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

The officially unofficial start of fall is Picnic Week at OTC – and here we are! This week we'll celebrate at every campus and center across the OTC system. The Waynesville Education Center will kick us off on Tuesday, followed by Lebanon on Wednesday, Richwood Valley and the Republic Center on Thursday, and culminating with the Springfield campus picnic on Friday. Hot dogs, dancing, and smiles will be in abundance this week, and that sounds alright to me.

A few other items of note:

**PTK Awareness Week** - The Alpha Psi Tau chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) at OTC invites faculty, staff, and students to participate in **PTK Awareness Week September 25-29**. During that time, feel free to wear your PTK t-shirt to support the approximately 1,000 PTK students enrolled at OTC. If you don't have a PTK t-shirt, please contact [honors@otc.edu](mailto:honors@otc.edu) or stop by ICE 354 on the Springfield campus to receive one free of charge. Students who see faculty and staff support for PTK are more likely to have interest in getting involved in PTK at OTC. Membership comes with a wide range of benefits including scholarship opportunities, activities/events, educational experiences, and much more. Best of all, PTK membership is free to all qualifying OTC students.

**Student Organization Fair** – On Tuesday, September 26, the Office of Student Engagement is hosting a **Student Club and Organization Fair** in the Plaster Manufacturing Center from 10 a.m. to noon. We've heard from students that connecting with others is something they want, so the college continues to invest more in providing engagement opportunities. As you probably know, students who are more connected with each other have better academic outcomes, so please encourage your students to attend.

**New Faces** – Several new employees in key positions have joined OTC in recent weeks:

- I had the pleasure of introducing **Cassie Mathes, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer**, to the full-time faculty a few weeks ago. Cassie joined OTC in July, and with that, the college combined Web Services, Communications and Media Relations, and Creative Services into one department, which Cassie leads.
- At Deans Council last week, we were joined by **Mark Schindler, College Director of Safety and Security**, and **Melissa Lloyd, Chief Human Resources Officer**. Both Mark and Melissa have many years of valuable experience in their fields, and we're very fortunate they have chosen OTC as their work home.

Please welcome Cassie, Mark, and Melissa when you see them.

**3 Good Things** – Here are three good things that made me smile last week. I hope they make you smile, too:

- Honor Flight of the Ozarks assists qualifying veterans by flying them to Washington D.C. to visit the WWII, Korean Conflict, Navy, Air Force, Vietnam and Iwo Jima memorials, and Arlington cemetery. Our very own **PTK students voted to sponsor a Guardian on the 10/25 Honor Flight of the Ozarks by paying their flight costs to accompany/assist a veteran on the trip.** Additionally, all OTC students, faculty, and staff are invited to attend the “Send-off” ceremony and/or the “Welcome Home” ceremony at the Springfield-Branson National Airport. Want to go? Please visit the OTC Calendar of Events for additional information and/or updates on the event.
- OTC Music Instructor Phil Forrester reported this week that **OTC’s newly formed jazz band now has 17 members, up from only 8 members last fall.** If you’ll recall, the jazz band came to be by way of the 2022 Innovation Celebration, where OTC colleagues voted to fund Phil’s proposal to begin a jazz band. I am so proud of Phil for bringing this fantastic opportunity to OTC students.
- Sociology Instructor Cheryl Li sent me some good vibes from her Introduction to Sociology students. Cheryl explains: “To explore culture, students worked in groups to create a new word and image to symbolize an aspect of OTC culture. Sociology tends to draw a very diverse group of students, which made the words they identified to incorporate into their new word even more impactful...” The words her students used to describe OTC were **opportunity, guide, inclusivity, accommodation, cool, and diverse.** It’s gratifying to know the culture we’ve created for OTC students is such a positive one.

Have a great week!

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