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Subject: Provost's Notes: Week 11
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Happy Monday, and welcome to November! Here are this week's updates:

Free COVID Testing Hours: Monday hours for asymptomatic COVID testing on the Springfield campus have changed to 4-5 p.m. For now, testing will continue to be offered on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. [Visit the website](#) for more information on COVID testing and hours.

OTC Confirmed COVID Cases: Both our employee and student COVID case managers continue to report a manageable number of cases. By contrast, sadly, community spread and hospitalizations continue to increase in our area. We are encouraged that our mask requirement continues to have a significant and positive impact at all our locations. As a reminder, [OTC's COVID dashboard](#) is updated daily.

Zoom Classroom Equipment: If you're teaching in a classroom equipped with Zoom equipment, please keep an eye on it. We've had a couple of instances of equipment walking away, so do a quick check of the room during every class period to ensure all is in order. If any equipment is missing, please let your dean or chair/director know so it can be reported.

Travel Over the Upcoming Breaks: Some have asked if the college will tell employees to stay away from campus for a period of time upon returning home after out-of-state or international travel. At this time, the college is not requiring this. However, please be extra-vigilant about monitoring yourself for symptoms. [Canada's spike in coronavirus infections after their Thanksgiving holiday](#) should serve as a cautionary tale. Please take additional precautions this year.

A Note About the Election: As if being a college teacher in the midst of a global pandemic isn't challenging enough, let's add in the most heated presidential election in our lifetime. It's very likely that all of us are feeling some amount of anxiety at what is to come tomorrow and possibly over the next several days. And yet this is such an important time to be a teacher. Over the coming days and weeks, your classrooms may become spaces where your students are engaging in difficult conversations. As challenging as it may be, try to embrace it. In the age of social media, civil discourse is a skill that some of our students have rarely witnessed, much less learned. Use these opportunities to model it for your students – disagreeing with ideas, not people; seeking understanding, rather than argument. A colleague shared [this article](#) about difficult dialogues that you might find useful. While it is tailored toward the communication discipline, it is relevant in all contexts.

As always, I am eager to help in any way I can. Please do not hesitate to contact me with concerns, questions, or if you need support.

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