

Dear Colleagues,

As I started composing this email, I pondered whether to just send bulleted updates or dwell more in this beautiful spring moment. I thought back to my April 2020 communications, when I turned to poetry for inspiration as we dug deep in the early days of the pandemic to find the willpower to forge on. Two years later, I wondered what I might write given that we are still forging down the long path of the pandemic. I admit I googled March quotes, and found the gem in my subject line. March 4th, the only day that is also a sentence, by Indiana writer John Green! (I hope some of you will instantly start thinking of other potential dates that are sentences. Given all of the February fun with dates and numbers, I got a kick out of this one!). It's also very appropriate for where we are as a learning community, as we are all looking for new energy to help us march forth. I hope you are getting outdoors, enjoying the early signs of spring, and rebuilding your vitamin D stores. I hope you also enjoy the two attached images James Grigg recently shared with senior leaders.

Other comments, and a few important procedural reminders and updates:

First, I included a reminder in my Provost's Report at Faculty Conference on our [Outside Employment for Faculty Members](#) (including consulting) policy. I pointed out that full-time faculty must request approval for all external consulting and any outside employment *before* committing to the work. The approval form is [here](#). I have signed several forms this week. Thank you for sending those in! While consulting activities are quite common, teaching for other institutions during the 9-month appointment is rarely if ever approved. Please talk to your department chair and/or dean if you have any questions. As I said in my Faculty Conference report: When in doubt, fill it out!

Second, I write with a reminder regarding our student absence policy, especially as it relates to authorized absences, including participation in athletics. In addition to navigating students who may be ill or exposed, the pandemic has also necessitated rescheduling athletic competitions both home and away. These changes have affected the travel schedules, sometimes making timely notification to faculty a challenge. I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize our need to work with students when they must be absent. In short:

- Student athletes are expected to notify faculty in a timely manner when travel for athletics impacts their ability to be present for class, so that alternate arrangements can be made for make-up work or for the student to attend another section of a lab, for example.
- Faculty are expected to discuss these options with students when they share that they are representing the university as athletes.
- The Class Attendance Policies section (page 8) in the Academic Regulations section of the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) states: *Instructors are obligated to provide makeup opportunities only for students who are absent with adequate cause such as incapacitating illness, death of an immediate family member, or*

authorized representation of the university. The policies also state that “if a student’s absences in a course total 25 percent or more of the class meetings for the course,” the student will receive an N, F, or U. However, if the absences are covered by one of the extenuating circumstances under the adequate cause section, they should not be included in the 25% calculation unless make-up opportunities were provided that the student did not avail themselves of, for example.

Both the University and the Athletics division understand the importance of class attendance and how missing classes negatively affects student learning. However, please extend all possible consideration to our students who continue to navigate various health challenges and to our student-athletes as they represent Winthrop in their authorized activities. If you have any questions on how to interpret the policy, or if you need help supporting a particular student-athlete, please reach out to Tim Drueke or Trent Kull, our Faculty Athletics Representative.

Third, our SACSCOC campus visit is right around the corner, March 22-24. Noreen Gaubatz, Meg Webber, and so many others are hard at work preparing for the arrival of a team of volunteers from peer institutions who will be on campus for three days to talk with many of you about your roles and responsibilities serving Winthrop students, as well as learning about our **QEP - Flight Ready!** As Meg presented to you at Faculty Conference last week, the QEP has three parts: 1) helping students consider their talents and interests in their first year on campus; 2) training faculty on career readiness learning outcomes through our ACUE partnership; and 3) developing an alumni mentoring network for students. Thank you in advance to those of you who will be in meetings answering questions and demonstrating our strengths. Please be aware that while the team is here from March 22 - 24, they may request additional information that we will work to supply as quickly as possible. Thank you in advance as well, if you are called on to help us provide that information.

I want to turn my lens outward for a moment before closing. While I am entreating you to fill your reserves with the energies of spring, I am also mindful that we are all watching events unfold in Ukraine that further tap our spirits, as we respond with empathy to the horror that is unfolding upon Ukrainian citizens. Turning anxiety into action is never easy, but I've seen numerous appeals for ways individual citizens around the world can provide practical supports. If you are in a position to do so, looking to reputable humanitarian and faith-based organizations to channel your concern into contributions can defuse the stress that arises when we see other members of the human family struggling to meet their basic needs. Also, we can take heart that, as is often the case, when democracy is most challenged, it is also most invigorated.

Finally, as Black History Month folds into Women's History Month, I close with a celebration of the nomination of [Ketanji Brown Jackson, the first African American woman nominated for the Supreme Court.](#) We have held wonderful events at Winthrop over the past month, and more are coming during March, as we celebrate the contributions of all members of our diverse community. Thank you to all faculty and staff who have created such rich programming this year to keep our students engaged and support our collective learning.

March forth, and be well!

Adrienne