Dear Colleagues,

Even though you and your loved ones are safe and well, with the end of the term approaching, we are writing to offer a few words of encouragement and well wishes.

First, thank you for your tireless efforts to support undergraduate inside and outside of the classroom this term. We hear from students, faculty, and staff regularly about how much you have gone above and beyond to engage and reach out to those in support at all times. We also know that you have juggled many additional responsibilities outside of your teaching, and we thank you for your collective hard work and dedication.

Of course, managing the stresses 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’ll find the information and reminders offered below to be helpful and timely.

Faculty Mental Health and Wellness

Given its constrained nature and limited opportunities for social connections, this semester presents a host of unique challenges for students on campus. Our faculty and staff have stepped up with Duke Votes: Resources for Faculty and Students, an initiative that included mental health and wellness resources for faculty and students alike. As we continue to navigate this unprecedented time, we urge you to consider the importance of our students’ mental health and to advocate for sustained resources, even as our campus celebrates the end of a historically challenging and difficult academic year.

Our colleagues in the Center for Wellness and Health Education (CWE) continue to be available to help faculty during this unsettling time. They can provide referrals to local mental health services, and they offer webinars and courses that you can share with your students. As you continue to interact with your students, please remind them of these resources and to take care of themselves. Many faculty are under as much pressure this semester as anyone. We want to remind you of the tools at your disposal to offer a bit of relief to yourselves and your students.

First and foremost, we encourage you to take care of yourselves. We know this comes as you juggle many additional responsibilities, and routinely express to us their appreciation for all the ways faculty have gone above and beyond to engage and offer them support in all capacities. We appreciate your understanding as you navigate these and many other unique challenges this semester.

Duke open-access resources are available to support faculty wellness include:

- The Personal Assistance Service (PAS) is the faculty/employee assistance program at Duke that helps those in the DUKE community who need support. It offers assessment, short-term counseling, and referrals to develop a personal treatment plan.
- Additional options: TalkNow (24/7, talk about anything) and Scheduled Counseling.
- Personal & Academic Support Services (PAAS) is available to provide information to your students about where, when, and how to vote via a Duke-sponsored resources available to support faculty wellness include:

- Duke Votes: Resources for Faculty and Students.
- Keep Learning.
- The Office of Faculty Advancement resource page includes videos, best practices and articles on wellness and support.

The Office of Faculty Advancement is also hosting a series shares our colleagues’ takes on the issues that matter most in academia. You can share directly with your students or use these reminders to be helpful and timely.

As a reminder, Courses are scheduled to take place on November 9th. The House of Representatives is considering legislation that would make Election Day a federal holiday, which would create additional uncertainty and stress on campus. We urge you to consider the importance of election-related conversations, listen to students’ concerns, and, if necessary, refer students to the Student Wellness Center.

Here are a few tips for successful conversations:

- Keep it positive and non-partisan. Avoid a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer. Acknowledge the moment. Listen to both sides. Ask students to share their perspectives. You can point them to COVID-related wellness strategies that facilitate academic progress while minimizing stress in the pandemic; your voice matters in helping them keep things in perspective. You can point them to COVID-related wellness strategies on wellness.duke.edu.

- Other resources include:
- Duke Votes: Resources for Faculty and Students.
- The Office of Faculty Advancement resource page includes videos, best practices and articles on wellness and support.

Finally, if you are able, the Duke Blue Devils Care: A convenient way for Duke students to receive no-cost mental health support from a licensed counselor. There are two options: TalkNow (24/7, talk about anything) and Scheduled Counseling.

If you are interested in participating, please contact your students and encourage them to sign up directly with the service.

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Keep Learning.