Dear Class of 2018 Parents,

I can hardly believe that we are only weeks away from the end of the Fall 2016 semester. Here in New England, we have enjoyed the display of a vibrant fall foliage and now the cool temperature and reduced daylight hours are preparing us for the inevitable snowfall that is soon to come.

Ironically at Wesleyan, this means that it is time to think about next semester. November 22 is the closing of the pre-registration process for Spring 2017. Students use this opportunity to meet with their faculty advisors and me to discuss course selection and plans for the summer between their junior and senior year. Strategic course planning may include the start of planning for a senior capstone project. Although many students in the class of 2018 are well ahead in overall credits and in the process of completing their major(s), some students may be behind a credit or so and will enroll in Wesleyan’s winter session courses offered during January to get up to credit pace. You may want to ask them where they are in terms of their major work and fulfilling graduation requirements.

At this point in the junior year, many students are thinking about life after graduation. For some that means graduate school and in mid-November, I hosted a dinner for some 2018’ers featuring historian and Wesleyan alumna Professor Corinna Zeltsman, who discussed her motivation to pursue graduate school and offered advice to students thinking about pursuing a similar path. I am encouraging students who want to learn more about graduate and pre-professional schools to discuss their interest with their faculty advisors and other professors and also to visit the Gordon Career Center.

Many of our students have utilized the career center throughout their years at Wesleyan to prepare their resumes, write cover letters, identify internships (volunteer and paid opportunities), and explore job opportunities. I am delighted to partner with the career center to host a special open house and program for juniors who have not yet fully utilized the resources of the center. Please encourage your student to attend the Career Planning 101 Session that will be held on November 30 from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. in the center. The director of the center, Sharon Castonguay, will facilitate a workshop that will include an overview of the newest job search software among other resources and strategies. Some students are eager to talk about their future direction while others are more reluctant, but talking with family members who know them well can help students better identify their interests and thus potential career paths.

At the same time that all this is happening, there are many students who want to talk about and understand the results of the election, regardless of their political affinities.
There have been several structured opportunities for students to gather and process the outcome, including many panel discussions by Wesleyan faculty members. Of course, I am here to support students in this effort and to help them successfully complete the fall semester. There will be two weeks of classes after Thanksgiving break, November 23-28. The last day to withdraw from courses is December 2 and classes end on December 9. The reading period runs from December 10-13, and final exams take place December 13-17. Winter break begins at noon on Sunday, December 18, when the residential halls close.

Please encourage your student to take advantage of the numerous opportunities and resources available and to stop in to say hi or share questions or concerns as they bring the Fall 2016 semester to a close. I hope you also will feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

I wish you all the best.

Sincerely,

Renee Johnson Thornton, Ph.D.
Dean for the Class of 2018
(860) 685-2764
rjohnson01@wesleuyan.edu
http://classof2018.blogs.wesleyan.edu