Dear Parents,

As the August heat intensifies, I am eager for the Fall season to begin and the return of your students and the vibrancy they will bring to the campus. I am especially excited to welcome sixteen new transfer students who will join the rest of the class as they move into the junior year together. Orientation for new students begins on Wednesday, August 31 and housing opens for all undergraduates on Saturday, September 3 at 9:00 a.m. Classes will begin on Monday, September 5.

Where does time go? It might seem to you as though it was only recently that your students departed for their first semester in college. Now, most of them have reached the mid-point of their Wesleyan education and a critical milestone. By now they have declared an academic major, or two, and found an “academic home.” Along with their major declaration, they may have also designated a certificate or minor. Your students should plan to meet with their major advisor(s) as soon as possible to finalize their fall course schedules. They will be able to make adjustments to their course schedules during the Drop/Add period from September 5 to September 16 at 5:00 p.m. and make changes to their grading mode, in courses that offer that option, until September 30 at 5:00 p.m. I am delighted to serve as your students’ class dean and I am looking forward to supporting them in their continued development and progress towards graduation.

As juniors in college, the upcoming year will be filled with exciting new opportunities. This year might be a time when they engage in a cultural immersion experience through a Wesleyan-recognized Study Abroad Program, the Twelve College Exchange (TCE) Program or short term study at another institution. In addition to looking beyond the geographical perimeter of the campus, junior year is a time when many students begin to contemplate post-graduation life. That is where the Gordon Career Center comes in. The Center is staffed with full-time professional career advisors and students who are “career peer advisors.” These students are trained to guide other students through the maze of paid and unpaid summer internships, post-graduation employment opportunities and job search strategies, and to help them develop effective resumes, cover letters, and interview skills. For students interested in medicine, law, and other post-graduate study, the medical school and law school advisors are invaluable. I know that some students might find planning for the next phase in their life a daunting task, so please encourage them to go on an exploratory visit to these resources or come see me.

This fall, I will coordinate several gatherings for the junior class, including a welcome back ice cream social, faculty-student dinner, and programs with the Gordon Career Center and the Center for Global Studies’ Office of Study Abroad. Last semester, I revived the Class of 2018 Class Council and the council will likely propose other fun and relevant programming for their peers to enjoy. I will invite your students to these events by email and posts to the class blog: http://classof2018blogs.wesleyan.edu. Please inform your students to regularly check their emails and visit the class blog for useful information and announcements about upcoming academic events and deadlines. I would appreciate it if you would encourage them to participate in the class activities and to meet with me. They can contact me by email or phone to schedule individual appointments and I also hold drop-in hours Monday through Friday.
Please do not hesitate to contact me as well, if you have any questions or concerns.

Wishing you a healthy and happy academic year,

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