
From: LIGHT, AARON E.
Sent: Monday, October 27, 2025 8:05 AM
To: ProvostNotes
Subject: Provost Notes 10.27.25

Hello Ozarks Tech Faculty and Staff! This week brings some great activities for us all to enjoy, and I also wanted to share a few reflections I've had during the current government shutdown.

Spirit Week is this week and it is a great opportunity to show off your Ozarks Tech pride and have some fun together! Here's what's coming up:

- Tuesday, October 28 – Team Day
 - Represent your favorite sports team by wearing their gear! Also, stop by the Blood Drive in the Jared Family Atrium from 9 a.m.–3 p.m., in partnership with the Community Blood Center of the Ozarks.
- Wednesday, October 29 – Flannel and Fleece Day
 - Embrace the fall season with your favorite warm plaids, fleeces, and cozy layers.
- Thursday, October 30 – LEAGUE T-Shirt Day
 - Wear this year's LEAGUE T-shirt with pride and celebrate the spirit of our campus community.
- October 30–31 – 13th Annual Halloween Costume Contest
 - Join in (or cheer on!) the fun at the bookstore's annual Halloween Costume Contest. It's always a highlight of the season and a great way to end Spirit Week with some laughter and creativity.

Government Shutdown Reflection

In class every day we work with students who have a wide range of academic, social, and emotional needs. Some of these are instructional as we deal with different learning styles, movement needs, or the ability to connect new content to past experiences. Others are more personal like emotional support needs, low confidence, food or housing insecurity, and many others. As instructors and staff, our collective roles is to balance these instructional and personal needs while providing the stability, structure, and care that help students succeed. That balance is not always easy, but it is what makes you exceptional educators and professionals, the ability to truly see our students and help them reach their goals, even when it may take longer than they expected or desired.

The current government shutdown has created or amplified many of these personal challenges. Whether we realize it or not, each of us knows someone who has been affected government shutdowns. If you didn't before, you do now. My wife has worked at the Federal Medical Prison here in Springfield for more than 20 years and our family has experienced several shutdowns during that time.

In a prior shutdown, we missed multiple paychecks. Despite both of us having good jobs, we were young and living paycheck to paycheck, and the missed income forced us to visit a food pantry just to feed our family. I remember feeling a deep sense of stress during that time as I felt that I should be able to provide for my family without outside assistance. And at that stage in our lives, we simply couldn't afford to add

more debt to make ends meet. We were told back pay would come once the government reopened, but there were no timelines and no guarantees, especially as she was furloughed during that period.

Thankfully, our circumstances today allow us to weather this current shutdown. But many families who rely on federal paychecks cannot. That stress will ripple outward to our friends, colleagues, and especially our students. As the shutdown continues, we could also see ripple effects if federal programs like SNAP become disrupted, creating more financial and emotional strain.

I share this not as a political statement, but as a reminder that life can change for any of us with one unexpected situation or phone call. When you notice changes in a student's or colleague's behavior or performance, be curious about the "why." Talk with them. Listen. Connect them to our community resource specialists, counseling services, or if it's a student, to their navigator for support. One of the responsibilities I've always taken most seriously in my role at Ozarks Tech is to truly see our students, staff, and faculty where they are and support them in any way I can. I know many of you share that same commitment, and I'm deeply grateful for the care and compassion you bring to your work every day.

Aaron Light DHSc, RRT-ACCS, FAARC

Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Ozarks Technical Community College

1001 E. Chestnut Expressway

Springfield, MO 65802

417.447.8152