

Minority Student Welcome

Welcome to Michigan

On behalf of the faculty of the University, I would like to welcome you to Michigan... and to our family of the maize and blue! I suspect this has been a hectic and confusing week for many of you... and the last thing you probably need at this point is more advice...particularly from a University bureaucrat. So I won't attempt to give you any advice... rather I want to convey to you a sense of the pride we take in your achievements that brought you to Michigan... and a sense of the time of enormous challenge, opportunity, and responsibility at which you have entered the University.

A Sense of Pride

Let me first congratulate you on the distinguished records each of you have brought to Michigan... This past year we had over 19,000 applications for the 4,500 positions in our freshman class. We therefore had the luxury to build a class drawn from the best students drawn from across the nation...
...the best scholars...
...the best musicians...
...the best artists
...the best athletes...
...and the best leaders...
Each of you has accomplished something very special to get into this place...and I must admit that we are already very proud of you.
You are part of what is the strongest class in Michigan history...

The Challenge of a Michigan Education

But, despite your obvious academic talents, most of you will find Michigan a challenging experience.
...to some it will be through formal courses
...to others, the size and complexity of the university
...others of you will face challenges through athletics, social activities...
...even challenges to your most fundamental beliefs
But, of course, that is what a college education is all about...
A college education is a time of challenge and discovery, of curiosity and intellectual growth, of learning about yourself, your talents and your limits.

1. Michigan is not a small liberal arts college...

it is a great research university.

It is also a very large, complex, and exciting place.

Our philosophy is to use these incredible resources not simply to teach facts...indeed, students of your ability can learn facts, content, pretty much on your own.

Hence, of more lasting value are the broadly applicable skills and wide-ranging perspective that is characteristic of a liberal education -- not a

narrowly focused curriculum.

This can be frustrating at times, but we are convinced...
as are the other great research universities of this
nation...that you will be far better prepared to assume
the role of leadership in society with this type of
an education.

**2. From this perspective, it is critical that you
recognize that you will probably be learning more
OUTSIDE of the classroom than in it!**

This University is designed to provide a rich environment
of intellectual experiences...

Whether it be through the wealth of formal instruction we
provide, or through the array of cultural, social,
athletic activities.

Take advantage of this environment...

Get out and meet people and become involved!

In particular, meet your fellow students...

you can learn a great deal from them...

and they can learn a great deal from you!

**3. Let me stress that your education
at Michigan will not be a passive process.**

While it is true that we probably have more opportunities
on this campus than any other university in the nation,
it is also true that they will not be presented to you on
a silver platter.

It's all here...but you have to learn to go out and get it!

Nobody ever said a Michigan education was easy...

but the generations of students who have had the
determination to meet the challenge have demonstrated
the value of this experience through their achievements
later in life

A Time of Unusual Opportunity

There is another reason why meeting the challenge of
a Michigan education is important

You are starting your college education at a very unusual
time in the history of our nation...

Never before in our history has there been more
opportunity for students willing to make the
commitments and sacrifices necessary for
an outstanding education.

Let me explain...

The Challenge of Change

The challenge of dramatic economic change...

Traditional industry society is shifting to a new
knowledge-based society, just as our industrial
economy evolved from an agrarian society at the
turn of the century.

A transition is occurring in which..

Intellectual capital has replaced
financial and physical capital as key to economic development

Some examples:

Industrial production is steadily switching away from
material and labor intensive products and processes
to knowledge intensive processes:

In a car, 40% materials, 25% labor...

In a chip, 1% materials, 10% labor, 70% knowledge!!!

Increasing production has come to mean
decreasing blue collar employment!

In the 1920s, 1 of 3 was a blue-collar worker
today 1 in 10 and dropping fast
probably to about 1 in 20 by the turn of the

century...less than agriculture...

It is a fact of the post-industrial society that we now find ourselves that the number of low-skilled jobs is disappearing rapidly...

In all developed countries, "knowledge" workers have already become the center of gravity of the labor force.

In a sense, we have entered a new age...an

age of knowledge!

Yet, at the same time, that low skilled jobs are rapidly disappearing, the demand for knowledge-based professionals has far exceeded supply in most fields...

Traditional source of S&E college students is declining

25%-30% falloff in HS graduates by 1992

Assuming that same fraction (4.8%) choose to enter S&E, and assuming constant demand (very conservative), there will be a cumulative shortfall of 700,000 by 2010!

Furthermore, by that time over 30% of college age students will be from underrepresented minorities...students who have not traditionally had the opportunity to pursue these careers.

It has become a national imperative to convince more of you to pursue educations and careers in the knowledge-based professions...engineering, science, medicine, law,...

A Time of Unusual Responsibility

As I noted earlier, you are an extraordinarily talented group of individuals...

It is likely that regardless of what happens during your college education, you will go on to become leaders of our society...

Hence, we believe it important that you prepare for this life of leadership now by taking advantage of all that this University has to offer.

Broaden your horizon...

Become involved...

Develop a personal philosophy of life...

Become committed...

In a sense, you not only have an obligation to yourself...but to our nation and the world to prepare for the mantle of leadership you will be asked to assume following your graduation.

Michigan is an exciting, challenging...sometimes frustrating...but always rewarding place.

Let me wish you the best as you start the fascinating and rewarding process of a Michigan education!