

Bryan Jones

Prof. Clauss

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### Why I Should Stay at Notre Dame for Summer School

As a freshman swimmer at Notre Dame, I know what is best for my training. As such, I believe that I should stay at Notre Dame over the summer to continue swimming with my teammates. I am writing a letter to my parents, who are likely opposed to this for financial and personal reasons. I believe that my letter will serve its purpose because my parents are likely to be persuaded by my argument since they know that I know what is best for myself. Hopefully, if writing this letter to my parents proves successful, they will let me stay at Notre Dame over the summer to both continue swimming with my teammates and take my difficult second year classes ahead of time.

Dear Mom and Dad,

Let me thank you yet again for sending me to Notre Dame. I love it here and I couldn't be more appreciative for the sacrifices you guys have made for me to be able to attend this university. I am more academically stimulated than ever, and I'm getting along so well with everyone on the swim team. Also, as you noticed when you were here for the meet against Pittsburgh, my swimming has greatly improved already. And mom, at the Ohio State Invite after my 500, you even said, "let me see that beautiful stroke again in your mile." As much as I miss you guys and New Jersey, I'm starting to feel at home here. Because of how successful I've been thus far, I'm strongly considering staying here for the summer to continue training with Notre Dame. I know you guys would miss me a lot if I didn't come home this summer, and I know that it may be very costly, but I truly believe that if I stay at school this summer I would be able to make massive improvements in my swimming and even take two of my harder classes ahead of time.

First and foremost, I would like to stay this summer so that I can continue training with my teammates. Since joining the team, I've done some of the best training that I've ever done because of the fierce level of competition that is much greater than what I had back home. The men that I train with on the team are all just as motivated as I am and extremely talented. These guys keep me going even when I'm worn out and are quick to congratulate me on a good set. In late November, one day the distance group's main set was 50 x 100 on the 1:05. This is a grueling set that requires swimming at a consistently fast pace for almost an hour straight with only five to six seconds rest after every 100. The sprinters finished their main set before us and, without being asked to do so by the coaches, lined up and down my lane to cheer on Deters, Woogie, and me. I was so proud to be a member of the Notre Dame Men's Swimming when I was getting ready to push off for number fifty as the sprinters were shouting "Go Bryan!" in my face. Being in such a motivating, competitive atmosphere has no doubt had a positive impact on my swimming.

Consider the difference in ability of the people I could be training with this summer. My group at Wahoos, Senior A1, is a diluted National Team – those of us with Nationals cuts are stuck with lesser swimmers because of time and space constraints. At Wahoos, the age and talent of the swimmers vary greatly. My in-practice times are faster than the shave and taper times of most of the guys in our group (not to mention the girls that are in our group also). Needless to say, this is not very conducive to fast swimming. At Notre Dame, I train with men who are all of a similar talent level, which gives me many people to race against in practice everyday. Here at school, in the distance group I usually swim next to Tom Smith. In freestyle sets, we're always in a dead heat because our 500 and mile times are so close together. Competing against Smitty is so exciting for me, since he is one of the fastest swimmers on the team all-around. Just knowing

that I can keep up with that caliber of swimmer because of my improvements here at Notre Dame help me to push harder every day.

Also consider the type of attention that I would receive this summer at either place. Even though I would be in a five or six person “A+” interval this summer, Senior A1 is a group of forty-five people during the summer. These forty-five people all have a wide array of needs that the coaches must attend to. On the other hand, if I stay at Notre Dame this summer, I’d be one of only a hand full of swimmers – last summer there were six to stay. With two full time coaches, that gives a swimmer to coach ratio of 3:1, which is far better than Wahoos’ 15:1.

I certainly don’t have anything against the Wahoos coaching staff. I respect them as coaches and professionals, and I have also become closer friends with Bowser since I graduated Wahoos. No matter how good a coach is, however, it is not possible to devote as much attention to each of the fifteen swimmers as another coach could devote to three swimmers. Everyday at school, Teller and Johnson work with the distance group. These two coaches are frequently able to pull me aside and give me valuable technique assistance since the two of them are watching the five distance swimmers. If Teller and Johnson were in charge of thirty swimmers, I doubt that they could possibly have given me as much help.

Beyond the in-pool training, another integral part of why I’ve gotten so much better since August is because of the superior weight program. Over the summer, the guys at Notre Dame lift four times per week. Back home, Wahoos doesn’t lift at all during the summer. Even if Wahoos did lift as often as we do here, it would not even be comparable to the Notre Dame weight regiment. Our strength coach, Lisa Morris, is extremely qualified for her job as she is certified by the United States Weightlifting Federation and National Strength Coaches Association. She provides expert support and technique help for us and is able to create unique workouts that are

specially fitted to the needs of swimmers. For instance, we do many exercises like pull ups and free weights that emphasize working muscle groups together, rather than just isolating one group. This is invaluable in swimming because swimming is obviously a full body exercise in which all muscle groups must work in harmony.

Back home, all we had were some trainers at a local gym who were lazier than us. They were lackadaisical in their approach to our lifting program and failed to give us adequate technique help. In fact, many times Paddy and I were in charge of teaching the underclassmen how to lift and choosing our workout for the day. Without the proper technique training that I receive from E every single time I'm in the weight room, it would be very easy to deteriorate, or even blow out, my knees while doing squats. This would explain why my joints no longer ache after lifting like they did last year.

I can certainly concede that there is a financial issue at hand. Even though we aren't exactly standing in the bread line, the cost of this summer program is not quite pocket change. But, you have to consider the money that you'd actually be saving while I'm away. First off, you aren't paying the Notre Dame coaches like you would be paying the Wahoos coaches. The Wahoos summer program is approximately \$900. And don't forget our travel meets. This past summer, the trip to NBAC was \$450, Penn State was another \$500, and Junior Nationals was \$1100. This summer coming up, I plan to attend both World Championship Trials (in Federal Way, Washington) and US Open (Indianapolis, Indiana). Considering the cost of National meets last summer, I can only imagine how much it would cost to go to two this year with the rising costs in airfare. If I stay at Notre Dame this summer, the swim team will pay for my meet entry fee and cost of travelling for these national meets. After adding in costs such as technical suits,

goggles, and other things that Notre Dame provides for me, you would save another sizable amount of money.

Then there is also the most important reason I came to Notre Dame, academics. From a practical standpoint, staying over the summer would lighten my workload in my upcoming sophomore year. If I take the two intensive one week courses that are offered, I gain six credits up front. Then, I'd also take a science (Organic Chemistry) and probably a math (Calculus 3), leaving me with somewhere around fifteen credits. So, I'd have taken enough credits that I can considerably lighten my workload for next year.

If I take just two classes by themselves this summer, it will be much easier to focus on them. You two have always been the biggest advocates of success in the classroom. Without the added homework, obligations, and tests of other classes to worry about, I will be able to devote myself much more fully to each of my classes. Having this extra time to dedicate to my classes would allow me to get a better grade in those classes, which would in turn boost my GPA, etc. Considering how difficult Organic Chemistry is, it would be great to be able to take it in the low-stress environment of summer school.

Before making my decision that I want to stay for the summer, I talked it over with Pat Lincoln. Pat is a sophomore who stayed over the summer after his freshman year. Since there are no long course pools near his home, and the Notre Dame training is far better than anything available for him back home, he took full advantage of the option to stay. He told me that the combination of intensive in-pool training and weight training have clearly paid off for him and that he feels much stronger in the pool because of it. In fact, at Ohio State this year he went 49.70 in the 100 fly. Last year, he was only able to go a 50.81. He said that he would strongly suggest it to anyone for the reasons that I have already mentioned in this letter.

So, mom and dad, I really hope that you'll take my proposition into consideration. As you can see, staying at Notre Dame for the summer would be best for me academically and athletically. Yes, I will miss you guys a lot but I think that this is definitely for the better. But think about it this way though. Four years of college is not very long, it's only a quick part of my life. I'll be done swimming at the end of my college career and I want to be able to go out with a bang. Don't you think I should "seize the day" now and stay over the summer to get as good as possible? When you see how well I swim at World Championship Trials and US Open you'll know that you made the right choice in letting me stay. Thanks a lot for your support in everything I do.

Love,

Bryan