From Us to You, 5 Years in the Future
A gift to the graduating class of 2014,
from the 5th year reunion class of 2009.
Enjoy!
To the Great Class of 2014,

On behalf of the Society of Alumni and the Alumni Relations Office, we share with you this gift from the class of 2009. One week after we officially welcome you to the Society of Alumni at Commencement, the 2009’s will return for their 5th reunion. We asked them to share insights related to their experiences over these past five years and many of their responses are found here. Our hope is that their words will be helpful to you not just as you prepare to leave the Purple Valley but in the years to come. As the breadth of your personal and professional experiences grows, revisit these pearls of wisdom, as they will carry different meaning at different points.

Our thanks go to Michelle Almeida ’13, Alumni Relations Coordinator, who created and curated this inaugural edition of Eph Post. Please let us know what you think as your feedback will help shape future efforts.

We wish you all the best for what the future holds; make sure you take notes that you can share with the Class of 2019 when you’ll return the Eph Post favor!

Dennis O’Shea ’77  
President, Society of Alumni

Brooks Foehl ’88  
Director, Alumni Relations
Greetings Ephs!

Take a second, breathe, and then pat yourself on the back for having made it this far. As the class of 2009 looks back at the last five years, we see that we had so many silly ideas about the way life was supposed to be that it is actually laughable. We hope our little Eph Post will help you realize you are not alone, don’t need to fit a mold, and are probably much more prepared for life outside the Purple Bubble than you might think.

If you don’t have a job yet, that will come. If you are single, there is still time and reunions ahead (yes, Williams reunions can result in unions). If you have a plan see it through as best you can, but, if you don’t, resist the urge to sign up for something you don’t love. It sounds cheesy, but I hope reading our notes will at least save you that lesson.

Inside you’ll find musings on what we have learned. They are here for you; take and use what you will. We don’t have it all figured out, but we are getting a better idea of what “it” actually should be. If anything, we hope our words will encourage you to trust yourself and do what scares you rather than what feels safe.

Hopefully, it will also encourage you to stay in touch and reach out to Ephs. We are all so different, but ask any alum and you’ll hear the same thing. The connection you feel with a fellow Eph is truly rare. We are also quite a lucky and generous bunch. Be there for each other and know that other Ephs are out here waiting to help you.

Till we meet,

Mijon Zulu
Class Secretary, on behalf of the Class of 2009
What was your greatest fear/worry/stressor senior year of college? Why? Are you still fearful/worried/stressed?
QUESTION #1

My greatest worry was not finding gainful employment. 2009 was a tough economy to graduate into. You could find a job, but would it be a job you wanted? Now I’m onto my second position since graduation. That first job seems so important, but it won’t define you.  VICTORIA STANTON, MAINE

I was okay with the idea of my first few jobs after graduation being “just jobs” and not “my calling,” but I was worried that I might never figure out what I really wanted to do. But we’re trained to think deeply and to analyze problems. So by paying close attention, reflecting on my experiences, and talking to as many people as I could, I started to get a hunch about what I wanted to do. From there, it just took a little time for me to feel comfortable taking the plunge and seeing if my hunch was right.  RUTH

My greatest fear, especially towards the end of senior year, was the pressure of finding a job. I thought that if I didn’t have something ready and lined up that I would feel like complete failure. I mean I had done everything the right way, right? Gone to college for 4 years, about to get my degree. So when I hit graduation and still didn’t have anything... and, mind you, still didn’t have anything until the following March, I panicked to a certain degree. That worry and fear though did what it needed — pushed me out of my comfort zone and into a space where I hustled as needed and was pushy about the job search and any contacts I had. When it finally paid off and I had a job (woo hoo!), I was able to look back and see that those few months of unemployment were actually good for me. I was able to evaluate what really mattered to me and where I really saw myself wanting to be as a post-grad. It gave me the space to experiment with my path, and in the end looking back close to five years later, I’m grateful for it.  ANONYMOUS

Greatest fear: employment. Economy was in the tank and with a relatively average GPA; I wasn’t getting any attention from firms. After finding a job and conducting another successful job search, I no longer worry about job search/security since I trust the strength of the Eph network, and know the skills and perspective gained at or after Williams will serve me well.  CAMERON HENRY, NEW YORK CITY

Not getting a job. Feeling unprepared for the workforce. It was a rude awakening to feel like the person I wanted to be at Williams and then have the real world be a hell of a lot harder. But, happily, not stressed at all now. Stay patient, stick with it, and the right things will happen.  ANONYMOUS, WASHINGTON, DC

“How do I get a job? What do I want to do? I have no idea. How will I make money? What did I was all four years here thinking about (was it just the clouds?)? I feel like this is a cliff and I am just falling off it. Oh my. Oh my. Oh my.”

That was usually the dialogue in my head when I began to think at all about life post-purple bubble. But senior year was by far my favorite year because I had the most amazing friendships and I felt confident in myself at Williams. Now I know that the answers only come with gentleness, patience and listening, and it’s the questions that you should aim to live.

WILLIAMS COLLEGE OFFICE OF ALUMNI RELATIONS
I try not to stress, let go of expectations, and make decisions out of love and clarity, not out of lack and fear. I know I have everything I need inside and the world is conspiring as well for my happiness. **DENISE DUQUETTE, BERKELEY, CA**

I wasn't sure I'd find a job and I wasn't sure I would figure out my passion. It felt like I needed to have my whole life planned out once I graduated and I didn't know how to do that. However, once I entered the ‘real world’ I realized no one has it all figured out and you can make short-term choices and keep enjoying the journey of growing up, figuring it all out, and finding what you love. I’ve had a ton of fun since graduating! **ANONYMOUS, NEW YORK CITY, NY**

I was anxious about finishing my senior thesis, interviewing at graduate schools, and doing well in my spring classes (including a Java course that made me feel like Sisyphus!) That year, I tried therapy for the first time. I’m still stressed, and the stressors are bigger (publishing, job searches) but I’ve actually had a more flexible lifestyle (with fewer things to balance) as a PhD student than I did at Williams. **ELISE PIAZZA, SAN FRANCISCO, CA**

After four years of being surrounded by my closest friends, I feared being away from them all. I had built such a close sense of community and I was afraid of it evaporating in the single day after graduation. But Williams continues, and those relationships endure, develop, and become even more enriching and complex. Not only have I maintained and strengthened those friendships, but I’ve also developed new ones across generations through alumni gatherings and the like. The family, as it were, has only gotten bigger and better. **AROOP MUKHARJI**

My greatest fear was losing the amazing friendships I had made over my four years as people began to start their lives around the country (and around the world). While I haven’t stayed in touch with everyone, five years later I still see my core group of friends often, even though we live in different cities. I’ve also lived with other alums that I never would have thought I’d stay friends with — and we’ve become closer than ever. **ANONYMOUS**

Toward the end of senior year, I grew worried that I had used my time in college poorly, and even wondered if it had been a mistake to go at all! Basically I felt I had made an irredeemable mess of things. Five years later, I am less inclined to judge myself so harshly. I found the years of 22 and 23 a challenging time of life and certainly I made a lot of mistakes. But ultimately you have to be able to make mistakes to move forward. **SAM WEINREICH, NEW YORK CITY, NY**

It seemed possible that the task of living on my own, in a different part of the country, would be less fun than college. I quickly learned that it’s just a different sort of fun. **ANONYMOUS**

One difference between the way I viewed the world during my senior year and the way I view it now is where I looked for/found affirmation. When I was younger, I looked to others for approval. But, that was never truly satisfying. It was only when I learned to find it within myself that I stopped worrying about what I was “supposed” to be doing. As my own judge/grader/analyst of my life, I became more comfortable with the present and less afraid of
the unknown. I had experiences after Williams that I never could have imagined senior year... and so my advice to you is to allow yourself the freedom not to know how your path will unfold.  **ALI TOZIER, MAINE**

That I didn’t know what to do next. I had no idea what I wanted to do in life, rather I wanted to do way too many things and had no way to narrow it down. Also, that I wouldn’t find a rewarding job, I applied to probably 50 jobs and got rejected from all of them. Leaving senior year I moved back in with my parents and was a cashier at a grocery store for about 9 months, this was scary and stressful. I’m not worried anymore, it turns out you can just keep doing one random thing after another. Since graduating I have served in the Peace Corps, worked for an NGO abroad, been a farmer, and am now a sous-chef at a vegan restaurant. Life is a great ride and I’m learning to relax and enjoy it.  **CAMILLE BEVANS, WOODBURY, CT**
Describe an unexpected obstacle of the last five years.
QUESTION #2

Living far away from close friends is really tough. I’m so thankful we live in the age of gchat. Also, trust that if you get on a plane, your friends will welcome you with thrilled, open arms. Doesn’t matter how well you’ve kept in touch in the meantime. I also found it hard to form new friendships in “the real world.” They may be farther between, and they may take more time to develop, but they are there. **RUTH**

The hardest part was keeping in touch with friends, real touch and communication. This gets harder when you no longer live 10 minutes away from each other but different cities, different time zones, and different schedules keep you apart. **EM FLYNN, UNITED STATES**

I have always been independent and self-reliant, but I never realized how lucky I was to have a support system — in family, friends, Williams, etc. Maneuvering in the world with less contact with my support system has been more of an obstacle than I had imagined it would be, but it has allowed (forced) me to grow as a person. **ANONYMOUS**

Here is one unexpected obstacle: meeting cool people in a new city. It takes more work than in college. The quality of people outside the purple bubble is lower than you think. Everyone at Williams was pre-screened by admissions, and even so some duds slipped through the cracks. Imagine how bad it is with no screening process! Use your Williams friends as a way to meet new friends. Coolness attracts coolness, so your friends will know where the hidden gems are. **JEFF KAPLAN, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA**

I think the biggest obstacles have been largely internal in that we have complete agency with what we do and when. Of course we can’t control who hires us and how things work out, but it is up to us to leave jobs/change careers/break up with people/move, and it’s really challenging to determine when those things should happen and what the breaking point is to make a decision. **KATHERINE CONAWAY, NEW YORK CITY, NY**

Having majored in Theater my path was already going to be a difficult with no set path ahead of me. But the winding path I discovered to get where I am now was so much more fulfilling than a set A to B. **MORGAN PHILLIPS-SPOTTS, UNITED STATES**

Quitting my first job out of college. I never thought I would quit. It just never occurred to me. But, I have found, that it is important to always push yourself and ask questions, to never settle, and you don’t owe anyone anything (except your kindness, but you can do that from a distance too). You just most importantly and seriously must pursue your divine passion, to the absolute most of your ability. Go after it so hard that yes, you will disappoint people, yes, you will confuse yourself and others, yes, your heart will break, but hell yes will you be alive and learning and free and inspiring - not only others but inspiring your own self. And isn’t that one of the most magical feelings, seeing and experiencing our own brightness from the inside? **DENISE DUQUETTE, BERKELEY, CA**

When there are no finals, or big games, or winter studies on the calendar, suddenly you have to set your own schedule and create your own goal posts. Be proactive! **ANONYMOUS**
My career has in some ways been more challenging than I planned. But the challenges forced me to find what I’m really passionate about, and I’m better for it. ANONYMOUS

It’s not enough to be smart and hardworking. You have to figure out how to specifically add value in the workplace. Find a problem and fix it. ANONYMOUS, WASHINGTON D.C.

First, in school, you are encouraged to study and pursue your interests. Then, generally, you are required to enter the work force and earn a living. There are a lot of great things about both of those experiences, but I was very unprepared for how hard it would be to make them fit together in any kind of coherent way! SAM WEINREICH, NEW YORK CITY, NY

The first time I took my MCAT and got my score back I was pretty certain I would never get into medical school. Oh the agony, the panic! I felt absolutely certain that my future depended on a stupid test and that my dreams were crumbling before my eyes. Well, it turns out that it didn’t matter at all and my fretting was for naught. It’s always good to keep things in perspective! Now when I tutor other students I always tell them that story to keep it lighthearted when the stress sets in. JESSICA KOPCHO, NEW YORK CITY, NY

This might sound silly but I had a really bad breakup with a long term boyfriend a few years after college and I thought I’d never find another relationship again and that I had made the wrong choices and missed out on better people while I had been focusing so much time on him. However, the breakup taught me so much and I honestly wouldn’t take back what happened. Learning about yourself and other people IS incredibly important — just as important as learning about a job or a skill or anything else in your 20s. ANONYMOUS, NEW YORK CITY, NY

My father was diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer and died 9 months later. I never imagined that I would spend a part of my twenties taking care of my ailing parent. I had no idea how to manage my work, social life, and family life during that time and struggled immensely. I was fired from two jobs and, after he died, I couldn’t imagine ever feeling like myself again or how to fix my life.

But, thanks to an amazing family, a support group at the Gilda’s Club, and a program called Landmark Education, I picked myself up, put myself out there, found work that I loved, and found a “new normal”. It feels strange to say it, but I think I am much happier now than I was before all of this happened. I have a strength that I didn’t have before and don’t think that I would trade it for the person I was before. MIJON ZULU, NEW YORK CITY, NY
Describe an unexpected joy of the last five years.
Don’t feel dumb about celebrating the cheap thrills, or the seemingly small accomplishments. You managed to buy groceries on a weeknight? High five! I’ve also embraced my independence in ways I didn’t anticipate, and it’s been deeply rewarding. I highly recommend solo travel, even if you already did some in college. Trips within the US are easier to pull off and no less adventurous.  

RUTH

Some of the best moments have been when I realized that I was doing something teenage-me would have thought was awesome: having hot chocolate and pizza for lunch in Barcelona, going to a huge 90s dance party in NYC, camping in the Sahara, singing karaoke at 4 am with my sister and friends, pitching a project to a big client, and even little things like cooking dinner in my apartment or going to drinks with a group of friends or having a mini Williams reunion.  

KATHERINE CONAWAY, NEW YORK CITY, NY

Supporting myself. Learning how to cook. Realizing that adulthood isn’t that hard, and probably everyone is faking it. Meeting lots of different people.  

ANONYMOUS, WASHINGTON D.C.

Being able to depend on myself. Live on my own. Rely on my creativity, my mind, my body, my health, my spirit to take me through life to all the places, near and far, I imagine and dream about. And when you find that strength within, then you can access a level of relationship with the rest of the world that is more harmonious and peaceful and playful and free. Life becomes abundant.  

DENISE DUQUETTE, BERKELEY, CA

It’s been so fun to watch my friends (both Eph and non-Eph) take new steps and slowly but surely continue to turn from clueless kids into semi-clueless adults.  

SAM WEINREICH, NEW YORK CITY, NY

Developing a passion for food and cooking (inspired by my lard-powered Romanian husband).  

ELISE PIAZZA, SAN FRANCISCO, CA

No homework! I still love to read and try new things, but I get to do it on my terms.  

VICTORIA STANTON, MAINE

Discovering that I had been taught to think better than most. I may not have taken the best technical classes, but I could write and think critically at a higher level. It was a joy to discover that although I was outmatched with respects to training and networks, I could surpass that if given the chance.  

HENRY TED KERNAN, DENVER, CO

I fell in love with a beautiful girl who calls me on my shit and holds me to the highest regard. I really am my best self with her, and I can’t believe how lucky I am to have her in my life every day.  

CAMILLE BEVANS, WOODBURY, CT

My crew teammate, friend, and college sweetheart proposed to me last May and we are getting married this summer. It wasn’t necessarily unexpected at the time, but at Williams
I always wondered if I would end up marrying a fellow Eph! Here we are, almost 6 years into our relationship and still going strong.  

**JESSICA KOPCHO, NEW YORK CITY, NY**

Job/grad school progression has been amazing, but perhaps it’s to be expected. As cheesy as this may sound, I think my engagement with Williams as an alum has been one of the most surprising positive experiences in the past five years. I volunteer for Williams and have gotten to know my classmates better, and become close friends with those within my own year (and well beyond!) who I never knew well while on campus. My alumni experience is transforming into something as rewarding as my student one!  

**CAMERON HENRY, NEW YORK CITY, NY**

One of the joys of the last 5 years has been being a member of the Alumni Society. It was tough to appreciate or really understand the bond shared by alumni as a student. After all, in the “Purple Bubble,” you were always surrounded by smart, wonderful, and caring people. In the “real world” these meetings by nature are far less frequent, but all the more meaningful. There is no greater feeling than blindly running into a fellow Eph! They are almost always some of the most loyal, helpful people!  

**RAHUL BAHL, STAMFORD, CT**

One thing that has been incredibly wonderful is the generosity of Ephs and their eagerness to connect with other Ephs. But more importantly, I feel happy and comfortable with myself and my choices in friends, significant others, jobs, organization memberships, etc. I have taken big steps in my life, too - I bought a condo last year, which has given me a sense of belonging and responsibility to my community.  

**ANONYMOUS**

Regularly singing with a group of Williams alums, none of whom I knew before graduating.  

**ANONYMOUS**

I joined a glee club and a barbershop quartet and have won or placed in the top three of our Spring Quartet competition for the past four years. I also started playing volleyball again in city leagues and this brought back a competitive edge that I haven’t had since high school. When I started playing volleyball, I had to reteach myself the game, but I have grown immensely. This spring, my team that played in a National League placed top 8 out of 27 teams at the New York tournament and my city league team won gold in our division’s end of season tournament.

The confidence and joy that I have shared through these activities have transformed my life and reenergized me for the work week.  

**MIJON ZULU, NEW YORK CITY, NY**

My friends and my new experiences. I was so focused senior year on what I was saying good-bye to or ‘losing’ once my education concluded and I had to say goodbye to being a student and to all the wonderful things being a student brought. However, I soon learned that you can always be a student if you choose, and you never lose your friends and your memories. I found I never really did say goodbye after all, my friends and experiences stayed with me and I then found once I graduated that I was saying hello to a million new people and experiences out in the world and I absolutely love it.  

**ANONYMOUS, NEW YORK CITY, NY**
The greatest unexpected joy of the last five years is being able to reconnect with family and friends I grew up with. Being in Williamstown for four years, while beautiful in its own right, had distanced me from the beauty of day to day relationships with family and friends. I realized upon moving back home after graduation how much I had missed in those four years being away, and for the past five year I have loved getting to reaffirm those connections. 

ANONYMOUS

A few years out of Williams, I took a new job close to my hometown where my parents still live. I then made the bold decision to temporarily move back in with my parents to save a little money. I was so nervous that I would be judged by my peers as “a failure” that I almost decided against this decision. But, I went ahead with it and I ended up having the most wonderful few months reconnecting with my mom and dad. After this job, I subsequently moved away again to go to graduate school. Yet I will never regret that time I shared with them. I am so glad that I wasn’t ultimately swayed by what others would think of me.

Make your decisions because they are right for you and don’t think twice about how you might be perceived! 

ANONYMOUS
What has been the most impactful decision you have made between graduation and now?
QUESTION #4

The first job I took. It defined where I lived, how I lived, what I expect to earn the rest of my life, and what I did for my master’s degree. I did not realize what an important decision I was making at the time.  
HENRY TED KERNAN, DENVER, CO

Taking the job that scares me most. I had the chance to move into sales, which was a little outside of my comfort zone but I thought it would also teach me the most. I think challenging yourself in your 20s in the years following graduation offers a really good lesson and experience.  
ANONYMOUS, NEW YORK CITY, NY

Joining the Peace Corps. Yes, it’s a cliché, but it changed my life. I don’t think it is for everyone, but it is an amazing experience. I learned how to be alone, rely on myself, and how to get along better with people from many walks of life. It was a hard journey, and I’m still suffering the health impacts, but I would choose to do it again in a heartbeat.  
CAMILLE BEVANS, WOODBURY, CT

I moved abroad. I helped a friend start a non-profit from scratch in Guatemala. We had no idea what the hell we were doing, but we learned to embrace the uncertainty and somehow, because of our passion, we made it happen. I will never trade that experience for the world. I learned so much. I lived my days in dog-years, met beautiful souls I never would have, gained a completely different and expanded worldview by living in a different location, economy, culture. I explored and adventured and made shit happen. I failed almost everyday. I learned to live with it. I’m still learning to live more compassionately with it.  
DENISE DUQUETTE, BERKELEY, CA

Moving to California. Just do it. You’re only young once and if you have any desire to try it out, find your opportunity and go for it.  
PATTY LIAO, SAN FRANCISCO, CA

The most impactful decision I have made is moving to DC for grad school and a job. Uprooting myself from my comfort zone has changed almost every aspect of my life. It has given me a sense of agency — I am making my own decisions because they are the decisions I want to make, not because they are what is expected of me.  
ANONYMOUS

Choosing the University of Calgary over the University of Saskatchewan to attend veterinary school. Chose a new program, with small class sizes and more hands on versus a proven reputation.  
MALLORY GREEN, CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA

The most impactful decision I’ve made since graduation was to go for my Master’s degree (in Education). If you’re like me, you might not know what your professional passion is when you graduate from Williams. Take your time in finding it and don’t compare yourself to all those former classmates who seem to be gaining crazy amounts of success immediately. Keep moving forward and keep learning about yourself with each new step you take. Williams graduates are privileged to have a wonderful education and powerful networks. Use this privilege deliberately and positively.  
ANONYMOUS
I was a music/psych major at Williams, and yet I am starting this fall at Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons. I went from teaching music, to research, to nursing school, to Columbia postbac program, to medical school. Each of those decisions has had a huge impact on my life and led me to the path I am on now. If you’re not on the right path, leave for a different one!  

JESSICA KOPCHO, NEW YORK CITY, NY

Deciding NOT to go to graduate school was a revelation for me. I kept telling everyone I would, but deep down I didn’t really want to. I was just embarrassed that I wasn’t “achieving” more after Williams. It took a couple years to get over that feeling of inadequacy. You don’t have to save the world to be successful, happy and lead a full life.  

VICTORIA STANTON, MAINE

Deciding to marry my best friend. It was an impactful but very easy decision.  

ELISE PIAZZA, SAN FRANCISCO, CA

The most impactful decision since graduation that I made was to live at home. It sounds dorky and lame at first, especially after having lived on my own for all of my time at Williams. However, I decided to live at home after Williams mainly because I knew what I wanted for myself. The next place I lived in, I wanted to own outright, and I knew that paying rent, utilities, etc. was not going to get me there faster. So I decided to spend 2-3 years at home saving up until I had enough for a down payment on a place. I’m happy to say I was able to accomplish that this past year.  

ANONYMOUS

I listened to how unhappy I was and reset my life. After a year in Boston and a year out of college, I realized that I was tired of living far away from home and I didn’t want to work in education. I moved home to NYC, found a new job and felt reenergized by returning to my family. I don’t think that we need to feel trapped in a particular type of work or location. Go where you think you need to be and be close to people that you care about.  

MIJON ZULU, NEW YORK CITY, NY

For me, I’ve made my major decisions based on what experience I thought I would regret if I didn’t do them. I’ve passed up a couple opportunities that would’ve meant more traditional success in terms of career / title / income. It’s been a hard path, but ultimately, I don’t think I’d feel like I was doing the right thing for myself otherwise. Plus, the more you make those choices, the more options you see and that find you.  

KATHERINE CONAWAY, NEW YORK
Briefly recount a great adventure you have experienced since graduation.
QUESTION #5

I moved to Argentina for a year after graduating from Williams to figure out “what I wanted to do with my life” — while I still don’t know what I want to do with my life, I met lots of interesting people, perfected my Spanish, learned about wines, ate great steaks, took road trips, and danced a lot. It was perfect. I also bought a condo. That was an adventure, too, but a very different one — be prepared for lots of surprises if you buy a house. ANONYMOUS

My greatest adventure since graduating was living in France for a year. I was able to find a teaching job there that allowed me to explore Europe and learn about different cultures. There are lessons to be learned from living abroad that you just can’t learn in any other way. It isn’t only seeing new places, but it is experiencing different ways to live life and opening your mind to new possibilities. Every day is a challenge and an adventure. Don’t wait to travel, and don’t be a tourist — really get out there and let it change you! ANONYMOUS

Traveling to Japan to present my research at an international conference and to visit my freshman roommate (Yasmin Saaka), pursuing her passion of drawing comics in Tokyo! ELISE PIAZZA, SAN FRANCISCO, CA

When my first year Williams roommate came to visit me in Alberta and we visited two National Parks, went hiking and she got to visit the farm where I grew up. The friends you make at Williams are friends forever, no matter how much time passes between seeing each other. MALLORY GREEN, CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA

Traveling to Europe with 2 close friends and one brother (all Williams alums) and paying our way across Europe for 5 weeks from coins we made from street singing. AROOP MUKHARJI

To celebrate new years, my girlfriend and I traveled with two of our best friends to the waterfalls. It was a couple of hours to get there by bicycle (ok it took me 8 hours, I’m not a cyclist), but man was it worth the view. In fact, we were having such a good time we decided to spend two nights there instead of one. Sadly, we didn’t bring enough food so our second day there we lived on badly cooked rice with tomato paste soup and rationing our last orange. Needless to say, by the time we started to ride home we were all a bit hungry. Well, while we had been there a bush fire had started, so to get home we had to ride on a small path between fields up in flames. It was literally starvation behind us, or the fire in front of us, and I really thought we would die. Instead, I discovered the true meaning of fight or flight, and I think I biked faster than ever before, talk about an adrenaline rush! CAMILLE BEVANS, WOODBURY, CT

On a whim, I decided to travel to Ireland in between jobs. I landed in Dublin three days after booking my flight, and had dinner with my JA and an entrymate/teammate who were both there for work. I proceeded to drive 1,000 miles in a week around the country without any hotel reservations or preconceived plans. Its arguably the best spontaneous decision I’ve ever made. I also traveled to Mexico with two close friends from Williams and had some amazing experiences there. CAMERON HENRY, NEW YORK CITY, NY
This past year my friends and I decided to take a 5-year anniversary trip to Texas. It was the first time we’d all been back in the same place since college. It was so easy to fall back into that friendship that I can’t believe we had ever been apart. New adventures were made and many Williams stories were shared. If and when you can, adventure to new places with old friends- definitely worth it!  

EM FLYNN, UNITED STATES

Living in Colorado. I never realized this state had it all! HENRY TED KERNAN, DENVER, CO

I drove a Mustang convertible down Highway 1 in Northern California, and listened to classic rock music. ANONYMOUS

Last year, I did something I have never done. I went to California for the first time to attended Coachella. I booked a flight and flew out to San Francisco to meet up with my friend Sue. We spent a little over a week road tripping down to Indio, attending the concert during the weekend, and then driving back up to San Fran. At Coachella, our house was full of Ephs and we spent the weekend bringing Camp Williams to Cali. I cannot think of single moment where Sue and I didn’t find moments to laugh, bond, share stories, and feel closer than ever. The whole trip was a week of bliss and I carried that with me all summer long.

After you leave the Purple Bubble, you will feel like you have lost many friends, but they are actually just waiting for you to reach out. Even when life is crazy busy, take time to see old friends. You will be enriched. MIJON ZULU, NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

Living abroad in general was a great adventure. Even though I worked full time, because it was as a teacher in a school, it mainly felt like studying abroad with more responsibility. I loved being in another country; it made daily life seem exciting and interesting even in the mundane or frustrating moments. It is harder to feel like life in the U.S. is exciting in every moment, but it really all is a great adventure, which is what I am working on remembering. KATHERINE CONAWAY, NEW YORK CITY, NY

Traveling in general has been a great adventure. I would argue that any additional disposable income you have after savings, paying off debt, and living expenses should be spent on experiences versus things. I have saved and been able to go to Ireland, France, Australia and many trips to cool new places in the US since I graduated. I’ve also put money towards classes, experiences and adventures around Manhattan and they are far more enriching than the newest shirt I purchased. Go travel!! ANONYMOUS, NEW YORK

Not to sound cliche, but LIFE has been a great adventure! I would never have guessed when I graduated that I would be where I am today. I’ve lived in Italy, New York and California; taught music; tutored biology; done research in psychiatry; traveled all over the world; gone to nursing school; taken classes at three different colleges; will soon be marrying my best friend; and am now going to start medical school in a few months. I’ve changed career paths at least 3 times in 5 years and have finally found my calling. It’s been a great adventure to say the least! JESSICA KOPCHO, NEW YORK CITY, NY
While I suspected it at the time, I now know that the most exciting period of my life was the time between graduation in June of 2009 and joining GE in January of 2010. It was the first time in my life I wasn’t actively working towards a specific goal. I mowed grass at my golf club and played as much golf as possible. Then, I took my meager savings and spent a month in Europe, immersing myself in the art and culture of Rome, Paris, Vienna, Prague and 14 other cities. It helped me appreciate the importance of having fun and not taking life too seriously...I had my entire life ahead of me to do “adult things!” RAHUL BAHL, STAMFORD, CT

Ultimately there has been no single great adventure. Just the daily work of confronting yourself, coming to terms with yourself, and using whatever understanding you’ve gained to become a better relative, partner and friend. That work continues in cubicles, in foreign countries, in houses and apartments, in cars, in airplanes, in kayaks, on hiking trails, through emails — it’s just as present in the ‘mundane’ as in the ‘meaningful.’ And it never stops.

SAM WEINREICH, NEW YORK CITY, NY
Open-ended! Share what you’d like.
Congratulations! Your life is just beginning. Cherish the time you spent at Williams, but enjoy the next 5 years as you continue to figure out who you are and what you want to get out of life WITHOUT the burden of homework. (Unless you’re in grad school ;)) Good luck!  

EM FLYNN, UNITED STATES

I’m just so happy for everyone graduating in the Class of 2014. This is a huge milestone, and there’s so much more ahead of you. You will always have the Williams network, and don’t ever be shy about reaching out.  

VICTORIA Stanton, MAINE

Use the Eph network — for your social life, for career networking, etc. I have learned that we are incredibly lucky that there are so many interesting and dedicated Ephs throughout the world and they are always excited to talk to other Ephs.  

ANONYMOUS

Things don’t always work out exactly as you plan, but everything happens for a reason and you grow and learn from all your experiences in life and they make you a better person as a result. Never stop aiming for the stars; a Williams education sets you up for any career you desire!  

MALLORY GREEN, CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA

Best work advice: be resourceful. Become a solutions-provider instead of a problem starter. Keep asking questions! But exhaust all available resources to find answers before outsourcing your concerns.

Cultivate the ability to go with the flow while exerting influence over your life’s path. Making minor tweaks that allow you to progress and remain content is a much healthier, more sustainable strategy than hitting the reset button each year.

And stay engaged with Williams, however you can! Volunteer, attend regional events, return to campus, and stay connected with friends. Life will be all the richer for it.  

CAMERON HENRY, NEW YORK CITY

No matter what you do and how much you rely on technology, data, and numbers, never forget about the “humanity” and the “feel good” aspects of what you do.  

PATTY LIAO, SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Don’t be fooled that college is your best four years of life. Just wait til you’re an alum...!  

AROOP MUKHARJI

For me graduation was really scary. Everyone says college is the best time of your life and how much they miss it. College was a lot of fun, and I do miss it sometimes, but life is better. In fact, life is f*ing awesome! So don’t stress too much, and if you are looking for words of wisdom read Neil Gaiman’s “Make Good Art”  

CAMILLE BEVANS, WOODBURY, CT

Listen to Baz Luhrmann - Everybody’s Free To Wear Sunscreen once a year and try to listen to the advice. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTJ7AzBIJIo  

MIJO ZULU, NEW YORK, NY
Do one thing for five years, or do a different thing every year for five years. Just do things. You’ll be fine. **ANONYMOUS**

Don’t fear graduation; just choose to treat the world beyond it as an extended classroom. You can always learn and grow. Travel and stay in touch with your friends and strive to meet new people, both your age and younger and older— it is great to have the perspective of people at different stages in their lives to balance yours. Plan adventures, try new things, take classes, enjoy life. While there will be bumps in the road, you have been well prepared to make the most of the rest of your life if you so choose. Congrats! **ANONYMOUS, NEW YORK**

So many of my Williams friends, myself included, had no idea what they wanted to do after graduation. Some of them still don’t know. I can’t emphasize how much more common that is than you’d think, and that it’s OK to take your time finding your way. There is such an emphasis on “becoming an adult” as fast as possible, but just because you’re not sure where your life is taking you doesn’t mean you’re falling behind. It’s a process, and learning what you love takes time. There’s nothing wrong with a meandering road! **JESSICA KOPCHO, NEW YORK CITY, NY**

When I graduated from Williams, I was paralyzed by the fear of making the wrong decision moving forward. There were so many ifs and so many worries, but the trick to overcoming was to just start.

After starting, I think the best thing I have done since graduation was quit things. I now do things for as long as I learn from them, but then when I stop developing from the experience, I move on. From this, I have learned more about myself and who I want to be than I ever would have by sticking to a job, friendship or a grad program out of principle. Quitting is scary, especially as a driven Eph who is used to a track, but quitting has been the most necessary evil for forward progress. **ANONYMOUS**

Find a quiet corner away from everything else — family, friends, work, society — and be really honest with yourself about what it means to be successful. You should be proud of the choices you make and the life you pursue. **ANONYMOUS**

Never. Stop. Learning. Never. Stop. Dreaming. Create your own rituals. Treat each day as sacred. Take care of yourself, take care of your family. Life is today, and you are divine. **DENISE DUQUETTE, BERKELEY, CA**