

Good afternoon, Berea Beloved, and most importantly, the class of 2022!

I address you today, as the Executive President of the 82nd administration of the Berea College Student Government Association, and it is an honor for me to speak on behalf of the Berea College student body. I am not nervous at all..my heart is pounding, my knees are shaking, and I am sweating. But, I am sure it is all coincidence. The story I am about to tell you, is not just my story, it is a representation of what our school is.

When I came to Berea as a freshman, that was my first time in the USA. On my flight from Atlanta to Lexington, I was sitting next to a gentleman who said “Bless you!”, when I sneezed. Can you guess my response? I said “Why?”. He had kind of a hard time explaining to me this cultural practice. When I arrived on campus, I was really scared; scared to talk to people, and to even order food on a 3 am-walk to McDonald’s. I thought my accent would be ridiculed. I thought I would not be accepted. 3 years later, I have been the Captain of the Berea debate team, President of the Martial Arts Club, and I have also learned how to play cornhole. This speaks for how Berea has helped me grow. It has taught me that no matter where I come from, at Berea College, I can make it. All of us can make it.

Because of my professors, friends, and the supportive staff at Berea, because of how passionate and invested in my success they are, and because of how Berea has taught me to never give up, and to always go the extra mile, I feel confident that I can take on whatever comes next. This school has not only taught me how to dream, but also given me the skills required to pursue those dreams.

It does not matter if you are Christian or Buddhist, Asian or African, or whether you support or oppose pineapple on pizza, Berea is a place that is sure to help you exceed your expectations. And regardless of what your identity is, you are accepted and loved here. We will make sure that

you thrive and make your life one of service and satisfaction, because God has made of one blood, all peoples of the earth.

Thank you!