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May Term Introductory Remarks

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May Term Introductory Remarks
Jonathan D. Green
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It is my pleasure to kick off May Term.

During the traditional semesters, many of you regularly tell me that you wish you had time to participate in more of the activities happening in different corners of the campus. Many activities have been scheduled this month to provide you with some common experiences. Please take advantage of them. The first is an all-campus picnic this evening on the quad during regular dinner hours.

On campus, we frequently talk about the advantages of liberal education including advantages that are distinctive to Illinois Wesleyan. May Term has the potential to be the best of both, but like most good things it is what you make of it.

In the liberal-arts education biz, our mantra is broadly and deeply. During your careers at Illinois Wesleyan, we want you to achieve a high level of expertise and competence in at least one discipline, and we want you to do so by contextualizing those specific disciplines within the world of ideas.

As many of you have already learned, this is a two-way street; your majors and minors are not merely nested amidst a diverse intellectual landscape; they are also the lenses through which you can observe and interpret the broader life of the mind.

So what about May Term? It is not an example of broadly and deeply, but rather deeply and briefly. It is the only time as IWU students that you are studying a single subject. In most cases the courses you are taking this month are not in your *major*, and yet you are experiencing them with a level of concentrated intensity that occurs nowhere else in your undergraduate curriculum.

From a teaching-and-learning perspective, this is a singular opportunity to become immersed in the life of the mind of someone else. For the next three weeks, divorce yourself from the idea that you are fulfilling a general education requirement or picking up a missing unit toward graduation.

You have the chance to think like an historian or a photographer or a field naturalist. Become that person for three weeks. Lose yourself in that work. See the world of ideas through that lens, and at the end of the month, as you return to your disciplinary home reflect on how your perceptions have been enriched by the brief time you spent walking in the intellectual shoes of another.