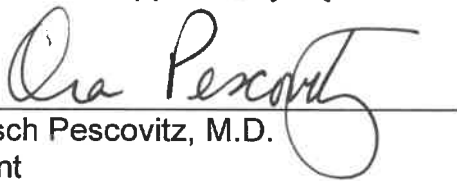
9. **Attachments:** None.

Submitted to the University President
on 4/3, 2025 by



Amy Thompson, Ph.D., FESG, CHES
Executive Vice President for
Academic Affairs and Provost

Recommended on 4/4, 2025
to the Board for approval by



Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D.
President

Reviewed by


Joshua D. Merchant, Ph.D.
Chief of Staff and
Secretary to the Board of Trustees