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## Opening Remarks

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# Opening Remarks

*Paul Benson, Provost*

Good evening. It is wonderful to see all of you here in what is an especially busy time in the Spring Term for everyone on our campus. Thank you for participating in the Global Voices Symposium this week.

Our campus owes particular thanks to Dr. Julius Amin, the Alumni Chair in Humanities, for launching this annual symposium as one of his office's signature initiatives. In the wake of the pathbreaking 2016 symposium on race in UD's history and institutional culture, Julius decided to highlight the value and impact of the humanities at UD by convening this symposium for exploration and interrogation of the University's work on global and intercultural learning, scholarship, partnerships, and engagement, work that was affirmed in President Spina's April 2017 inaugural address on UD's Strategic Vision. This exploration is especially opportune this year as we launch university-wide planning processes for diversity, equity, and inclusion in each division and as the Center for International Programs conducts its own strategic planning process to reflect on its mission and future goals.

Markers of pointed challenges to global understanding, relationship building across national boundaries, and development of resilient intercultural competencies abound. Each day, we are confronted with news of geopolitical conflict and violence, news of resurgent ethnocentric nationalisms, news of fear about cross-

cultural contact and engagement, and signs of entrenched, willful ignorance about so many of the rich traditions, values, languages, and frameworks of meaning-making that shape the experience of the human family across the globe. As profoundly disturbing as these and related challenges are, it is vitally important for our educational and scholarly work as students, faculty, and staff that we continue to refine and advance UD's institutional goals for global and intercultural learning, discovery, and engagement.

This is also vitally important for our own personal journeys. For we cannot begin to fathom who we are as persons until we examine and appreciate the wonderfully fruitful, multifarious, and culturally diverse streams of human life and understanding that have formed us, that make the world our home, and that implicate the world right here in our campus community in Dayton, Ohio—one of the themes of Julius' address this evening. International and intercultural study and exploration are not optional for us.

Thank you again for participating in this symposium, and special thanks for Dr. Amin, his office, and the symposium planning committee for organizing this week's presentations and conversations for us.