

## Gail Sweezey - Director of Admissions

Good afternoon. I am delighted to welcome the Class of 2014 and other new students to Gettysburg College. This morning, as I was watching 729 of you arrive at Gettysburg, I was thinking about reading your applications and how remarkable all of you are. You bring so many talents with you to the Gettysburg community and it is a true pleasure to have you here.

We carefully selected you from nearly 5400 applications. Your class comes from 29 states and 9 countries and it is clear from your applications that you represent the very best of your high school graduating classes. Here are some highlights of who you are and the interesting talent in this class.

Some of you have already taken college level courses; you have been recognized as a National Merit Scholar and an AP Scholar; you have received an International Baccalaureate Diploma and awards for the study of language; you have been named an All-American for excellence in academics and athletics. You have been leaders in several national honor societies. You conducted pulmonary research at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, worked on a Sea Turtle preservation project in Costa Rica and preserved a habitat for rare toads in Pennsylvania. You sang with the Washington Youth Choir at President Obama's inauguration and performed back-up vocals for Bruce Springsteen and Garth Brooks. You participated in the Congressional Art Competition. You are a junior zookeeper at the Baltimore Zoo, participated in the Youth Leadership Summit, and recorded oral histories of war veterans for a historical society. You were in a movie with George Clooney and Renee Zellweger. You are a fencing national champion, an author, an apprentice vintage aircraft mechanic, a social activist, and a glass blower. To quote one teacher "your intellectual curiosity sets the bar high and encourages those around you to be at their academic best."

You also made a huge difference through service to others.

You started an organization that sends soccer balls to children in Iraq, volunteered in a Romanian orphanage, and taught African Drumming to homeless children. You are a volunteer firefighter, and an EMT. You are the president and designer of a local organization providing business attire to abused women entering the workforce. You raised \$216,000 for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, played an active role in the "going green" club at your school, and built eco-toilets in India. You were the student representative to the school board, a peer mediator and a peer tutor. You received your schools service award.

"You are", to quote one teacher, "a person who makes a difference wherever you go". You performed at Carnegie Hall, organized an anti-bullying campaign at your high school, and spent a year leading birding tours in Ecuador. You started a waffle-athon for a non-profit organization, coached swimming for the Special Olympics and served as a Young Einstein Volunteer at the Orlando Science Center. You received the US Marine Corp Distinguished Athlete Award. You have edited your school newspaper. You were the student body president. You had the lead in your school theatre productions, race sailboats on Lake Michigan and have a second-degree black belt in Karate. The list is both extraordinary and endless.

You are an excellent group of students! And we expect you to do great work as you contribute in positive ways to this academic community. Now it is time for me to pass you on to the faculty and to Chris Zappe, Provost of Gettysburg College. Provost Zappe, can you please stand so that I may present the class?

And will the Class of 2014 and other new students please stand and remain standing until the conclusion of the statements that the provost and I are about to make.

With confidence and hope, the admissions office presents to the faculty the Class of 2014 and other new students. We have confidence in their abilities, and we have high hopes for their achievement under your guidance. We have carefully selected these students from nearly 5400 applicants. They are individuals who are deserving of access to our rich educational resources and who are promising in their potential to make best use of this opportunity. Their high school teachers have recommended them to us, praising their diligence, their eagerness, and their initiative. To these young women and men, dedicated teachers provided initial forms of intellectual direction. Now we commend these students to you, knowing that your teaching will intensify the challenges of learning to which they have been introduced, and that your guidance and support will enable them to meet these new challenges and will also make an enormous difference in their lives.