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**To:** [ProvostNotes](#)  
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Good morning!

A few announcements to share:

**What to do when a student is out with a COVID-concern:** We've had several questions about handling student absences related to COVID, so here is a refresher:

1. Through the [OTCCares site](#), report all students, online or seated, who report symptoms, must quarantine, or have tested positive.
2. Have a plan for how students can continue to participate in your classes when they cannot be present. The attendance module in Canvas has an option for recording if the student is "present" in person or off-site.
3. Students must be allowed to make-up work that they have missed due to COVID. Our case managers will contact you when the student is able to return to class.
4. The [administrative withdrawal policy](#) is still in effect for students impacted by COVID, so **any student who has not participated in class in any way for 14 consecutive days must be withdrawn.**

If you have any questions about how to handle specific absences, please reach out to Dr. O'Connor ([oonnorg@otc.edu](mailto:oonnorg@otc.edu)).

**Great Colleges to Work For:** We were very proud to learn last week that OTC has been named [one of the best colleges in the nation to work for](#). In the September 13 edition of the *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, it was announced that OTC was also acknowledged as an Honor Roll institution, a designation granted to only 42 colleges each year. OTC is the only college in Missouri to garner this distinction. This is quite an honor, but even more so because much of the assessment is based in large part upon employee feedback. All of us working together toward a common goal is what makes OTC such a special place.

**Academic Council:** On Wednesday, we will hold our first Academic Council meeting of the 2021-2022 academic year. The agenda and related documents are now [posted](#) if you wish to review them. If you have feedback on any of the agenda items, please contact [your representative on Academic Council](#).

In Dr. Higdon's *Notes* yesterday, he discussed the imperative of serving working adults more optimally. While unemployment remains low in our region, *underemployment* is high. Too many people are working low-skilled, low-wage jobs. The good news is that many companies are seeking to provide educational benefits to their employees in an effort to retain them. Our responsiveness to adult learners ties directly into a student-centered approach to education – and not only does this benefit the individual student, it benefits all of us when there is a larger pool of skilled employees in our region. Whether the goal is a transfer degree or a workforce-ready degree or credential, OTC can make this a reality for more working adults.

I challenge us all to examine our practices in our day-to-day work – whether that work happens in a classroom or elsewhere – and consider how we can better create an environment in which working adults can thrive. The future of our communities depends upon this, as does the future of OTC. We must stay relevant in this environment. As the community's college, it is our responsibility to make this our responsibility.

Have a great week.

**Tracy M. McGrady, Ed.D**

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