

This is an exciting day -- the formal beginning of our academic year. Let me say welcome to all the new **Lakers for a Lifetime!**

We'll talk today about life-long learning... college life... leadership... goal setting and success.

Let me introduce to you some of the people who gather today and who will do their best to help you be successful at Grand Valley State University.

We welcome: Board Chair David Hooker... Vice Chair John Kennedy...

I also want to welcome Provost Gayle Davis... the members of my cabinet... distinguished faculty and staff members... and all of the students and guests who have joined us for the beginning of another exciting year on campus.

And we're so pleased that inventor and entrepreneur Dean Kamen is here to accept his honorary degree.

He has changed lives, and so can you.

I want you to dream big here at Grand Valley. Bolster those dreams with hard work. And never lose your moral compass.

The legendary newspaper editor and Congressman Horace Greeley put it this way:

"Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, and riches take wings. Only one thing endures and that is character."

You first-year students will have many new-found freedoms here on campus... there is a richness of opportunity for you. Your mind and your ideas will find fertile ground here.

We're counting on you to pursue your individual success with the knowledge that true success means your communities, organizations and families will be the better for your presence.

Inspirational author Robert Collier reminds us:

"Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out."

So, don't be overwhelmed by all the new... stay steady... go to class, day in and day out! Reach out to the esteemed members of our faculty who have elected to take their expertise into the classroom to teach you ... and to learn from you.

Respect yourselves and show that same respect to others. Be kind to yourselves and show that same kindness to others.

**Thomas J. Haas
Convocation 2015
August 28, 2015**

This is your community! Thank you for choosing Grand Valley State University. We so look forward to watching what you do and how you contribute to campus as you pursue your degrees... set your goals... and dream big.

Welcome... and Go Lakers!

Thomas J. Haas
Convocation 2015
August 28, 2015