



December 2021 Leadership Update

Dear Colleagues,

This will be the final leadership update for 2021. What a year it has been! As I mentioned in last month's update, it is clear that many in our community are struggling. The last 21 months have impacted us all, in ways that are hard to even describe. We feel angry, sad, and some might even feel hopeless in the face of challenges that can feel insurmountable.

As many are aware, the campus community is grieving the tragic loss of EMT student Oliver Leopold, who died last week from an apparent suicide. This is a painful reminder of the hopelessness that some may be experiencing. Despite this pain, I still have hope because I believe in each of you, and I believe that together we can and will support each other and our students.

Last week, I watched the Counseling Services team and our Fire Science faculty and students provide support to each other as they grieved the loss of a classmate. Witnessing members of our community support each other fuels my hope. I have seen the collaboration of so many across the college responding to the ongoing challenges that the pandemic has thrown our way. Seeing that collaboration and problem-solving strengthens my hope.

Recently, I entered one of the restrooms on the first floor of the Des Plaines Campus and was greeted by all of these messages of positivity taped to the mirror — a project conducted by our UNICEF club. A young student and I stood there and read them together. We reflected on how those messages lifted both of our spirits and allowed us to connect with each other. Those positive messages were inspiring. They reminded me of something that Distinguished Professor of Psychology, Mary Johannesen-Schmidt shared in a recent workshop on self-care about a quote in her pediatrician's office. It said, "scatter kindness like confetti." Wouldn't our world and our community be different if we all scattered kindness like confetti?

When was the last time you scattered kindness by helping a student or thanking a colleague? How did that make you feel? I'm fairly certain by spreading kindness, you not only gave hope to the other person but also improved your own mood as well.

This month's list of lifesavers scattered kindness to students and colleagues. Let's learn from them and empower ourselves to make a difference for someone else.

Dear Aunaetrakul
Robyn Bailey

Marc Battista
Mel Battistoni

Vicki Bialek
Glen Blaylock

Steve Butera
Debbie Christie
Steve Cohn
Justin Corbett
Phil Cronin
Thomas Dattilo
Tina Fakhrid-Deen
Carina Flores
Margaret Gas
Angelo Gero
Kim Harris
Jeff Hawkinson
Jeffrey Hoffmann
Heather Jakob-Short
Mark Kiel

Spencer Kimura
Leah Kintner
JoAnne Kloske
Eleni Kontogeorgis
Eilish McDonagh-
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Zoran Miodragovic
Keith Morgan-Dunham
MaryAnn Nedorost
Connie Negron
Tiffany Olson
Mark Palmsiano
Hatel Patel
Jamie Petersen
Dan Ridolfi

Anthony Robinson
Garcia Rose
Joe Scifo
Prashant Shinde
Elena Smoukova
Francisco Sosa
Anna Sowinska
James Takaesu
Elizabeth Tharp
Scott Tharp
Sheila Tsatsakis
Barbara Vazquez
John Wade
Gloria Yamauchi

So as this year comes to a close, that is my challenge to each of you. Challenge yourself to scatter kindness like confetti. Take time to renew your spirit during the Winter Break, and return in 2022 ready to inspire our students and each other. We have students' backs and I have yours, and together, we can all reach our big goals. Our community is a reason to hope.

May you have a holiday season filled with love, joy, peace and **hope**.

