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 for 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.


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 have made it their career to help you with yours and have many excellent ideas and resources to share.

Start now. Visit http://careercenter.nd.edu, stop by 248 Flanner Hall, or call (574) 631-5200.

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 http://socialconcerns.nd.edu, visit Geddes Hall, or call (574) 631-5293.
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 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 http://cslc.nd.edu/grants 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 http://cuse.nd.edu, go to 233 Geddes Hall, or call (574) 631-0372.

5. Apply for UROP funding.

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.

Want to know more? Go to http://www.isla.nd.edu/for-undergraduate-students, stop by 101 O'Shaughnessy Hall, or call (574) 631-5730.

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 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 (www.al.nd.edu/majors) or in the Office for Undergraduate Studies (www.al.nd.edu/advising) for more information.

3. Spend your summers wisely.

Internships and career-related summer jobs are increasingly important when applying for postgraduate positions. They also give you the chance to apply your liberal arts education to a variety of professional contexts. And 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).
To apply for financial help through the Arts and Letters Summer Internship Program—and learn about other internship ideas and resources—contact the staff in The Career Center.

2. **Do a senior thesis or project.**

One of the most powerful ways to cap your undergraduate studies is with a senior 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. Should you be one of them?

1. **Start now …**

As an alumnus from 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 dean of the College, 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.

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](http://al.nd.edu/undergraduate-students).