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Now What? Colby seniors have their plans in full swing

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Now What?

Colby seniors have their plans in full swing

The *Colby* spotlight remained trained on our four seniors (introduced in the winter magazine) as they rounded up recommendations, mulled options and waited for their post-Colby lives to take shape. In addition to being full-time students, the four are occupied by job interviews, grad school applications and a whole lot of waiting. It's a senior year roller coaster, and *Colby* is along for the ride.

This was Jan Plan 2004 for Jenny Kalman:

Kalman continued research in the Biology Department and took a course on geographic information systems (GIS) and remote sensing. She was in the classroom or the lab for many hours. And all the while, she was waiting.

During January Kalman had applications in at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Northwestern, SUNY Buffalo, NYU's Sackler Institute and Johns Hopkins University as well as a bid for a fellowship at the National Institutes of Health in Washington, D.C.

A Ph.D. program or a master's of public health program? "I'm probably going to do both," Kalman said. "I've sent out applications to just Ph.D. programs so far. I'm going to apply to at least one M.P.H. program in Boston and maybe a second one at George Washington University. But regardless of which one I get into now, I'm going to do both eventually."

But in the meantime?

"A Ph.D. would take five to six years and a master's of public health would take one to two, so I would be done with school in six to eight more years. I could go on to doing more school now, or I could defer and wait a year. So we'll just see what happens."

An offer of the fellowship at the National Institutes of Health would allow Kalman to take a break from school for a year and would offer some other perks. Her parents, who live in a Virginia suburb of D.C., have been remodeling the bottom floor of their home and have suggested Jenny and Jason could live there either temporarily while they look for another place or for as long as they might be stationed in D.C.

But it was all speculation until . . .

Kalman called back as this issue of *Colby* went into production. She had exciting news.

Acceptances had come in from Madison, Buffalo and the Sackler Institute. Northwestern and Johns Hopkins invited her to interviews. If that wasn't enough, she was offered the fellowship at the NIH. "I've accepted it," Kalman said with excitement and relief. "Now I just have to decide which school I'm going to defer from for the year that I'll be at the NIH. That depends on the other schools I'm still waiting to hear from and also on where Jason gets in. But Jason has options in D.C. as well, so that is where we're headed for at least the next year."

The future was taking shape.

It was January and Jason Beal looked anxious. And, of course, excited. And impatient to get answers to so many questions. "I've submitted applications to all the grad schools I'm applying to, so that's a relief," he said. "I've applied to master's programs at Columbia University, SUNY Buffalo, Northwestern and American. I've also applied to a Ph.D. program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Now I'm moving on to Plan B."

Plan B was searching for and applying to jobs or fellowships in areas where Beal and girlfriend Jenny Kalman '04 are interested in living if they don't go to graduate school immediately. So far, two possibilities top his list: the Scoville Fellowship and a job with PIRG (Public Interest Research Group) in Washington, D.C.

Beal's eyes lit up as he explained: "The Scoville Fellowship provides students with six to twelve months of stipend so they can work at internships for organizations that normally wouldn't be able to pay them money. . . . They have a list of organizations they work with, and if you get the fellowship they ask you which five organizations out of their list you would like to work with and why. Then they move you into one of the organizations."

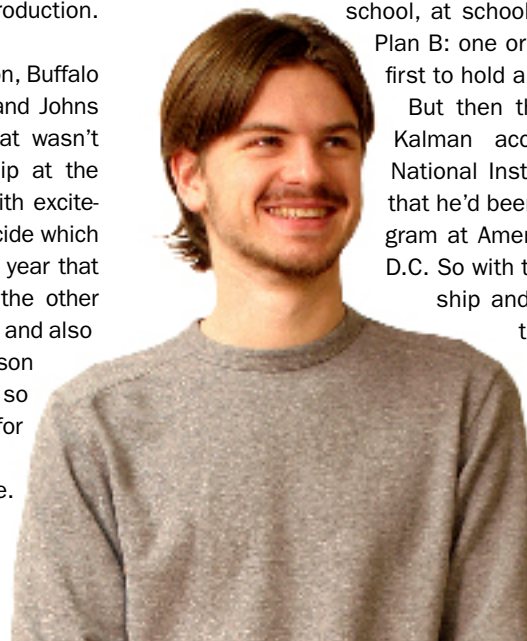
Beal found out about the PIRG program from one of his professors in the Government Department. PIRG has state organizations around the country that work on issues of public interest. It employs campus organizers and researchers and lobbies in Washington. "I'd be most interested in working on campaign finance reform," said Beal, who held an internship at the Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics and Electoral Practices in Augusta during Jan Plan. "It would involve a lot of lobbying, working with senators."

So as of January, Plan A: Beal and Kalman going to graduate school, at schools near each other, right away.

Plan B: one or both of them taking a year off first to hold a job or a fellowship.

But then the roller coaster took a turn: Kalman accepted a fellowship at the National Institutes of Health; Beal learned that he'd been accepted to the master's program at American University in Washington, D.C. So with that acceptance, Jenny's fellowship and the PIRG and Scoville opportunities pending, it looked like

Jenny and Jason would be in Washington for the next year. A host of questions had been whittled down to a few.



With four graduate school applications done and mailed, Kristan Jiggetts was crossing her fingers. She applied to UCLA, the University of Southern California, Loyola Marymount (all in or near Los Angeles) and Columbia College in Chicago. The holiday break took her on a winter training trip to Puerto Rico with the swim team, she took a chemistry course (science requirement fulfilled!) over Jan Plan and her thesis (an analysis of films that target teen audiences) was beginning to take over her life. It was almost enough to keep Jiggetts from thinking 24-7 about her future.

But not quite.

For instance, because she's applying to film and production programs, most of the schools requested writing samples, and she'd been thinking about this. "I sent the screenplay I wrote and almost every creative writing story I've ever written at Colby," Jiggetts said. "But one of the main schools that I want to go to is USC and their application was one sheet, and it said exactly what I needed to write and essentially said, 'If you can't handle answering these questions concisely, then you're not coming here!' They didn't want any materials. I had to write down exactly what my goals are and why I am attracted to this program—in one page. That's more stressful because if I messed up on those eight hundred words, I guess I'm thrown out. It was hard to pare down what I wanted to say."

It is difficult to avoid feeling pressure with graduation looming, especially when some classmates already know where they're headed. "One of my roommates, the economics major, is actually now employed," Jiggetts said. "She got a job in the fall, so she's all set. But the rest of us are still kind of on the fence.

"My parents have been really supportive of the grad school option, which is interesting because I would think that they would just want me to go out and get a job at this point. Every once in a while I say to my mom, 'What if I don't get into grad school and don't get a job either?' She just says, 'Relax. Most people don't know exactly what they're doing. They're not going to have the next thirty years planned out on May twenty-fourth.'"

What if Jiggetts doesn't get into graduate school this time around? "I've been trying to make a contingency plan, but I've also been trying to stay optimistic and think that this is going to work out," she said. "If it doesn't, I guess in March or April I'll have to try to find something else. Most of the jobs I would apply for would open up around that time anyway. I've still been looking around but I haven't found anything.

"Maybe I'll just head out to L.A. to do anything that will get me working on a set. Sometimes I think I should look into something else that interests me, like publishing, but then I keep thinking I should stay with what I feel I would love to do [film] and just go with it until it completely falls apart or until it comes together."

She set a brave smile.

"Either one."



Upbeat Kearney Shanahan was smiling even more than usual. One job offer in. Other options still to consider.

Following two rounds of interviews, Shanahan was offered a position at Cambridge Associates, a consulting firm in Boston.

"The second interview was a full day of five interview sessions focusing on different aspects of your skill and character," Shanahan said. "It's a way to connect personally so that several different people have impressions of you. For a smaller firm, much of what plays into this process is fit—how you fit the firm and how the firm fits you. That was one of the things I was impressed by about their recruiting process."

The next step was a request for a reference (he referred the firm to Dean of Faculty Edward Yeterian). A few weeks later, Shanahan was back at Colby. This was the beginning of Jan Plan and he was working at his part-time job at Pad Thai, a restaurant on College Avenue, when he got a message. Cambridge Associates was extending a job offer and the paperwork would be in the mail the following week. Goodbye Pad Thai; hello Boston!

But that's not all Shanahan had to consider. He'd also been invited to a third round of interviews with Dove Consulting in Boston, and he was invited to (and attended) a weeklong business course in the Netherlands courtesy of Akzo Nobel, an international biotechnology and pharmaceutical company. The invitation came as a surprise.

"I didn't think it was anything," Shanahan said, laughing. "I had written it off. . . . It wasn't advertised well, I was confused about it, I wasn't sure what this business course was. I realized [later] that it's more of an audition, like a very long interview. From what I understand, they're obviously making a commitment to you. I am an investment for them and they are an investment for me because I'm missing a week of school. There's a mutual investment there. Finding which company within Akzo Nobel fits with you is a lot of what this week is about."

Shanahan had given himself a spring deadline to respond to Cambridge Associates, and in the meantime, he had some thinking to do. If he receives offers from Dove and Akzo Nobel, he'll be doing a lot of weighing and comparing. "So I have a small firm, another small firm, but not as small, and an international corporation," he said, warming up to the problem. "I'm comparing two different types of consulting firms: strategy consulting versus investment consulting. And also going straight into biotech, which is what I ultimately want to do, versus doing consulting for a few years first."

So many choices, so little time.



By Abigail Wheeler '04