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Dear New Faculty,

Welcome to Haverford! Many of the ideas below stem from discussions I've had with fellow students and faculty as well as family and friends. As you will soon find, Haverfordians love discussion. We are an opinionated bunch with a bunch of opinions. While it's difficult to please everyone, I believe that simply listening to people solves many problems. With that, here are my suggestions.

1. Make small talk.

Meaningful student / teacher relationships are a big reason why people choose Haverford. This does not mean, however, that these relationships will happen effortlessly. Many students are intimidated by faculty (even first year faculty!). According to one professor I spoke to, the five minutes before class are often the most valuable for getting to know students as whole individuals. Engaging in small talk with students before the pressure of the academic setting sets on creates a level of safety that will be carried throughout the class.

2. Let students know that it's okay to be confused.

While it's important to steer clear of an underlying sense of chaos throughout a semester, confusion is oftentimes a sign of engagement with the material. Create a judgment-free zone by setting the example for your students that embracing confusion is good. In turn, you will have a more transparent idea of how your students are responding to your teaching, and you will be able format a more personalized map for the course.

3. At office hours, let the student do most of the talking.

Clarify from the beginning why the student is there. Is it for reassurance? Is it an indirect way of saying "I am completely lost?" Is it for counseling about a personal issue? More likely that not, it's not for a continuation of the lecture. Be respectful of the student's agenda.

4. Acknowledge differences between the two (three) colleges.

Know that Haverford, Bryn Mawr, and Swarthmore are all different places with very different personalities. Spend some time trying to understand these personalities, because they play very important roles in creating the dynamics of a class.

5. In an introductory class, less is more.

Students who take an introductory class are looking for a little taste of the material, not a deep analysis of the subject. The best way to keep students engaged in the material is to stimulate *them* to ask the deeper questions. Students who take intro classes are often freshmen who are still learning how to make the transition from high school to college-style learning.

6. Trust yourself.

If you do, your students will.