

Black All Campus Alumni Reception/9/29/90

+

+Greetings and welcome to all of you.

+This has become one of the highpoints of my year

+because I am always delighted to see so many old friends

+and because it is always such a warm and enjoyable gathering.

+And also because you exemplify for me

+the tremendous strength our University has in its alumni.

+It is only since I became President that I have fully appreciated

+how important our alumni are to us.

+Not just in giving money--though that is certainly important--

+but in recruiting students, and mentoring them once they are here,

+in helping build public understanding and support for the University

+and, through your achievements, in providing an example to others

+what is best in a Michigan education.

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+Our African American alumni lead the way in loyalty and support.

+This is especially moving to me because

+I know that many of you have bittersweet memories of your years at Michigan.

+Like our larger society, our campus has not done its best

+for minority students, faculty and staff.

+I know that that there were many barriers, large and small,

+that unfairly made your student days more difficult.

+So your loyalty to Michigan is all the more remarkable and appreciated.

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+We cannot undo the past.

+I wish we could but we can't.

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+What we can do today is make sure the past is not repeated.

+and You know, I am pledged to do that and more

+to make Michigan the leader in diversity.

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+Once again, I am pleased to report to you that we are making progress

+in recruiting African American faculty and students.

+For example this year we have Xx new faculty members.

+this makes a three year total of Xx and at this rate we are on track

+to double the number of minority faculty in three years.

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+Our student numbers are also improved although this year's counts

+will not be in until later this month,

+all the preliminary indicators are excellent.

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+We really have in place now the people, the policies and the mechanisms

+that will keep our rate of increase moving up so that we will be representative

+of the population in this decade.

+I think you will be proud to learn that Michigan

+is now regarded as a national leader in building diversity

+and the Michigan Mandate has become a model for others.

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+I wish that I could tell you that this means we have achieved our goals.

+But we all know that increasing the numbers is only the first step.

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+Now comes the hard part.

+And believe me, it is hard, to try to change

+and to build a community that values its differences

+but at the same time can hold together, work and live together

+and pursue common goals and forge common values.

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+I believe we have made some progress here.

+But I know we have a long way to go.

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+This isn't surprising,
+when you consider that universities are one of the few institutions in our society
+where the effort is being made.
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+While separation increases in many aspects of American life,
+universities are one place where people have the opportunity to come together.
+And it isn't always easy.
+In fact, it brings stresses and strains, friction and even conflict at times.
+But I see this as a sign that we are making progress
+a natural part of a process of becoming more representative.
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+We all know you don't get change without pain in this life.
+So we may still be in the headlines from time to time.
+But we can't let ourselves be distracted by that or by setbacks,
+mistakes or occasional detours.
+We are on this road for the long haul.
+We can't and won't let up until we get to the destination
+which is to make our University the leader in being the most diverse
+and cosmopolitan campus in the country.
+We can't do it without you.
+Without you we can't miss!
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+And before I close I want to say that one of the ways you help us most
+is when you let us know we are off the track.
+So keep in touch.
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+Many thanks and Go Blue!
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