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Bennington College Announces NEA Chairman Jane Chu To Give Commencement Address

BENNINGTON, VT—The National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Jane Chu will address the class of 2016 at Bennington College's 81st commencement dinner on Friday, June 3rd, at 7:00 pm on Commons Lawn.

In addition to her role at the NEA, Chairman Chu is an accomplished artist and musician and a national leader in arts administration and philanthropy. Throughout her career, her work has focused on the role of the arts in the country's creative ecosystem.

"Jane has spent her career thinking about the way the arts intersect with the economy, human development, and community vitality," said Bennington College President Mariko Silver. "She is a model for making the sorts of connections that many of our graduates have begun, and will continue, to make in their own work."

"Graduation is a huge accomplishment and I look forward to celebrating with this year's graduating class on this wonderful occasion," said NEA Chairman Jane Chu.

Kieran Najita '16 will be the senior class speaker.

About Jane Chu

As the eleventh chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, Jane Chu has a deep understanding of and commitment to the arts. Among her many accomplishments, she served as the president and CEO of the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in Kansas City, Missouri, from 2006 to 2014, overseeing a \$413-million campaign to build the center.

She received bachelor's degrees in piano performance and music education from Ouachita Baptist University and master's degrees in music and piano pedagogy from Southern Methodist University. Additionally, Chu holds a master's degree in business administration from Rockhurst University and a PhD in philanthropic studies from Indiana University, as well as an honorary doctorate in music from the University of Missouri - Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance.

Read her [full biography](#).

About Bennington College

Bennington College is a liberal arts college in southwestern Vermont that distinguished itself early as a vanguard institution within American higher education. It was the first to include the visual and performing arts in a liberal arts education, and to integrate work in the classroom with work in the field. To this day, Bennington stands apart in requiring that every student—every winter term—get a job, complete an internship, or pursue an entrepreneurial experience. Bennington students work intensively with faculty to forge individual educational paths around their driving questions and interests. The College graduates small classes of tested students, regardless of chosen field, who are notably confident in their capacity to engage and succeed in the world.

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