

**EVENT:** Fall 2023 convocation

**Date:** Monday, August 21

**PRESIDENT'S ROLE:** Remarks

Good evening, Mavericks!

As we come together today, filled with anticipation and excitement, I am honored to welcome each one of you to the beginning of a new academic year. To our returning students, welcome back, and to our freshmen embarking on this thrilling journey, a special welcome to you all. As the President of this esteemed institution, I stand before you with great pride and a sense of responsibility, knowing that together, we will continue to build a thriving community of learners, innovators, and leaders.

UT Arlington's commitment to academic excellence is unwavering, and our distinguished faculty members are dedicated to empowering students with knowledge and skills that will shape their futures.

Our campus is a rich community of cultures, fostering a welcoming and supportive environment that celebrates and promotes unity. The range of cutting-edge facilities, state-of-the-art research centers, and industry partnerships ensure that our students have access to invaluable hands-on experiences.

Moreover, UT Arlington's strong sense of community and vast alumni network create a powerful support system that extends well beyond graduation. These strengths, combined with your drive and passion, will undoubtedly pave the way for an extraordinary education and propel you towards a future brimming with success and fulfillment.

The start of the academic year is a time of renewal—a chance to refresh our minds, to rediscover our passion for learning, and to embrace the opportunities that lie ahead. While the world has witnessed its share of challenges, our commitment to education remains steadfast. Let us remember that education is not merely a path to earning degrees, but a lifelong journey of growth and understanding that transcends the boundaries of the classroom.

I can still recall so many experiences during my own freshman year. Like how one professor saw me in the computer lab and pulled me aside to show me what the internet was and how I could use it. I know that comment dates me, but it also exemplifies the power that your time here has

to open you up to new horizons and dream bigger than you ever thought you could. And our faculty are here to help you do just that.

As you embark on this new academic chapter, I encourage each of you to explore the myriad of resources available on campus. Our University is not just a place for lectures and assignments; it is a treasure trove of experiences waiting to be discovered. Engage with professors during office hours, participate in student clubs and organizations, utilize the library, attend workshops, and embrace opportunities for research and internships. The resources available to you are vast and designed to help you unleash your full potential, both academically and personally.

Beyond the classroom and campus resources, one of the most valuable aspects of university life is the chance to engage with your peers. Our community represents a kaleidoscope of cultures, perspectives, and experiences. Embrace this diversity, for it enriches your educational journey and empowers you to become compassionate and open-minded global citizens.

As you engage with your peers, remember that you are not alone in this endeavor. Reach out to those around you, for they too are navigating the challenges of university life. Together, we can create an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and supported. Friendships forged during this time will often last a lifetime and provide you with a network of support that extends far beyond graduation.

For our incoming students, I understand that starting university can be both thrilling and nerve-racking. You are embarking on a brand new adventure, leaving behind the familiar and stepping into the unknown. Embrace this journey with an open heart and a curious mind. Seek out opportunities to meet new people, attend orientation events, and join student-led activities. Remember that every student, both new and returning, has been in your shoes at some point, and they are eager to welcome you into our academic family.

As we embark on this new academic year, let us carry the hope and promise that education bestows upon us. Our pursuit of knowledge is not confined to the lecture halls or the pages of textbooks. It is a journey that extends far beyond graduation, shaping the course of our lives and the lives of those we touch.

In this journey of lifelong learning, let us remember that challenges will arise, but they are opportunities for growth. Each setback is a chance to strengthen your resolve, to adapt, and to emerge stronger than before. Embrace failure as a stepping-stone to success, for it is in those moments of adversity that we truly learn who we are and what we are capable of achieving.

As your President, I stand with you, as do our dedicated faculty and staff, to support your endeavors and celebrate your triumphs. Together, we form a community committed to excellence and innovation, fostering an environment where you can thrive as scholars, thinkers, and changemakers.

Let this academic year be one of transformation, enlightenment, and lasting memories. Seize every opportunity, cherish every experience, and build connections that transcend the

boundaries of time and place. As you step forward into this new journey, may your hearts be filled with the promise of a bright future and the strength to go after your dreams.

Today, we are pleased to welcome to our convocation stage, celebrated Olympian, gold medalist, New York Times bestselling author, *Dancing with the Stars* mirror-ball trophy winner, body positivity advocate and scholar, Ms. Laurie Hernandez. Let's welcome her in true Maverick style.

Thank you, and Mav Up.