

A letter from Springfield College faculty amid switch to virtual learning

Dear Students,

On behalf of several of my faculty colleagues, I'm writing this letter from my dining room table while surrounded by papers—notes on converting my classes to a fully online setting, notes on supporting the faculty who teach for our College Writing program, both here in Springfield and on our campuses across the country, and drawings my kids have done. My computer has a disturbing number of tabs open—Paypal, Google, PrideNet, Facebook, the New York Times, Brightspace and the Springfield College Student. I'm a slow texter, but my phone has been buzzing all day with messages, questions, and solutions from my colleagues.

Students, we write this to say, we are thinking about you.

To our first-year students: We are heartbroken that your year has been interrupted just as you were getting the hang of it. To our seniors: We are heartbroken that your senior year, which you have worked so hard for, has been truncated in this way. We'll find a way to celebrate your accomplishments, but I know it won't be the same. Sophomores and juniors: you're not forgotten! Your experience has also been disrupted. Athletes, artists, teachers, volunteers, advocates, student workers, humans: We are heartbroken for all of you. There's no way around it, this situation is just plain hard.

So where do we go from here? As members of the Springfield College community, we urge you to take advantage of the beautiful virtual networks that have begun to emerge. Check on your friends, your roommates, your teammates. Ask if they are okay. Remember, going home isn't easy for everyone. Some people don't have a home to go to; others may not feel safe going home. Perhaps their families don't acknowledge their true identity, or perhaps their city, state, or country is farther along in this pandemic than we are. For some, who have worked to build roots in this country, going home means they might not be allowed to come back. Check on your Springfield College family. Ask them what they need and offer what you can share.

A brilliant educator, Paolo Freire, advocated for what has been called "a pedagogy of love." Teaching, which for Freire was inextricable from liberation, hinged on genuine human emotions, on truly caring for one another. He wrote, "Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to others." Be courageous!

Love,

Anne C. Wheeler

Assistant Professor of Composition & Rhetoric & Writing Program Director

William Arighi

Assistant Professor of World Literature

Julia Chevan

Professor of Physical Therapy & Chair of the Department of Physical Therapy

Justine Dymond

Associate Professor of English

Susan Joel

Associate Professor & Chair for the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Regina Kaufman

Professor of Physical Therapy

Rebecca Lartigue

Professor of English & Honors Program Director