

Heidelberg Fall 2023 Opening Convocation

President's Remarks

24 August 2023

Thank you, Jayce Porter for the *National Anthem*, Zaria Keys for *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, and Camryn Hedrick for the *Invocation!* Perfect.

Good morning to the incoming Class of 2027 and to all undergraduate, transfer, returning, and graduate students! My name is Rob Huntington and this Convocation (#15) is now my favorite one. I hope that everyone had a fun and productive summer in advance of fall term.

Thank you very much to all **1,075** FT/PT UG/G/CCP students for choosing Heidelberg University this year. I extend extra appreciation to our upper-class students for continuing their college education with us. We are grateful to be here together.

Welcome to our 174th year of educating young women and men through our integrated *Professional Liberal Arts* curricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular programming. Our mission is your success while a student, through graduation, into your careers, and throughout life.

Thank you to our Faculty and Staff who worked very hard to prepare your courses, teams, ensembles, activities, services, residence halls, and campus for the start of fall semester. Everyone did a great job!

Our keynote speaker this morning is Heidelberg alumna, Ms. Keyshawn Womack '98, a distinguished business leader in branding, marketing, communications, strategy, and culturally inclusive content. She will be introduced momentarily. We appreciate you being with our students here this morning, Keyshawn. Thank you!

We are welcoming **295** new first-year, **22** transfer, and **10** other new undergraduates to our school this fall. All **327** students are motivated to succeed. This freshman class is smart, talented, and interesting.

One new student is from Women's World Cup Champion Spain; 3 countries and 17 U.S. states are represented; 2% identify as non-binary; 9% are in our Honors Program; 9% are Heidelberg legacy families; 14% come from Tiffin and Seneca County; 15% had a 4.0 or higher GPA in high school (3.5 average GPA); 22% identify as underrepresented students; 23% are from outside Ohio; 28% participated in Scholars Day; 36% are first generation college students in their families (Congrats!); 41% identify as females; 57% identify as males; 63% are DIII student-athletes; and **100%** of our new students want to engage, succeed, graduate, and advance their careers at The Berg.

Your top three incoming first choice majors after three days of classes are Business Administration, Education, and Exercise Science (47%!).

Our incoming students were very engaged in high school. Many of you were multi-sport athletes, worked at least one job, volunteered in your home communities, and participated in leadership organizations like Student Council, 4-H, Future Farmers of America, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts. One of you was a multi-year state champion in your sport. One of you received first place in the state/regional Business Professionals of America competition in entrepreneurship. One of you started your own business before graduating high school. Many of you participated in orchestra, theatre, band, choir, speech and debate team, podcasting, and script writing for newscasts. Three of you were actually in the musical *Once Upon a Mattress* together in Florida last year. At the same time, many of you took Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and College Credit Plus courses, while some of you were members of the National Honor Society, language clubs, and math clubs. Fantastic!

We welcome all of you to your Heidelberg Family!

In my Convocation habit, I highly recommend two recently published novels written by female authors, one new and the other established.

The first book is *Lessons in Chemistry* (2022), written by Bonnie Garmus (Seattle), and it is her first novel. The writing is fantastic. This story is about a tremendously smart, hard-working, clever, and courageous woman named Elizabeth Zott who overcomes a lot of stereotype bias and gender prejudice in the 1960s. It is also a love story that reaches across generations. The narrative is very funny and very serious. This best-seller was rejected 98 times by publishers! 98 times. Do not give up on your dreams!

The second book is *Hello Beautiful* (2023), written by Ann Napolitano (Brooklyn), an accomplished author of several novels including the highly acclaimed best-seller *Dear Edward* in 2020. This book is about William Waters and the four Padavano sisters. It is also well-written, especially in its deep development of many characters over 48 years. This story is about unexpected love, traumatic loss, abandonment, recovery, and emotionally different expressions of family and friends. All about life. This is a good path through life!

To all new and returning students, please get engaged and be intentional about everything you imagine. Jump on all the *Opportunities* and grab all the *Advantages* of this University! It is our privilege to support your academic and career aspirations. We want all of you to graduate successfully from Heidelberg in four years or sooner to continue your journey and pursue your *Life of Purpose with Distinction*.

Good luck to all of you and especially to the Class of 2027. Thank you!

Introduction of Mr. Isaiah Young '25 (Akron)

- Political Science, Economics, and Criminology triple major
- Student Senate President and Student Representative to the BOT
- Men's BxB, OAC Freshman of Year, Siggy Top Individual Perf A
- Emerging Student Leader A - Help others in the Berg community!

