Hello to Parents of Students in the Class of 2017,

This will be the last August note that I will be writing to you, which brings home to me (yet again) how quickly the years go by and how much I have valued my time with your student here at Wesleyan. We still have a year to go together and I am looking forward to this intensive and exciting year, which, as I noted in my May note, is filled with a range of emotions, “last times,” and prospects of new beginnings.

The start of a new year also marks a new beginning. The Deans’ Office and Office of Student Affairs have been busy preparing for returning students, new transfers, and the Class of 2020. University housing opens on Saturday, September 3 and classes begin on Monday, September 5, the same day as the Student Affairs “Welcome Back” reception for seniors. For your planning purposes, Fall Break runs from 5 p.m. on Friday, October 22 through Tuesday, October 26, and Family Weekend follows the next weekend on Friday, October 28 through Sunday, October 30. If you are on campus then, I hope you will stop by to say hello during the deans’ drop-in office hours from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 29. If you are not, I hope we will have the opportunity to meet or reconnect before graduation, Sunday, May 28, 2017 (mark your calendars now!).

To participate in the graduation ceremony, all seniors must meet the University’s graduation requirements by the end of the Spring 2017 semester—32.00 credits with no oversubscription (of which at least 16.00 credits must be Wesleyan credits); completion of one major; a cumulative grade point average of 74.00; and six semesters in residence as a full-time student (four semesters if a junior transfer and five semesters if a sophomore transfer). By checking their credit analyses and major certification forms in their portfolios, seniors are expected to know where they are vis-à-vis these requirements and be taking the appropriate measures to complete them. Urge your student to check in with me to review the credit analysis, ask questions about next steps, or share concerns.

This year, seniors will enroll in some of the most rigorous and intellectually challenging courses of their career at Wes. Whether it is a senior seminar, thesis, essay or other capstone experience, it will be an opportunity to bring together what they have learned, both in and outside their major. It also provides an opportunity to develop close working relationships with faculty members, who can provide not only intellectual mentoring, but also career guidance, recommendations, and referrals for life post-Wes. Staff members with whom your student has worked, whether through an organization or club, athletic team, or work-study, are also in a position to be life-long mentors.

Making connections with other students continues to be an important part of the Wesleyan experience. Keep encouraging your student to reach out to others, to be open to new people and ideas, and to learn from the experiences of others. Students are well-served by learning to embrace difference as they move forward, and their friendships will continue to serve as sources of support, satisfaction, and opportunity long after they graduate.

And speaking of graduation, what they will be doing after May 28 is on every senior's (and parent's!) mind. If your student is still not sure of next steps, suggest making an appointment with a staff member at the Gordon Career Center to explore options. Once seniors have visited the office, they are less likely to feel overwhelmed by any uncertainty of life post-Wes and more willing to begin the process of narrowing interests, identifying directions, pursuing possibilities, and applying for jobs or professional/graduate schools.
In closing, I want to reiterate how much I look forward to working with the Class of 2017 throughout the coming year. Please check out Parents' Questions for Students and encourage your student to take advantage of this last year to engage in all the things left on that special “to do” list in both the curricular and co-curricular areas.

I will write again before Thanksgiving, but in the meantime enjoy the fall and do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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