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**To:** [ProvostNotes](#)  
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Good morning!

I hope that the first week of classes treated you well and that your routine is starting to emerge.

**Artificial Intelligence:**

As we all venture forth into the realm of teaching in a world with AI, I'd like to make sure you're all aware of a resource available to you in Canvas. Jennifer Dunkel, English instructor, developed a phenomenal set of **resources about AI in Higher Education** and has graciously shared it with all of us. Anyone with [this link](#) can enroll themselves in the Canvas site. Many thanks to Jennifer for curating these resources!

**Free Vision Screenings Continue:**

An initiative of AmeriCorps, MSU's Vision Screening Program has screened more than 84,000 individuals in Southwest Missouri since Fall 2013 *free of charge*. Last semester they began bringing that service to OTC. The Vision Screening Program will be on the Springfield campus the **first, second, and third Fridays of each month** in **ICW 231** from **11 a.m. to 2 p.m.** OTC students and employees, along with their family members ages 6 months and up are eligible. *Please help spread the word to your students!*

**OTC Cares:**

A few months ago, I found myself with a crying student in my office. This is not an unusual scenario for any of us who work directly with students, but this particular student was a high achiever – excellent grades, involved in campus life, a recent grad taking one last course (one I was teaching) before transferring. But after half a semester of solid academic work, her performance in my class had lagged – and I'll admit it, my first thoughts were judgmental: she got lazy and slacked off, she wasn't prioritizing the class, and so on. I'm not proud of it, but that's where my head went. So when she showed up at my office in tears, I assumed it was because she found herself staring at the end of the semester with an outcome that left her ashamed. And that was true, but that wasn't the whole story.

Her tears also were due to an abrupt breakup with a longtime boyfriend, and the resulting sudden move back home to her emotionally vacant parents. Because of her intelligence and achievements, I would never have guessed that her home life was rough and that she lacked any kind of meaningful emotional support. She needed someone to talk to, and she came to me. She needed to vent and cry, process her confusion and sorrow, sit with that awful combination of anger and hurt, and all in a safe place where there were Kleenex aplenty. What an honor that she came to me. As I sat and listened to her, I was jolted back to my young adulthood when love would come to an end, and how it felt to carry the weight of a seemingly shattered world.

Our students are human. I'm not perfect at it, but I try to keep myself in that mindset when students turn in assignments late, slack off, do half-assed work. Let's face it: We have all done these things,

some of us as recently as this morning. While high standards are important, so too are soft and comforting places to land.

As her tears dried and we developed a plan for her to finish the semester, she talked about transferring in the fall and how much she would miss OTC. She talked about how OTC felt like home to her. She said she always felt supported here and cared for. She knew that she had people she could talk to here when she couldn't talk to her parents. It was because of all those things that she blossomed and grew in self-confidence. This student was bright enough that she would have excelled academically anywhere she went, but the relationships she developed here helped heal some significant wounds and fill some considerable gaps *in addition to* providing her a first-rate education and solid preparation for what came next.

To have that kind of role in a person's life...that's about as good as it gets.

Have a great week!

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