Hello to Parents of Students in the Class of 2021:

Welcome to Wesleyan! With the summer nearly over and Arrival Day fast approaching, I am sure this time is as exciting for you as it is for your new Wesleyan student. It surely is exciting for us as we anticipate the arrival of incoming first-year and transfer students to campus for New Student Orientation (NSO). NSO takes place August 30 through September 3, with an early orientation for international students and a group of first-generation students beginning on August 27. All orientation programs are designed to help smooth the transition from high school to college by providing new students with information and programming about Wesleyan’s many academic, co-curricular, and community resources, while also extending opportunities to begin building productive relationships with faculty, staff, and other students in their advising, community, and residential hall meetings. Arrival Day also offers opportunities for parents to learn more about Wesleyan at the Parents’ Workshops I (academics and support) and II (student life) and to hear from President Roth at his remarks that follow in the Chapel.

During NSO and over the course of the fall semester, it is especially important that 2021’ers make an effort to cultivate strong relationships not only with me, their class dean, but also with three other individuals in particular. These are the faculty advisor, who provides guidance regarding academic plans and who authorizes the plan of study each semester; the peer advisor, an upper-level student who is well-informed about academic support services and helps students navigate the course pre-registration system; and the resident advisor, another upper-level student who is knowledgeable about Wesleyan’s co-curricular resources and whose job is to provide new students with opportunities for social growth and community engagement. There is also the dean for international student affairs and the director of our new student equity resource center, both of whom can support students in making Wesleyan their home. Of course these are only some of the many sources of support in Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and the Office of Equity and Inclusion. Making these connections helps any student regardless of class year, but especially in the first year, find their place and cultivate confidence.

As class dean, my job is to provide students with information, advice, and support and to help them monitor their progress towards graduation. While my primary concern is academic growth and intellectual development, this concern naturally extends to the personal realm within the context of the residential liberal arts environment that defines the Wesleyan experience. If your son or daughter has academic concerns or is in need of personal advice or support, please encourage him or her to come see me. I serve as a point person for both students and faculty, and if I cannot be of direct assistance, I will provide a referral to someone who can, which can range from a peer tutor to a therapist, from professor to a chaplain.
As for questions or concerns that you as a parent may have, many answers can be found on the Wesleyan website, especially the Parent & Families page. Another good resource is Parents’ Questions for Students, which was created by the class deans to provide an overview of the kinds of academic, co-curricular, and personal challenges that students typically face during their time at Wesleyan. Another channel of communication is the Class of 2021 blog through which I notify students about events, new courses, workshops, important deadlines, scholarships and fellowships, and internship and career opportunities. You should feel free to check it out at your convenience and catch up on the posts I have made since late June.

Please be sure to mark your calendars for Fall Break, which is October 23 and 24, and Homecoming/Family Weekend, which takes place from November 3-5. Fall is a beautiful time in New England, and Family Weekend provides a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the fall foliage and get a sense of life on campus by attending a musical performance, WesSeminar, a football game or theater production. I will be holding drop-in office hours for parents on that Saturday, November 4 from 10 a.m.-noon, and I encourage you to stop in and say hello. For your planning purposes, Thanksgiving break runs from November 22-26.

This is the first of many letters I will be sending you over the next four years, and I am delighted that I have the opportunity to do so. I am eager to meet the Class of 2021 and look forward to four good years working with them. I hope we get a chance to meet soon--if not on Arrival Day, then on any occasion you have to visit campus, but if not in person, then by email or phone.

I hope that you are enjoying these final days of summer with your family. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. I hope to see you soon!

Best,

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