Bill Karpus: Good afternoon.

I'll try that one more time. Good afternoon!

I'm Bill Karpus. I'm the Dean of the Graduate School. And I want to welcome you to the University of Wisconsin–Madison. I also want to welcome our distance learners, our online students. This event’s being recorded. And they're not with us in person today, but they're certainly sharing our collective academic mission.
You have chosen to study at one of the world's preeminent research institutions, and we are very happy that you have joined us. You are making the transitions from what I call "consumers of knowledge," as undergraduate students, to "producers of knowledge," as graduate students.

What you are about to accomplish has never been done. So I want to dwell on that one little bit. You're thinking to yourself, "Oh, tons of people have gone to graduate school, right?" But what you are about to do in your studies and your research, by definition of a graduate degree, has not yet been done. Your ideas and creativity will result in something brand new. The information you develop, the creativity that you bring to light, will become what appears in textbooks of the future. You will become thought leaders and the world's experts in your various academic specialties.

The graduate school is the central administrative home to 165 master's degree programs and 102 doctoral degree programs, encompassing approximately 9,500 students on and off campus.

The Graduate School doesn't do its work alone. It partners with faculty, staff, programs and departments, schools and colleges, often behind the scenes, to provide access to the best possible educational, research and career development experience. At UW-Madison, you will find interdisciplinarity and collaboration hallmarks of your experience.

The mission of the Graduate School is to foster excellence and graduate education, and the main vehicle by which this is accomplished is the integration of graduate education and the research enterprise.
Graduate students, you in this room, you fuel the engine of discovery at this institution. And the research enterprise at UW-Madison provides a fertile environment for you to make those discoveries and create new knowledge. UW-Madison ranks sixth nationally in research expenditures, greater than $1.1 billion dollars. And the National Research Council Analysis of Program Quality shows that 40 of our programs are in the top 10 of their field. And if you really drill down, you'll find a lot of number one programs and departments here at UW-Madison. UW-Madison confers the third highest number of PhD degrees annually, behind the University of Michigan and the University of Texas–Austin.

The Graduate School is very interested in the success of all its students.
However you define success—as publishing papers or books, giving presentations or creative performances and works of art—we celebrate all manners of production of new knowledge. That's probably about the fourth time I've said "new knowledge," and that's going to be a major theme of what you're here to do. Over half of the invention disclosures to the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation include at least one graduate student.

So the Graduate School plays a significant role throughout the lifecycle of graduate students, from the application, to admission, to enrollment, to graduation, by enabling scholarly achievement that results in the desired career outcomes, those career placements of your choice. Much of our work is done in the background so that you can concentrate on your studies, your research and your career development.

The Graduate School advocates for graduate students and for graduate education.
We work in collaboration with senior administration, schools and colleges, departments and programs to provide you with resources and opportunities to succeed.

So I don't do this all by myself. I have a talented leadership team: LaRuth McAfee, Assistant Dean of Diversity, Inclusion and Funding; Alissa Ewer, Assistant Dean of Professional Development and Communications; Marty Gustafson, Assistant Dean of Academic Planning and Assessment; Judy Bauman, Director of Admissions; and Michelle Holland, Director of Academic Services. Also helping ensure your success are Associate Dean Lisa Martin, who's also a professor of political science; many of you met her already, and Associate Dean Parmesh Ramanathan, who's also a professor of electrical and computer engineering; many of you have met him already, too.

Together this group, along with the other staff members in the grad school have arranged this week's events for you to help in the transition to graduate school and to the UW-Madison. This leadership team in the Graduate School brings a wealth of knowledge and a level of commitment to graduate education that I know will benefit you in the long run.

You will be hard pressed to find a more dedicated and passionate group of individuals helping your success than what we have in the Graduate School. We're here to help you during your career development as the next generation of thought leaders in your respective disciplines. The Graduate School strives to engage students, faculty, staff and alumni, as well as the public, in the mission of accelerating the pace of discovery and generating new knowledge. What's that? Number five.

We hope to develop a relationship with you during your time here and to continue that relationship after you graduate. And we look forward to following your long and distinguished careers. We will engage you through a variety of communication mechanisms:
email, our website, weekly newsletters, Facebook, Twitter—I have monthly coffee chats with graduate students—receptions, discussion groups. We hope you avail yourself of all of those opportunities to interact with us and other members of the campus community. The needs of the graduate students are not the same as those of undergraduates, and the Graduate School partners closely with the faculty and staff of your programs to identify what you need for your success.

The Graduate School believes in an environment free from harassment and bias of all kinds in which you can undertake your studies and direct your creativity toward the generation of new knowledge. To that end, the Graduate School will be asking you to participate in programming designed to inform you about sexual harassment and provide you information and tools should you encounter it. We will also ask you to participate in cultural awareness and bias discussions during the course of the academic year.

We are fortunate to work with some outstanding faculty and staff members in this arena to provide opportunities for you. We will push some of this—inclusivity resources—out to you, but we strongly urge you to explore resources that live in your individual departments and programs, and join in the conversations in a number of different spaces. Diversity in all its forms is essential to a robust educational and research environment, and it's necessary for your career development in the long run.

So my wish for you is: that you have a rewarding time as a graduate student at UW-Madison; that you take advantage of all that your department and your program, the Graduate School and the university have to offer; that you seek out a mentoring team that best positions you for the career of your choice; and that you engage in a tremendous number of activities and opportunities that will not only help you advance your research and creativity, but become leaders in your fields of study. Finally, I hope that you take time for yourselves and achieve a positive work-life balance. This will be important when the going gets difficult and you begin to question your choices. Become part of the community, seek out assistance when you need it, and know that the Graduate School is here to help you.

So this year I made a change compared to the last two years in the introductory program, and I thought it was important to introduce you to a number of members of the university's senior leadership team right from day one when you step foot in UW-Madison. And so, first I want to introduce Sarah Mangelsdorf. She is Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. She's also a professor of psychology. As Provost, she's the chief academic officer of the university. And she'll speak next, but I want to also tell you that Patrick Sims, Vice Provost and Chief Diversity Officer, is here to share remarks with you, and Lori Berquam, Vice Provost for Student Life and Dean of Students, is also here. Now I want to welcome Sarah Mangelsdorf, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
Sarah Mangelsdorf: Thank you, Bill. What Bill didn't tell you is that he and I have been working together for years in one form or another. I was Dean of Arts and Sciences at Northwestern before coming here, and he was Associate Dean of the graduate school there. So, we've had lots of shared experiences in higher ed administration.

It's a great pleasure to welcome all of you to the University of Wisconsin–Madison. As Provost, I have the great pleasure of working with all of the academic deans, and it is my job to work with them to help ensure the quality of the educational programs we offer. In fact, I chair a committee called the University Academic Planning Committee, which Bill also serves on, where all new graduate programs—and undergraduate programs—that are being presented or proposed have to come through our committee for review. And any program that is changed has to come—bring its changes to us—and any program that wants to change its name has to bring it to us.

And so, Dean Karpus has given you a sense of the breadth and quality of the academic programs we have here, so you know we have a very wide program array: everything from astronomy to veterinary medicine. I used to be able to say everything from A to Z, but one of the things that came to the Academic Planning Council this last year was that the Zoology Department, with their Zoology PhD, decided to become the Department of Integrative Biology. And in doing so, we could no longer say A to Z, and they could no longer say they had the number one program of zoology in the country, because they were the last existing Zoology PhD program in Research One Universities. And so I congratulated them at the UAPC for having arrived in the late 20th century. Anyway, but now we have everything from astronomy to veterinary medicine.
We currently have over 29,500 undergraduate students on this campus, and you can probably feel that today. Today is our second day, official day of move in. There were some folks that moved in over the weekend, but the bulk of first year students moved in yesterday, today and tomorrow. So if it feels a bit more crowded this week and next week, there’s a reason why. And there are over 11,600 of you, graduate and special school students, from across 13 schools and colleges.

These student numbers are large because we are a large research university. As Bill said, our university has over $1.1 billion total research expenditures each year, which means that we’re among the most active research campuses in this nation and, indeed, in the world. And while research and knowledge creation is a large part of our mission, I believe training of graduate students is one of the most important things that we do here. This campus has a strong tradition of training graduate students, and we recognize that this is an important part of our mission.

As graduate students, you are the next generation of scholars who will make new discoveries and add to our bodies of knowledge across our 100 plus programs. You will contribute in numerous ways to help improve the health and well-being of humans and animals, to find ways for us to address climate change and produce creative works that will be enjoyed by the world. And some of you will become the next generation of teachers and professors, educating at all levels. We know that how you are taught and your experiences in and outside the classroom will shape how you, in turn, teach and mentor.

And I want to reinforce the remarks Dean Karpus made about the fact that there are many services and people in our university community who are here to ensure your success. This is a big place, and it takes some adjustment, especially if you’re coming from a smaller undergraduate institution. So learning about all the services and resources available to you is an important part of your education.

As you can probably imagine, we rely heavily on our graduate and professional students to make this place work. We couldn’t educate the undergraduate students we have here without all of you. And we couldn't engage in the research and scholarship that takes place here without all of you. We know many of you will help with the undergraduate instruction, and you’ll also become mentors to our undergraduates on research projects and in labs across this campus. So I want to thank you, in advance, for the important role many of you will play across your time as graduate students here in helping us achieve our mission of providing high quality undergraduate education.

But beyond research and teaching, one of the important hallmarks of Wisconsin, which I expect you'll learn a little bit more as you immerse yourself in the community here, is something we call the Wisconsin Idea. It is the general principle that the education and
research discoveries that take place here should influence people's lives beyond the boundaries of the university. We don't want the knowledge and wonderful things that happen on this campus just to be held here, in the ivory tower. They should benefit the people of the state and the country and the world. And this university has had that as a basic principle for over 100 years, which is—you know, lots of other institutions, about a decade or so ago, started saying, "We need to, like, talk about what we do in terms of public engagement." It was like it was a whole new thing! I remember being involved in committees at other universities where we thought about how we'd look at public engagement when it came to evaluating people's tenure cases. Well, Wisconsin has been thinking about that for decades.

So it's important for you to know that you joined an institution that has a deep commitment to engaging in scholarship and research that will improve lives, from medical advances to arts and humanistic endeavors. As a scholarly community, you'll find that many here believe in the Wisconsin Idea and make time to engage beyond the classroom and the laboratory. I hope you will find a way to do this, too.

So let me close by reiterating my welcome to each and every one of you, and I wish you good luck. And now, let me turn the microphone over to my colleague, Professor and Vice Provost and Chief Diversity Officer, Patrick Sims.

[Applause.]

Patrick Sims: Thank you, Sarah. Thank you, Bill, for having me with you all. How's everybody doing today?

Audience: Good.
Graduate School
University of Wisconsin–Madison

Patrick Sims: Hmm.... Really? [Points to one side of the room.] This group looks so studious. You are always sitting so nicely and organized. [Points to other side of room.] There’s the cool group standing up, right? No. How’s everybody doing today?

Audience (loudly): Good!

Patrick Sims: There we go! Well, as Sarah mentioned, my name is Patrick Sims. I'm the Vice Provost and Chief Diversity Officer. I'm also a faculty member in the Department of Theater and Drama. And I'm glad to be here to share a few nuggets of wisdom from my experience as a faculty member on this campus since 2004. One of the things I am sort of obligated to talk about is the institution’s commitment to diversity. Right? And I'll do a little bit of that, but I want to challenge you a little bit and share some wisdom that a wise man by the name of Bryan Stevenson shared with me when he was on our campus about two years ago.

How many of you are familiar with our Go Big Read campaign? [Raises hand.] Kind of know? Well, you'll learn about it. But he authored a book by the title of *Just Mercy*. And, the book took a look at the death penalty, particularly in states where there's no recourse for individuals—there's no public authority in the state of Alabama where Mr. Stevenson’s practice is situated. And his life’s work has been dedicated to exonerating individuals who are innocent and getting them off of death row. And so, I began to hear him speak and talk about—wow! How do you stay motivated to do that when you're facing, literally, life and death circumstances? And in my role, there are times where it can feel like we're dealing with life and death circumstances. There are challenges that emerge every day, and those are also new opportunities to affirm our commitment that we are dedicated to diversity and we want every single student who steps foot on this campus to have an experience where they can thrive and bring their full, authentic selves to the academic enterprise that you’re choosing to study. So he gave us a series or nuggets of wisdom that I want to share with you today.

Before I do that, I do want to talk a little about our institutional statement, our commitment to diversity. We went through a process where we engaged our shared governance partners, where students—many of you—have an opportunity to help shape the way the university thinks strategically about these kinds of endeavors. And the first thing I want to impress upon you in that we recognize diversity as a strength for us. It leads to creativity and innovation in ways that only can be achieved if you have diversity of thought, like minds, experiences, etc. This is something that we've always held true, but we had to find a way to message that more intentionally; to let folks know that UW-Madison is committed and cares about diversity, and we want that to be one of the first things that you recognize as you join this community.

Understanding what it means to be a Badger is accepting the responsibility that you're caring not just for yourself, but you're also caring for a much larger community. And by virtue of being part of that larger community, you have a responsibility. Right? And that responsibility is, in my mind, to lift up your fellow person. Right? To support them. Of course, you have to
take care of you and do your studies. But, to what end? Right? To the end that you are going to be the next world changer, or the next Bill Gates, the next Mark Zuckerberg, the next individual that’s going to discover the cure for cancer. Each and every one of you have an amazing contribution, and we want to reap the full benefits of those contributions, recognizing that you are doing so as a part of that responsibility to the broader community.

So those are the few things I want to share with you on that piece. Now back to the nuggets that Mr. Stevenson gave us.

One of the things he suggested was to be proximate. And I think these nuggets also resonate quite nicely with us when we think about our studies. And being proximate, according to Mr. Stevenson, was recognizing that you had to get close to the issue or the challenge or the opportunity. You can’t address it from afar. You have to find a way to get in there, roll your sleeves up and get your hands a bit dirty in order to be actively participating in the solution.

Second thing is: You have to disrupt the narrative. Change the narratives that lead to politics of fear and anger. In the world that we live in, there’s so much that’s changing right in front of our eyes, with Charlottesville and the things that are happening on the West Coast and literally what’s happening right now in Houston. You have to find a way to disrupt narratives of politics that relate to fear and anger. We have to find ways to embrace the humanity that each and every one of us brings to the table. And in doing so, I say we go back to the responsibility of caring for our fellow person.

The third thing that he asked us to think about is investigating what it means to remain hopeful. I know there will be times where you will be tested and you will wonder, “Oh my god. Can I do this?” And the answer is a resounding, "Yes! You can." Right? Because it’s that hope that fuels you and oftentimes inspires someone else, who may be going through the same challenge that you are but they just aren’t as vocal about it. And they’re able to respond to that challenge because they see you being willing to meet it head on. So, always remain hopeful.

The last piece that he asked us to think about—if I make sure I get my note here—is being brave enough to step outside of your comfort zone. You’re going to be asked to do things that you never have done in your life. I mean, that’s the virtue of what it means to pursue graduate study or pursue knowledge. Right? You’re pushing the boundaries and going places that no one else has ever gone. You have that responsibility to step outside that comfort zone. I think if we find a way to practice these things of being proximate, of disrupting narratives related to politics around fear and anger, keeping hope alive for ourselves and stepping outside of our comfort zone, there’s a joy—from my experience—that emerges when you see not only the success of your labors, but you start to recognize that there are other people who are in the trenches doing the work with you. That, in and of itself, is
incredibly rewarding because you start to realize that you're part of a movement. You're part of something that's going to make a difference. These are the times that historians will write about 50 years from now, 100 years from now. You have a chance to help shape history. A page of that could involve your contribution. And some of that work starts with you here today. So I want to celebrate you, commend you, send you all kinds of good love and vibes as you pursue your studies. And I want you to be on the lookout for some of the things that Dr. LaRuth McAfee and I are going to be doing in terms of our partnerships. We'll have a series of mixers that we'll be putting on through our offices to try and get to know you better, connect you with other faculty members who have similar interests, be it academic or based on lived experiences. So, we'll be sending those communications to you. But most importantly, we want you to know we're here for you, we care about you and we want to ensure your success. All right?

Thanks so much. Have a great afternoon, everyone.

Up next, my partner in crime, my sister from across the river—as I say, my paprika to my pepper—Dean Lori Berquam.

[Applause.]
not know that. But this very ground that we walk on is Native American land, and, indeed, belongs to the Ho-Chunk Nation. We share it together with them. And as we share it, and as we walk on it together, I hope we're all cognizant of the legacy we want to leave. As Dean Karpus mentioned, you are thought leaders. You were selected to come here, not because we thought you were a good person—but we hope you are a good person—but because we believe in you and your intellectual abilities. We believe in you, and what you can contribute is new knowledge, new discoveries, to the state of Wisconsin, but, indeed, to the world. So you belong here.


The fact that you are a part of this amazing place where you will be conducting research that is new knowledge—you will be reading things that aren't yet in books—it's an incredible opportunity. Grab it with both hands; squeeze it for all it's worth. That's what being a student at Wisconsin is about. That's what it means to be part of this incredible community.

I know each of you has a passion. I know I had a passion when I was doing my research—and if you ever want to talk about it, let me know because I'm still incredibly passionate about it—but you have a passion for what you want to study. We want to support you in doing that. We also want you to know that we hope that can attribute to the purpose you have for life. They have to be interconnected. If they are standalones, then you will be doing work that you don't feel passionate about and will not give you or your life meaning. Look for things that give your life meaning. That's when you know, in fact, you are truly living.

And at Wisconsin, we want you to be truly alive. We want you to truly engage all of your senses and with all of the people around you. We know you'll build strong relationships with those in your particular department. My challenge? Go beyond that. Go beyond your department. Build relationships across departments. That interdisciplinarity that Dean Karpus talked about? It is a foundational value of ours here. Make sure that you use it. You'll build incredible relationships here. You'll have incredible memories. But all of it is for naught if it doesn't contribute to a meaningful life.

I had the opportunity a couple of years ago to hear the honorable Archbishop Desmond Tutu's daughter, Naomi Tutu, when she came to campus. And she said this: "We are who we are through other people." We are who we are through other people. Each of us is who we are through the people we meet and have connected with. From the years when you grew up, to the years of your undergraduate education, to the time you are here: Every relationship you build, every connection you make, is one that contributes to the person that you’re becoming.
This is an incredible place. The Division of Student Life at the resource fair [holds up flyer] had this—shares with you a number of different places in which you may have intersections with the Division of Student Life and the nine different offices in the division. There are resources here to support you. And I know that you are now knowledgeable enough to be able to reach out and take advantage of them. This is an incredible place. I used to say, "Allow it to transform you," but now I say, "Be a part of that transformation." You will be forever changed. It's what we do here at Wisconsin, and it's what I'm looking for from each of you to do while you're here.

Congratulations, welcome and On, Wisconsin!

[Applause.]