Cazenovia College's first year students are introduced to the college’s academic expectations through the First Year Summer Reading Program. Each year, Cazenovia College’s First Year Program selects and assigns a significant book for first year students to read prior to their arrival at the college in the fall. This year the program has selected **The Last Lecture** by Randy Pausch

As this excerpt from the book's website explains, Professor Pausch’s last lecture was both part of an academic tradition and a unique variation on that tradition:

>A lot of professors give talks titled “The Last Lecture.” Professors are asked to consider their demise and to ruminate on what matters most to them. And while they speak, audiences can’t help but mull the same question: What wisdom would we impart to the world if we knew it was our last chance? If we had to vanish tomorrow, what would we want as our legacy?

>When Randy Pausch, a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon, was asked to give such a lecture, he didn’t have to imagine it as his last, since he had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. But the lecture he gave—“Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams”—wasn’t about dying. It was about the importance of overcoming obstacles, of enabling the dreams of others, of seizing every moment, (because “time is all you have...and you may find one day that you have less than you think”). It was a summation of everything Randy had come to believe. It was about living.

*The Last Lecture* will be introduced as part of Summer Orientation, and will be discussed during Fall Orientation. Following the fall discussion, students will submit an essay based on the book to their First Year Seminar instructor. All student work will receive credit in the First Year Seminar, and the best work will be awarded prizes by the First Year Program.

**Turn this page over for more information about the essay assignment.**

1Introductory remarks and epigraph taken from The Last Lecture website<http://www.thelastlecture.com>. 
**Cazenovia College Summer Reading Program**

**Essay assignment on The Last Lecture**

One thing is absolutely clear after either reading or viewing *The Last Lecture*—Randy Pausch is devoted to his chosen field. He loves being a teacher—indeed, in one of his last acts on earth, he chooses to teach. (His goal: “how to teach my children what I would have taught them over the next twenty years.” ix).

*The Last Lecture* is stuffed with lessons from Pausch-as-teacher—all of which can be discussed on their own merit (“Know Where You Are”..."Never Give Up”...”Be a Communitarian”). But for this paper, let us use *The Last Lecture* to illuminate what Pausch did for a career, and what you are about to embark upon at Cazenovia College—the experience of a “higher” education.

After reading *The Last Lecture*, offer your judgment as to what, of the many lessons in *The Last Lecture*, is either the most useful thing a college freshman should be taught, or the one thing that you expect to be taught as a college freshman. Defend that choice, using quotes/examples from *The Last Lecture* to support your argument.

**Essay assignment timeline:**

- *The Last Lecture* introduced in summer orientation by Cazenovia College faculty member and students given essay assignment.
- **Sunday, August 30**: Students share ideas about the book and the writing assignment with each other, faculty, and master students at fall orientation lunch.
- **Wednesday, September 2**: Essays are due at the first class meeting of First Year Seminar. Essays are the first graded assignment for First Year Seminar.
- Best paper in each seminar gets prize and is entered into overall First Year essay competition.
- Best essays overall named by panel of judges and awarded grand prizes at a ceremony to be held by the end of September.

**Essay format:**

- Your essay is to be a minimum of 750 words long.
- Your essay must be computer generated using Times New Roman and size 12 font.
- Double space your essay using appropriate paragraph structure with valid topic sentences. Grammar and usage do count!
- Provide an introduction with a thesis statement, a body, and a conclusion.
- Cite a minimum of five specific passages from the book using either **MLA** or **APA** style citation to support your argument.
- You are welcome to include computer-generated images or other written sources to help make your points but these sources must be included in a works cited or reference page.