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Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 4:22 PM
To: [fulltimefaculty](#); [adjunctfaculty](#)
Subject: Provost's Notes: What Students Have Been Told

Happy Monday, Faculty –

First, I'd like to send a big thank you to the adjunct faculty who participated in the Adjunct Educators Conference on Saturday. I hope you had all your questions answered, but if not, please feel free to send them my way. I'm also looking forward to welcoming our full-time faculty back on campus on Wednesday.

For today's *Provost's Notes*, I thought I'd give you a general rundown of the communication students are receiving from the college related to the Fall 2020 semester. Throughout the spring and summer, we communicated with students about various topics: CARES Act relief payments, Technology Grants, plans to reopen in the fall semester with seated classes, and the incentive to take all classes online (which worked! As of this morning, online enrollment is up 46% and for the first time, OTC Online is our biggest location, with more enrollment than the Springfield campus).

Beginning in early July, the college made a concerted push with communication about fall semester protocols. Here's the information students have received:

- **Mask Requirement:** In addition to what has been publicized in the news and on social media, we have sent emails to Fall 2020 applicants and enrolled students that masks will be required at OTC.
- **Academic Calendar Changes:** We also informed students about the changes to the academic calendar (Fall Break canceled, Thanksgiving break extended).
- **Final Reminders:** This week, another round of emails and texts will go out as last-minute reminders about good hygiene practices and the mask requirement.
- **Attendance Agreement:** Starting in July, students who logged on to myOTC to register were presented with an attendance agreement that reinforces the mask requirement and explains that if they have COVID-19 symptoms, they should stay home. This agreement must be acknowledged before the system allows the student to progress to registration or change their schedule.
- **Social Media:** OTC's social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have been alive with our "Healthy at OTC" campaign. You'll see more of that campaign this week as well.

FULL-TIME FACULTY DEVELOPMENT DAYS

Full-time faculty will meet virtually on Wednesday, August 19 at 9:30 a.m. After that, we'll have the Academic Town Hall. Both meetings will be available at this Zoom link:

<https://otc.zoom.us/j/99775495865>

The agenda for Faculty Development Days is posted at: <https://faculty.otc.edu/center/faculty-development-days/>

THINGS THAT HAVE CHANGED SINCE LAST WEEK

CoxHealth Virtual Visits: The college is working with CoxHealth to provide easy access for our students and employees to receive a COVID-19 virtual visit and test (if needed), free of charge. Details are still being worked out, but in short, we will give faculty teaching seated classes information cards to hand to students who are exhibiting symptoms or report not feeling well. These cards will give students directions about how to access the virtual visit. Most will likely choose to do so from their phones, but if that's not an option, all OTC campuses and centers will have a designated room with a computer and webcam where students can privately participate in a virtual visit with a health professional. More information to come as plans are solidified.

Q&A with Jon Mooney: On Thursday, the college will host Jon Mooney, Assistant Director of the Springfield-Greene County Health Department, for an employee question-and-answer session. The Springfield-Greene County Health Department has been a leader in our state for producing sound, science-based guidance. The Zoom session is scheduled to begin at 10:30 a.m. You should have received an email earlier today about this session.

Town Hall: On Thursday at 3 p.m., the college will host a Town Hall question-and-answer session. You are invited to join the event and send any questions you have to covidquestions@otc.edu. In addition, you will have an opportunity to submit questions live during the event. Here a link to the meeting: <https://otc.zoom.us/j/97037615841>.

COVID Dashboard: Starting on Monday, August 24, a COVID-19 dashboard will go live on the OTC website. This dashboard will provide a total number of cases at the college, broken out by OTC location. You'll be able to find this dashboard on the OTC COVID-19 page: <https://www.otc.edu/covid/>

Registration Period Extended: Because of the unusual nature of this semester, and due to the fact that many students are delaying decisions about attending college, we have extended the registration period until Thursday, August 27. Please show grace and work with any students who register for your classes during the first week.

THE LAST WORD

I know that many of you are anxious about the fall semester and are nervous about returning to work in-person. Those of us who have had an on-campus presence throughout the summer are pretty much back to our business-as-usual mindset; however, those who have not been on campus much (if at all) since March, may be feeling uneasy. I understand that emotions are running high right now. The uncertainty of the fall semester, the fears about exposure – all of these are valid. But we have students counting on us, just as we always do. That is one thing COVID-19 has not changed. We have a mission to serve our community, and we must move forward.

But the good news is that we are not helpless against this virus. I feel confident that we've put all the precautions in place to make OTC as safe and healthy as possible. There are a lot of competing interests that make decision-making difficult right now, but the decisions we make are rooted in science. We are constantly monitoring COVID-19 spread in the community, and we are continually seeking guidance from health experts – not relying on what people say on Facebook. We will adapt and change as needed, including another move to remote delivery if circumstances warrant it. In the meantime, wear your mask. Wash your hands. Practice physical distancing as much as possible. These are the practices we know make a difference in mitigating the spread and helping us stay healthy.

I've developed a new appreciation for the energy that our faculty and students bring to the life of the college. It's been lonely rambling around vacant hallways for the last several months. It will be

nice to run into people again – and hopefully, we can recognize each other with our masks on.
Enjoy the last couple of days of calm before the rush sets in.

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