CHC Welcomes New Students at Induction Ceremony 2017
Commonwealth Honors College welcomed new first-year and transfer students at the Honors Induction Ceremony on September 1. Students, family, friends and faculty gathered to celebrate the students’ arrival and their induction into the college. Members of the CHC community spoke at the ceremony to congratulate the students and share advice for the years ahead.

“Today is a wonderful day—the day that you embark on a journey,” said Commonwealth Honors College Dean Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina. “This is only the beginning, yet you are at the precipice of a life of discovery, enquiry, of questioning—and of unexpected answers that will cause you to rethink what you think you know. We are already so proud of you!”

Gerzina praised the students’ hard work and encouraged them to explore new spaces and opportunities, challenge their ideas, and meet new people. She stressed the importance of building and sustaining the honors and UMass communities.

Distinguished Professor of Linguistics and Acting Provost & Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, John McCarthy, welcomed the new honors students in his address. “We are so pleased that you accepted our invitation to come to the University of Massachusetts Amherst and be a part of our vibrant Commonwealth Honors College community. You will benefit from small classes, research opportunities, outstanding speakers, and co-curricular activities that help build community with your fellow students.”

Kim Tremblay, Associate Professor of Veterinary & Animal Science and Commonwealth Honors College Council Chair, delivered the keynote address. Tremblay spoke to the students about the significance of a general studies education, emphasizing that these courses help students become more thoughtful and well-rounded students—qualities which are attractive to employers and graduate schools.

“You have earned a spot in the Honors College at Massachusetts’ flagship campus,” Tremblay continued. “It is now up to you to take advantage of the many opportunities the university and the Honors College have to offer. Take academic chances and try something new. It is in those experiences that you have the opportunity to truly learn.”

Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Professor of Engineering David McLaughlin provided a parent perspective. He recalled moving into the Southwest towers at UMass 37 years ago, and spoke about his own path as a UMass student, professor, and parent.

“As a former UMass student, and now a UMass parent, I know the feelings of pride, excitement, anticipation, and nervousness that many of you are feeling right now,” said McLaughlin. He presented the students with five pieces of advice as they begin their academic careers: “Know that you belong here. Work hard and enjoy yourselves. Get to know the faculty. Understand and respect each other. Immerse yourselves in academics.”

Stephanie Castro ’18, the ceremony’s student speaker, encouraged the students to define their goals for college and beyond. “Have a specific goal and make a plan on how to get there, because doing so will make every late night and tough exam that much more worth it. Following my plan has allowed me to graduate a semester early to pursue a Masters of Science in Accounting, and allowed me to accept a full-time offer with PwC just last night.”

Castro also advised stepping out of your comfort zone and making time to have fun in addition to classes, work, and extracurriculars: “Enjoy the coming years to their fullest, because before you know it, you, too, will be starting your senior year, wondering where the time has gone.”

Image Credit to Jediah Zuraw-Friedland