

April 21, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

It is amazing to sit back and consider all that we have accomplished this academic year. Out of enormous uncertainty, and working together, we have created a successful academic year in the midst of a global pandemic. Thank you! As we approach the end of the semester, I ask for your assistance in supporting our students through the end of their final exams.

I am sure you already realize student stress is at an all-time high. This is always a challenging time in the semester, but after nearly three terms of remote learning, many of our students are dealing with unprecedented burdens including mental health concerns. Each of us has a part to play in helping students manage this stress and stay the course through the end of the semester. Please consider taking some of the actions below, each of which can provide that little bit of extra support to help a student stay on track:

- Take a moment at the start of classes or meetings to check in and ask how your students are doing. I've heard many students share how much it means to them just to know faculty and staff care about their well-being.
- Let students know you believe in them and their ability to finish the semester. Many students are facing a crisis of confidence as deadlines mount. It can help them enormously to hear us say that we know they can succeed.
- Tell students when they are doing really well. The "kudos" function in Starfish is a great way to do this quickly and easily.
- If you see opportunities to lighten the load of required work, while still accomplishing your course objectives, consider doing so.
- Reassure students that life will be much more normal next year. Nearly half the student body has never experienced a normal RIT academic year. But we have, and can tell them what it's like and help them look past their current stresses.
- Refresh your knowledge on available support services for students in distress. You can find a full set of resources, including the Red Folder, [here](#). If you become concerned about a student, submit a Tiger Concerns Report [here](#).

Finally, as you think about how to take care of your students, please don't forget about yourselves. Take a moment to recognize a colleague. Express gratitude for the effort and

care that has helped us all make it to this point. Give yourself a pat on the back for a job very, very well done. Watch your own fatigue and take steps to get extra rest if you need it. Look for ways to lighten your own workload. Work-life balance has been a huge challenge for all of us this year and it matters more than ever now that we are in the final and most intense month of the semester.

My thanks and very best wishes to all of you as we move towards the close of this semester.

Sincerely yours,

Ellen Granberg, Ph.D.  
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs