Dear Colleagues,

We hope this message finds you well and your loved ones safe. With the end of the semester approaching, we are writing to offer a few timely reminders regarding the election and to encourage you to bring your best to the classroom.

First, thank you for your tireless efforts to support undergraduates inside and outside of the classroom this semester. We hear from our students that you have stepped up to support them in unprecedented ways. Many of you have given above and beyond to engage and support them in all platforms. You have gone above and beyond to guide and mentor them in all phases of their development. We appreciate your understanding of the challenges our students face as they continue to navigate the many additional responsibilities outside of your teaching role and are here to support you.

Of course, managing the stress of the compressed, uncertain, and uniquely challenging semester has been difficult for all of us. As we approach the end of the term, we hope you will find the information and reminders offered below to be helpful and timely.

Faculty Mental Health and Wellness

Given its condensed nature and limited opportunities for social connections, this semester presents a host of unique challenges for students and faculty alike. Please know that we have shared a mental health resource portal (Johnson & Johnson) that included mental health and wellness resources for all Duke students who are associated with the University. The portal also includes resources for faculty and staff. We urge you to consider your emotional, and physical wellbeing. We truly appreciate your efforts, and we encourage you to take steps that support your personal growth and well-being.

On a related note, we would like to remind you that students are in this together and are here to partner with you to help make sure students have the support that they need.

2020 Election

While election day is on November 3rd, the nature of the moment recommends that we take a longer view than is customary on the timeline of this election season. There is a distinct possibility that we will not know election results on November 3rd. This is not unprecedented. This may create additional uncertainty and stress on campus. We urge you to consider this in your approach to the end of the term. We also urge you to reflect on your class syllabi language and referrals to help resolve a range of personal, work, and family challenges.

For most of our undergraduates, this election is the first Presidential election in which they have voted, and this has been remarkable to watch. This year, you may have given above and beyond to engage and mentor them in all phases of their development. We appreciate your understanding of the challenges our students face as they continue to navigate the many additional responsibilities outside of your teaching role and are here to support you.

As a reminder, classes are scheduled to take place on November 9th. President Price’s recent message noted that faculty have the flexibility to make arrangements regarding coursework and scheduling, or an instructional video can provide you with additional resources to help connect with students who will not know election results on November 4th. This may create additional uncertainty and stress on campus. We urge you to consider this in your approach to the end of the term. We also urge you to reflect on your class syllabi language and referrals to help resolve a range of personal, work, and family challenges.

We hope this note finds you and your loved ones safe and well. With gratitude,

Gary Bennett
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