

## Welcome Gathering 2021

### Welcome remarks from Dean/Director William L. MacDonald

- Students, welcome to The Ohio State University at Newark
- Heat – Dean voted most likely to wear shorts Commencement story –  
Buckeye casual
- Land acknowledgement

We are gathering here today on a site of meeting and exchange for Indigenous peoples, including those in historical times known as the Shawnee, Miami, Wyandotte, Delaware. We are also about one mile north of a magnificent site on which Indigenous peoples of this land whose names we do not know but whom we refer to as the earthworks builders or the People of the Adena, Hopewell and Fort Ancient cultures once gathered. As we celebrate the start of the academic year and the start of your college careers, we acknowledge and honor the diverse Indigenous peoples connected to this land.

By gathering here today in a very casual fashion, we are breaking, however temporarily, from tradition. To keep everyone safe, we have cast aside regalia and much of our formality in favor of an outdoor event that is much more focused on getting to know each other and having fun. Traditions help define the university's culture, but a culture is always fluid. Patterns of behavior emerge, gain popularity, and may become so established that it's hard to imagine they might someday disappear. Can you imagine the phrase, OH-IO! ever disappearing? Some patterns gain popularity but evolve. Compare pictures of Brutus Buckeye taken in the 1960s to pictures of Brutus taken last year. Some cultural patterns eventually disappear altogether. Consider what happens when a building is demolished. All traditions have a beginning, and the fluidity of Ohio State's culture means that a new tradition can emerge at any moment, and its potential to do so resides in you.

With that idea in mind, I want you to think about something. Believe it or not, all first-year students gathering at the Newark campus this fall represent about 50% of the campus's student population. The size of your subpopulation gives you great influence. My advice to you today is to own the culture. It belongs to you, and it's yours to shape. Leave your mark.

Every one of you contributes to the diversity of our student population, not only here at the Newark campus, but at Ohio State, overall. The sea of diversity in which you are swimming will present amazing opportunities for you to learn from each other. You are going to form life-long relationships that cross ethnic, racial, religious, gender, political, and all sorts of other cultural categories. We are all different from one another, but we are all part of one Ohio State family.

And that's a big family. With six campuses, extension offices throughout the state, and gateway sites in Brazil, China, and India, and alumni all around the world, Ohio State is magnificently massive. That enormous space attracts and accommodates an incredibly diverse student population. You represent over 60 of Ohio's 88 counties, and some of you were born outside the United States or have parents who immigrated to the U.S.

So how do you leave your mark in such a huge family? You can start by mixing and mingling and getting to know your family. It's friendly. Try these things:

- Join or create a student organization
- Take a Global Education course
- Participate in the Second-Year Transformational Experience Program

- Apply to join Honors
- Consider ROTC – Army ROTC is active on the Newark campus
- Take a course at Stone Lab on Lake Erie
- Visit the Newark Earthworks and ask about the push for World Heritage Status
- Visit the SciDome at The Works and ask about getting involved there
- Take a service-learning course
- Visit with faculty and ask them about getting involved in research
- Join Pelotonia and help Ohio State end cancer
- Join University Chorus and help the campus adorn its ceremonies with music

Don't sit by and watch. Join in. Take the lead. Ohio State offers you enormous opportunities to grow, but you have to engage the ignition. The light is green. The moment is yours. Your journey is underway, and I hope that when you reach your destination, when you receive your diploma, you will look back with great pleasure at all of your seasons at Ohio State. Have a great year!