



OFFICE *of the* PROVOST

Fall 2021 Update

Dear Academic Affairs Colleagues:

As we look forward to the coming semester, I want to thank each and every one of you for the contributions you make to our division. Academic Affairs is large and complex. Our core mission - provide the very best learning experience that we can for our students - is simple to state but complicated to implement well and consistently. We have been doing that and we are continuing to do that now. None of us would have planned the semester to begin in the way that it is developing. All of us know that the current environment is only making everything more challenging.

I want you to know that I am optimistic about our ability to manage whatever comes our way over the next few weeks, but I also know that we are tired from facing an incredibly dynamic environment that continues with much uncertainty. Many of us are on edge, not always from work, but also from the stresses and strains of life that have multiplied over the past 18 months. We hoped we had turned the corner, but that corner is still eluding us. We need to be extra careful as we continue to navigate our way through unknown waters.

My intent is not to sound pessimistic, but it is important that we acknowledge where we are. Given the track record we have as a University in the face of many challenges over the years, I have every confidence that we will continue to carry out our mission. And our mission reminds us why we are here doing the work that we do day in and day out, year after year.

As we begin fall semester 2021, please keep in mind that we are a university community, and we need not go it alone. There are avenues for help, so please seek that help via your supervisor or through our Employee Assistance Program offerings.

I will echo the message of President Saunders and urge those who are able to get vaccinated to do so. And I will again ask you to wear face coverings while indoors. These twin decisions will help in our shared responsibility to foster a healthy campus community on every front.

With admiration and respect,

George

August 20, 2021