



**OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR  
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS & PROVOST**

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Dear Colleagues,

Our commitment to Student Success at Illinois is anchoring our work during this turbulent time. Although uninvited, we are meeting these unexpected challenges with the focused priority of sustaining the Illinois Experience for our students.

By now, we have adopted new platforms for delivering our academic content, possibly had virtual encounters with our students, and are prepared to advance new forms of pedagogy. By next week, we will have adapted to a functional routine in this uncharted territory. Let us now pivot and embrace our roles beyond delivering academic content. Let us help our students weather this storm, embrace well-being, and achieve effective learning outcomes.

Our students need us. They need to hear from us. Their world has been disrupted. They need our reassurance. They need to hear that we are experiencing this weather together, and that together, we will emerge from the storm. Our students need to hear that we understand their fears and that they can confidently rest in our advocacy on their behalf.

Our response to addressing academic needs with such immediacy was expected. After all, we are Illinois. Let us surprise our students as we deliver unexpected concern for their personal well-being. Let us affirm them. Let us be flexible. Let us assure our students that we are not proceeding with business as usual. We recognize that much has happened. Let us create the memory that at the point of crisis, we demonstrated compassion and concern for our community.

As we continue our good work, let us be mindful and care for ourselves. Our students take their cues from us. Let us engage in practices that sustain us.

Grace to you,

Ollie Watts Davis  
Suzanne and William Allen Distinguished Professor in Music  
University Scholar  
Provost's Fellow