



Matriculation 2023

Remarks by President William Lahey

You are now matriculated. You have been welcomed to Mi'kma'ki. You are now members of the College in Latin as well as in English. You can't get any more official than that! Congratulations and welcome!

It says on the program that matriculation signals the joint commitment of the institution to the education of the enrolling student and of the student to their responsibilities as a member of this community. I want to reflect for a few minutes on the reciprocal nature of the commitments we have made to each other.

According to the oath you have taken, your responsibilities require your obedience to the regulations and *best* traditions of the College. That little qualifier – your commitment is only to the best traditions of the College – means something. We are a university. A place of learning, questioning, debate, and re-examination, not just about the world outside of King's, but also of King's and its history and future.

In the grand tradition beautifully invoked by our Public Orator, a university is a community. From its beginning, King's has always thought the greatness of a

university lies in the greatness of the community that exists between and among those who belong to it. To put it another way, the greatest of the traditions of King's is the one by which our very identity is defined by our mutual commitment in every generation and across all generations to being a community defined by friendship, belonging and our common mission of learning with and from one another. It is these themes – friendship, belonging, community and learning together, that alumni of all ages speak of when they speak of what they cherish most in their memories of King's. The matriculation oath evokes these themes by calling on us to “serve the precepts of communal life and learning”, remembering our communal life includes our many relationships with those around us.

You will decide what these precepts mean for you during your time here. Just the same, I urge you – and all of us – to let kindness be your watchword. Extend the hand of friendship to those around you and take it when it is offered so that all can enjoy that feeling of belonging that is in the very fibre of what is now your university. Let your guiding star be a determination to do your part in ensuring that no one is left out or behind in the community you will build with each other, upper year students and everyone at King's. Let us together aspire to make this not only a friendly community but also a loving one. All this, in your studies and in the whole of your student life, is how your time here will help to prepare you for your future.

Your oath asks you not only to obey our best traditions but also our regulations. That doesn't sound like much fun! We do have rules but I think of them as the commitments we make to each other through processes of self-governance that include students, faculty, staff, and alumni at all levels. These commitments

include not only our rules but the principles, values and practices we follow to keep each other and our community safe and healthy and inclusive for everyone. In this moment in our history, I want to stress that our commitments to each other include all we are doing as a community to prevent and respond to sexualized violence by creating a pervasive culture of consent and respect, building on all the work of recent years.

Each of you has promised – I hope you noticed - to care for the honour and welfare of the College, **quote**, “for the rest of my life”. That is quite an extraordinary promise to have made, at least if you take it seriously, which I hope you do. The response I gave to you implies acceptance of your promise and also a reciprocal promise. In admitting you as students in “our University of King’s College”, the language of matriculation signifies that the university now belongs to you as much as it does to me, my colleagues or the generations who have come before or will come after you. The language signifies that in addition to being students for a time, you are now members of the College for all times. That is the alchemy of matriculation.

In the spirit of that alchemy, the College must now and in the future live up to the commitment you have made to its honour and welfare. On behalf of the College, I promise you the College’s dedication to this responsibility of being worthy of the commitments you have made to King’s.

Caring for the honour and welfare of the College is not the same thing as always praising and celebrating the College, though I hope you do find much to praise and celebrate. Caring also requires criticism when criticism is due. To paraphrase

Sarah Sharpe, one of our recent valedictorians, caring for the welfare and honour of the College means understanding that criticism is an act of love.

This means calling on the University to be better where it has failed or disappointed. This is and must be one of our best traditions referred to in matriculation. This is very important as we prepare to observe the third National Day of Truth and Reconciliation and as we reflect upon and work to improve our relationships with the Mi'kmaq and all Indigenous communities, with the African Nova Scotian and the wider African Canadian community, and with all who in the past may not have been fully welcomed at King's.

So, we have made our promises to each other. To seal the deal, please do take the next step of engraving your signatures in the matricula so that, for ever more, it will be clear to everyone that you were a student of our university and then continued as a lifetime member of our collegii regalis. You will find the matricula, with a space in it waiting for your signature, in the foyer of the Arts and Administration Building immediately after this ceremony.

I hope this evening is fun and even a little magical for you. On your behalf, I thank everyone of the many who have had a hand in its creation. I look forward to seeing you all at the reception to be held in your honour in my home, the President's Lodge. You can come to the reception after you have signed the Matricula or come to the reception and then go back to sign the Matricula when the line is shorter. If you don't get the opportunity to sign this evening, you can make arrangements with the Registrar's Office for the next two weeks and after that with library to do so at another time.

The President's Lodge is down the hallway off the foyer of the A and A towards Coburg Road, which will take you through the Senior Common Room and another short hallway that leads to a door with a "President's Lodge" sign on it. You can also get there by going out into the Quad, past Cochran Bay, and up the stairs to the little landing that goes past the Chapel - then through the double doors that will take you to the Lodge's back door. If you get lost, which I doubt you will, a search party will come find you!