

**National Service, National Security and the Value of Mentorship:
A Conversation with Sec. of State Madeline Albright and Congresswoman Elisa Slotkin
Feb. 20**

It is a great honor for Oakland University to welcome back¹ to Oakland University one of the great Secretaries of State in U.S. history, Secretary Madeline Albright.

I want to thank Secretary Albright for spending time with high school students and our OU international students prior to this conversation.

Reaching out to students is such a powerful way to support their studies and interest in making a positive difference in the world. And that's one of the important ways Secretary Albright's influence and impact continues to grow.

As the first female Secretary of State, Secretary Albright is in the forefront of breaking through the proverbial glass ceiling. But frankly, her accomplishments and bipartisan approach are hallmarks of her exceptionally effective

¹ Sec. Albright was the feature speaker in the Varner Vitality Series, Tuesday, Oct. 14, 2008.

leadership for men, women and people of all races, religions and backgrounds.

During the second term of the Clinton administration, among her many accomplishments, Secretary Albright's leadership led to the ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and stability in Eastern and Central Europe.

For many years, Secretary Albright has been an inspiring role model for many men and women.

Those of us who are fortunate to consider life as an opportunity for service understand the power of role models and mentors to shape not only the course of an individual's life, but also the course of history.

As we'll hear shortly, Secretary Albright has done both with great competence, intellect, passion and grace.

We convene at a time of reactionary and partisan politics, and amid the beginnings of a national election that will likely be bitterly fought.

We, at Oakland University, believe it is especially important to be a venue for public discourse and civic engagement.

It is essential we listen to each other, and take the time to learn more about the people, policies and politics that shape our world.

The primary goal Of Oakland University's Center for Civic Engagement is to be a "convener of conversations" about issues of public importance.

We appreciate that all of you have taken the time to be here this morning, and again, Oakland University is very proud to again have Secretary Albright with us so that we can learn from a master of public discourse and civic engagement.