

## Fall 2018 Convocation

**August 19, 2018**

War Eagle! I am delighted to welcome you—the class of 2022—to Auburn University. You are the future of our great university, and from where I stand, our future looks bright!

A little over a year ago, I was in your shoes. I was also new here. I'd left behind many of the people and places I knew to come to Auburn. Because, like you, I believe in this university and its potential to transform lives—including my own.

You are embarking on an exciting journey that's full of "firsts." Many of you are experiencing your first class on a college campus. You're living away from home for the first time. You're reaching your first milestones independent of your family.

Any time you do something for the first time, regardless of how well it goes or doesn't go, you learn. You grow. Every "first" is an opportunity to make you a better, stronger person. I know I have certainly learned from my "firsts" this past year. Do not be afraid to venture out of your comfort zone.

I have the pleasure of encouraging you as begin your own exciting journey of possibility. Some of my favorite experiences at Auburn have been the ones I have shared with students. You add so much life and energy to our community. You fill this campus with great ideas and limitless potential, and you make Auburn an inspiring place to be.

You enrolled at Auburn to prepare for life and at the same time to get a degree to help you land a terrific job. But while you're here, we want to not only prepare you for life after school, but to help you figure out how you might transform the world around you.

You are bright, determined and ready to work harder than everyone else. This is what Auburn is. As the Creed says, we believe in work, hard work!

They say you only get one chance to make a first impression, so start strong. Get involved, become engaged, make good decisions, and you will thrive at Auburn.

Stay after class to talk one-on-one with your professor. Visit the Davis Arboretum or the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art. Make a new friend when you greet them on Hey

Day. Connect with the folks at the Career Center. And on Saturdays this fall, soak up the best game-day atmosphere in all of college football.

Students who are involved are students who succeed. By getting involved on campus, you'll form meaningful, two-way relationships with mentors who will support you throughout your career, friends who will be there to celebrate your accomplishments, and friends who will also be there to encourage you when you need it the most.

On that same note, try find balance between what you want to do with what you must do. And to achieve that balance, there are times you'll have say "no." By not overextending yourself, you'll avoid getting burned out. And, you'll be able to devote the best of you to the things you're passionate about and the things to which you can really contribute.

It is easy—very easy—to feel overwhelmed by everything around you: your studies, your new friends, happenings on campus. College is exhilarating, but it can also be stressful.

Please know two things. First, you are not alone. And second, we are all here to help. The faculty and staff of our university are committed to helping make your experience here a successful one. Take advantage of the resources Auburn offers to help you succeed.

The years you spend on the Plains will be some of the most wonderful and memorable years of your life. I can't wait to shake your hand on the day you receive your Auburn degree and thank you for the difference you've made. Until then, I look forward to seeing you on campus, hearing about your experiences, and watching you fulfill your potential.

Welcome to Auburn. War Eagle!