

Is it hard to believe Fall Break is here? For me it is somewhat hard to fathom. I am always amazed at how quickly the academic year appears to progress. Of course, time has not sped up but the sensation of time speeding up is real.

What does this mean for students? In listening to plans that members of the Student Senate shared this morning at their weekly meeting, I hear that some have a very clear, definitive plan: Sleep. Sleep. Sleep. For many of the students who are staying on campus or traveling home, sleep is a priority over the next several days. It does make me wonder, how can we help students think of sleep as a priority all the time? I have addressed sleep in previous newsletters and will simply add this: It is an essential, underappreciated need for college students.

For others, travel and exploration are in the plans. For one, running a first half-marathon is on the docket. Another student shared a plan to visit another campus to watch a close friend perform in an opera. Yet another is going backpacking on Lake Superior's North Shore—there were plenty of ooo's in response to that plan. Travel is a large part of students' break experience. I hope that during these travel experiences students make it a priority to do a personal check-in on their semester. Having grown up in Duluth, Minnesota, I can imagine standing on the shore of Lake Superior and taking stock of the first half of the semester.

Regardless of what a student is planning to do during break, it is indeed a break. It's a break from the daily schedule, the pace, and perhaps the place. For some, the break may be a work break. Students this morning talked about catching up on academic work, staying on campus to further their research or to compete in scheduled athletic events. A break can afford students the opportunity to focus more closely on their work, in a way that is not fully possible during the semester. Overall, attending to their personal responsibilities is all part of the ongoing work of being a student. It is their most important job.

I appreciated hearing this morning the variety of plans students shared but also how many were looking forward to reconnecting with family—parents, siblings, and others. While the fall break is an opportunity for reconnections, time may also appear to speed up for those who are receiving their students. If that is you, savor the moments you have with your visiting student. A good home-cooked meal (or a dinner on the town) will be appreciated, as will your company and your questions about how the semester has gone thus far.

We are heading into the point of the semester where the experience intensifies. As students prepare to return to campus, please know we have people and resources in many areas to help them to achieve the success they have identified for themselves. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you wish to explore the options or have questions.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Corey Landstrom', with a stylized, sweeping flourish at the end.

Corey Landstrom,
vice president and dean for student life