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Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 5:08 PM
To: [fulltimefaculty](#); [adjunctfaculty](#)
Subject: Provost's Notes: Supports for Students and Faculty
Attachments: Medical Resource Information.docx

Good afternoon, Faculty –

In the past couple of weeks, I've shared about safety protocols in place for the fall (there are a number of them), as well as any policy/procedural changes (there aren't very many of those). This week's email will discuss several faculty and student supports that the college has put in place for the fall semester. Some of these resources are hold-overs from what we quickly put into place during the spring semester, but having had a few months to work out the kinks, our hope is that there has been a fair amount of improvement.

SUPPORT FOR FACULTY

Academic Early Alert: This service was heavily utilized by faculty during the spring semester and will likely continue to offer a great deal of support to you this fall. If you have a student who, despite your best efforts, is having technology issues, not showing up or participating, or has several late or missing assignments, fill out an Academic Early Alert report on the [OTC Cares website](#). Our team of Academic Early Alert specialists will reach out to the student on your behalf to help them get back on track.

Preparing to Pivot (P2P) Course: Last week, I shared with you the new course designed to help instructors pivot to remote instruction in the event this type of transition is needed. **Preparing to Pivot (P2)** is a voluntary, self-enroll, self-paced virtual course open to all OTC faculty scheduled to teach courses this fall. The course will continue until August 14, so if you haven't yet signed up, it isn't too late! Successfully complete the training and all requirements prior to the deadlines, and you'll be eligible for a **\$200 faculty stipend**. You may [enroll now](#). As of today, 165 OTC faculty have signed up – and word on the street is, it's a great class – so don't miss out.

Center for Academic Innovation: Oh my heavens...where would we have been without these folks during Spring 2020? If you need one-on-one assistance, our phenomenal staff in the [Center for Academic Innovation](#) are always eager to help. Contact them for help with course design, ideas for how to teach utilizing Zoom or other useful tools, questions about Canvas - really, they can help with practically anything course-related.

IT Support: Our friends in IT have been hard at work this summer equipping several classrooms at all locations throughout the system for remote instruction. This will be useful for offering live, synchronous instruction through Zoom and will provide us a great deal of flexibility. In addition to this, the [IT Help Desk](#) has laptops and hot spots available for checkout to faculty and staff. They can deliver to non-Springfield locations, too.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

In addition to the regular student support services available (such as personal counseling and tutoring), OTC has created a number of special supports for students:

Medical Resources: In the midst of the health crisis we are all facing, we know a couple of things about our students: 1) many of them are likely to become ill, and 2) many of them may not know where to seek care for COVID-19 related symptoms. Attached is a list of resources the college has

compiled for students who may need medical attention. You will note that some of these resources are free.

In addition to this, OTC is forming a special team of people to assist students who report as COVID-positive during the fall semester. Members of this team will reach out to students who are quarantined to ensure they have access to medical care and that they are continuing to participate in classes remotely so they do not fall behind or risk administrative withdrawal. These staff members will also communicate with instructors so they know when students are released to return to class.

IT Support: One of the biggest obstacles our students faced with the sudden transition to remote learning in the spring was the lack of technology to fully participate in their classes. New for the fall semester is the option for students to charge a laptop to their student account as a “required supply” which can then possibly be covered by financial aid. You can see the laptops available for students [here](#). And the good news is, I hear they are selling like hotcakes. Unfortunately, we still do not have great options for students in terms of Internet access, but because free wifi is fairly ubiquitous, it’s a huge win that our students now have the ability to purchase the hardware they lacked.

In addition to the availability of laptops, any OTC student enrolled in at least 12 credit hours (either in-person or online) for the fall 2020 semester [may apply for the OTC Technology Grant](#). The money can be used for anything technology-related, including, but not limited to the following items:

- Computers or tablets
- Hardware, such as hard drives, monitors or keyboards
- Software or software upgrades
- Electronic textbooks or course materials
- High-speed Internet or wifi

Incentive for Online Enrollment: OTC has incentivized online enrollment for the fall semester. Any student who enrolls in 12 credit hours of only online classes can receive up to an additional three credit hours online free. This was done for two reasons: 1) to help students out financially during a time of economic hardship, and 2) to minimize the number of students at OTC locations, thus lowering the risk of infection. As of today, enrollment in online classes is up 40% over where it was last year at this time.

Free Proctored Exams through ProctorU Auto: OTC has purchased an institutional license for ProctorU Auto. For the fall semester, students will no longer be required to pay \$3 for each proctored exam. However, please continue to use proctored testing judiciously. Remember that the purpose of proctoring is [identity verification](#), not ensuring that students aren’t cheating on tests. ProctorU Auto records the exam session, but there is no one watching the student during that session. If you have concerns about students cheating, you will need to watch each session yourself.

THINGS THAT HAVE CHANGED SINCE LAST WEEK:

- We continue to monitor COVID-related changes in our communities. One such change is Springfield Public Schools’ announcement of either a fully online or a hybrid schedule for the fall. Many of you have younger children in the SPS system, and you may be unsure about how you are going to manage your work responsibilities with a child who is only in school two days per week. Earlier today, you should have received [a survey](#) asking about childcare challenges you anticipate having this fall. The college is exploring solutions for our employees, and your feedback is vital. If you have not already, please complete the survey.

- During the last couple of weeks, we have had a few COVID-positive members of our OTC community. While this is obviously unfortunate, we are grateful to have learned from these situations and feel much more confident about managing positive cases during the fall semester. It also reinforces our belief in the masking mandate. While contact tracing is not an exact science, we know that in at least one case, none of the individuals at OTC who were in close contact with the COVID-positive person became ill. **All were wearing masks.** As a reminder, in addition to masks, the college is doing daily deep cleanings of all classrooms and labs, providing disinfectants and hand sanitizers in every classroom, and offering face shields for added protection.

As you prepare for the fall semester, I'd like to reiterate something you already know: The biggest single factor in a student's success is their relationship with their teachers. That is true now more than ever. There is an oft-repeated quote that has several variations, but goes something like this: "Crisis doesn't build character; it reveals it." I don't know who said it first, but I'd say they were on to something. As we navigated our way through the chaos of the spring semester, *your* character was revealed. Never have I seen a group of people with so much grit, and yet who act with such compassion and purpose. You know that we have a mission in our community and a responsibility to our students – and they feel it. Pandemic or no, our work is not done. The fall semester will be a wild ride, but as always, none of us is alone. We are in this together.

I'll be back next week with another installment. Until then, what questions do you have for me? What can I do for you as you prepare? Please don't hesitate to reach out.

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