
From: LIGHT, AARON E.
Sent: Monday, November 17, 2025 9:59 AM
To: ProvostNotes
Subject: Provost Notes
Attachments: Super Fall 25 (1).png; ITI260_Capstone_Flyer.pdf

I hope your week is getting off to a great start.

As we head into the Thanksgiving break and move toward the end of the semester, I have been reflecting on recent conversations with students and members of our community, as well as the broader trends emerging in national surveys. A theme that continues to surface is the question, is college worth it? I have heard students express uncertainty about whether the cost of their education will truly pay off, and community members and employers often ask how our degrees translate into employability and long-term opportunity. At the same time, faculty frequently remind me of the less tangible but deeply important benefits our students experience, including growth in critical thinking, personal development and the ability to adapt to a rapidly changing world.

The national data echo many of these concerns. A [2024 Pew Research Center](#) report found that only 22 percent of adults believe a four-year degree is worth the cost if a student must take out loans. In that same report, about 40 percent said a bachelor's degree is "not too" or "not at all" important for securing a well-paying job. While this data is focused on the 4yr vs 2yr education models, it demonstrates the questions that people are asking about education. In 2025, a [Pew analysis](#) shows that seven in ten Americans now believe the United States higher education system is headed in the wrong direction, a sizable increase compared with 2020. Large majorities also feel that colleges are falling short in several critical areas, including affordability, preparation for good jobs, the availability of financial support and even the development of strong critical thinking skills.

These findings highlight a growing public skepticism about the value of higher education, and they underscore an important charge for us. We must be intentional and transparent in demonstrating outcomes that matter, including job readiness, skill development, affordability and long-term return on investment. At the same time, we cannot lose sight of the intrinsic value of education and its ability to cultivate thoughtful citizens, foster curiosity and produce adaptable, well-rounded graduates. As we close out the semester, this is an ideal moment to engage our students, colleagues and community partners in reflecting on how well we are preparing learners not only for their first job, but for lifelong success and fulfillment.

I would like to begin conversations about how we tell our story here at Ozarks Tech. How do we demonstrate that our English, Communications, Math, Welding, CIS, PTA, MLT,... courses prepare students for the workforce? How do we ensure that these courses remain up to date and relevant for every student who takes them? How do we tell the story that our workforce partners love our graduates and want more of them? How do we highlight that four-year institutions value our students for their preparation, professionalism and readiness for upper-level coursework? This is the story we need to be sharing with our community. We know that we are doing meaningful work and we know our students are learning, growing and developing the skills they need to better their lives. Our task now is to make sure others know it too.

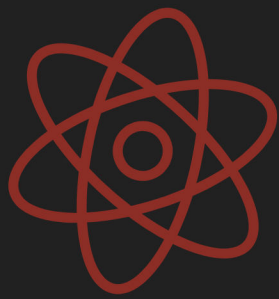
Story Telling Happening Soon

- 1) BCS/Physical Sciences Student Undergraduate Presentation of Exemplary Research (SUPER) event will be November 21st in IC 108 B&C from 10-11:30am. This event will be a poster presentation style event where students will be showing off their research and defending their work to their peers. Come out and see the stories of our students learning about the sciences and research processes. See attached flyer for more information.
- 2) IT Capstone projects will be presented on December 3rd in PMC 222 from 9-11am. This will be a booth-style walk through events where the student teams will present their scenarios, infrastructure, challenges and live demonstrations. If you are available, come out and see how IT is telling their story about student development in their program. See attached flyer for more information.

Thank you for all that you do and please take the time to reflect on all of your courses and what we can do to tell their stories.

Aaron Light DHSc, RRT-ACCS, FAARC

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**Please join us to hear of
the amazing research
your peers have done
here at OTC!**

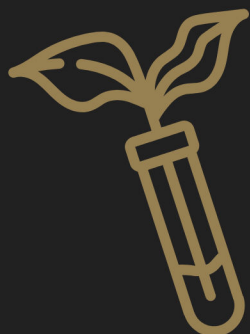
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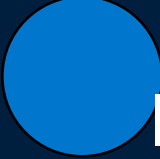
Research



November 21st in
Information
Commons 108 B&C
from 10-11:30

**For the love of
Science!**





ITI-260 Capstone Presentation Showcase

Enterprise Network Architecture • Virtualization • Security • Systems Engineering

■ Join Us for a Con-Style Tech Showcase!

The students of ITI-260 Capstone in Information Technology Infrastructure invite you to a conference-style presentation event showcasing their semester-long enterprise network buildout.

Featuring Student-Built Environments Including:

- Enterprise Active Directory Domain
- Virtualization Compute Clusters
- Network Infrastructure & Routing
- Perimeter Security & Firewalls
- Monitoring, Logging, & Documentation

Event Details

Date: December 3rd, 2025

Time: 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Location: PMC 222

Experience the ITI Capstone Difference

Walk booth-style through student project environments. Each team will present their company scenario, infrastructure, security controls, challenges, and live demos.

Hosted by the Information Technology Infrastructure Department