

THE Webb SCHOOLS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 1, 2021

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Webb Students Celebrate Start of 2021-22 Academic Year

CLAREMONT, CA – Students laughed and cheered as they joined faculty and staff at The Webb Schools on Sunday, Aug. 29 to celebrate the start of the 2021-22 academic year and the return to in-person classes and residential boarding.

After two days of moving into dorms, gathering for orientation sessions and catching up with friends, the 400 students of Webb School of California and Vivian Webb School came together for the annual start-of-school Convocation.

It was the first time the entire Webb community had gathered since March 12, 2020, when the campus was evacuated. Because of the pandemic-required online instruction in 2020-21, nearly half the students were on campus for the first time.

“We’re back in person, and it’s surreal to see everyone here,” Head of Schools Taylor B. Stockdale said. “A lot of things go into making Webb the special place it is – the beautiful campus, our stellar and passionate faculty, our incredible staff. But at the center is our student body. It’s remarkable what you accomplish. And we are so glad to have you back with us.”

The school is operating under strict pandemic protocols, including the use of masks indoor and out and a mandate that all students, staff and faculty be vaccinated, barring medical exemptions.

Stockdale reminded students of Webb’s foundational values – trust, honor and community – and thanked the school’s seniors for their role in leading and mentoring the younger students.

“We’re going to have struggles along the way,” he said. “We’re going to fall down. And that’s what it’s all about. But we will never stop honoring those values that have been a part of this place from the very beginning.”

Dr. Jamila Everett, Webb’s director of admission, said the schools are welcoming 114 new students this year, including entrepreneurs, a game designer, a professional e-sports competitor, an amateur herpetologist, a fossil hunter, several musicians, an award-winning documentarian and the founder of a nonprofit that aids domestic violence victims.



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“Each of our students brings so much to the Webb community, and we can wait to see you to grow, learn and meet your goals now that you’re here,” Everett said.

Dr. Theresa Smith, Webb’s associate head of schools, introduced new faculty members, including a geologist; a biologist; an expert in French and Spanish; a poet; a visiting scholar with expertise in photography, film, and media studies; an English literature scholar, an expert in digital storytelling; a professional chorale leader, and a teacher skilled in mathematical economics.

Sarah Lantz and Rick Duque, the deans of students for Vivian Webb School and Webb School of California, respectively, also welcomed students. Lantz announced plans to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the founding of Vivian Webb School in the coming weeks.

Duque, visibly moved, told the students how pleased he was to have them back on campus. He then challenged the students to consider what they hoped to make of their web journey. He also led the students in a cheer – “Once a Webbie, Always a Webbie!”

VWS President Catherine Li ‘22 urged students to take advantage of all Webb has to offer.

“Take this chance to try a new sport, find a new interest or say hi to people you have never met before,” she said. “Let’s have some fun this year. This moment, right here, is the perfect time to build the community we envision.”

WSC President Xander Kong ‘22 said Webb students remained engaged with each other during the pandemic.

“Webb students transformed the year into a year of opportunity, a year of overcoming physical and emotional boundaries to emerge strong, healthier and more connected than ever before,” Kong told students.

“Many of you are looking to rebuild or rekindle the Webb experience. I’d like to challenge this thought with the idea that the flame that is the Webb community was never extinguished in the first place. This is not a year of recuperation. This is a year of celebration, a year of risk taking. “

