

GREETINGS FROM THE STATE

Hello Friends and Family, I'm honored to welcome you all to Maine and to our beautiful campus here at Bowdoin College.

For the **nearly five hundred** of us officially graduating today, it has been a long time waiting for this day to arrive. Many here today haven't been back since leaving for an especially long spring break, about seventeen months ago now. As I have spent a number of those months at my family's home in South Portland, I have been back to campus a few times, but the past few days, reuniting with my classmates and celebrating our time at Bowdoin have been by far the most special.

When I mentioned to a few of my friends that I would be delivering the Greetings from the State, multiple people responded, "oh that's perfect, you love bragging about Maine." It's true, I believe this place is incredibly special. I'm surely not alone in that feeling.

During basketball season, we started our game days with a pregame shoot around. We split into teams and competed against one another in shooting competitions. For many years, we had a strong contingent of team members born and raised in Maine, so it was an even split, Mainers versus out-of-staters. Over the years, the numbers shifted and we had to make some changes. We started by taking Taylor Choate, she was from New Hampshire, it was close enough. And we added Kate Kerrigan, her family spends the summers in Old Orchard Beach, she was essentially from Maine. By my senior year, our "Maine" team was comprised of three Mainers, three from California and one from Colorado.

Any collection of us could've made up the Maine team, though, that's the beauty of spending your college years in Maine and at a place like Bowdoin, so intertwined with the history and culture of the state.

Despite having spent my whole life in Maine, I still had a lot to experience during my four years here. In truth, I've been jokingly told I'm not a true Mainer because I'm from Southern Maine. I hadn't been north of Bangor until a weekend trip to Presque Isle my junior year. During my years at Bowdoin, I spent mornings at the Giant Stairs and fall afternoons on the water in Harpswell. Dinners in Portland and summer days with my teammates on Peaks island. My favorite one mile radius in the whole state remains this campus, though, and I'm so grateful to be gathered here with all of you.

Over the past year, we have spread across the globe and returned to this spot. Come the end of the weekend, we will all return to our lives in our locations scattered thousands of miles apart. Luckily, we all share this state and this campus, a home to return to regardless of distance or time.

Thank you.