

Dear Parents of Students in the Class of 2021:

Let me start with a hearty hello! My name is Tanesha Leathers, and I'm excited to serve as the new class dean for your students. I've been a Pioneer, Eph, Terp, Blue Jay, and now I am proud to be a Cardinal. This upcoming academic year will be my 20<sup>th</sup> in higher education, and I look forward to working with you as partners in supporting your students' goal to successfully graduate in a couple of years.

With the end of summer approaching, the campus is gearing up for the arrival of new students in the Class of 2023. For returning students, housing opens on Saturday, August 31 at 9:00 a.m., and classes start September 2. Fall Break takes place from the end of the day Friday, October 18, until Wednesday, October 23 and [Homecoming/Family Weekend](#) is scheduled for Friday-Sunday, November 1-3.

Having declared their majors last semester, juniors are now settling into their new academic homes. Even so, it is important for every junior to understand that time will pass quickly between now and graduation. The more thought one puts into one's graduation plans at the beginning of the junior year, the more fruitful one's senior year will be. If your student is planning to undertake an honors thesis, it is a good idea to begin the process of securing an advisor and narrowing down the research topic before the end of this semester, especially if your student is planning to apply for a Davenport or Dana scholarship (highly competitive thesis research grants that are due in early February). The fall is also a good time to drop by the [Gordon Career Center](#) to discuss career pathways and preparation for life after college.

This fall, about 180 members of the Class of 2021 will be participating in study abroad programs in places as far afield as South Africa, India, Ecuador, and New Zealand. Study abroad can be a wonderfully transformative experience. For many parents, having a student who is studying abroad is an opportunity to travel vicariously and explore the nuances of a foreign culture through familiar eyes. While most students are well-prepared for their travels, life in a foreign country can present unforeseen challenges that may seem especially daunting to parents who learn about them from half a planet away. It is important to remember that every study abroad program provides support resources to help students meet the cultural and academic challenges they may face while studying in a foreign country.

You will hear from me again around mid-semester. In the meantime, please feel free to call or write if you have any questions or concerns. If you are planning to be on campus for Family Weekend, I will be holding drop-in hours for parents on Saturday, November 2, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Please stop by-I would love to meet you!

All best,

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