UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

COLLEGE OF LITERATURE, SCIENCE,

AND THE ARTS

STUDENT WELCOME EVENT

August 30, 2020

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University of Michigan

College of Literature, Science and the Arts

Student Welcome Event

Sunday, August 30, 2020

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[Standing by for program to begin]

[VIDEO PLAYING]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

>>DEAN ANNE CURZAN: Hi everyone. I'm Anne Curzan, Dean of the College of Literature, Science and the Arts. I want to let everyone know this event is being recorded. Additionally we have set up live captioning for those of you who want to access the service please click the C.C. button at the bottom of your Zoom screen to enable captions. We will post the recording and transcript of this event on the LSA website as well. Normally at the start of a new school year the University hosts a formal convocation to welcome you to campus. Convocation is not happening this year but was still very important to me to connect with you as you start here at LSA. I believe in ceremony and starting college is a big deal. This is a real milestone in your lives and we want to celebrate it with you.

I'm also really aware that this fall may not be quite how you imagined you're going to start your time at LSA. I know it's going to be very different but regardless of where you are and where your learning is happening, there is so much to be excited about for this year and we want to share our excitement with you today. We have a very fun agenda planned over the next about 40 minutes. You will be hearing from former NFL lineman, TV host, entrepreneur and proud LSA alum Dhani Jones. We also joined by two members of LSA student government, President Selena Bazzi and Vice President Josiah Walker. Will also hear from Rosario Ceballo our associate Dean for sciences and a professor in the Department of psychology and human studies. We will also learn more about you through some poll questions but halfway through.

For those of you are joining us by phone or audio only, there will not be any additional video element aside from that wonderful music video but you just saw from our friends at the school of music theater and dance. The exception will be the polling and I'll be sure to read out the results so you can know what they are but it is true that the participation in the polling activities does require for you to be locked into Zoom on your computer or mobile app so if you are phoning and you will not be able to participate in the polling but I will you know what happens. Before we begin I also want to acknowledge that the University of Michigan is located on the territory -- in 1817 the Ojibway, the nations made the largest single land transfer to the University Michigan. Seeded in the treaty at the foot of the rapid so that their children could be educated. We acknowledge the history of native displacements that allowed the University of Michigan to be founded. Today we reaffirm contemporary and ancestral ties to the land and their profound contributions to this institution.

Let me start with a few thoughts as you start college before I invite our guest speakers to talk with you. Today I am formally welcoming you to the College of literature, science and the arts at the University of Michigan what we call LSA. LSA is 160 years old. This is a long legacy of excellence in the liberal arts and sciences. And LSA our mission is to push the boundaries of what is understood about the human experience and about the natural order of the world and we are here to foster the next generation of rigorous and empathetic thinkers, creators and contributors to the state, the nation and the world. Those rigorous and empathetic contributors and creators and thinkers, that is you. This mission is our invitation to you. Literally hundreds of thousands of students have come through this college on their way to lives and careers so varied and unexpected that there is no way to capture all those possibilities.

You are now part of that legacy. Part of this diverse intellectual community. That is exploring the world, reimagining the world, and striving to make purposeful, positive change. So you are going to have a lot of opportunities to explore here and we often talk about this within three disciplines. It is what we do we explore. And you can do that in the humanities which includes art and literature and language and philosophy. Which reveals to us the depth of the human experience including all that we share and all that makes us unique in our diversity. Fundamentally the humanities help us understand the world from perspectives that are different from our own.

You'll get to explore the social sciences such as economics and sociology, psychology, anthropology which explore and explain how humans come together in groups and societies. How our society works and what happens when it does not. And then there are the natural sciences such as physics and chemistry and the biological sciences and astronomy which investigate how the natural world all around us works. From the tiniest particles to the vastness of the universe.

I really want to encourage you to explore broadly to try out classes you never imagined. Why? First, you might find something you love. I started college as a math major. I became a linguist. When I went to college I didn't even know what linguistics was and I've had a fulfilling career researching and teaching the history of the English language. I would never have found that if I did not do some exploration in my first couple years in college.

Another reason is that you never know what class is going to stick with you. For example 1 of our alums is a doctor at the University of Michigan hospital and he says that the class that was most important to him was a class on Icelandic saga because in that class he learned how stories work. Ended his work he spends his days listening to and interpreting the stories of patients.

You are going to leave your with a superpower. To quote Van Jones who was on campus last fall, you will have a superpower when you leave LSA to work effectively, in a radically diverse world. And we will help you figure out you want to do in the next chapter with your liberal arts degree and the superpowers that come with it.

I want to share two other quick messages with you today before turn the floor over. The first is I want you to know that you belong here. You are here because we know that you will be an exceptional addition to our community. You are not a mistake that was made in the admissions process. You worked very hard to be here.

You, with your own experiences and perspectives and these will cause you to ask your own set of questions and come up with creative solutions which are going to push all of us to think in new ways. If you are not hearing a question being asked it may be that you need to ask it. If you are not hearing a solution only table, you put that solution on the table. You are a critical part of this community and we are so glad you are here.

I count myself Credly lucky just to spend my time surrounded by all of you. You inspire me every day.

My second message is to take care of yourselves. I want to talk about your well-being. I hardly need to say that this is a very strange and difficult time for the world. The pandemic threatens our health and the health of our loved ones and communities. And a top of the pandemic our country is experiencing truly traumatic events and calls for racial justice these have an impact on our lives and emotions. It is important that we care for our own well-being and that of others.

And by well-being I mean your health, physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. Adventure you are about to embark on S new LSA students is going to be thrilling and enriching and transformational. But you are also going to be challenged. You will experience sadness maybe even failures. He could well feel confused about where you want to go. I'm here to say that is completely normal. I experienced all of those things in college including failure. And I guarantee you that the thousands of LSA students who came before you did, too. It does not mean they don't belong.

It does mean that you, like all of us, need support to thrive. Part of my job as the Dean and the jobs of my fellow faculty members and staff your LSA is to support your well-being. We are here and we want you to reach out to us. And there is plenty that you can do that you already do, to take care of yourself.

I want you I want to invite you to think about what gives you energy. What restores you? What gives you joy? For me I really make an effort to get enough sleep and to exercise. And of course there's also chocolates.

I especially love swimming which is very meditative for me. I also make it a priority to connect with people I care about because just talking to them gives me energy.

And on that note I'm hoping that this event will help you feel a bit more connected no matter where you are.

You are incredibly important to me and to our community and I promise that you will be hearing from me often through videos on social media, virtual student hours and much more. I also hope you'll reach out to me, let me know how you are doing and what you are learning through your education and LSA. Especially as we navigate these unpredictable times.

So with that I now want to introduce you to somebody real special. Dhani Jones is an entrepreneur, former NFL linebacker, author and host who began his career in the NFL playing the New York Giants, Philadelphia Eagles, and Cincinnati Bengals. For Dhani Jones NFL was a jumping off point and in 2010 he launched his philanthropic endeavor, BowTie Cause, designed signature bowties organizations around the country. His career includes being host of the travel Channel series Dhani tackles the globe and the VH1 show ton of cash. He is a proud LSA alum graduate in 2000 and was part of the residential college. I'm just thrilled that he can speak with you today as part of your starting your college career here at LSA so let me turn it over to Dhani Jones.

>>DHANI JONES: Thank you Anne and to all of you who have had the great opportunity to now walk our amazing campus I say hello and to quote the great Bo Schembechler, those who stay will be champions. As Anne pointed out my name is Dhani Jones like graduated from the greatest university in the world. In the world. All right? I had the pleasure of going to the University Michigan and now joining the over 500,000 graduates that have traveled the globe, constructed the tallest buildings, led the greatest companies. We put graduates on the moon we put countless amounts of impact and collective social good in this world. Everywhere we go we change the world.

Now I like to say there are many who speak of themselves as individuals but at Michigan we speak of ourselves as a community. As a university and as a team. My coach said my first year at Michigan he said this is Michigan. It's been here long before you and it will be here long after you. No one is greater than the team and the team is what makes Michigan greater than the rest

Now I went in 96-2000. I played in the national championship. Won the national championship in 1997 as we went to the Rose Bowl. But the most meaningful moment of my life was sitting in my parents basement and committing to the University of Michigan and it was after I had the M on top of the globe I knew that I had no other choice. I knew that if I worked hard every day and sat in front of the classroom, raised my hand, asked questions and made meaningful relationships there was nowhere I could not go that could not say Go Blue and be welcomed.

Now while at school as Anne pointed out you will be challenged. Over the tenure of your time at Michigan, the world will have its challenges. Life of course in all of its wonderful aspects has challenges.

And at Michigan, we accept those challenges and while you are studying at the ugly meeting of the union with your friends, okay? Read a book, take some time out for yourself I invite you to spend time thinking about how you wish to impact the world. You see, school is not only about getting your degree, going to some great football games and having - University of Michigan's about becoming the leader you were meant to be. It is but heavenly perspective and adding to the legacy that I'm sure many of your parents might be sitting with you right now, who are graduates, have set for you.

Your life has changed forever. The future has changed forever. You are no longer one person. You are a force, a way of life. You are Michigan. I will leave you with three things.

That got me through school.

The most important, mind to the here and now. James Earl Jones the famous actor, voice of Michigan, Darth Vader, member him? You don't build a bond without being present, he said. Don't let distractions take you away from the moments that you have.

Two step outside your comfort zone. Larry Page, you know the founder, Google, Michigan graduate. He pushed the envelope for what is possible keep searching he said it's okay to change.

And I would say one of the most important things to keep in mind as you take time to learn, study and growth to the University of Michigan is make an impact. President Gerald Ford another great Michigan graduate said history and the experience tells us that more progress comes not in comfortable and complacent times but out of trial and confusion. This is your time to explore and push the bounds of who you are. After your time in Ann Arbor the world will be different and so will you. I invite you to carry the flag of the team.

The rallying cry of Go Blue. We are everywhere. Everywhere. And now so are you. Welcome to Ann Arbor. Welcome to the time of your life, welcome to Michigan.

>>DEAN ANNE CURZAN: Dhani thank you so much for those inspiring words about taking control of your education, becoming part of this community and creating positive purposeful change in the world. We are so delighted you were able to be here.

>>DHANI JONES: Thank you Anne.

>>DEAN ANNE CURZAN: Now we want to hear from all of you, the incoming students so we are going to do a poll there going to be four questions. The questions are going to pop up on your screen and for each one you're going to have about 30 seconds to choose your answer and then we will get to see the results. So here comes the first question.

If you, you have to wear one color for the entire term. What is it? Maize or blue? I can hardly wait to see the answer to this question. Think that I have already perhaps hinted at what my answer would be for those of you who can see me I happen to be wearing blue at the moment but you never know what I have in my closet. Maybe lots of maize and of course only needed at games we need to have all of that ready to go. So all right we are going to get the results. Okay so we have blue coming in at 85% and maize coming in at 16% and I love that that adds up to 101%. I did say I started college as a math major but clearly blue people are opting for blue that is just a way to accentuate the maize when we pull it out.

Here is our second question. I'm still seeing the first question.

Question two. Where are you viewing this webinar? Your dorm room? A bedroom? A coffee shop? Outside? The broom closet under the stairs? All right and we know that right now because of the global pandemic we have students who are on campus. We have students who are at home and we have students who are in other locations all around the globe so we are excited to see where you are right now as you are tuning into this welcome.

We have got most people in a dorm room or bedroom dorm room at 55%. Bedrooms at 39% no one is in a coffee shop perhaps because it's hard to sit there. We have 2% of people for outside and 7% of the people are in the broom closet under the stairs. I hope you have a flashlight in there with you.

Our third question. This is picking up on something I talked about. What is your top choice for taking care of yourself during your first semester? Here are the choices. Hobbies, sports and fitness, mindfulness or meditation, musical arts, religion or spiritual practice, comfort food, face time with family and friends.

And these are all and you may be looking at this and thinking I want to do a lot of these and we hope that you will do a lot of these. So the question is just what is your top choice today for what you want to do to be taking care of yourself? And we wanted to ask this question because it is so important to us to stress your well-being as part of college. You will be able to learn effectively if you are well and healthy. And we want each of you to thrive. Here are our results and thank you all for participating this. So hobbies at 27%. The highest a sports and fitness at 36 and behind that at 32% his face time with family and friends. We have got music and arts at 22%. Comfort food at 12% and religion and spiritual practice at 6% and mindfulness at 12% so a really nice range there of all the things you're going to do.

And here's our last question.

Here you will get to see a building on campus so here's this building and here's the question. What can you find in this building? Dean Curzan's backup collection of dictionaries, thesauruses and linguist it guides and I have to say I do own a lot of dictionaries.

Maybe you can find 53 bells that play chimes and occasionally the theme from Westworld. And Memorial to World War II soldiers. A classroom. Definitely D and probably at least one of A, B, or C. Those are the five choices. This is a wonderful building on campus and taken on a day as beautiful as today and you can see the clock there on the top. So we wanted to show you a little bit of campus even though some of you may not be on campus right now and I can hardly wait to see what you think is going on in this building.

Here we get the results. Okay I love it that some of you have decided that my dictionaries are in this building. So we have 52% going with the last one which is D there must be a classroom and at least one of A, B or C. You all are correct so it is definitely D. There is a classroom there and's also true that there are 53 bells they are this is called the bell tower and a memorial to World War II soldiers. What is not there? Is all of my backup dictionaries but I think it's a great idea so I might go store some of them there.

Thank you all for participating. It is fun for us to get to know a little bit about you and now it is my pleasure to get to introduce two very important students in LSA. Our LSA student government representatives Selena Bazzi and Josiah Walker. Selena is the student body president for LSA student government and Doctors Without Borders exec it of officer. She is studying biomolecular science with a minor in art and design and community action and social change. Selena is the first Lebanese American student body president at the college. Josiah Walker is the vice president for LSA student government into studying political science with a minor in entrepreneurship. He is also he is also the president of Turn Up Turnout, the nonpartisan student group that works with the Ginsberg center here on campus as well as all 19 schools and colleges student organizations and athletics to increase student voter turnout at the University of Michigan. Josiah is the first African-American Vice President for the college. Let me turn it over to Selena and Josiah.

>>SELENA BAZZI: Thank you Dean Curzan. Good afternoon my fellow Wolverines. It's with great excitement we welcome you to the University Michigan College of literature, science and the arts. A student's of the largest college the number one public institution in the nation, you are in a unique position to become leaders in your field of study and areas of interest.

>>JOSIAH WALKER: This truly could not be a more peculiar time to be a student let alone a first year student. You have likely noticed that we are in the midst of making an unprecedented switch to hybrid learning and yet we still have not managed to beat Ohio State and if up against the two of us have been students here.

>>SELENA BAZZI: It may assure you to know that LSA academic technology has put in a tremendous spot of effort to make sure your learning experiences has similar to in person environment as possible. Professors have been coordinate with the Dean's office, environment health and safety or EHS, the services for students with disabilities and the office of diversity, equity and inclusion to accommodate students come from a variety of backgrounds with a variety of needs. In fact, the University Michigan as a whole has been working very diligently to ensure you will still be able to make the best, the most of your undergraduate career.

>>JOSIAH WALKER: Perhaps some of you are worried about how you'll make friends or get involved on campus. Without we would share that we both entered college as early generation students far away from our families and undecided about what to study. It was not long however before this campus discharge feel like home. You will meet your lifelong friends and for some of you who are lucky enough your soulmates. You will be surrounded by highly motivated students who strive to be the best they can be while inspiring you to be the best you can be and you will enjoy the newfound freedom that comes with being a college student.

>>SELENA BAZZI: There are many different things that make the University Michigan feel like home. Sometimes it's the knowledge of the campus layout and other times hanging out with close friends after a long day. Or even seeing my friends in the dining hall.

>>JOSIAH WALKER: For me it was getting involved student organizations my favorite after student government of course being Turn Up Turnout the nonpartisan student group that works to increase voter registration, education and turnout at the University Michigan.

>>SELENA BAZZI: If someone would have told us years ago that we would become the student body president and vice president of one of the most intellectually competent and elite groups of individuals, we went never believed it. Let alone the first air American student body president and first Black student body vice president. Our point is college provides with special opportunities long as you're willing to accept that your journey will not always take you in the direction you expect. We urge each of you to find comfort in the process of patience and with time, bigger and better doors will open. Only then you can see where your journey of discovery will take you.

>>JOSIAH WALKER: The past three years at Michigan actually been a world of personal, academic and professional growth for the two of us and we are confident that it will be the same for you. Tomorrow officially marks the beginning of your undergraduate journey. Give yourself a space metaphorically and literally to meet individuals who are different from yourself. This is a time where you can learn more about the world around you, all while being in one central location or as we like to say at your home away from home.

>>SELENA BAZZI: The University Michigan is so much to offer it is a place for growth and learning where thousands of student organization and a plethora of resources there are endless possibilities to become leaders on campus. If you notice something missing you can be the one to create that change leaving your mark on that on the community for instance joining student government. Take this imperfect moment and make it as perfect as it can be. Consider picking up a new skill. Michigan online is a great place to start. You can learn about leadership, financially-and many more subjects offer free.

>>JOSIAH WALKER: This just as much your home as ours. We would like to thank each of you for joining the convocation and we are beyond excited to serve as your student body president and vice president this year.

>>SELENA BAZZI: We wish you all the best of luck as you embark on your journey spirit thank you everyone and for always. Go Blue.

>>DEAN ANNE CURZAN: Thank you so much Selena and Josiah there were so many important messages about the ways to think about your education here at Michigan and your time here and as you said we have spent a lot of time getting ready for this hybrid semester. A lot of creativity and there's so much learning that is going to stretch everyone's brains just the way it would if we were entirely in person. I'm going to be in the classroom this fall teaching in a hybrid way and I'm really excited to meet students starting tomorrow. And so let me turn to our last speaker, our final speaker is Rosario Ceballo, an associate Dean Professor Ceballo oversees all the social science departments in the college and has an impressive record here at Michigan. She is an award-winning teacher. She was chair of the women's studies department for years and launch the new gender and health major in 2016 which is one of our fastest-growing majors. She is also an accomplished researcher whose work focuses primarily on academic and psychological functioning of children and adolescents living in poverty. As a first generation college student herself, she's been working over the past year to learn more about how we can better support first generation students in LSA so that we can be sure that everyone can thrive. Let me turn the floor over to Professor Ceballo.

>>ROSARIO CEBALLO: Hi everyone. Good afternoon. It is an honor to be part of the first ever LSA Zoom welcome event. And already I can tell that you're going to be an incredible class of LSA students. So today I speak for so many U of M professors graduate students and staff when I say we are so happy to have you with us at the University of Michigan. Congratulations to all of you and welcome to U of M. Not long ago, I had the privilege of giving a welcome talk to students participating in a welcome orientation for students interested in the Latinx experience. And that led me to think about things that I would not let this global pandemic to? For me in one of those things is my absolute love for the fall and love for the start of a new school year and all of the excitement that that brings. So even under the strangest of world circumstances, with a global pandemic, I hope that all of you find many moments to embrace the journey that lies ahead. The moments of laughter, the sense of accomplishment you will get in a class, the joy of trying something new with new friends. The fun of being in college and starting a new stage in your life.

And officially welcoming you to the University Michigan into the college of LSA I thought I would give you four pieces of advice that I wish I had known when I was starting in college.

The first and most important thing that I have to say to you I'm just going to repeat a bit what Dean Curzan has already highlighted. Because my most important piece of advice was to say to all of you you belong at the University of Michigan. U of M admissions does not make mistakes and even those of you like me who are the first in your families to go to college, and you had to look up what a wolverine was when you first got here, and I recently had help from the participants in doing that by the way, all of you, all of you belong at the University of Michigan. And I will share a secret with you that even students whose great great great grandparents came to U of M and you can sing the football fight song in their dreams even those students sometimes even feel uncertain in college so the messages when you feel uncertain don't for a second think that you don't belong. Even during those difficult times. You are now all and forever more will be Wolverines.

The second piece of advice that I want to give to you is that the University of Michigan is absolutely rich in resources. Find out about those resources and use them. Do not try to do college alone. The University resources are here to support you. We have computer support, we have advisors for majors, we have emergency funds, we have internship awards through the opportunity hub. We have hundreds of clubs and research opportunities and so on and so on. Use them, find your people, make good friends and reach out to your professors. Go to office hours and just say hi. You don't need to have a question to go to office hours.

Most of us and I know that there are many who feel like me, teach because we love students. We want to help students be successful and we see learning as an ever-changing and tremendously rewarding experience. So I promise you no one gets through college alone. Reach out, use our resources.

Third, don't forget your strengths, your experiences and the things that got you here. Matter what they are. It may be that you took care of three younger siblings after school every day and got stellar grades. It may be that you are the best dancer in your city. It may be that you speak five languages and have traveled the world. The things that make you who you are, those are the things that are your assets and your strengths. So have fun in college. Have fun learning. Don't forget your strengths but try new things.

Remember, please that learning happens outside as much is inside the classroom or the Zoom window. And the Zoom screen brings me to my final piece of advice.

Lastly I want to say something that you may not expect and the fourth piece of advice that I have for all of you is please teach us. Tell us how you are doing. Tell us what you need and how we can improve your learning experience in this new hybrid teaching environment. Not of us, none of us have ever started a semester during a pandemic before. We are all learning together. Your professors and instructors are learning new skills and being challenged informants they never knew before. So we're going to need your feedback. Please talk to your instructors, your GSI, your advisors, mentors, librarians. Tell us how to do bad there, don't let the pandemic keep you from reaching out. Share with us what works, what could make things easier and how we can help.

As I mentioned to you earlier, you are all valued measures of u of M now in the college of LSA and we need your contributions and feedback to learn and work together in order to thrive as a college under these conditions. I know and trust that you will make us stronger and better so thank you for the opportunity to talk to you all today. And to welcome you to the University of Michigan.

>>DEAN ANNE CURZAN: Thank you so much Professor Ceballo and those four pieces of advice are things that we should all keeping in mind. And they are filled with the sense of how much we all have to learn from each other and that is the joy of this place. And I very intentionally as Professor Ceballo did say learn from each other because that is what we do, that is what we do at a research institution, a research institution that cares deeply about teaching is that we are all learning and where learning from each other.

So I want to thank all of you for joining us. I also want to thank the remarkable team of people who made this event happened. Made those poll questions happen who got all of us here on a Sunday afternoon.

I hope that your first week of classes goes very well and despite all of the uncertainty and all that is new in this environment, I want you to be able to find joy and meaning in your explorations here. I'm so grateful and happy that you are here whether you are on campus or you are right now on a video line. And I'm proud to know that you are now part of the great history of LSA and that your work, your visions, your ideas will shape this community and college for years to come.

Congratulations on coming this far and good luck with this next chapter. Forever, Go Blue.

[End of event]