

Thank you, John, for bringing the class of 2022 to join our community during this extraordinary year. We are so glad to have many of them on campus, and we look forward to when all of them are able to join us on campus.

Class of 2022, please consider this the introduction to the matriculation ceremony you will participate in this coming Sunday. Class of 2021, you will be able to participate in matriculation as well, in the small groups that include your roomies.

In the past few years, our matriculation ceremony has taken place with the entire community gathered at the president's house. This year, Covid-19 has required us to reinvent this recent tradition. Basically, small groups of first-years will join me and members of the staff in the front yard of our campus home to sign our school registrar. For each group, their 2nd year roommates are invited to come and cheer their firsties, welcoming them into the larger community. You have received instructions by email, including your time to come down to the president's house to sign the register.

Our matriculation ceremony this year, as it does every year, reminds us that names matter.

In cultures across the world there are important rituals around naming a child. The importance of these rituals goes beyond the identity of the child, and even beyond the importance attached to the name by parents and extended family. The importance is communal.

Names in some cultures are linked to initiation into a particular religious faith. In other cultures names mark the moment of birth and reference something happening at the time.

Some cultures consider names so precious that they are only used during special ceremonies, while in everyday life, individuals are referred to based on their role in the family structure: sister, brother, aunt.

Many cultures distinguish between "good names" and "bad names". In some cultures, certain letters are added to names to indicate affection.

This Sunday, our first years will matriculate at United World College USA. To matriculate is to be admitted or enrolled into a community, in this case the UWC-USA community. Our matriculants, (or "firsties" as our second years affectionately call them), are asked to sign the school register. Their names will be added to the names of each and every student who has joined the UWC-USA community over the 38 years that this campus has been in existence.

What better way for our new class, the class of 2022, to know they have really arrived than to have their classmates call them into community by speaking one another's names? And by so doing, begin to acknowledge publicly the different languages and cultures each of us

carries with us. Begin to acknowledge publicly that we have work to do to understand one another, starting with learning how to pronounce one another's names respectfully and with care?

I will begin by calling the first name on the list. By so doing, I call this person into our community. By signing the register, this person accepts a place in the community. Then this person, and each person after, will call the next person on the list and they will in turn sign the school register. One by one our first years will join their second year roomies on the knoll after signing the register, becoming one student body.

This year, again, we will do this in small groups. And while we won't have a communal dinner at the president's house, we will serve a special dinner in shifts at the dining hall.

I look forward to seeing all of you on Sunday!