Dear Parents of Students in the Class of 2020:

The spring semester is now well under way and students have settled into their courses and are preparing for the flurry of mid-term exams, papers, and projects that will be coming due in the next couple of weeks. It is hard to believe that Spring Break (March 10-26) is almost upon us and that the daffodils will soon be heralding in the change of season.

The period following spring break is when students involve themselves in making plans for next year. On the academic front, students will begin meeting with their faculty advisors to plan their Fall course schedules (also known as Pre-Registration). For a student entering the sophomore year, these meetings are an opportunity to begin planning a pathway through the intended major, while also contemplating whether study abroad has a place in one’s longer-term academic plans. While there are no right or wrong answers to these questions, they nevertheless merit careful thought and self-reflection. If it seems that your student could benefit from some guidance in formulating their academic plans for next year and beyond, please convey that I can be of help.

On the co-curricular front, the question of next year’s housing is a preoccupation for many students. At Wesleyan, the Housing Selection process, known colloquially as the “lottery,” is a process in which all students must participate. Students are assigned points based on class year and form groups to select housing. Because rising sophomores have the fewest points in the GRS system, many students in the second year choose to apply for “Program Housing,” which provides the opportunity to live collectively in a residence based on shared experiences or cultural interests rather than solely on friendship. Needless to say, the experience of participating in the housing selection process can be complicated and time-consuming. While students do not always get their top choice in this process, they almost always end up in a housing situation in which they can feel comfortable.

Most students experience a smooth transition to college, but for some the ups and downs of the college experience can be a bumpy ride. If in your conversations with your student you sense an unhealthy level of anxiety, either in terms of academics or social life, it is important to stress that help and support are available. As Dean for the Class of 2020, my job is to provide academic and personal advice to students while also serving as a “one-stop” point of connection to other campus resources. In terms of academic matters, I can help students think about how to choose a major or balance their course load or help them find tutors in difficult classes. They also can talk with their faculty advisor and professors. Beyond the classroom, I can connect students to our Chaplains, to our therapists in the Office of Counseling and Psychological Services, or to a counselor in the Gordon Career Center. If you sense
that your student might be in need of help or is in search of connection, it is always
good to ask: “Have you seen your class dean?”

Finally, if your student has yet to make plans for a summer job or internship,
encourage a stop at the Gordon Career Center to make an appointment with a staff
member for tips on how to make the summer worthwhile. Alternatively, some
students may want to consider the Wesleyan Summer Session (May 31-August 4),
which provides opportunities to earn extra credit towards graduation or to explore
areas of the curriculum for which there simply was no time during the regular school
year.

I will be writing to you again before the end of the semester. In the meantime, please
feel free to call or write with any questions or concerns.

Best wishes,

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