Dear Parents of Students in the Class of 2020:

As the fall fades away and winter settles in on New England, it’s hard to believe that the Class of 2020 has almost completed its first semester. Classes end on Friday, December 9, and reading period and final exams will take place December 10-17. Housing will close at 12 noon on Sunday, December 18.

By the end of the first week of January, students will be able to login to their portal to view their final grades for the semester. Parents are naturally curious to find out these grades and most students are proud to share this information, especially when the grades are good. Sometimes, however, especially when students feel disappointed with their performance, they may be reluctant to share this information with parents. In a situation like this, instead of pressing the question, it can be helpful to shift the topic of conversation from “What were your grades?” to more open-ended questions such as “What did you learn?,” “What was your favorite class?,” “Can I read one of your papers?” If this line of inquiry leads you to sense that your student is struggling, it’s always good to ask: “Have you seen your class dean?”

While academic life is at the heart of the Wesleyan experience, life beyond the classroom is an important part of this experience as well. Beyond coursework, students are expected to develop friendships, join clubs or athletic teams, or work at a campus jobs. All new students face the challenge of refashioning high school work habits and social skills to meet the academic and co-curricular demands of the college environment. While most students eventually figure out how to make this move, even the most well-adjusted students will feel stressed out at times. Winter break is a good time to inquire into how the transition to college is going. “Are you making friends?” “Are you managing your time?,” “Are you enjoying Wesleyan?,” “How do you deal with the stresses of college life?”

Also, as you may or may not be aware, this is the third year that Wesleyan has offered students the opportunity to participate in a two-week Winter Session intensive learning experience. Students who take part in the program return to campus in early January to take a course for credit or participate in career-related workshops sponsored by the Gordon Career Center. The registration deadline is December 6. Students who are interested in the program should contact the Winter Session office at winter@wesleyan.edu.

Spring housing will open on Tuesday, January 24, and classes will begin on Thursday, January 26. The first day of class is also the beginning of the two-week Drop/Add period, when students can fine-tune their schedules if they have changed their minds about courses in which they are already enrolled, or if seats
open up in courses that were closed during November pre-registration.

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. Please encourage your student to take advantage of the numerous opportunities and resources that are available and to stop in and see me if in need of any guidance or advice.

I will be writing to you again in the Spring. In the meantime, please feel free to get in touch if you have any questions or concerns.

Best wishes,

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