

## **NEW HAVEN PROMISE RECEPTION**

Welcome everyone, to Southern Connecticut State University!

Congratulations to all of our New Haven Promise Scholarship recipients.

And a big shout out to the 55 of you who have chosen to attend Southern this fall - Where are you? Let's hear from you! (GCC/HCC – great partnership – shout out to my good friend Paul Broadie)

We're delighted that you chose us - joining the 225 Promise Scholars enrolled at Southern this fall – I promise you that you won't regret your decision.

More than 80 percent of our Promise Scholars are first-generation to college. And they are doing well!

I'm particularly proud to note that today we will be honoring the first Southern student to receive the Legacy Award. This is the longest-standing honor bestowed by New Haven Promise, which annually rewards recent graduates who have demonstrated a deep commitment to their studies, fellow scholars and the City of New Haven.

Congratulations to Rigoberto Escalera, who graduated cum laude this past May with a degree in business administration and a concentration in accounting!

Ten members of our incoming cohort - known as Emerging Leaders - will also be participating in a residential leadership program that will cover their housing expenses for the academic year. In return they'll be providing mentorship and outreach to Southern's Promise Scholars and to New Haven high school students.

With this new class, Southern will have had 502 Promise Scholars to date. Only one other institution has more – UCONN (much bigger place). Not too bad. We are proud of that fact, because providing access to higher

education and creating pathways to success for students from all walks of life is what we do - and it's what we have done for the last 125 years.

The opportunity to attend college is one that most people in this country, and indeed across the world, still do not have. So don't take it for granted.

So, with your college journey just beginning, you have choices to make. And I'm sure you're already wondering – how am I going to do it all?

How am I going to devote my energy to my academic work, to my friendships, my families, my activities beyond the classroom?

Well, let me give you a little bit of advice as you take your first steps on this exciting journey:

1. **Find your mentor** - Find someone with whom you connect, who can support you, and help guide you through the many opportunities you will have before you.
2. Remember that **RELATIONSHIPS** matter - A big part of your education will involve meeting new people, interacting with others, learning how to interact with people whose ideas and values may differ from yours.
3. **Try new things** - be open to new experiences and unfamiliar ideas both in and out of the classroom. Because at the end of the day, you'll become a more well-rounded individual: a doer as well as a thinker.
4. **Finally, Care** about others, about serving your community, about doing good, about pursuing social justice, and creating meaning in your own life.

Remember, everyone deserves to be treated with dignity, respect, kindness, compassion and civility.

As the American writer, Walker Percy said, "You can get all A's and still flunk life." So, "don't flunk life." Oh, and one more thing.....have fun!

Congratulations

