

# "Welcome to Bennington"

SEPTEMBER 1, 2016

Bennington staff, faculty, and students gathered in Greenwall Auditorium yesterday to welcome the class of 2020 to the College with musical performances, speeches, and faculty on stilts.

Super-senior and student speaker Audre Wirtanen offered wisdom to the incoming class, reminding them that "Saying no is not doing nothing. So when you are drowning in responsibility after agreeing to all of the opportunities around you, remember that saying no is still energy expended. Inhibition can be your friend. Take care of yourself."

Megan Demarest, Assistant to the vice president for finance and administration in the Business Office spoke on behalf of the staff. She mentioned some of the many instances the Bennington community has been there to support her. She extended this support to the new students, "You may never have a need to come see me in the Business Office during your time here, but I want you to know that regardless, I'm rooting for you every day. We all are. Welcome to Bennington."

Hugh Crawl, who teaches astronomy, was the faculty speaker this year. His speech focused on changing the way we think about failure. As he said, "Failing at something does not necessarily tell you that you're no good at it. It doesn't even have to tell you that you were doing anything wrong." He continued: "It is not because we are bad at our job that we fail...It is because at the beginning of any ambitious work, it is nearly always impossible to tell the difference between work that will succeed and work that will fail."

His final message was one that promoted hard work, as he cautioned "The one sure way to turn one of your successes into a failure is through lack of work—by not trying."