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To: [ProvostNotes](#)
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Good morning!

A few things to share:

Annual Registration: As the launch of Annual Registration on March 26 draws closer, there have been several questions emerge. Dr. Drew Aberle, dean of Arts, Sciences, and Business, visited with Faculty Senate about a few of those questions last month, and during last week's Academic Council meeting, I was able to provide an update. As a reminder, Annual Registration will allow students to register for summer, fall *and* spring semesters when the spring registration period opens in March each year, whereas previously they could only register for summer and fall. With the roll out of student success, we've seen tremendous increases in fall-to-fall and spring-to-fall student retention rates (about 3% and 4% respectively), but fall-to-spring retention continues to lag (at only about 0.2%). We believe this may be due to students having such a short window to plan and register for spring classes when registration opens in October. Our Research office is poised to capture data on how many students actually choose to register for all semesters at once and how this switch impacts fall-to-spring retention. Currently, what we know is that our Student Success navigators are busy meeting with students who are engaged *now* with Spring 2025, which under the old system wouldn't have happened until late fall. Much appreciation to our academic leaders at the college who are charged with building schedules. This is a big shift in how we do business, and they have done a great job in getting those schedules built earlier for what we hope will greatly benefit students.

Integrated Planning: Of course, Annual Registration isn't the only new thing; we are in the midst of our first year of Integrated Planning, which was a huge initiative. I've been going through the plans for every area under the Academic Affairs umbrella, and I'm so impressed by the thoughtfulness with which these plans were developed. There are so many opportunities to improve how we serve students, and several of them are emerging through this process. Thanks to all of you who have spent time formulating your department's annual plan.

Strategic Plan: As Dr. Higdon mentioned in *Notes*, Strategic Planning Council met Friday morning. It's exciting to see the momentum that continues to grow behind [Dream.Plan.Build](#). I've appreciated the successes that have come out of past strategic plans, but I am totally fangirling over this one. Friday afternoon a few of us met to discuss the progress of the [Academic Excellence](#) Task Force strategic planning group. I can't tell you how excited I am at what may emerge from this group. This is a chance to see some big dreams come to fruition in ways that will help distinguish OTC as one of the top teaching colleges in the nation. It was an exciting way to spend a Friday afternoon!

In short, there are lots of big things on the horizon. It can be exhausting at times to be a part of such a dynamic institution, but it is so, so worth it. We made a big investment in Student Success a few years ago, and now with full implementation, we are seeing the payoff. In addition to gains in retention rates, we're also seeing increases in matriculation rates and enrollment. While so many of our sister community colleges in the state (and nationwide) are seeing declining enrollment, OTC has grown. We're becoming better and better every day – I can feel it. Even though we may try some things and fail, that's okay. It reminds me of a quote by Molly Ivins, the notable newspaper columnist and author: "Freedom fighters don't always win, but they are always right." We aren't freedom fighters, except for metaphorically, but the sentiment remains the same. As long as we are fighting to lift our students out of poverty and unfulfilling lives, we are always right. I sure am proud of us for keeping at it, even when we don't win.

Have a great week!

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