

Duke | Office of Undergraduate Education

Resources for Faculty, Students, and the Election

Dear Colleagues,

We hope this note finds you and your loved ones safe and well. With the end of the semester approaching, we are writing to offer a few timely reminders to faculty teaching undergraduates this term.

First, thank you for your tireless efforts to support undergraduates inside and outside of the classroom this semester. We hear students routinely express to us their appreciation for all the ways faculty have gone above and beyond to engage and offer them support in all platforms. We know this comes as you juggle many additional responsibilities outside of your teaching and we share the students' gratitude for all that you continue to do.

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'll find the information and reminders offered below to be helpful and timely.

Faculty Mental Health and Wellness

First and foremost, we encourage you to take care of yourselves. We know firsthand the stress you are facing, and we recognize that our 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 both yourselves and your students. You have jurisdiction over your course content and pace; you can abbreviate assignments, pre-record lectures to be watched at students' convenience, or adopt other strategies that facilitate academic progress while minimizing stress in the coming weeks.

Duke-sponsored resources available to support faculty wellness include:

The [Personal Assistance Service \(PAS\)](#) is the faculty/employee

assistance program that is available at no charge. PAS staff are licensed professionals who offer assessment, short-term counseling, and referrals to help resolve a range of personal, work, and family challenges.

The Office of Faculty Advancement resource page includes [videos, best practices and articles on wellness and support](#).

Student Mental Health and Wellness

Given its condensed nature and limited opportunities for social connectedness, this semester presents a host of unique challenges for student wellbeing. In August, we shared a menu of [sample course syllabi language](#) that included mental health and wellness resources for students. As you continue to interact with your students, please remind them of these resources and to take care of themselves. Many of our students feel pressure to achieve unprecedented success even in the pandemic; your voice matters in helping them keep things in perspective. You can point them to COVID-related wellness strategies on [Keep Learning](#).

Other resources include:

[Two-Click to Connect](#): In just two clicks, students can select one of two types of trained wellness representatives who will reach out within 24-48 (business) hours: Peer for You responders—who are here to chat in confidence with zero judgement—or DukeReach staff members.

[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. Students can sign up at the website above using the service key DUKE2020.

As always, if you are concerned about a specific student for any reason, [DukeReach](#) can provide you with additional resources to help connect that student with whatever help they may need, from mental health resources to academic support. Please don't ever worry alone — we 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 timeframe of this election season. There is a distinct possibility that we will not know election results on November 4th. This may create additional uncertainty and stress on campus. We urge you to consider ways to support yourselves and your students in the upcoming weeks.

First: **vote** if you are able. The [Duke Votes](#) website includes information for students, faculty and staff, as well as useful background on the electoral process that you can share with your students. Please don't forget that any voter eligible to vote in Durham County can vote at the Duke early voting site at the Karsh Alumni Center through October 31. Between now and November 2nd, student leaders of Duke Votes are available to provide information to your students about where, when, and how to vote via a [brief live presentation to your class](#) or an [instructional video](#) you can share directly with your students.

As a reminder, classes are scheduled to take place on November 3rd. President Price's recent message noted that faculty have the flexibility to make alternate arrangements regarding coursework and scheduling, and we encourage you to take steps that support student participation in the democratic process.

For most of our undergraduates, this election is the first Presidential cycle in which they can vote, and Duke has seen remarkable levels of student engagement around voting this fall. We expect that many of our students will seek opportunities for conversation and engagement around the election results (or lack thereof). If you are comfortable, we suggest that you acknowledge the moment, welcome these conversations, listen to students' concerns, and, if necessary, refer them to the myriad resources and events that colleagues are offering this election season.

In addition to voting information, the Duke Votes website features [resources and events](#) to help contextualize the 2020 election, and [Duke Today's Election 2020](#) series shares our colleagues' takes on the issues driving local, state, and national campaigns.

Once again, thank you. Throughout 2020, Duke faculty and staff have gone to extraordinary lengths to support our students' intellectual, emotional, and physical wellbeing. We truly appreciate your efforts, and we hope you will have some opportunities to recharge during the longer winter break period.

With gratitude,

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