



Class Deans Office
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063
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June 1, 2022

Dear Member of the Class of 2026:

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—in person! 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 entering new 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, coming to a deeper understanding of what the liberal arts mean will be useful to your engagement in the college experience. 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 and this letter serves as a starting point to help you do that.

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*. In early to mid-August you will be assigned a liberal arts adviser (LAA)—and learn through the *Workday* platform, the name of that faculty member. Prior to the formal [orientation](#) on Smith’s campus, you will meet with your adviser remotely in order to discuss the courses you are interested in taking. This meeting will take place in late August. Your adviser will contact you at that time. 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.

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 regularly. Academically, both the [class deans](#) and [registrar](#) 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, the [Libraries, Museum & Gardens](#) site is a very informative website, We also hope you will appreciate the academic heart of campus—our 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 Form and Emptiness: A Novel*, by Ruth Ozeki. 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 on-line, 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 Dean of the College, Baishakhi Taylor, 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 Asst. 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, we are elated to be able to welcome you to our beautiful campus, see you in person, and actively engage with your future. 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 a large, stylized initial "J".

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