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To: [ProvostNotes](#)
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Happy Monday, and welcome to Week 2!

By all accounts, we had a successful start to the semester last week. In Dr. Higdon's *Notes*, he shared that over 50 vaccines were administered last week during Eagle Days, and overall mask compliance was high. Again, the mask requirement for inside all college buildings is in effect until September 10. The college will be reevaluating the requirement and announce in the coming days whether it will be extended beyond that.

As we continue to discuss building upon our culture of care at OTC, I want to share something written by Kevin Kloppenburg, who has been an adjunct faculty member in Humanities and Fine Arts at OTC for several years. Last Monday as the semester began, Kevin wrote this on his personal Facebook page, and he has given his permission for me to share it with all of you:

*Thirty five years ago, Ronald Regan was President & I was just starting my teaching career. My first two schools are no longer around. Back then I didn't have a computer, or a phone in the classroom or even air conditioning!
...Thirty-five years later, I had experiences with elementary, middle school, alternative schools, high school & now I am at the college level. Not many educators have that kind of teaching experience.*

I no longer dive right in to the curriculum. I have learned to do something more important on the first day of the semester. And it doesn't include reading them the syllabus. Today I have to build trust. For without that, my students won't invest in the process of being willing to listen to me. Today I start building a relationship with each of my students. Each one comes with a unique and diverse background. They will see that I respect & celebrate those differences. Today I will learn preferred names & personal pronouns. I will also learn accommodations needed so they can learn easier. They also need to bond together as a group to also work together. I have a bag of tricks...(it includes Jolly Ranchers & stickers)...to get all this accomplished and humor is a big part of the recipe. But mostly just being honest and genuine. If I do my job correctly, then they will leave class to come back Wednesday excited to learn new & challenging things. The foundation will be solid for an ideal learning environment. Then when I push them to do better, they will gladly go the extra mile to accomplish excellence. I only have one shot to get this right today. Then the rest of the semester will be a cakewalk. Wish me luck!

It is clear that Kevin invests his time in a way that is student-centered, proactive, holistic, and data-driven – the four pillars of a culture of caring. He focuses on his students, sees them as individuals, communicates care for who they are, and celebrates their differences. He collects data about each one of them so that he can address the whole person. Kevin tells me that he knows this approach is successful. He teaches afternoon and evening classes, and he had planned to use the 30 minutes in between those classes to prep and eat the sandwich he brought for dinner. Instead, "...most of first class stuck around to share things they wanted to tell me and show me things on their phone and just share how excited they were about class." The sandwich had to wait, but that was okay with Kevin. It is not hard to see why Kevin was nominated and selected as the 2019-2020 recipient of the

Adjunct Instructor [Excellence in Education Award](#).

This is one more example of how establishing the relationship first is a foundational component of learning.

Wishing you a fantastic week.

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