

From: [MCGRADY, TRACY M.](#)
To: [ProvostNotes](#)
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Good morning!

I do not have any significant announcements to share today, but I do want to call your attention to an opinion column in yesterday's *Springfield News-Leader*, penned by Dr. Joan Barrett, OTC's Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. As we seek to operationalize student-first thinking into our decision making process, Dr. Barrett's column, "[Colleges Shouldn't Withhold Transcripts for Unpaid Bills,](#)" is timely. In this column, Dr. Barrett explains the thinking that went into OTC's decision to be among the first in Missouri to discontinue the practice of holding academic transcripts hostage when a student owes a balance. This is another excellent example of how OTC is taking seriously our commitment to operate with care and compassion for our students, and in service to our community.

I had a great time during my visits to the Richwood Valley and Table Rock campuses last week. I always enjoy them, and I always learn something. Thanks to everyone who made time to stop by to chat. Speaking with faculty and staff at these locations brought to mind another component of a culture of care that is equally important, and that is establishing an even deeper culture of care for each other as OTC employees. Working at a community college can be taxing even during the best of times, but this last year-and-a-half has been really, really tough. We've had to do a lot of gymnastics to continue fulfilling our mission, and our ability to fulfill that mission starts with each other. It was a great honor for OTC to be recognized as one of the nation's [Great Colleges to Work For](#) a few weeks ago, but there is always room for improvement. As part of embracing a culture of caring for students, we'll also want to have a conversation about what it looks like to help, support, and celebrate each other better. If you have an idea, or know someone who deserves some recognition, please let me know. I'd love to hear your thoughts.

COVID-19 case counts continue to decrease in Greene County, and vaccination rates continue to rise. This is all good news, but we should continue to be cautious as we head into colder months. The college will announce plans for masking for the next 30 days on Friday.

Have a great week!

Tracy M. McGrady, Ed.D

Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Ozarks Technical Community College
1001 E Chestnut Expressway
Springfield, MO 65802
417.447.8152