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Opportunities will present themselves

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Quad 136

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Opportunities Will Present Themselves



Photo: Haley Plotkin

At its best, a liberal arts education teaches students to learn how to learn, which, combined with critical thinking skills, communication skills and the ability to synthesize information, makes the liberally educated student capable of doing many things.

The classic liberal arts story has a humanities major finding a career path that takes him or her far from their undergraduate major. For example, writer [Michael Lewis](#) was an art history major before he became a bond trader, then author of *Liar's Poker* and *Moneyball*, or closer to home, Denis McDonough '92 was a history and Spanish major who has managed to have some success in the world of politics (currently he serves as the White House Chief of Staff).

Recent grad [Casey Wojtalewicz '11](#) has a nice twist on the benefits of a liberal arts education. Rather than pursuing his passion for music and majoring in the arts at SJU, Casey opted for Peace Studies. While maybe not exactly as practical as accounting, Peace Studies allowed him to follow his passion for activism. Music, on the other hand, “always seemed just a hobby. I didn’t think it (was) realistic to pursue it as a career. That was just a dream,” he said.

But like a good liberal arts student, Casey was fully engaged outside the classroom where music continued to be part of his extra-curricular education. His pursuit of a holistic education while at Saint John’s paid off with an offer to become the drummer for the group [Cayucas](#), an up and coming LA-based band. (They will be performing in Minneapolis at 7th Street Entry on March 7th.) Casey attributes his opportunity to ultimately pursue his musical passion to being “well-rounded and grounded” when he left CSB and SJU.

Casey tells a nice story about a conversation he had with former SJU President Dietrich Reinhart who advised him not to worry too much about planning an explicit career path. Br. Dietrich said, “Opportunities will present themselves to you.”

And that is liberal arts advice to drum by.

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Michael Hemesath is the 13th president of Saint John's University. A 1981 SJU graduate, Hemesath is the first layperson appointed to a full presidential term at SJU. You can find him on Twitter [at] [PrezHemesath](#).