



JOSH ARMSTRONG

Convocation remarks

Zenobia Hikes

Welcome.

My name is Zenobia Hikes, vice president for student affairs.

We have come together today to remember the cherished and innocent members of our Virginia Tech family who were gunned down in a senseless act that has left us all reeling with excruciating grief.

As we share our sorrow, we collectively pay tribute to these young, gifted minds who came to Virginia Tech searching for knowledge and understanding, and to these dedicated, talented professors who sought to impart that knowledge and enhance that understanding. Today, the world shares our sorrow and pays tribute with us.

We particularly want the families and friends of those who died to know that you have our deepest, most heartfelt sympathy. We hope you know that we will do what we can to ease your pain, even as we deal with our own. Your loved ones were valued members of the Virginia Tech family and they can never be replaced, either in our hallways or in our hearts.

What happened here yesterday has reverberated not just throughout the Virginia Tech family but throughout all of higher education—indeed, throughout the world. This global tragedy is one we never imagined to see on our university campus. Because of it, we have lost not only these dear members of our Virginia Tech family, we have also lost the sense of peace that comes with learning.

The Virginia Tech family is one of camaraderie, respect,



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scholarship, pride, and spirit—standing together through the good times and the bad. What has happened to these beloved members of our family has brought us even closer together in shared grief and disbelief. With the help and support of each other and our brothers and sisters from around the world, and with the uplifting strength we gain from our collective loss, we will eventually recover. But we will never ever forget. □