Dear Class of 2018 Parents,

As the final days of classes draw near, there is a mixture of enthusiasm and exhaustion in the atmosphere on campus. From my office window, located on the second floor, I see the gradual greening of the campus as the trees adorn their branches with leaves and students lounge on the lawn outside of North College. Along with the warmer temperatures and longer days comes the hustle to complete final projects, write term papers, and study for final exams. The last day of classes will be on Wednesday, May 4 and the reading period will take place from Thursday, May 5 until Monday, May 9. The final exam period runs from Tuesday, May 10 until Friday, May 13, and University housing closes at noon on Saturday, May 14. In just a few weeks, your sons and daughters can officially say that they are “rising juniors” and well on their way to a future of new triumphs and challenges.

A successful end of the sophomore year marks a point of transition in their undergraduate academic career. Your sons or daughters have likely declared their majors and are settling into their academic departments. Membership in a major provided them with preferences during the recent pre-registration process and they now have the opportunity to meet with their new major faculty advisor (or advisors for those pursuing multiple majors). Some students are still completing final requirements for acceptance into their preferred major and have continued to seek the guidance of their initial faculty advisor. The end of sophomore year is truly a milestone in their lives. It is also an ideal time to begin the career development process by contacting the Wesleyan Career Center to explore the range of volunteer and paid opportunities they may apply for in the near future.

While some students will return to campus in the Fall, about half of the members of the Class of 2018 will participate in study abroad. Wesleyan students travel to the far corners of the globe during their junior year and immerse themselves in the study of language, culture, and society in ways that can profoundly transform their personal lives and intellectual development. This intensive experience can present unforeseen challenges and parents often experience a sense of helplessness because of the geographical distance. Rest assured that Wesleyan-approved programs are well-staffed and equipped to assist your sons and daughters through the challenges they may face during this time. But for now, the focus of students’ attention must be the successful completion of their Spring 2016 coursework. There are still papers to write, presentations and projects to prepare, and exams to take.

However, there will be a few study breaks, including a faculty dinner on Thursday, May 5 with Victoria Pitts-Taylor, Ph.D., Sociologist, and Chair and Professor of Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Lastly, we have revived the 2018 Class Council to advise and coordinate activities for the class, so I am anticipating an influx of innovative ideas to inform programming over the next two years. Please encourage your sons and daughters to take advantage of these programs and to stop in to see me if they need anything.

Have a wonderful summer!

Sincerely,

Renee Johnson Thornton, Ph.D.
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