



Office of the Class Deans
Smith College
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Dear Member of the Class of 2028,

Welcome, and congratulations on your decision to join the Smith College community!

I write to you as the Dean of the First-Year Class, and I very much look forward to meeting you in the fall! You will meet many deans with different roles at Smith. I am responsible for overseeing the *academic progress* of all first-year students. Our holistic advising approach ensures you are fully supported to navigate your academic journey at Smith.

Smith College is what a liberal arts education in a college town was designed to be; a warm, vibrant place rooted in community where students can be simultaneously nourished and challenged so as to flourish as change-makers, having developed a strong sense of self and a valid perspective for a better world. Smith offers an unmatched liberal arts experience, one committed to integrity, pairing cultural and intellectual life with high-impact experiential learning and global and civic engagement. What's really special is that this pervades campus life, both in and out of the classroom. Smithies study with leading faculty in their fields of expertise within a diverse, open curriculum, demonstrating an exceptional dedication to igniting curiosity and the freedom to explore a range of intellectual paths. The commitment to an excellent liberal arts education is 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 college experience. This letter serves as a starting point to help you do that.

I imagine you are excited to begin your time at Smith. [Associate Vice President for Campus Life](#), Julianne Ohotnicky, recently emailed you to introduce you to Workday and to the tasks you've been asked to complete this summer. In time, you will familiarize yourself with Workday, as it contains important information about you personally and academically. **Course Registration for first-year students occurs during our on-campus Orientation at the end of August, not before.** Using Workday for scheduling will not officially register you for your classes, but making a preliminary Workday schedule is a good place to start.

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. *Rest assured, they will reach out to you in August* with more detailed information about advising and our liberal arts model and will schedule a virtual advising session with you prior to Orientation. Because Smith offers an open curriculum, only one course is required of you. All first-year students must successfully complete a [Writing Intensive \[WI\]](#) course in their first year. This is a perfect example of a conversation topic you will have with your adviser when you meet over Zoom in late August. *There is nothing you need to do before then.*

You will find any combination of courses totaling 16–18 credits—the “normal load”—to be an exhilarating and challenging intellectual experience. You may also notice that it is a major leap from high school in terms of the work, organization, and discipline required to be successful. Preparation is key, so this summer, take your time, read thoroughly the messages you receive from the college, and understand that this is a process!

The [For New Students](#) website offers numerous links and prepares you for living within the Smith community—academically, residentially, and socially. For now, this site is your current home and will be updated over the summer. [Assistant Dean of Students](#), Marge Litchford, will be keeping you informed about our Orientation program over the upcoming weeks and will connect you to the Campus Life Moodle page.

Your Smith email account *is the official means through which college offices will communicate with you, so that account is vitally important.* I’d recommend getting into the practice of checking it at least 2x per day. In fact, you will receive another email from me in early August introducing you to the **First-Year Academic(s) Matter(s) Moodle** page and within it, the **Introduction to Academic Excellence** module you’ll be asked to complete. This will not only teach you about [Smith’s Library system](#) but how to strive for and adhere to a standard of excellence rooted in integrity found in Smith’s [Honor Code](#). Please note: both the Academic Moodle course and the Campus Life Moodle course will open for you the week of **August 5, 2024**.

In the coming 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. Also, look out for an email from *Gallup*, in which you’ll be asked to take the fascinating Clifton Strengths Poll (you can see my results at the bottom of my signature). During Orientation, we will introduce you to many more platforms and software that will help you traverse your first year.

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. You might also explore the many services Smith offers all its students, such as the [Accessibility Resource Center](#), which

provides support for students who need accommodations; the [Jacobson Center for Writing, Teaching, & Learning](#), offering writing services and resources, public speaking resources, and tutoring and learning specialist services; and the [Spinelli Center for Quantitative Learning](#), giving tutoring support for quantitative skills across the curriculum. As you start to virtually explore study spaces, which are vital to academic success, check out the academic heart of campus—our nearly new and beautiful [Neilson Library](#)!

One of my favorite roles as Dean of the First-Year Class is to Chair the Smith Reads Committee. The Smith Reads program is designed especially for you! As part of Orientation, all entering Smith students are asked to purchase and read a book before their arrival. We are delighted to announce, in partnership with the [Office of Equity and Inclusion](#), that *World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments* by Aimee Nezhukumatathil is our 2024 Smith Reads selection! This illustrated essay collection combines lyrical nature writing and memoir to explore themes of race, environment, identity, and belonging. During Orientation, you have the “wonder”-ful chance to hear from this year’s Smith Reads’ author, who will offer a reading and will participate in a lively onstage conversation stemming from questions posed over the course of the summer by you, our incoming students! 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. If you need help locating a copy, please contact Xochitl Quiroz, our [First-Years’ Engagement Librarian](#).

[Smith’s mission](#) is to educate women of promise for lives of distinction. Everyone at Smith is here to help you achieve that promise. We are a team that persistently envisions new possibilities for students and then works to see those actualized, and we all look forward to meeting you in the fall. In the meantime, it is my sincere hope that you walk through this transitional time with wonder and find good health over these next few months before your first year at Smith begins.

With every good wish,

Dean Joyce

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer A. Joyce". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being more prominent.

Jennifer A. Joyce, Ph.D. (she/her)

Dean of the First-Year Class

Smith College

Clifton Strengths: Achiever | Strategic | Learner | Input | Positivity