Problem Challenge

Welcome to the University of Michigan!!!

We're absolutely delighted to have such a distinguished group visit our campus!
This is a very exciting place, and I hope you have some time to get out and enjoy both Ann Arbor and the University.
There are lots of things going on here...and I would encourage you to wander around. Check out our museums, our laboratories, our massive computer clusters, ...and, of course, our ice cream shops, snack bars, and videogame parlors!

Just out of curiosity's sake:

How many of you are planning on careers in science or engineering?
How many in a profession like medicine or law?

I'm interested because of another hat I wear...

National Science Board
Education and Human Resources Committee...
Serious concern:
America is losing out in the "brain" race...
Let me explain...

When I graduated from college...
Space race with the Russians...
First to the moon...
Some were even looking beyond...
Rover Project: nuclear rockets for Mars mission
We fully expected to have a base on Mars by this time!

What happened?
America became disenchanted with science and technology...
  Maybe the war in Vietnam...
  Maybe the concern about the environment...
The best of our students stopped going into science...
Despite the fact that so many of you say you will go on...
  only about 3% of you will major in science or engineering!
  (Compared to 50% in most other nations...)
But something even more serious happened...
  We seemed to forget for a time about the importance of
  quality...of excellence...in what we did.
Example: When I was Dean, a GM executive...
  Claimed that Japanese would never beat us...
  We could put a car on the showroom floor...
  Only problem was that people don't by cars by the
  pound...
  They buy junk by the pound!
At a time when the rest of the world was picking up the pace...
  America was sitting back and resting on its laurels...
  We stopped demanding the best...in our schools...in our
  industry...in our achievements...
Now there is a real challenge for you!
  Because if our nation is to get its act together again,
    it will be because students like you demand it!
If our schools are ever to improve, it will be because
  you simply will demand the best of your teachers!
If we are to regain our scientific leadership, it will
  be because many of you make the commitment to seek
  the rigorous education required of scientists and
  engineers.
 Wouldn't it be great if during this conference many of you decided that you simply were not going to stand for mediocrity! That you were going to go for the gold...for the best in the achievements of your schools, your teachers, your friends, you nation!

Ah, well, don't let me lay too much on you!!!

Instead, let me welcome you once again to the University of Michigan...and wish you the best for an exciting and enjoyable conference.