Hello Class of 2019 families,

It was great to see so many of you over Family Weekend. We hope that the wonderful Weseminars, the fighting spirit of the Cardinal athletes, the amazing student presentations, and inspiring artistic productions gave you an idea of what Wesleyan has to offer your son or daughter. If you could not make it this year, we hope that you will be able to come next year. Since then, we have moved from a warm and brilliant fall into slightly crisper weather, darker evenings and the feeling that winter will soon be here.

Strangely, this change in season from fall to winter signifies for the Wesleyan community a turn toward the spring semester—with the start of pre-registration, which runs in its different phases from November 1-22. This semester, course selection for many sophomores is being made with major declaration in mind. Students must declare their majors next semester between February 8 and April 4. Some know exactly what they want to pursue, some are torn between several options, and others still are finding their way. Regardless of their current state of mind about their major (which they may change several times before they graduate), questions about possible major paths raise questions about jobs and careers post-Wes, which often raise more questions about how to make meaningful contributions to a better world.

We encourage this kind of critical self-reflection and future planning, but this can be a lot to handle at the same time one is mastering course material in four academic courses, working at an on-campus job and/or participating in two or three (sometimes more) co-curricular activities. So it is okay to let your student know that they can take a deep breath; that there are many, many different kinds of jobs and positions available (some might not even exist yet!) regardless of their major, and that there are myriad opportunities to better the world. You might ask what courses are being considered for the spring semester—what has been really enjoyed and what has been a challenge in both a positive and negative sense? What major has been decided or is being considered? Refer your student to the Gordon Career Center (suggest meeting with a staff member to start thinking about different internships/career paths and to learn more about the vast array of resources they offer), to his or her faculty advisor and instructors, and to me as the 2019 class dean to talk about plans, questions, and concerns. It is important to keep in mind that students take many different paths to find what it is they are most passionate about. I have coordinated workshops focusing on study abroad and fellowships this semester, and will host another centered on internships in the coming weeks.

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, and one week of finals later. 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.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me, and check out the class blog at www.classof2019.blogs.wesleyan.edu.

Sincerely,

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