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To: [ProvostNotes](#)
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Good morning!

I hope everyone enjoyed their Spring Break week. Our campuses and centers were quiet last week, which is great for productivity, but they were a bit lonely. It's nice to have folks back to start this last 8 weeks of the Spring 2024 semester. Here's a few things happening this week:

March Madness Events: We all like helping students, right? This month, there are lots of opportunities to do just that – and as a bonus, they're fun:

- **Coming to a Campus or Center Near You: Dip Madness:** The OTC Foundation and the OTC Bookstore are teaming up to support the Student Emergency Fund, which assists students struggling with short-term financial challenges. [Dip Madness: Slam Dunk Dip-Off & March Madness Mashup](#) (say that three times fast) is happening Thursday and Friday this week. Be sure to set aside some time to taste some delicious dips and vote for your favorites.
- **OTC Foundation Bracket Challenge:** There's a new twist on the Bracket Challenge: For the first time ever, there's a traveling trophy up for grabs! Any employee from any campus or center can compete to win. But hurry! Brackets can only be purchased on the [OTC Foundation website](#) until Thursday (3/21).

Scavenger Hunt: On Friday, the Office of Student Engagement is hosting a (Springfield) campus-wide scavenger hunt for the OTC community. Students, staff, and faculty are invited to participate, so grab a few friends or join an existing team. Learn more here: [OTC Campus Wide Scavenger Hunt - OTC Calendar of Events](#)

A few weeks ago, I was made aware of a post on Reddit that I wanted to share. The Springfield-based author posed this question to Reddit world: "How do I start going to college?" They wrote:

I'm about to be 19 and no one in my family has ever been to college and I have no idea where to even begin. I just know I can't live in this constant cycle of poverty for the rest of my life. I'm really scared of accumulating debt but I just want a job I don't hate that makes me financially free. My grandparents were never able to work and constantly struggled to make ends meet and my mom had me at 16 and the cycles continued but worse at times. I just want normal things I'm staying in a hotel currently and I don't have a job or a car but if anyone has any recommendations besides fast food or retail hiring I'd love to hear them. I wouldn't really mind those but I've been working those since I was 14 and if there's somewhere that pays better or is better in general I'd love to hear it. I just want a house and a car and a normal life doing normal things. This is no life i

can or want to live forever. I was blessed with my intelligence, and it would just be a shame to waste it doing nothing of substance with my life. I know I'm interested in engineering and conservation but my grades weren't that great in high school.

Fortunately, the Reddit-verse came through. A sampling of comments:

- “Call OTC’s main number and ask for student financial aid dept. They’ll give you all the steps that you need.”
- “I was in the same boat many years ago. It takes courage to change your life, hard work, and a little luck...I agree OTC is the way to go.”
- “OTC is the goat for starting college.”
- “Immediately start working on financial aid stuff like FAFSA, and then definitely look into OTC...There are people waiting for someone like you to call!”
- “Echoing other comments – I definitely recommend OTC! OTC has people to help you every step along the way.”

Other options were mentioned, too, but the comment section was a virtual lovefest for OTC. Every job produces times of frustration and headaches, but when I read this post, I thought how fortunate we are that our headaches aren’t for nothing; they lead to improved lives for so many people. Folks around here have come to count on us for that. It’s an awesome responsibility to hold someone’s hope in your hands, but how gratifying to know that our work is so consequential. And I don’t know about you, but about this time of the semester, I need that reminder.

I sure do hope that original poster finds their way to us.

Enjoy your week!

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