

NEWSROOM

[Home](#) / [News](#) / [2024](#) / [August](#) / 'Your Pledge is an Awesome Responsibility'



'YOUR PLEDGE IS AN AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY'

NEW CAPTAINS BEGIN THEIR JOURNEY OF INTEGRITY AND EXCELLENCE BY SIGNING HONOR CODE.

by [Kelley McGee](#) | August 23, 2024

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"There was no chance I was going to miss this," said Brayden Rash '28 as he settled into the first seat in the front row of Diamonstein Concert Hall at the Community of Scholars Honor Convocation. "This is the official start of our freshman year."

Fellow freshman Quinn Rasnake took a seat next to Rash and echoed his anticipation.

"Signing the Honor Code is important. I want to make sure I'm actually following the traditions and rules that are expected of you when you're a Captain," she said.



Here is the Honor Code that Rash, Rasnake and more than 1,100 first-year students, freshmen and students transferring from other colleges, all pledged to uphold:

On my honor, I will maintain the highest standards of honesty, integrity and personal responsibility. This means I will not lie, cheat or steal, and as a member of this academic community I am committed to creating an environment of respect and mutual trust.

The Convocation is more than just a welcome for the incoming class; the ceremony is an introduction to the values

that will define their time at Christopher Newport.

"Today, we gather with our dedicated faculty to help you discover your why," said President William G. Kelly. "This is a serious occasion that asks you to reflect on what matters to you, what you stand for, and to commit to something greater than yourself. The faculty behind me are among the most dedicated educators in the nation, deeply committed to your success, and will be your mentors and partners in learning and research during your journey. Now, the hour has now come to commit yourselves to living a life of service, dedicated to scholarship, founded on a bedrock of honor and respect, as we grow together to be the leaders and citizens this University, the Commonwealth, and our nation need now more than ever."

Dean of Students Dr. Kevin Hughes reminded students that the pledge is an "awesome responsibility."

"Our community of honor means that you think not just about the common good. It means you are committed to acting honorably in everything that you do. It means you accept personal responsibility for all of your actions," he said. "It means that you have an obligation to help your fellow Captains and anybody else that you know who needs extra care."

It's a commitment Ariana Williams '28 and Kyleigh Elliott '28 were excited to embrace.

"I think it's important to hold myself to a higher standard," said Williams. "I came here because I love the values this University stands for, so it was good to have something in writing that says, 'I'm going to uphold those standards.'"

"I love the sense of community felt here today. This is a tradition every incoming class experiences and something that binds us together and holds us accountable," said Elliott.

Provost Quentin Kidd offered the invocation and emphasized the importance of the ceremony.

"Ceremony and ritual are important because they connect us deeply to one another and give us a feeling of belonging and purpose within a community. They create unity instead of separation, and help us understand the common things we are striving for," Kidd said. "The community you will join today - the common thing that we are all a part of - is not just a community of scholarship but a community of honor, and this Honor Code induction ceremony is your first step into this community."

Led by Faculty Senate President Brian Puaca, students recited the Honor Code aloud, and then stepped forward to sign their names to it in front of University witnesses - faculty, staff, upperclassmen - who have already embraced these ideals.

After signing, students were given a "lucky penny," which they will hold until graduation day, when each senior tosses the penny into the fountain for good luck.

President Kelly closed by encouraging the new Captains to commit to asking for help when needed and to be "All In" during their four years on campus.

"Embrace what makes this place special and different. From the traditions that will guide our steps today, to the values of Honor, Service, Scholarship and Leadership, to the unending commitment to be anchored in excellence in all we do. Embrace what makes us special, don't shy away from it. Allow it to become part of who you are and how you live your life," he said.

Following the ceremony, students took part in another cherished tradition: ringing the Clock Tower Bell.



