

## A Message from President-elect Laura Walker

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### BENNINGTON COLLEGE

**TO:** The Bennington Community

**FR:** President-elect Laura Walker

Dear Students, Parents, Alumni, Staff, and Faculty,

I write to you today to tell you how deeply honored I am to become the next President of Bennington College and to become a member of Bennington's extraordinary community of intellectual fervor, creativity, and experimentation. I look forward to being both a steward of Bennington's incomparable legacy and a fellow explorer as we together forge its future.

Over the last months, I have learned a lot about what makes Bennington so special. I believe that its tradition of academically rigorous, interdisciplinary, and student-driven inquiry positions Bennington to have even greater impact in the years to come. As I marched in the streets of Brooklyn earlier this month, joining similar protests occurring around the country, it was a striking reminder how deeply this country needs institutions with the courage to actively dismantle systems of racial injustice and inequality, to amplify the voices of marginalized groups, and to be tireless in this work. Bennington is one of these institutions of change. A major piece of the work ahead is to relentlessly and honestly pursue Bennington's own journey toward inclusion, justice and equity. It requires each of us—beginning with me—to recommit to social justice, to critically examine our own blindspots, to have courageous conversations, to make lasting systemic change and to support each other with kindness and empathy.

I want to work collaboratively and transparently with all members of the Bennington community—students, faculty, staff, board members, alumni, donors, and parents—to strengthen what makes Bennington so special. I vow to you that I will listen deeply and lead with generosity, compassion, and openness. Together, I believe we can uphold Bennington's core values and commitment to being an instrument for social good, and that we can collectively develop innovative ways for Bennington to thrive.

I have much more to learn about Bennington. While I have met many of you over Zoom already, I so look forward to getting to know you in person, and learning about Bennington from you. I also want you to get to know me—my values, my passions and my commitment to working with you on the joyful path ahead.

Starting in early July, I will begin to engage with the community and to work closely with Isabel Roche to establish a smooth transition. I will be fully engaged and on campus on August 1st. Until then, you will no doubt have questions and recommendations for me. I welcome them wholeheartedly. Feel free to reach out to me at [presidentelect@bennington.edu](mailto:presidentelect@bennington.edu).

With respect and commitment,

Laura Walker  
President Elect