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To: [adjunctfaculty](#); [fulltimefaculty](#)
Subject: Provost's Notes: The Week Before Spring Break
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Good morning, Faculty!

Here are this week's updates:

COVID VACCINE: The Walmart vaccination registration link has been added to the [COVID vaccination information](#) on the college website. Again, we encourage employees to register at every vaccination site possible, so I encourage you to sign up at this one as well in the "Educator" category.

MASKS STILL REQUIRED POST-VACCINATION: Just a reminder that even if you have received your COVID-19 vaccination(s), you must still wear a mask and follow other safety recommendations. Because COVID-19 is such a new disease, and because the vaccine is new, scientists are still studying how the vaccine impacts transmission rates. You can read more about this on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>

And on to a couple of happier topics...

COMMENCEMENT: As you're aware, OTC will host two commencement ceremonies on Wednesday, May 19. In planning to minimize crowd size at each ceremony, we averaged the number of graduates over the last three years from each program, then divided them to have roughly the same number of grads at both ceremonies. Graduates have been divided by degree/certification program, and this corresponds to the ceremony faculty will attend as designated by department below:

3 P.M.

- All General Education and Business departments (except Biological Clinical Sciences)
- Computer Information Science
- Early Childhood Development
- Electronic Media Production
- Graphic Design Technology

6:30 P.M.

- All Technical Education departments (except those indicated above for the 3 p.m. ceremony)
- Biological Clinical Sciences
- All Allied Health programs

As a reminder, **full-time faculty attendance is required**; adjunct faculty, please join us if you wish! You'll receive further instructions soon about arrival time, etc., but I wanted to communicate this information now so you can know which ceremony to attend. If you have any questions about this, please let me know.

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN RESPIRATORY THERAPY: You likely have seen the news (and read in Dr. Higdon's *Notes*) that Missouri's Coordinating Board for Higher Education approved proposals on Wednesday from OTC and St. Louis Community College to offer bachelor's degrees in Respiratory Therapy. This is a tremendous win for both colleges, as we are the first community colleges in the state to gain approval to award a bachelor's degree. But more importantly, this is a win for the people of our service area. This move allows us to expand Respiratory Therapy education to an area of our service region (Waynesville/Pulaski County) which has been underserved and is in dire need of respiratory therapists. However, as I said in media interviews last week, OTC is only seeking to offer bachelor's degrees when either a program's accreditation requirements demand it, or when a profession's entry-level education requirement is a bachelor's degree. In the case of Respiratory Therapy, changes to accreditation requirements prompted us to seek this approval. This approval is only the first step to full approval to offer the degree. Next, we will seek approval from the program accreditor and from the Higher Learning Commission. Plans are to offer the associate and bachelor's degrees in Springfield, and the bachelor's degree in Waynesville. If all goes well, the program will begin in Fall 2022.

I wish all of you a smooth week-before-Spring Break, and a fun and relaxing Spring Break week. Continue those safety protocols! My next Provost's Notes will be on March 22.

What questions do you have? Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can clarify anything or support you.

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