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Now What? Anxious Colby seniors ponder their next move

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Now What?

Anxious Colby seniors ponder their next move

Senior year at Colby bears a marked resemblance to senior year in high school. Four years ago it was college essays. Now it's grad school applications, résumé revisions and job listings that consume us as we confront the often asked but rarely satisfactorily answered question: "What are you going to do next?"

Colby magazine interviewed four valiant seniors—Kristan Jiggetts, Kearney Shanahan, Jason Beal and Jenny Kalman—and they not only attempted to answer the question but agreed to let Colby eavesdrop on their planning and scheming, from the dramatic to the mundane. In this issue we introduce the foursome; in coming issues we'll offer readers serial peeks at what our seniors are up to. Follow them as they share triumphs and tribulations, public confidence and private worries.

Because Colby doesn't offer a film and television major, Kristan Jiggetts had to blaze her own undergraduate path. "I knew I wanted to go into writing and focus on pop culture, film, anything kind of current and what I would consider exciting," Jiggetts said. "I chose American studies as a major because it combines history, English, sociology and you can pretty much put anything into it, so you can take the best things that you can find and make it to fit you. I also have a concentration in creative writing, on the fiction track. I took screenwriting with Professor [Jenny] Boylan freshman year and I really enjoyed it. . . .

"I think it's really important to make socially responsible film, and I think that's half the problem with the film industry. So that's what my ultimate goal would be—trying to put something positive out there, positive images of people."

Jiggetts crosses her lanky swimmer's legs (she's captain of the swim team) as she explains that she took classes in directing and editing last summer at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts program in Florence, Italy, and she produced a short film called *Ciao, Ciao, Firenze*. At Colby, she's generated a 60-page screenplay.

So far, Jiggetts has got one film program application done—to UCLA. While grad school would be great, she's also considering getting a job after graduation. But how do you break into the film business? She says she's "talking to anyone I know, anybody who knows anybody or anything!"

Still, Jiggetts is worried. "It's funny because one of my roommates is an economics major and so she's been doing this whole job thing . . . she's already had interviews! Am I doing something wrong here? I don't want to be a lifeguard next summer, but is that what it's coming to? So it's been stressful because everybody convinces you that if you don't find a job you're going to be living in your car next year."

Kearney Shanahan has been a COOT leader and a varsity swimmer, and he serves on the Academic Affairs Committee, the Educational Policy Committee for the Board of Trustees, the Task Force on Statement of Values and the Appeals Board. A biology major with aspirations to attend medical school someday, Shanahan still is diversifying his interests and options. This year he's added one more thing—his bid to start a Consulting Club at Colby.

"Consulting works for liberal arts majors," he said. "There's analytical thinking. Multi-tasking. Maybe a little bit of quantitative stuff. It's a broad field; that's why it fits so well with different things that each individual at a liberal arts school can do."

His interest in consulting was sparked at the Amos Tuck School of Business Administration at Dartmouth last summer. "I've always had an interest in government and economics but I didn't major in those. . . . But I still took a lot of econ classes because it's something I enjoy and something that I come easy to. I decided to attend [Tuck] this past summer just to sort of get the experience because you know, we learn theories all through college and once I was able to get my hands on something to work around with, I realized this is something I really enjoy."

Shanahan has had interviews with Cambridge Associates, an investment consulting firm, the CBR Institute for Biomedical Research and Horst, Frisch, Clowery & Finan, Inc., the economic consulting firm. "At the beginning of the year it's like, 'I need a job. I don't care where.' But as you do it and as you talk to more people about different firms, culture, you realize, 'I really don't want to work there,' or 'I really *do* want to work there.' For me, I think that issues of teamwork, and that being what brings a group together and focuses them, are important factors. Because in consulting, if you're at work until midnight, you want to be there with someone you can remotely connect with on a personal level because otherwise it's just going to be miserable."



On Jason Beal's white board are reminders: *Get recommendations from professors* and *Meeting with Career Services—Friday*. "I'm a list individual," he said. "I've got ten different lists, which is clearly inefficient. I've got lists on my board, lists in a notebook, lists in a Trapper Keeper."

Inefficient as he claims his system is, it seems to be working. Beal, a government and philosophy double major from Thomaston, Maine, is juggling applications to five master's programs and one Ph.D. program. He hopes to work in humanitarian aid or on justice issues. Aside from his grad school aspirations, he's president of the Philosophy Club and Amnesty International and plays pick-up soccer.

Applying to competitive grad schools with fingers and toes crossed is nerve-rattling enough, but Beal's options and choices affect his long-time girlfriend, Jenny Kalman '04. With their differing interests in science and humanities, reconciling life after Colby is a concern for both of them.

In comparing the pros and cons of a Ph.D. versus a master's program, Beal said, "A Ph.D. is very time consuming and a little too strictly academic for what I want to do. It might be better if I actually get involved in organizations and try to do some work alongside them."

It also makes a difference in working towards compromise with Kalman. "She needs to be flexible in understanding that when I go to a place [for a master's program], I won't be spending six years [earning the degree]. So the place we choose has to be large enough so that when I finish my program, I can go out and find work in my field."

With deadlines approaching in December, January and February, Beal's white board is getting full. "Career Services knows me very well," he said. "I have weekly meetings and I go in there and complain about things that are bothering me. Not things they're doing wrong, just misconceptions I have and feeling like I don't know what I'm doing." Counselors there helped him sort through the stacks of materials: letters of recommendation from professors, a carefully tailored personal statement, biographical information, transcripts and test scores.

Beal has an internship lined up for Jan Plan at the Maine State Commission on Ethics and Campaign Finance Reform. "I'll be putting together documents for candidates to understand campaign finance laws, what they can and cannot do in accepting gifts to their campaigns. It should be fun stuff."

Jenny Kalman folds her hands in front of her as she matter-of-factly explains her academic goals, not to mention the clubs, jobs and sports she sinks her time—and teeth—into. Kalman, a biology major and chemistry and math double minor from Herndon, Va., plays pick-up soccer, is treasurer of the CIRCLE, works in the Chemistry Help Center and is co-president of the Biology Club. No problem adding a stack of graduate school applications to the melange.

Kalman is applying to several Ph.D. and master's of public health programs to study epidemiology and infectious diseases. "Ph.D. applications are usually due in December and January. But the M.P.H. programs, the applications aren't due until February or March. So I'm anticipating that it could possibly create a problem in which I find out about the Ph.D. programs before I find out about the M.P.H. programs and I have to make a decision to accept."

"But that's not the biggest problem," she confided, brushing blond hair away from her face. "The biggest problem is my long-term boyfriend." His name is Jason Beal, and they've been going out since the first week of freshman year. They live in adjacent singles in Coburn and studied abroad together in Ireland last year. "We're planning to get engaged in the next year and obviously we want to stay together. So, it's not just a matter of getting accepted somewhere and thinking, 'This school is good for me and they have what I want.' It's also, 'Can he go there also, or can he go to a school ten minutes away?' The problem is that we're both very focused on what we want to do. If you look at the magnitude of my desire to study infectious disease, it's matched by his desire to study human rights."

Not only are application deadlines sneaking up, but Kalman is frantically studying for the GRE in biology, an exam that will have a big impact on her future. "When I came here as a freshman, I thought I wanted to study wolves as a wildlife biologist," she said. "As passionate as I was about wolves, that's how I am now about infectious disease."

"I think it'd be really cool to be an investigator in disease outbreaks and have to identify what the pathogen is. Another thing would be working on vaccine development and biotic resistance. I want to help someone out. Which is counterintuitive for me because I think people are awful. When I wanted to study wolves, I was like, 'Yes! I don't want to have anything to do with people!' I don't know why that's changed. I think part of that might be my relationship with Jason. I do want to give back to the world because there's so much good in it, even along with the bad."

By Abigail Wheeler '04