

Tansi, Dakota MacColl nitsiyihkâson, niya nêhiyaw ekwa Métis. (Hello, my name is Dakota MacColl, I am Plains Cree and Métis.

Hello, my relatives, my name is Dakota MacColl, I'm from the First Nations of what is now Canada. I come from a line of healers, and I'm happy to be finishing up my time at UO so I can move further along my path of finding what that means for me to live in a colonized world as an indigenous healer.

My time at UO has had its ups and downs, and sometimes I struggle to articulate the experience as a whole. When I first arrived, I was overwhelmed with the amount of people and the quickness of the campus lifestyle. Moving as if I was in a school of fish was new to me and I wasn't sure how to fit in since I was used to acting alone.

As I spent more time finding, fostering, and building community, I realized the importance of *creating* that space, and carving out that time to slow down, even on campus. The longhouse became a refuge for me to listen to the quiet, older voices of the elders as they drank their coffee.

However, it would not be honest to say that I operate within an institution that is built for my inherent success. Every day, I walk past the Pioneer statue and feel the hair on the back of my neck stand up when I see the rifle, I feel my hands begin to sweat. I wonder about the students going on tour for IntroDucktion. What do they hear about it? Do they know what was said in the speech for its dedication? Do they care? Do they know about the history of Deady Hall?

That is why, in my time at UO, those communities that held me so tightly gave me the confidence to speak up. I began to reach out directly to offices to speak with people in power when I saw something was awry. I began to make noise.

Now more than ever, those lessons must be applied. We must speak *loudly*, we must take up space, and we must carve our *own* space for ourselves in these institutions when it is not given to us.

This hour, this day, this week, this month have not been easy. I am tired. And I know that you are tired, too. But I feel your fire, I feel it inside myself, and I've felt it for a long time.

We *rise* to the occasion and speak up for a better tomorrow. We speak up for structural change. We speak up because our ideas are the seeds of a better tomorrow and because we are the future elders. We may not be fortunate enough to see the fruits of our *grief and* our labor, but we do it knowing that the Seventh Generation after us will. Don't get me wrong; it is not the responsibility of people of color to do all of this work. But our voices deserve to be heard. Our voices as BIPOC are sacred.

And with that, I implore all of you to find your voices and to speak up. Plant the seeds. Foster them. Teach your children how to water them. Teach your community how to water them. Use your heat, and keep your communities warm.

The lessons we learn on this campus that occupies Kalapuya Ilihi, don't stop when we receive our degrees in the mail, they only just begin.

Kinanâskomitin (I am grateful to you).

Black Lives Matter.

Black Lives are sacred.

Black Lives are valuable.

Kisâhkihitiin (You are loved by me.)

I am with you.

Thank you.