

UB's most famous student today is sophomore from Grand Island

By Maki Becker / News Staff Reporter / Google+ , **Stephen T. Watson** / News Staff Reporter / @buffaloscribe / Google+ on August 22, 2013 - 12:18 PM

Updated August 22, 2013 at 2:25 PM

She's America's most famous college student today.

UB sophomore Silvana C. D'Ettorre this morning had the honor of introducing President Barack H. Obama before his much anticipated speech on higher education at the University at Buffalo before a crowd of 7,200 people.

"Actually, when I was on stage, I was thinking: 'This isn't that bad,'" said D'Ettorre, 19, a native of Grand Island.

And she had never given a public speech before.

D'Ettorre, an exercise science major who is active in many organizations at UB and plans to enroll in UB's School of Dental Medicine, got the call from the White House on Tuesday night that she'd be the one welcoming Obama, she told The Buffalo News.

She wasn't allowed to tell anyone except her parents,

"That was very tough," said her mother, Rachelle D'Ettorre, who kept the exciting news secret.

D'Ettorre pulled an all-nighter to write her speech, studying other welcoming speeches students have given but also writing from her heart.

"She did this on her own," her mother said.

Backstage today at Alumni Arena, D'Ettorre told the president about her plans for dental school and Obama told her she should go because of her pretty smile.

Her family had great seats to the event, almost at the front row.