ADDRESSING PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SMITH TODAY

IN RESPONDING TO MISPERCEPTIONS about the college, it is helpful to rely on the following principles.

Own the agenda. Never feel obligated to answer critics purely on their own terms. Say what you want to be said and heard about Smith. Model to others how they, too, can tell the story of Smith today.

Don’t dwell on the objection. Move past it quickly to replace a doubt or objection with a compelling fact or story that reflects the college’s distinction.

Misperceptions about Smith College most often arise from a lack of accurate information about Smith today. One of the best ways to correct misperceptions is to be informed with the facts. Following are prompts to help you respond to questions and misinformation about Smith’s reputation and standing.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF STUDENTS

Young women are applying to Smith in greater numbers than ever. For the class of 2018, Smith received the highest number of applications in its history—4,461. These students are as talented and ambitious as the generations of women who came before them.

Faculty are internationally renowned. In the past decade, Smith has received more National Science Foundation funding than any other liberal arts college. Over the past six years Smith College has produced more Fulbright fellows than any other liberal arts college in the world. In 2011, 35 percent of Smith applications were awarded Fulbright Fellowships—more than 2.5 times the national average.

COLLEGE RANKINGS

Smith College places little emphasis on the US News and World Report’s rankings, which have been highly criticized by leaders in higher education. The rankings are largely based on institutional wealth and admissions selectivity. They have no meaningful way of measuring quality or outcomes. The strongest reflection of the value of an institution is its alumnae. Smith women—numbering more than 48,000 worldwide—have been leading change, creating movements, and reshaping society for decades. That ability to lead was fostered and developed at Smith and says more about Smith’s enduring reputation and standing in the landscape of higher education than any annual list.
SEXUALITY AND GENDER AT SMITH

Smith College is proud to support the growing public acceptance of lesbians and gays in our country. Smith students who identify as lesbian do so in an open and supportive environment.
Smith accepts students on the basis of their academic merits. Smith students are diverse, accomplished, highly intelligent, and confident in expressing who they are and what they believe.
Smith fosters the individual growth of each student, equipping her with the skills, curiosity of mind, and intellectual power to lead at all levels of society.

THE COST OF SMITH

Smith is deeply committed to providing access to young women regardless of their means. 61% of Smith students receive need-based aid, and the average grant is $33,000.
Every Smith student receives a $14,000 scholarship above and beyond the billed fees.
Higher education is expensive because it is a people-intensive business.
About 60 percent of our budget is spent on compensation.
Smith continually considers ways to operate as efficiently as possible, and to keep its tuition increases low.

THE LONG-TERM VALUE OF A SMITH EDUCATION

A Smith education is well worth the investment. Smith students have access to a worldwide network of more than 48,000 alumnae in 150 countries. Every year, more than 400 students take internships around the world. Surveys of graduates show that more than two-thirds of each year’s senior class step into good jobs upon graduation, while 25 percent go on to graduate school.
Within twenty years after graduating, almost 10 percent of alumnae report being in executive-level positions.

RESOURCES FOR YOU

How to Talk About Smith and Smith Women booklet
The Gate news site: www.smith.edu/news
Smith Alumnae Quarterly: www.saqonline.smith.edu
Volunteer for Smith Website: www.smith.edu/volunteer