

9-19-2017

## At Home

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### eCommons Citation

Spina, Eric F., "At Home" (2017). *President's Blog: From the Heart*. 83.  
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# At Home : University of Dayton, Ohio

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 [udayton.edu/blogs/president/2017/09/family\\_weekend.php](http://udayton.edu/blogs/president/2017/09/family_weekend.php)



Tuesday September 19, 2017

## At Home

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By Eric F. Spina

Family. Friendship. Faith. Football.

As we welcomed more than 700 families to our beautiful campus for Family Weekend, I realized why this is quickly becoming my favorite fall tradition.

This year's weekend became more special when we rolled out the welcome mat to include a gathering of black alumni to celebrate some important campus milestones.

I found myself flitting from one event to another, welcoming more than 200 alumni here — some of whom had not been back on campus in many years — and chatting with parents there — relieved their first-year students are feeling at home after only a few short weeks on campus. Everywhere I went, I bumped into current students happy to welcome Flyers home.

At home — that's the feeling we want all students, alumni, and families to feel whether they're strolling through the plaza, cheering on the Flyers, praying together at Mass, or hanging out on a porch stoop in the student neighborhood.

At a Sunday brunch, I joined other administrators for a discussion with alumni about one of the cornerstones of my presidency — increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus. Increases in this area better position us to deliver on our commitment to excellence by helping students develop the capacity to effectively engage an increasingly diverse world and workplace. I intently listened to our alumni tell stories about their experiences as minorities on a predominantly white campus, how their education prepared them for life, and how their impressions of campus have changed over the years. These were powerful stories, ones that are well connected to our Marianist, Catholic charism.

Over the course of the weekend, I also attended a black-tie gala celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Alpha Phi Alpha, the first Greek fraternity at the University of Dayton, and felt the heart and soul of our motto — Learn. Lead. Serve. — at the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner commemorating the launch of the W.S. McIntosh Memorial Leadership Award, a combination scholarship-internship sponsored by UD and the City of Dayton.

We are blessed and made stronger by our diversity, and the alumni who came home this weekend are helping us understand from where we came and to what we must aspire.

As I visited with families in the pre-game hospitality tent before the Dayton Flyers football game played under picture-perfect sunny skies and paused for a beautiful celebration of Mass in the Frericks Center, I reflected on what makes our campus community extraordinary.

We show up for one another — whether it's a family from Pittsburgh enjoying a cookout with their son and his friends at a Marianist student house in the neighborhood or the city administrator in Washington, D.C. making a trip home to celebrate with other McIntosh scholarship winners.

And when we show up for one another, we become a stronger university, a better community. We become a family.