

Heard, Julia

From: Office of the MSU Provost <provost@montana.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2023 8:31 AM
Subject: Message to Faculty – intentional connections foster student success



Office of the Provost

Dear Faculty Colleague,

Warmest greetings as we start a new academic semester. The excitement is in the air as students return to campus with energy, enthusiasm and great anticipation of the new year. In addition to greeting our returning students –and new students– I encourage you to reach out to new faculty and staff in your department. Please check in with them and provide a friendly, personable Montana State welcome.

You are invited to participate in the **Faculty Symposium** on January 24th with the theme, *“Helping All Students Succeed.”* More than a professional development opportunity, this symposium provides a timely opportunity to connect with colleagues from around campus to share and learn from one another. Lunch is on us! Just be sure to register with the [Center for Faculty Excellence](#) ahead of time so that we know you’re coming.

We know that students succeed at higher rates when they feel connected to other students and to their faculty. The classroom is an ideal place to strengthen these connections by establishing positive, invigorating classroom learning communities that encourages regular attendance and active engagement. The Center for Faculty Excellence is a great resource for ideas and [suggestions](#) that will help you to foster student connections, encourage class attendance and build community in your classrooms and labs, from small settings to large lecture halls.

On the topic of making connections, one comment I hear mentioned often is how meaningful it has been to reconnect with others, whether family or friends, students or colleagues. [Research](#) supports our observations that those meaningful human connections lead to improved mental health and overall well-being. We can foster that with intentionality, e.g., being present on campus with doors open (literally and figuratively) to interact with students and with

colleagues. It's good for our spirit, our creativity, and our intellectual productivity to connect with and support each other.

Extraordinary opportunities and partnerships are germinated during spontaneous interactions that occur when we are present and available. I ask you to join me this semester in setting a goal to intentionally block out a bit more time each week to be available for enhancing connections with students and colleagues. Let's give it a try.

Together, we are engaged in a noble calling of educating the future citizens and leaders of our society, and you play a pivotal role in shaping students' experience at MSU. Do not hesitate to contact any of us in the office of academic affairs if we can assist you in fulfilling this mission – we are here to serve you.

In closing, welcome back – let's have a great semester!

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob".

Dr. Robert L. Mokwa | Executive Vice President and Provost

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