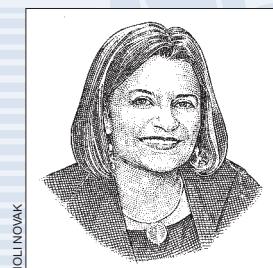


# Students Who Belong Here



Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, along with a welcoming letter by former Secretary of State Madeleine Korbel Albright '59. In September, WuDunn visited our first-year students at Wellesley and delivered a lecture. Additionally, students met in small groups, led by student mentors, to discuss this important book.

The lecture was a hit. The discussions were engaging. And our first-year students experienced—in only their second week of classes—the true nature of Wellesley’s intellectual community.

Over the course of last semester, I reflected on why this approach to introducing our youngest Wellesley sisters to our community was so successful. Certainly, the event was thoughtfully planned, both the book and WuDunn were highly engaging, and the discussions led by the student mentors were intimate and thought-provoking. But I think

**LAST FALL**, Wellesley welcomed first-year students to campus and introduced them to our community in a new and important way. Over the summer, each student received a copy of *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression Into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, by

our on-campus community. For instance, two-thirds of the class report that in high school they often had serious conversations with individuals who differed from them politically, religiously, economically, or ethnically, and nearly all had reconsidered their beliefs or assumptions after evaluating others’ arguments. Additionally, 87 percent said it was very important or essential to them to be part of an on-campus community with individuals whose backgrounds and experiences differ from their own. These numbers are a clear statement about what this class brings to our intellectual community!

The class of 2016 also had an impressive array of cross-cultural experiences and backgrounds before coming to Wellesley: 70 percent had traveled abroad on vacation, nearly half of them had traveled abroad with a class or another organization, and one-third had participated in a study abroad or exchange program during high school. Not surprisingly, given these experiences, nearly all believe it is very important or essential that Wellesley provide opportunities for them to gain a global perspective.

What these data tell me is that from the moment our first-year students set foot on campus—and even before that—they were poised to contribute to the Wellesley community in important ways. It also tells me that

*‘...From the moment our first-year students set foot on campus—and even before that—they were poised to contribute to the Wellesley community in important ways.’* —President H. Kim Bottomly

another part of the success can be, and should be, attributed to our first-year students themselves. Who are these young women? What motivates them? And what do they bring to our community?

These are the very questions that the Board of Trustees’ Committee on Admission and Financial Aid discussed last fall as they reviewed the results of the recent entering-student survey. This annual survey paints a more complete picture of our first-year class beyond the typical statistics and test scores. (Of course, as I wrote to alumnae in my State of the College email last fall, those statistics and test scores were once again very strong.)

This survey shows us that the class of 2016 came to Wellesley with experiences that complement and benefit

Wellesley is the right fit for them—they belong here.

Indeed, one of our institutional priorities has been, and will continue to be, recruiting and retaining the kinds of students who belong here. Our financial-aid policies enable us to admit and enroll the very best and brightest from around the country, and around the world, regardless of their financial backgrounds. These priorities and policies are essential to ensuring that Wellesley remains a strong and diverse community of individuals who value the open exchange of ideas and who thrive in a liberal-arts environment.

**H. Kim Bottomly**