

Dear Class of 2018

The First Year of Studies at Notre Dame is designed to introduce you to college life and help you discern which path to take in your studies.

[The College of Arts and Letters](#) is proud to play an important role in this process.

It is the place where you will delve into philosophy, theology, literature, history, the arts, and the social sciences as part of your [University requirements](#).

It is also *the* place where you can broaden your liberal arts education with a major, a minor, or electives in a wide range of [disciplines](#)—from financial economics to languages, politics, film, and the classics. Learn more about our majors in this [video series](#).

As part of your intellectual exploration and discovery, I encourage you to use my Top 5 list below to investigate the possibilities.

5. Take advantage of your professors.

Along with your First Year of Studies advisers, your professors in Arts and Letters can suggest research opportunities, service projects, internships, and other programs on and off campus that match your academic strengths and interests. They are also a great source of advice on how to get into the best graduate and professional schools. And they want to meet you. So go visit. Talk to them. Regularly.

4. Explore the world through 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 fluency and cultural competency to the next level by continuing your language studies. The [Center for the Study of Languages and Cultures](#), which offers tutoring and cultural events, can provide funding for immersion experiences through its [Summer Language Abroad](#) program.

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 employ your education in a variety of professional contexts. In the process, you will gain valuable work experience and a better perspective on the types of jobs you may want to pursue—or not. [The Career Center](#) staff can help you with resources, including an internship fair on September 9 and financial assistance through the [Arts and Letters Summer Internship Program](#).

2. 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 medical anthropology fieldwork in Rwanda, examined word comprehension in 12-month-old infants, analyzed gender dynamics in India, and designed a digital learning tool that uses music to enhance understanding of math concepts.

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

1. Employ The Career Center.

No, it's not too early to start thinking about life after graduation. Investigating possible careers and preparing for that first job take 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](#) experts have made it their career to help you with yours and have many excellent ideas and resources to share.

Start now.

No matter which course of study you select at Notre Dame, the classes you take in Arts and Letters will help you acquire practical skills, such as analyzing data, identifying and solving problems, writing persuasively, and speaking in public.

This unique combination of academic rigor and skills development will prepare you for continued success [after graduation](#), whether you go straight into business (as 46% of the Arts and Letters Class of 2013 did), enroll in graduate or professional school (31%), engage in service programs or independent projects (19%), or join the military (1%). (Yes, these numbers mean only 3% of 2013 Arts and Letters graduates were still looking for work six months after graduating, despite the tough economy.)

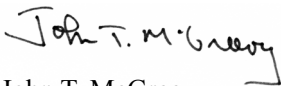
As an alumnus of the College of Arts and Letters Class of 1986, I know firsthand how the opportunities for our graduates have expanded—in professional and graduate schools, service, and the paid labor force—over the past 28 years. The trick is to take advantage of them.

As a dean, I'll offer just one more piece of advice: Pursue every opportunity you can. Call, visit, and email the people and offices on this list, and begin thinking about how to make the most of your time at Notre Dame.

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

I look forward to welcoming you to campus in August.

Sincerely,



John T. McGreevy

I.A. O'Shaughnessy Dean
College of Arts and Letters
University of Notre Dame

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