
June 5, 2023

Dear Member of the Class of 2027:

Congratulations on your decision to join the Smith College community.

Welcome! I write as the Dean of the First Year Class. My name is Jane Stangl, and I very much look forward to meeting you in the fall! You will meet many deans with different roles at Smith. In my role as your class dean, I am responsible for overseeing the academic progress of all newly entering first-year students.

Academic life at Smith College revolves around the commitment by students, faculty and the administration to providing an excellent liberal arts education. The liberal arts are central to the core mission of the college, and coming to a deeper understanding of what the liberal arts mean will be useful to your engagement in the college experience. This letter serves as a starting point to help you do that. If you think of my role in the context of your academic wellbeing at Smith, as an über adviser per se—navigating the liberal arts and assisting in your academic path is central to our work together.

Academically speaking and in general, you will find any combination of courses totaling 16-18 credits—the “normal load”—to be an exhilarating intellectual experience. You may also find that it is a major leap from high school in terms of the work, organization and discipline required to be successful. Preparation is key, yet first, take your time, read thoroughly the messages you receive from the college, and understand that this is a process! No one expects you to know and understand everything about your first year of college.

I know that many of you are excited to begin your Smith experience already, and have been introduced to the college through our data organizing software, called Workday. At this time, you should be completing a number of requests for information through Workday, and over time you should familiarize yourself with Workday. It contains important information about you personally and academically. In early to mid-August you will be assigned a liberal arts adviser (LAA)—through the Workday platform, the name of that faculty member will be known to you.

Many of you may have already utilized Workday to consider course scheduling and interests. Know that these schedules are preliminary for now (as all courses offered to our new students are not indicated in entirety in your schedule of classes yet.). Using Workday for scheduling will not officially register you for your classes as we will do that during our on-campus [Orientation](#) session, but it is a good place to start. You can expect more detailed information about advising and our liberal arts advising model in July and August—certainly well before your arrival, and rest assured that your adviser will contact you first, and before you arrive on campus.

One Smith offering that is often valued by our students is our open curriculum, that said you still have academic requirements and expectations over the course of your academic career; the first expectation (beyond the 16-credit average per semester) is that all first-year students must successfully complete a [Writing Intensive \[WI\]](#) course in their first year. This is a perfect example of a conversation to be considered and shared with your adviser when you meet in late August.

Our “[For New Students](#)” website offers numerous links to our orientation program and guides you in your preparation for living within the Smith community—academically, residentially, and socially. For new incoming students, the site linked above is your current home. Still, we encourage you to actively peruse the college website, being aware that the For New Students site will grow and be updated over the course of the summer months. Academically, both the [class deans](#) and [registrar’s](#) websites are useful starters and important connections to your early academic success at Smith. Get to know these websites as they will help in your preparation too. Continued communication will also be disseminated through your Smith email account. Your Smith email account is the official means through which college offices will communicate with you, so that account is vitally important. Within our orientation sessions we will further introduce you to many platforms, information sources and software packages that are available to you.

You should also make sure to explore the many services Smith offers all its students, such as Disability Services— support for students with physical disabilities and learning differences (413-585-2071, TTY/TDD 413-585-2072); the Jacobson Center—consultation for writing, tutorial services in all fields, workshops, study skills and time management strategies; and the Spinelli Center for Quantitative Reasoning—assistance with math and quantitative skills. In addition, a wonderful source of information rests within our [Libraries, Museum & Gardens](#) website. We hope you will appreciate the academic heart of campus—our nearly new Neilson (library)—findable on that site too.

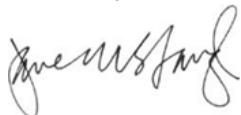
As part of our orientation, all entering students are asked to purchase and read a book before their arrival. This year’s reading choice is titled, *The Book of Delights, Essays* by Ross Gay. More information about the reading choice and program is available in the [Smith Reads](#) section of the For New Students website. The book may be purchased from your local bookstore or online and should be available in multiple formats based on your reading preferences.

In the coming weeks, you and your parents or guardian will hear from our Interim Dean of the College, Alex Keller, and our Dean of Students, Julie Ohotnicky. And, in the upcoming weeks—you will also hear from the Office of Student Affairs about your house and room assignment. Specific details will be made available to you through those offices. Additionally, along with our Assistant Dean of Students, Marge Litchford, we will be keeping you informed about orientation over the upcoming weeks. Again, the website is the best source for this information which will grow over time.

In closing, I would again like to personally welcome you to Smith. The past few years have created social and cultural challenges for all of us. In welcoming you to our beautiful campus we will actively engage with our collective challenges and your future goals. Again, my primary concern as your class dean is your curricular engagement and your academic progress. I am also available to you for personal advice and advice on the college in general. (I've been at Smith for quite a few years!) You can learn more about me and the class dean's office where I work in College Hall—the hub of numerous student services—via the [College's website](#).

[Smith's mission](#) is to educate women of promise for lives of distinction. Everyone at Smith is here to help you achieve that promise—and we all look forward to meeting you in the fall. In the meantime, it is my sincere hope that you find joy and good health over these next few weeks and months before your first year at Smith begins.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jane M. Stangl". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jane" being the most prominent.

Jane M. Stangl, Ph.D.
Dean of the First-Year Class