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Subject: Provost's Notes: 8/22/22
Date: Monday, August 22, 2022 7:53:40 AM

Good morning – welcome to the Fall 2022 semester at OTC! **HERE WE GO!**

The first day of a new semester always makes me happy – especially the first day of a fall semester. It feels hopeful and new and full of possibility. This week will be a full and busy one, so let's get going with announcements:

- **STUDENT SUCCESS:** Beginning next month, **all OTC students will be served by Student Success Navigators.** Students will have help with long-term, financial, and academic planning, and your involvement with your students will be more critical than ever. While your formal advising responsibilities will end then, your consistent presence in the lives of your students will be critical to helping them succeed in college and in life. You will continue to be mentors, advocates, and cheerleaders in their lives, and your division's College Navigators will help students navigate our processes. We're excited about this additional support to our students and the benefit this will provide to both them and you.
- **DSS SPRINGFIELD LEADERSHIP CHANGE:** **Jeff Jones** in the Disability Support Services office on the Springfield campus has taken off his administrator hat as director and has taken back the role of Disability Resource Counselor that he used to hold. If you've been at OTC for any length of time at all, you've likely crossed paths with Jeff. He is one of the most compassionate humans and a passionate advocate for our students with disabilities and the faculty who serve them. Regardless of his role in DSS, I'm happy Jeff is here to support us all. **Pan Porter**, Director of Academic Support at the OTC Table Rock campus, will assume the role of interim Director of Disability Support Services. Pan brings many years of experience to this role, and she looks forward to working with Jeff and the rest of the DSS team to facilitate a smooth transition.
- **LOCKING CLASSROOM DOORS:** With the recent Uvalde school shooting, many of you are thinking more seriously about classroom safety. During the last Chancellor's Cabinet meeting, Scott Leven, College Director of Safety and Security, led us through a table top exercise for a campus shooting. He emphasized that **research clearly demonstrates that armed intruders are deterred by a locked door.** Locking your classroom door after class begins is a common-sense safety measure. Explain to your students that you lock the door as a safety precaution, not to keep them out if they are late. If a student arrives to class late, please let them in and then re-lock the door.
- **OTC CARES REPORTS:** As we enter a new semester, please remember that **you have support in dealing with concerns about a student.** If you have a concern about anything, from academic performance to food insecurity to student behavior, [fill out an OTC Cares report.](#) Our Behavioral Intervention Team is here to intervene and assist as needed.

- **COUNSELING SERVICES FOR EMPLOYEES:** OTC is pleased to provide [free mental health counseling through Burrell](#) for all part-time employees, including adjunct faculty. Full-time employees can access free counseling services through the college's [Employee Assistance Program](#).
- **TODAY I'M GRATEFUL FOR...**
 - A big thanks to the **Center for Academic Innovation** staff who helped create a smooth transition back to school for faculty last week. They facilitated several informative sessions, and then wrapped it all up with Pineapple Whip on Friday. A pretty great end to the week!
 - Shout out to the **Technical Education faculty and staff** who worked incredibly hard over the summer, and especially during the last few weeks as we prepared to open the Plaster Center for Advanced Manufacturing. It was literally an all-hands-on-deck, college-wide sprint to the finish. The general contractor for the project remarked that he had never seen so many employees from every area of the organization come together in the way he witnessed at OTC. We have a lot to be proud of, folks. If you haven't yet seen the building, or had a chance to play in the Emerson Discovery Lab, make it a destination soon.
- **STUDENT VOICE:** As we begin the semester, I thought I'd share something written by one of our students who was in my Interpersonal Communication class this summer:

At one time in my life, I was ashamed of my past. I hated that I was an addict and was embarrassed to let anyone know. Now I can tell my story with pride and hope that I can be a beacon of hope for someone else dealing with addiction. I am almost fifty years old and have decided to go to college for the first time. Not because I must, but because I can. I find that it excites me to learn new things. I still struggle with self-doubt, and probably always will, but it will not stop me from pursuing my goals. I am not sure what I want to be when I grow up but am excited for the journey to find out. Thank you for letting me share my story.

I hope we will treat all of our students as if they are this one. Wishing you the very best semester.

Tracy

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