

**Ohio State President Michael V. Drake
Club and Society Leadership Symposium
Friday, Sept. 7, 2018**

Thanks, Jim. It's great to be here this evening with all of you – our most highly engaged alumni.

You are Ohio State, our best ambassadors in cities and towns throughout Buckeye Nation.

We are proud to have your leadership and support.

It is wonderful to have you back on campus, as you gather together to learn and grow in a way that allows you to do more for the greater good while advancing our beloved university.

I am pleased to be here and have an opportunity to thank you.

1. As some of our most passionate volunteers, you are creating Ohio State connections in every corner of the country – and even around the globe.

- You held an extraordinary 1,900 events across Buckeye Nation this past year. That's terrific! Your efforts strengthen our alumni's ties to each other and their dedication to Ohio State.
- Whether you are raising scholarship funds or volunteering at a food drive, you are representing our university and making a real difference.
- We are grateful for your commitment to service, which helps reach the entire Ohio State family and uplifts the broader community as well.

2. As you know, paying forward and engaging with our communities are vital to the Buckeye spirit. You have truly taken this to heart.

- I understand that this year alone, you have collectively awarded more than \$1 million in scholarships to 800 deserving students.
- This deserves a round of applause.

3. Your support of our students directly aligns with the university's efforts to provide access to an affordable and excellent education – one of the focus areas of the university's Time and Change strategic plan.

- For example, members of this fall's class are the first to experience the Buckeye Opportunity Program.
- This program ensures that all Pell-eligible students in Ohio receive an aid package that covers the full cost of tuition.

- It started on our Columbus campus and will be expanded to all of Ohio State's regional campuses this spring – impacting an estimated 4,200 Ohio students in total.
- Overall, we have committed more than \$100 million in additional need-based aid since 2015 – exceeding our stated goal of reaching that number by 2020 – with an expected impact for almost 32,000 Buckeyes.
- Last week, we also announced a number of initiatives to create savings for even more students. This includes:
 - eliminating 278 course fees – that's about 70% of all fees;
 - providing discounts on digital textbooks;
 - extending in-state tuition to all military families, regardless of residency;
 - and allowing students who take heavy academic loads to waive the cost of additional credit hours, if they are doing so to complete their degrees or to take advantage of internships or research opportunities.

4. I am pleased to report that our university continues to make great progress broadly. I'll share just a few quick updates:

- We had the most demand in our history in terms of applications for this fall's new incoming class, which once again represents one of the most talented and diverse in our university's history.
- The newly reconstructed Pomerene Hall and historic Mirror Lake District are signs of positive developments that set the direction for how our campus will continue to evolve over the next decade.
- We have upgraded this iconic building in a way that maintains its character and provides state-of-the-art facilities for our students and faculty.
- We're also looking at ways to bring innovation into our classrooms to prepare future generations of students. Our Digital Flagship collaboration with Apple will enable our students and faculty to use technology such as iPads and mobile apps to enhance their teaching and learning.

Finally, none of our progress is possible without the support and friendship we receive from Buckeyes like you.

I often say that what Ohio State does matters – because of our tremendous reach across the state and around the world.

As representatives of Ohio State, what you do matters as well.

Thank you for sharing your time and talents to support our students – today and in the future.

And thank you for being Ohio State's champions in places near and far.

Keep up the good work. And, as always, Go Bucks!