



## October 2022 Leadership Update

We're now two full months into our fall term, and it's inspiring to see our students gaining confidence as they navigate their classes, build relationships with peers, faculty and staff, and strive toward their goals.

This week, we welcomed nearly 70 students who began Late Start classes – taking their first course at Oakton. Late start (or flexible start) classes allow students to join our community at multiple points throughout the year, giving them an on-ramp to Oakton when it works for them rather than expecting them to conform to a traditional 16-week semester. Please pay special attention to new students who might need assistance navigating our campus for the first time and connect them with resources to ensure they are fully supported.

It's hard to believe, but spring registration will be opening soon. Priority registration is Nov. 14-16, and open registration begins Nov. 17. Remind students that registration will be opening and ask them if they need assistance with the enrollment process. We must work together to support students as they continue their education at Oakton and enable them to fulfill their academic and career goals.

I appreciated the opportunity to engage with some of you during Community Conversations at each campus focused on our new strategic plan. I heard powerful examples of the best of the Oakton Experience in each conversation. Sometimes the smallest gesture can significantly impact a student, fostering a sense of connection and belonging that is critical to student success.

Our strategic goal to strengthen students' Oakton Experience requires that we are intentional about creating these meaningful moments, supporting our students at every step in their journey. I know many of you are stretched thin given the vacancies in many departments and that taking the time to engage in meaningful ways with students might feel like just one more thing to add to an already overflowing plate. I encourage you to reflect on what experiences provide you with life-giving energy and what experiences are depleting. I get energy when I know I helped a student or a colleague, and I hope you will too. Our colleagues who are participating in the Caring Campus Initiative are working to identify specific ways to create those moments together – benefiting students and providing us with the life-affirming energy we all need to engage in our work.

The Oakton Experience is also enhanced by the continued modernization of our spaces as outlined in our Facilities Master Plan. I'm pleased to share that this week, our Board of Trustees approved two architectural firms to begin design and engineering work on our next phase of campus upgrades. Phase one renovations include updating the Des Plaines Campus TenHoeve Center and transforming the Skokie Campus Library into a Learning Commons. I'm confident this continued transformation will create a more welcoming environment for students, promoting collaboration and supporting success.

I look forward to engaging in a shared day of learning with you next Wednesday (Oct. 26) for our fourth annual College-wide Learning Day. This year's Learning Day theme is "Serving Adult Students - An Imperative to Building Just and Thriving Communities." I look forward to deepening our understanding of ways to reduce barriers and provide relevant support for adult students, a strategy outlined in our Strategic Plan. I'm especially excited to join many of you for the keynote address from Jairo McMican, associate director of equity initiatives at Achieving the Dream. Mr. McMican's address, "Serving Adult Learners is an Equity and Strategic Enrollment Imperative," will help us examine our biases toward adult students and strategize ways to help them navigate their educational journeys. Learning Day is designed for you to step away from the demands of your day-to-day routine and experience a shared learning experience with your colleagues, which I hope will provide you with life-affirming energy.

Check yesterday's Oakton Matters for more details about Learning Day and registration information.

One way we serve adult students is through the Northwestern Prison Education Program. This month, we celebrated the program's second graduating class with a ceremony at Stateville Correctional Center in Joliet. Another 16 incarcerated men earned an associate degree from Oakton on their pathway to earning a bachelor's degree from Northwestern University. As was the case when we celebrated the first cohort of graduates last spring, this event provided a moment of inspiration and a reminder of the importance of creating pathways and access to education for all of our community members.

I'm pleased to welcome two visiting faculty from Joensuu, Finland. They are spending two weeks at Oakton as part of the Illinois Consortium for International Studies and Programs (ICISP) exchange program. Additionally, Oakton hosted 10 international faculty visitors from the Netherlands, Sweden, and Germany last week as part of the "All 4 One International Partnership." Thank you to faculty members Michelle James and Mary Kakenmaster for hosting our Finnish visitors, and Katherine Schuster, Lisa Cherivtch, and Erick Rohn for facilitating the opportunities with our All 4 One partners to exchange ideas with educators, helping to create a more enriching learning environment. Thank you also to this month's long list of lifesavers for the many ways you've gone above and beyond to support students and one another.

Katie Adams	Michael Farquhar	Teresa O'Sullivan
Angelyn Anderson	Jeff Gossrow	Christine Paciero
Dear Aunaetitrakul	Theodore Gotis	Chris Petray
Kelly Becker	Greg Hamill	Lou Pierozzi
Valeria Benson-Lira	Stephanie Herrera	Jennifer Reeb
Vicki Bialek	Jeff Hoffmann	Camesha Richardson
Glen Blaylock	Peter Hudis	Kathy Roberson
Carol Bustamante	Mohammed Hussaini	Derek Rose
J Byrd	Jennifer Jennings	Garcia Rose
Julio Capeles	Charmaine Johns	Sylvia Rosillo
Ruby Catoto	Vesna Jovanovic	Katherine Schuster
Gabriel Chacon	Charlene Kadlec	Vinita Shah
Anita Cotton	Kristin Keramidas	Linda Sloan
Brenda Cruz	Renee Kozimor	Danielle Terry
Tom Dattilo	Ileo Lott	Rebecca Wojcicki
Vanessa De Jesus	Paula Luszczyk	Juleya Woodson
Elizabeth Dempsey	Kayla Mitchell	Miny Wu
Leslie Dzike	Bruce Mueller	Christine Ynaya
Tina Fakhrid-Deen	Saad Muhammad	Brad Young

I'll close this month's leadership update by encouraging you to attend the Employee Recognition Event on Nov. 3, which returns to Cafe La Cave. I'm excited to honor employees celebrating milestone work anniversaries as well as this year's faculty and staff excellence award winners, our living diversity award winner, and high impact practices award winners. Please check yesterday's Oakton Matters for more information and to RSVP to attend.

Thank you all once again for everything you do to help us live out the College's mission of empowering and transforming students' lives — and supporting our new Strategic Plan's bold vision of creating just and thriving communities.

In Community,

