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To: [ProvostNotes](#)
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Good morning!

I hope you all enjoyed the days working from home last week while we all dug out from the snow storm. While I enjoy being in the office and around colleagues, I am always surprised at how much I am able to accomplish from home. Plus, let's be honest, I enjoyed sitting in front of my fireplace on those cold mornings with my cup of coffee and taking a stab at the daily Wordle before getting down to business.

A few announcements this week:

A Big Thanks to Our Maintenance Crew: Speaking of digging out from the snow storm, while we were all on Teams or Zoom, our maintenance folks were busy clearing mounds of snow and ice from parking lots and sidewalks in bitter cold temperatures. This team works so hard at all of our locations, and they deserve our sincere thanks for making it easy for the rest of us and our students to navigate our campuses and centers safely. A big "thank you" to Raymond Wade and his team for their hard work.

HLC Site Visit Results: On January 10 and 11, we hosted a Higher Learning Commission site visit team to evaluate OTC's capacity to offer the Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Therapy degree. As you'll recall, OTC was one of two community colleges in Missouri to receive approval from the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education to offer the bachelor's degree – a first for the state. We are now going through approval processes for the HLC and the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care. Though we are still awaiting a final decision from the HLC Board, I am happy to report that the site team has recommended approval! In their report, the site team noted their meeting with our current Respiratory Therapy students and how impressed they were. They spoke highly of the Respiratory Therapy program and reported overall positive experiences. This reflects the excellent leadership of program director, Brandon Burk, and Health Sciences dean, Dr. Aaron Light.

Dream Bigger with the PMC: You should have received an email this morning from Dr. Higdon, highlighting the Plaster Manufacturing Center marketing campaign and the website to use as a starting point: dreambigger.otc.edu. If any of your students (or prospective students) inquire about the PMC, point them to this website.

OTC Cares: I am thankful today for faculty like the one who reached out to me on Friday, concerned for a student who had tested positive for COVID-19. The student had reported to this instructor that they were having trouble breathing. They had a virtual visit and were told to go immediately to urgent care. However, the student had been passing out (likely due to low oxygen) and had no one to drive them. Without going into all the details, this instructor was willing to place themselves at great personal risk to tend to this student's needs. We talked through a different plan, but ultimately the student found a friend to drive them and received badly-needed medical attention.

Fortunately, that story has ended well. But perhaps an equally important detail is at the beginning of the story: an OTC faculty member was so distressed and concerned that they were willing to assume personal risk to come to their student's aid. In my 20+ years at OTC, I have seen employees act in similar ways more times than I can count. It is likely that these scenarios play out multiple times each day without anyone ever knowing. It's just what we do. That willingness to really see our students and provide that holistic care is baked into our OTC Cares culture. I'm really proud of that, and I hope you are, too.

Have a great week!

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