



July/August 2022 Leadership Update

Colleagues,

We're on the horizon of another academic year, which fills me with such hope and excitement. Seeing so many of you back on our campuses this week has been energizing and I hope our Orientation Week sessions are filling you with great ideas and strategies to help you guide students toward reaching their goals. Thank you to the Faculty Professional Development Team, the Center for Professional Development, workshop presenters, and all who helped facilitate our Orientation Week.

I have always loved the "first day of school," which for us was Opening Day on Monday. Opening Day allows us to reconnect with colleagues we have not seen in a while, welcome new colleagues, and look forward to the new academic year ahead. I hope our Opening Day Program left you with a better understanding of the goals and strategies of our new Strategic Plan: **Vision 2030: Building Just and Thriving Communities.**

A link to the [Opening Day recording](#) is available for those who were unable to attend (or would like to watch it again). For those who did not receive a copy of our new Strategic Plan, please pick one up from my office at your convenience. You can also check out an electronic version of the Strategic Plan on our website's [Research and Planning](#) page.

You'll recall that each of our strategic goals — **Advancing Racial Equity, Strengthening Students' Oakton Experience** and **Enhancing Workforce Readiness and Community Engagement** — contain strategies and measures of success to guide us toward building Just and Thriving Communities. [Year one metrics](#) for each goal are on the Research and Planning page as well, helping us track our progress.

As you heard from your colleagues on Monday, we are already engaged in important strategies that align with our goals. Throughout the fall, you will be engaged in departmental discussions that align your work with the goals of the plan and explore opportunities to collaborate with other departments to maximize our efforts. This semester, I will re-introduce Community Conversations (formerly Coffee and Conversations), creating opportunities to meaningfully connect with one another and discuss College priorities. The first Community Conversation is Thursday, Sept. 8, and will focus on Vision 2030's goals and strategies. Check Oakton Matters for details.

Of course, Vision 2030 will build upon the foundation of our previous strategic plan — Success Matters — which concluded on June 30. We made considerable progress under Success Matters, some of which I spoke about at Opening Day. It was nice to see some of you earlier today at the celebratory ice cream social at Des Plaines. There will be ice cream at Skokie today (Aug. 18) from 2 - 3:30 p.m. (if you happen to be reading this shortly after I sent it). It's essential to find time to celebrate our progress, even if it feels like there are still mounds of work ahead. Acknowledging our victories as a team is critical to keeping us energized and motivated to continue moving forward.

During the Opening Day presentation - we also addressed the College's upcoming name change and ongoing brand refresh. What I hope you came away with most is that this is more than simply dropping "community" from our name and updating our logo and seal. This really is about taking time to re-introduce ourselves to the community, affirming our relevance and value. To do this, we must each truly embrace our roles as Oakton ambassadors, living out Oakton's values in our daily interactions with current and prospective students, community members — and of course — each other.

This is critical to reversing our years-long trend of declining enrollment by helping students understand the life-changing impact of an Oakton education. Our most recent enrollment report indicates an 8% decrease in enrolled students compared to this time last year. However, these next few days are critical, as many students are still considering their options for fall. As we engage with students — on our campuses, online or via telephone — we must keep in mind our role as Oakton ambassadors and our commitment to creating a welcoming and supportive environment. Thank you to everyone who helped support our Strategic Enrollment Management efforts by calling students who had either applied but not enrolled for fall or who were enrolled in the spring and had not yet enrolled in fall classes. This high-touch, personal connection is key to the Oakton Experience. Of the 526 students who were contacted, 206 of them are registered as of Aug. 15 (39%). Thank you! There is still time to call students and encourage them to enroll in our late start classes. Please let the Enrollment Management team know if you can make calls to students.

Let's also stay engaged with students once the fall term begins — encouraging them to take advantage of opportunities to build connections with each other and with us, by attending the Fall Student Welcome Event on Friday, Aug. 26 and other Welcome Week events. And if you haven't already, please consider dedicating a half hour (or more) next week to welcome students at one of our [information tables](#). This is another opportunity to engage with students and help them find their way around campus.

Finally, a special thanks to our most recent lifesavers, a long list of individuals who go above and beyond to embrace their roles as Oakton ambassadors and live out our mission, vision and values.

May Alimboyoguen
Dear Aunaetrakul
Kayshaun Barnes
Marc Battista
Kelly Becker
Kevin Best
Glen Blaylock
Michelle Blum
Karl Brooks
Steve Butera
Sun Choi
Tom Cierniak
Phil Cronin
Brenda Cruz
Tom Dattilo
Laura DeMerle
Giselle DeVilla

Rignesha Prajapati
Jeff Hoffmann
Brian Huntley
Jesse Ivory
Cheryl Joseph
Kelsey Kapolnek
Leah Kintner
JoAnne Kloske
Eleni Kontogeorgis
Gaya Lasam
Mike Loveday
Jeff Manson
LV McAllister
Tim McDonald
Jon McFarlane
Caitlin Melzer
Osvaldo Mendez

Julie Rosenberg
Maria Ross
Jim Schmittou
Laura Sewell
Francisco Sosa
Anna Sowinska
Bea Sparks
John Stryker
Aneta Tamraz
Paul Thomas
Luz Trejo Camarillo
Roberto Valadez
Manish Varma
Barb Vazquez
Carlos Velasquez Rodriguez
John Wade
Louis Walker

Leslie Dubin
Rani Edassery
Roger Eisen
Facilities
Mindy Finnigan
Margaret Gas
Ernie Gest
Peter Goss
Michael Peat
Stella Pillay

Cindy Nijmeh
Grace Norte
Ben Oros
Mike Pacocha
Jhosa Pagulayan
Mark Palmsiano
Herma Prieto
Laura Pristera Caringella
Sam Pudi
Mick Reuter

Tara Wesselink
Val Westphal
John Widera
Andy Williams
David Williams
Ruth Williams
Rebecca Wojcicki
Stefania Zarate Martinez
Camesha Richardson
Kathy Roberson

Wishing you all a wonderful 2022-2023 academic year!

In community,

