

**From:** [MCGRADY, TRACY M.](#)  
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**Attachments:** [21FA WINTER CHOIR POSTER.pdf](#)  
[final 21FA \\$100 and Under POSTCARD.pdf](#)

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Good morning!

I hope everyone had a fantastic Thanksgiving holiday and break. And while I've personally never understood the appeal of Black Friday shopping, for those of you who engage, I hope you scored some great bargains!

A few announcements:

**OTC Choir Winter Concert:** I'm pleased to announce that the OTC Choir Winter Concert is making a comeback! This event is one of my favorites and always gets me in the holiday spirit. I hope you can join us on December 7. Please see the attached poster for details.

**Holiday Art Market:** Another great event, thanks to our fantastic Fine Arts department, is the **\$100 & Under Holiday Art Market**. This event will be held this Friday, December 3 in the Information Commons Atrium. It will feature many different local artists selling items that would make special and unique gifts. Please see the attached postcard for more info.

**Trailblazer Award Nominations:** As a college community, we've been focusing on being more intentional with our OTC Cares culture. We've identified example after example of how faculty and staff adapt, adopt and innovate in order to help students have a better shot at success. From the personal level to the institutional level, we've been doing it well. As excitement builds around the upcoming Innovation Celebration, it's link to OTC Cares is clear. At the event in February, [Trailblazer Awards](#) will be handed out to six full-time employees who have been innovative at the college. Think of the folks who have embodied the OTC Cares culture and have created new supports for students and nominate them. **The deadline is tomorrow, Tuesday, November 30.** The nomination will take you less than 5 minutes – seriously, that's it!

**OTC Cares:** I want to share with you a story that I received last week from one of our faculty members about a student in her class. To me, this beautifully reflects the culture of caring at OTC:

*I've noticed the past two weeks one student who sits in the back of my class stopped turning in assignments but was still coming to every class. I could see him getting more confused each class period. I watched him sit there baffled when we worked on in-class worksheets and trying to catch up. I reached out with times to meet, to let me know any times that worked for him and got unanswered emails. I tried my best to give him extra help during class. I didn't know where I was losing him. Test is today. I see him in the back of the class, flustered, searching through notes for a last minute cram. I place the stack of tests at the front desk, announce to the class, "When you feel ready, you can come grab one and start." I quietly go to the back of the room, motion to Michael to join me out in the hall.*

*"Michael, I see you struggling lately. I can tell something more is going on."*

*He breaks down. "My wife lost her job, I've been picking up as many shifts as I can to try to help our family get by. I just don't have the time the past two weeks."*

*"Michael, would taking the test next Monday after Thanksgiving give you a chance to catch up?"*

*"You'd let me do that?!?"*

*"Yes. I will email you videos right now that I use for my online class so you can review what we've done in class these past two weeks. Will you go to the tutoring center right now and watch them and ask questions since you already had this time set aside for yourself?"*

*"Yes, I can do that. Where's the tutoring center?"*

*Does it hurt me that he's taking the test later? No. Are his classmates affected? No. Does it give him a chance to take a breath from the juggling act he's been playing all semester of working full-time, school, marriage, and taking care of kids when all the sudden a knife was thrown in with those balls? Yes!*

*Now I'll be filling out an OTC cares to see if there's some emergency money that can be sent his way. Our students will never cease to amaze me with the challenges they attempt to overcome.*

To me, this story reiterated two things: First, how amazing is this faculty member? And second, what looks like a student's apathy to us may not be that at all. The student who falls asleep in class may not be a sign of disrespect or boredom. The student who doesn't answer our emails may not simply be slacking off. How many of us would have assumed that Michael's unresponsiveness was due to laziness? I will admit that I have been that teacher in the past. Fortunately, experience gives us the gift of perspective. Paraphrasing Maya Angelou: When we know better, we do better. What this faculty member did was proactive. It was student-centered. It was holistic. This instructor acknowledged and cared for the *whole* person, not just the student who enrolled in her class. And let's all send good vibes to Michael, who is taking his test today.

Wishing you a fantastic week!

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

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