

Dear Sophomores and Juniors,

I am writing to encourage you to make the most of the time you still have at Notre Dame. Graduation may be a year or two away, but now is the time to start working toward your post-graduation goals.

If students in Arts and Letters make one mistake about career development, it is not in choosing a major. Any course of study you truly find fascinating and pursue with passion will help you hone the analytical, creative, and communications skills that lead to success after graduation.

The mistake, rather, is when you don't connect your coursework with the many other experiences and opportunities available to you as a student.

So, as you begin your countdown to commencement—and the countdown has started—consider seriously the following 10 pieces of advice.

10. Take advantage of your professors and advisers.

They can do more than help you decide what classes to take next semester. They can also suggest research opportunities, service projects, internships, and other special programs on and off campus that match your academic strengths and interests. Additionally, they are a great source of advice on how to get into the best graduate and professional schools.

Faculty in the College's [academic departments](#) and [Office for Undergraduate Studies](#) all have office hours. Visit them. Talk to them. Regularly.

9. Employ The Career Center.

Investigating possible careers and preparing for that first job after graduation takes more time than you might think, from self-assessments and industry research to resume writing, practice interviews, and career-event networking. [The Career Center's](#) expert staff has made it their career to help you with yours and have many excellent ideas and resources to share.

Start now. Visit careercenter.nd.edu. Stop by to see The Career Center staff in the LaFortune Student Center September 3, apply for [Arts and Letters Business Boot Camp](#) by September 5, and watch the calendar for additional events designed specifically for Arts and Letters students.

8. Engage the Center for Social Concerns.

Investing your time and talents in service work as a student and after graduation can make a real difference in your life, both personally and professionally. The staff at the [Center for Social Concerns](#) is ready to help you explore possibilities.

Visit socialconcerns.nd.edu to learn more.

7. Explore the Center for the Study of Languages and Cultures.

One mark of a cosmopolitan citizen is the ability to read and speak at least one foreign language—and this is increasingly valuable in today's global economy. Take your language fluency and cultural competency to the next level by continuing your studies beyond the minimum language requirement. In addition to tutoring and intercultural events, the [Center for the Study of Languages and Cultures](#) funds intensive immersion experiences through its [Summer Language Abroad](#) program.

Go to cslc.nd.edu for more details.

6. Use CUSE.

The faculty and staff in the [Center for Undergraduate Scholarly Engagement](#) can help you with research projects as a student—and help you apply for prestigious fellowships and scholarships, such as the Fulbright, Marshall, Rhodes, and Truman.

For more information and assistance creating compelling applications, check out cuse.nd.edu.

5. Apply to do independent research.

Housed in the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts, the College's [Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program](#) provides financial and other support to students who want to pursue independent research with the mentorship of a faculty member. Some of the students who took advantage of this funding last year conducted anthropology fieldwork in rural Uganda, analyzed gender dynamics in the Middle East, and traveled to a Roman archive to discover, translate, and perform a handwritten Alessandro Scarlatti cantata.

Want to know more? Go to isla.nd.edu/for-undergraduate-students.

4. Visit other centers and institutes across campus.

The [Kellogg Institute for International Studies](#), [Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies](#), [Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies](#), [Nanovic Institute for European Studies](#), [Medieval Institute](#), [Institute for Asia and Asian Studies](#), [Institute for Latino Studies](#), [Institute for Educational Initiatives](#), and many other centers and institutes do more than serve faculty and graduate students. In addition to speakers, film series, and other events, they also support undergraduate research and service programs during the summer and school year.

Contact the adviser for your major (al.nd.edu/majors) or the Office for Undergraduate Studies (al.nd.edu/advising) for more information.

3. Spend your summers wisely.

Internships and career-related summer jobs are increasingly important when applying for post-graduate positions. They also give you the chance to apply your liberal arts education to a variety of professional contexts. In the process, you will gain both valuable work experience and a better perspective on the types of jobs you may want to pursue (or not pursue).

[The Career Center](#) staff can help you with resources, including an internship fair on September 11 and financial assistance through the [Arts and Letters Summer Internship Program](#).

2. Do a senior thesis or project.

One of the most powerful ways to cap your undergraduate studies is with a [senior thesis project](#). You may not yet have a clear idea what that thesis or culminating creative project might be, but now is the time to imagine the possibilities as you delve deeper into your major, do service or an internship, and plan your study abroad. Almost one-third of Arts and Letters seniors do a senior thesis. Shouldn't you be one of them?

1. Start now.

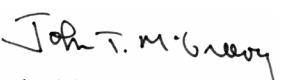
As an alumnus of the College of Arts and Letters Class of 1986, I know firsthand how the opportunities for our graduates have expanded—in professional and graduate schools, service, and the paid labor force—over the past 25 years. The trick is to take advantage of them.

As a dean, I'll offer just one more piece of advice: Take advantage of these opportunities. Call, visit, and email the people and offices on this list, and begin thinking about life after Notre Dame.

The Career Center statistics show that Arts and Letters alumni meet with immediate success after graduation, no matter which path they choose. In the Class of 2012, for example, 44% went into the professional workforce, 31% enrolled in graduate or professional school, 18% chose to engage in service programs or pursue independent projects, and 3% joined the military. (Yes, these numbers mean only 4% of 2012 Arts and Letters graduates were still looking for work six months after graduating, despite the tough economy.)

I know that with planning and preparation on your part, you will achieve your highest aspirations.

Sincerely,


John T. McGreevy
I.A. O'Shaughnessy Dean

A copy of this letter is available online at al.nd.edu/undergraduate-students.