

From: [MCGRADY, TRACY M.](#)
To: [ProvostNotes](#)
Subject: Provost's Notes: 10/24/2022
Date: Monday, October 24, 2022 9:00:38 AM
Attachments: [Faculty Voices Conversations Info.pdf](#)
[OTC Sage Coach Flyer.pdf](#)
[OTC Cares Flyer Fall 2022.pdf](#)

Good morning!

Another busy week is in store here at OTC. I'm looking forward to visits to the Lebanon and Waynesville Education Centers this week, but there are several things happening on the Springfield campus as well. I'd like to call attention to a couple of faculty-focused events this week:

Faculty Voices Conversations: The Strategic Initiative #1, Goal Group #3 is hosting several Faculty Voices Conversations sessions this week, both in-person and virtually. The attached document gives all the info. Gaining the faculty perspective is an important piece of the work of the Student Learning Experience task force. Participation is not mandatory, but I encourage you to attend and let your voice be heard.

FUN: CAI is hosting the second Faculty Unplug and Network event on **Wednesday at 2 p.m. in the Plaster Manufacturing Center 216D**. Remember...agendas are strictly forbidden at FUN, but fortunately snacks are not! RSVP at facdev@otc.edu.

In addition to these events, the **WGU Sage Coach** will be on the Springfield campus today. Staff from WGU will be here to celebrate our transfer partnership. The attached flyer provides all the details.

Fall Play: After a two-year hiatus, the fall play is back! OTC Theatre instructor Jon Herbert directs *I and You*, a story that focuses on the relationship between two high school students from very different worlds. The play runs November 17-20 in Lincoln Hall 211 on the Springfield campus. The event is free and open to the public. [Get your tickets here.](#)

OTC Cares:

At College Development Day, Dr. Abby Benz shared statistics about OTC students that I found startling. She shared that out of 100 postsecondary OTC students:

- 45 worry that they will run out of food before they can buy more.
- 25 are unable to pay the full amount of rent or mortgage.
- 19 are couch surfing or homeless

(I've attached the OTC Cares Flyer which provides these and other statistics about OTC students.)

Then last week in *Inside Higher Ed*, Dr. Matt Reed wrote [a commentary](#) on "[Mission Critical](#)," the recently-released Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) report. Read the article and the report if you wish, but the gist of it is this: **Students who have the most basic unmet needs are often the most engaged students on campus.** As Reed says, that's perhaps somewhat surprising at first glance, but upon reflection, it shouldn't be. Reed writes:

"If you're desperate enough to skip meals for lack of money, there may not be many places in your daily world in which you're treated with respect. If you're couch surfing, you're probably very aware of the space you're taking up...If you're on the streets, you have to deal with all manner of indignities, ranging from weather to law enforcement to inconsistent bathroom access. If you're missing meals due to money, you're painfully aware that you're missing them..."

There aren't many places that are welcoming to people without money. Community colleges and public libraries are among the few exceptions.

At college, a student who's otherwise in a bad spot can blend in with everyone else. They can attract positive attention through academic engagement and/or student clubs. Often, they can get food. If they have time in which they aren't working for pay, they can find places (such as the library) where they can stay for hours without anybody bothering them. They can find professionals, whether faculty or staff, who can help them. And if they're able to stick with a program, they can improve the chances of getting the kind of job that can get them out of their bad spot."

I have said it again and again, but the value we offer to students (beyond an excellent and affordable education, of course) is human connection. A colleague recently shared a thank you note she received from a young man who had been given a campus tour. In it he wrote, *"Thank you for getting me that tour today. It was great. Everyone was awesome and treated me like I was important."*

When I read that, I had mixed emotions. I felt pride, of course, because this prospective student had such a great experience. But I also felt a tinge of sadness at the last part of his sentence: "treated me like I was important." I found myself wondering, "Does he *know* that he is important?"

It is my hope that we treat *all* students like they are important. Because they are. They are each unique and brilliant and weird in their own way – just like we are – and they are all human beings who deserve to know they matter. But they also have needs. For many, it's basic material needs. For some, it's to feel dignity and respect. As Matt Reed writes: "When the world is cold, you go where it's warm."

Let's make sure students always find OTC to be that warm place.

Wishing you a great week.

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