

VALOR

VETERAN ★ ALLIANCE

January 2022

Inside this issue:

<i>VCO Update</i>	2
<i>Veteran's Voice</i>	3
<i>Ally of the Year</i>	4
<i>Call to Action</i>	4
<i>Fire Watch</i>	5
<i>Career Corner</i>	6
<i>Certification</i>	7
<i>Office Updates</i>	
<i>Coming Up</i>	8
<i>A Message from the President</i>	9



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Colleagues and friends,

I hope the onset of 2022 has been one filled with good health, relentless hope, deep-seated joy, and lots of layers (unless you have had the good fortune to miss the frigid temperatures we have recently experienced in the Midwest). There is always such a sense of promise in a new year. Never mind that it is just the day after yesterday, January 1st brings with it a slate-clearing feeling that helps us re-envision our ambitions and our lives.



I think the same is true for new semesters. There is so much promise and excitement at the outset. Of course, that is before the reading, assignments, group projects, tests, late nights, grades, and early mornings set in. Then it is a chaotic whirlwind until semester end when everyone slides into home base feeling a bit worse for the wear, yet still jubilant. Such is life I think. It has a way of carrying us along when the romanticism of our ideals and resets meet the reality of our limits—be they self-constructed or real.

As a faculty member, what I have learned is that semesters have a way of going by quickly. And the older I get, the more true this feels. In the span of roughly 40 hours of class time (and untold hours of prep and grading time), we do our level best to teach what we know, ignite a passion for learning, and develop key competency skills. It is both exhilarating and draining. At semester end we reflect upon our triumphs and lick our wounds, all with the intent of creating a more perfect iteration next semester. Hope springs eternal, thank goodness.

As we begin this new year and new semester, I encourage you to revisit Amy Tichey's 2019 article titled, [Student Veterans and Your Classroom](#). Amy (who is also a VALOR Board Member) focuses on what instructors can do to better facilitate student veteran success. This excellent [article](#) (posted on NDSU's Office of Teaching and Learning website) provides a reminder of some of the strengths, differences, and unique challenges student veterans bring into the classroom. On that note, this month's *Call to Action* asks you to reach out to one of our key campus representatives when you have questions about student veteran issues, whether they are general in nature or specific to one student veteran. Our network is expansive and it is here to help you serve student veterans. If in doubt, reach out.

My thanks to all of you - VALOR allies, partners, and board members - for bringing your time, energy, compassion, and resources to bear to support student veterans. May your semester and year be all you hope it will be and more delightful than you can imagine.

Carol Cwiak, J.D., Ph.D.
VALOR Faculty Liaison



VCO Update
Jim Stoddard

You can visit Jim on campus at the Veterans Educational Training Office in Ceres 329; or by phone at 701-231-9706; or by email at james.stoddard@ndsu.edu.



Congratulations to NDSU's Football program! The Bison secured an impressive ninth win in 11 years to once again be the 2021 NCAA Division 1 National Champions!

It is a nice way to start a semester at an institution that has a likewise impressive winning streak regarding research and education.



Lately, I've liked to start out new semesters by including some data on what our military students are studying. I think this helps us focus our attention on the right areas, and to get a handle on our population and their interests in education.

As of January 6th, NDSU has only 348 GI Bill students registered for Spring 2022. So, we're down by about 35 from the 383 we had last semester (Fall 2021). This is partly explained by the fact that we graduated 27 military students in December, which is great news! In comparison, there were only two military students with "degree awarded" in the Fall of 2020. But we're also down quite a bit (about 60) from the 408 GI Bill students we had enrolled a year ago in Spring 2021.

Here's the current distribution of NDSU's military-connected students by College:

Engineering: 73 (down by 23 from Spring '21)

Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences: 69 (down about 5)

Business: 43 (down about 8)

Health Professions: 43 (down about 6)

Science and Mathematics: 40 (down about 7)

Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources: 38 (down about 3)

Human Sciences and Education: 33 (up about 4)

Undeclared or Non-degree: 7 (down about 5)

Graduate School: *2 (no change)

* There are 29 military students working on advanced/professional degrees within Colleges other than the Graduate School.

By far the biggest change is in the College of Engineering, where GI Bill students are down by about 25% from Spring 2021. Almost all other departments are down by just a handful of military students.

Once again, the second-most popular College for our military students is Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Because this department covers a lot of ground, I dug a little deeper. Over half of these students (41 of 69), are majoring in one of only three programs: Criminal Justice (20), Architecture (13), and Emergency Management (8), with just three or less in all of the other AHSSC majors, except for University Studies (6).

Similarly, looking closer at the College of Science and Mathematics, the vast majority (35 of 40), fall into one of only two disciplines: Biology/Biological Sciences (20) and Psychology (15).

This is good to know so we can try to have informed military allies within those departments and majors that have large numbers of military students. Ideally, we'd like to have at least one ally in every academic field, but this way, we can see where our priorities should be.

Coming up in February, we'll be sending out a professional survey to all our military students to ask about their level of satisfaction with current campus services. The survey is developed by Skyfactor, a company that NDSU has used in the past to assess student services. We'll do a pre-promotion campaign to ensure students are watching for the survey invitation and know that it's legitimate, and to encourage them to respond honestly and fairly.

Once we have the survey results, the VALOR board and partners will be able to use the data to assess what we've been doing well, and advocate for any improvements or enhancements to services that are not delivering at the level we intend. We'll also be able to compare our results to peer institutions that are conducting the same survey.





Veteran's Voice

Craig Schwinden

VALOR Student Veteran Representative

My fellow Vets,

Welcome back to the new semester. Once again, we greet a new year, and with it, new hopes for bigger and better things. Unfortunately, the recent news continues to get worse regarding the coronavirus. And the optimistic outlook nearly a year ago that came in with a new administration in Washington has long left the building. I can't say that I am surprised, but I am disappointed. The "good" news is that it is characteristically bitter cold as it should be.

Back on campus, we are once again confronting an uptick in the latest virus variant while preparing for the

new semester. I have not seen anything specific yet about changes to protocols - be they testing or masking - but that could change at any time. I think the testing that was in place last semester went well as I tested twice at the SHAC, and the process was very smooth.

Also, as you already know, we have a new certification officer in Todd Yackley. This is his first full semester in that role here at NDSU. Let's make sure we are supporting him in any way we can. I suspect there will be changes in processes, procedures, or paperwork. Let's all be patient, understanding and most of all, work together. I also want to mention that the housing allowance guidance, which was changed to accommodate the coronavirus and set to expire last semester, has been extended by President Biden. Both houses of Congress passed this measure by voice vote and President Biden signed the bill on December 21st. You can read more about this here: [Housing Benefits for Student Veterans Extended by Pandemic Protection \(va.org\)](https://www.va.org).

I hope everyone that was here during the Fall semester is still with us for the Spring. If you struggled with the decision to stay or not and

are here but still not sure, I suggest you talk to a buddy or one of the many sources of support here at NDSU ([NDSU Career Advising Center](#) and [NDSU Counseling Center](#)).

Lastly, make sure to check out this month's newsletter. There is a lot of information in this edition you will find of interest. One of the highlights of the newsletter this month is the public announcement of the VALOR 2021 Ally of the Year award recipient. Jerry South, Director of Career Coaching in the Career and Advising Center, was awarded the honor in mid-December. Jerry is a retired Air Force senior non-commissioned officer and has done so much for VALOR and the student veteran population (not to mention many other students) here on campus. He has been a "rock" for VALOR especially since the coronavirus struck. Please thank Jerry when you see him on campus.

Remember that the Bison Student Veterans (BSV) will also start their regular meetings again, this includes their monthly socials as well. Check their schedule out [here](#). As always, please do not hesitate to send me any comments or suggestions regarding this article or any other articles or subjects via email [here](#). Thank you for all you do.



"If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception, it is a prevailing attitude."

~Colin Powell



You can also call Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647 - 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Reach Out: [Reach.gov/SPM](https://reach.gov/SPM)

Page 3

ALLY OF THE YEAR 2021

VALOR is delighted to announce that Jerry South, dedicated VALOR ally and board member, received VALOR's Ally of the Year award in mid-December of 2021. Jerry serves as the Assistant Director of Career Coaching in NDSU's Career and Advising Center. Jerry served in the United States Air Force for 23 years, retiring in 2012. He has many years of experience working with military students and veterans to help them achieve their educational and career goals.

Jerry has established himself in the NDSU student veteran community as a touchpoint for knowledge, assistance, and guidance. His ready smile and can-do attitude not only puts those who engage with him at ease, but also serves as an example of the power of applied positivity in one's life. Jerry is not afraid to share examples of his own life and career challenges and the lessons he learned from them. In such exchanges he illustrates the power of conviction and commitment to both success and resilience. The presentation of this duality from such a strong role model provides student veterans (and others that engage with him) a great example of the role one's own mindset has on happiness.

Please reach out and congratulate Jerry on this well-earned recognition. As James Barrie said, "Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves." Thank you Jerry for all you do!



Jerry South, VALOR's Ally of the Year for 2021, shown with Craig Schwinden (left) and Jim Stoddard (right)

CALL TO ACTION: **IF IN DOUBT, REACH OUT**

If you have questions or concerns about a general issue relevant to student veterans or a specific student veteran, please do not hesitate to reach out to Jim Stoddard, Todd Yackley, or Carol Cwiak for assistance. We may not have all the answers, but we are connected to the networks that can get the answers we need. Depending on the urgency of the issue, we also have the ability to initiate interventions.

We get questions about a wide-variety of things and often those questions help inform campus and VALOR initiatives designed to clarify, simplify, or rethink current practices. On occasion, we are advised about concerns specific to individual students. These can include concerns such as class absences, struggles with class materials or activities, family issues, changes in behavior, and medical issues. Our VCO, Jim Stoddard, does monitor midterm grades to identify any potential issues student veterans may be having, but that only captures a small percentage of issues that may arise.

The people most likely to identify and raise student concerns are staff, faculty, and students who regularly interact with the student. Toward that end, VALOR wants to encourage you to reach out in any instance in which you feel you need more information or assistance. Thank you for all you do to create positive outcomes for student veterans.



Fire Watch*Brennan Lemar and Devon Patton, BSV*

We are happy to return to campus after some much-needed time off and hope that you enjoyed your winter break. Our next meeting is Tuesday, January 11th at 5:30 PM in the Meadow Lark room of the Memorial Union.

Thanks again to Raymond Pizzaro with the Wounded Warrior Project for presenting at our December meeting. We do not have a featured speaker this month, but we are working to schedule speakers for the remainder of the meetings this semester. If you, or someone you know, is interested in speaking at one of our upcoming meetings we encourage you to contact us.

We will be holding elections for BSV officer positions in April for students interested in running. More information will be available on that soon. We are excited to return to campus refreshed with our fellow student veterans, staff, faculty, and allies, and to kick 2022 off to a strong start.

Connect with BSV via [email](#) or [Facebook](#).

**Congress Allows Student Veterans to Keep Full Benefits**

By Sara Weissman (from [Inside Higher Ed](#), December 20, 2021)

Congress finalized legislation Wednesday that allows student veterans taking remote classes to continue receiving full GI Bill housing benefits through summer 2022, Military Times reported.

Student veterans enrolled in online courses typically get half the amount in monthly housing stipends as students taking in-person courses under the post-9/11 GI Bill. Stipend amounts depend on where students live, so the difference in financial support can vary from several hundred dollars to \$2,000. When the pandemic forced students to move their studies online, Congress allowed the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to continue paying full housing stipends to online students to avoid tens of thousands of veterans losing part of their benefits, a policy that was set to expire Dec. 21.



“While we’ve made a lot of progress in getting this virus under control, many veterans continue to take classes online due to the pandemic and need the protections in this legislation in order to continue their studies,” said Representative Mike Levin, chairman of the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee’s panel on economic opportunity. “At a time when we are trying to keep veterans housed and encourage them to pursue a higher education, the last thing we can afford is to let these protections expire and risk derailing their studies or, even worse, forcing them out of their homes.”

The measure passed by Congress pushed back the expiration date and is expected to be signed by President Biden in the coming days.

“No veteran should ever have to face uncertainty when it comes to their future,” Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee chairman Jon Tester said in a statement.

Military Times

Follow [Military Times](#) for comprehensive, up-to-date coverage of a wide-variety of topics such as: military affairs, pay and benefit issues, Pentagon & Congress activities, veteran initiatives, military culture, education, transition, and employment information. You can also sign up for their free news alerts.

Career Corner

Andrea Hein, Assistant Director, Academic Advising, NDSU Career and Advising Center



Tip for Success: Visiting Faculty Office Hours

Welcome to new students and welcome back for our returners! Here are few tips about visiting faculty office hours. Getting to know your professors early in the semester can help you start the semester strong!

So, what are office hours anyway?

Office hours are usually specific times that your faculty members set aside in a week for students to drop in or schedule meetings to talk about your class materials. Your faculty have a lot going on each week, so these are times that they have set aside just for students when they are likely in their office and available to meet with you.

How do I know when office hours are or where to meet with my faculty member?

Usually in the first few days of class, your professor will go over the syllabus for the course, which provides details on a lot of information on policies, procedures, and outcomes for the course. They will usually have their office hours and office location/preference for meetings listed on the syllabus and likely talk about the information in the first few days of class. Refer back to your syllabus or email your professor if you are looking for office hour information. Sometimes, they may list office hours as something like “As Arranged” or “By Appointment.” That just means they would prefer that you contact them to arrange a time. It is not meant that they do not have office hours. So be sure to inquire. It might be helpful for you to take all of your syllabi out together and write all of your faculty office hour information in one place to keep it handy.



Tip #1: Introduce yourself early

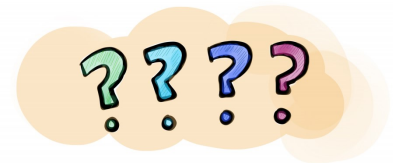
HELLO
my name is

Your new
favorite student

My first tip is to attend office hours or try to chat with your professor before or after class early in the semester. I'm talking the first or second week. And I also fully acknowledge that it might make some of you a little nervous or you may feel awkward going in and introducing yourself. But, rest assured, your faculty will be excited to have students walk through their door! They want to help you be successful. Also, by getting to know your faculty early in the semester, it's maybe less intimidating to go to them later if something does come up. Alerting your faculty and attending office hours as soon as you can is helpful so potential problems or confusion over the course material doesn't build up and overwhelm you because you waited until close to the end of the semester.

Tip #2: Things to talk about at office hours or with your faculty

Office hours are not just for when things may be going wrong in a class. But, they can certainly be used to get some extra time with the class expert themselves if you need clarification on anything. Visit and get to know your faculty and share why you were interested in the class, your interest in the major, and your career goals (if the class is part of your major). Get to know your faculty member's area of expertise or what they're working on for research. You never know what opportunities may arise. During this time you can also bring in questions about homework assignments or seek feedback on previous or upcoming assignments or tests. For example, your professor likely does not give back your tests to keep, but if you have questions about how you did, they will often discuss this with you in more detail during office hours. So you can go through the test together and explain why you gave the answers you did, while also gaining insight about the correct answers and strategies to study differently (and perform better) on upcoming exams. [Do you want to schedule an advising appointment with Andrea? Log in here and click to find available times!](https://ndsucampus.eab.com/pal/uBVGba7Zc7)



<https://ndsucampus.eab.com/pal/uBVGba7Zc7>.

“Success is never accidental.” ~Jack Dorsey



valor.veteran.alliance.organization/

Page 6

New Military Benefits Reporting Form

Military and Veteran Certification Office



Todd Yackley

The Military and Veteran Certification office is utilizing a new Military Benefits Reporting Form (MBRF) that all personnel receiving military benefits must fill out. This form is required in order to certify your enrollment for military educational benefits. You can access the MBRF form here: https://ndstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1FFNfi8O6DuV25w. Please be sure you have registered for classes prior to submitting your request. You must submit this form each time class changes are made. The first MBRF submission made for a specific term is considered a new request and any subsequent requests for the same term shall be deemed a change to the initial request. If you make any changes to your schedule after submitting the first MBRF for a term, please be sure to select "change previous request" in the "request type" field.

After the Drop/Add date of January 20, 2022 (<https://www.ndsu.edu/registrar/dates/>), your account will be placed in a hold status. To make a change, you must resubmit this form. After submitting a "change to previous request" the registration hold on your record shall be removed for two business days. Make sure that you have all necessary signatures or permission needed to enroll in courses or programs prior to completing this form. We will notify you once the hold has been lifted and you will have two business days to make the necessary changes.

Tuition and Fees will not be paid until this form is submitted. I know it's a new requirement but it is how we need to track everyone to ensure we have you paid correctly. If you have sent us your most current COE we should be good to go. If I do not have one on file when I receive your form, I will email you to get a copy. COEs are required in order to receive your funding.

Note: This form is not to be used for withdrawing from NDSU. To completely drop all of your courses, fill out the Cancel/Withdraw to Zero form in Campus Connection in the eForms tile.



SSgt Peter H. M. Griffin



Our community lost one of our own unexpectedly during the winter break. SSgt Peter H. M. Griffin, from the North Dakota Air National Guard, passed away on December 19, 2021 at the age of 22. Peter, a junior, transferred to NDSU in the fall of 2019. He performed well academically and after a year he took advantage of an opportunity to work full-time with the 119th Wing, North Dakota Air National Guard as a Geospatial Intelligence Analyst. Peter attended high school in Fargo and was from a military family. He was loved and respected by many. On behalf of NDSU's military community and the VALOR Board, we extend our heart-felt condolences to Peter's family, friends, and military comrades. A link to Peter's memorial information can be found here: <https://www.hansonrunsvold.com/obituaries/Peter-Griffin-2/>.

COMING UP

January

New Year's Day January 1
[NDSU Spring Semester Starts](#) January 10

February

Black History Month Month of February
 Four Chaplains Day February 3
 USO Birthday February 4
 National Salute to Veteran Patients Week of February 14
 Coast Guard Reserve Birthday February 19

March

Women's History Month Month of March
 Navy Reserve Birthday March 3
 Hug a GI Day March 4
 Seabee Birthday March 5
 K 9 Veterans Day March 13
 American Legion Birthday March 15
 Rosie The Riveter Day March 21
 Medal of Honor Day March 25
 National Vietnam War Veterans Day March 29

Connect Locally via Facebook**NDDVA**

facebook.com/NDDVA/

DAV North Dakota

facebook.com/davnorthdakota/

American Legion Post 2

facebook.com/americanlegionpost2/

American Legion Post 21

facebook.com/legionpost21/

North Dakota American Legion

facebook.com/NDAmericanLegion/

Dilworth VFW Post 1223

facebook.com/VFW-Post-1223-106022496155155/

Fargo VFW Post 762

facebook.com/fargovfwclub/

West Fargo VFW Post 7564

facebook.com/VFW7564.org/

North Dakota Veterans Educational Training

facebook.com/VeteransEducationalTraining/

Bison Student Veterans

facebook.com/BisonVeterans

VALOR

facebook.com/valor.veteran.alliance.organization/

Local Events

On **Wednesday, January 12th**, from **10 AM-12 PM**, veterans and their families can visit the **Fargo Air Museum's Veterans Coffee Hour** for free Sandy's Donuts and coffee. This event is held every second Wednesday of each month at 1609 19th Ave. N., Fargo.

On **Saturday, January 15th**, the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County will host **Warriors in the North—Healing Through Art Veteran Resource Fair** from **10 AM-3 PM** at the **Hjemkost Center** (202 1st Ave. N., Moorhead, MN). "The event is free and open to the public! All Veterans, their families, and caregivers are encouraged to attend. Several Veteran resources and representatives will be on hand from the Fargo VA Health Care System, VA National Cemetery Administration, Cass County Veteran Service Offices, VFW, and more! Stop by and check out the 'Warriors in the North - Healing Through Art' exhibit, learn about some great Veteran's benefits, and enjoy live music and snacks" (see more [here](#)).

On **Monday, January 17th** (and the 3rd Monday of every month), from **1-4 PM** visit the **free, walk-in legal clinic** for help for low-income veterans with civil legal matters at **Fargo VA's Community Resource and Referral Center (CRCC)**. Note: this service is not at the VA hospital; the CRCC is on 1st Ave N in downtown Fargo, next to the Federal Courthouse.

On **Tuesday, January 18th**, from **6:30-7:30 PM** join Major General (ret.) Alexander "Mac" MacDonald, speaking on his experience in the Korean War at **History Night at the Fargo Air Museum**. General MacDonald is a former Adjutant General of the North Dakota Air National Guard, and flew 36 combat missions during the Korean War. The Fargo Air Museum is located at 1609 19th Ave. N., Fargo. Admission is a \$5 donation and is free for museum members.

The American Legion, Department of North Dakota, is hosting its **Winter Conference** from **January 28th—30th** in **Bismarck, North Dakota** at the **Ramkota Inn Hotel**. The agenda is posted [here](#).

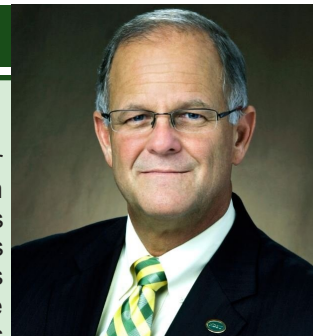
Do you need *money* for an emergency or *food* to get you through a rough patch? Check out [NDSU's Emergency Fund](#) and the [NDSU Food Pantry](#)—we've got your six.



Kindness is never wasted.



An Important Message from NDSU President Dean Bresciani



NDSU Community,

I want to welcome you back to the start of the spring semester, but I wish it were under better circumstances. There has been a significant national increase in COVID cases from the start of semester break till now. This spike is attributable to the Omicron variant and its increased transmissibility. This variant has been hitting the East Coast and Great Lakes region hard for a few weeks and is now spreading rapidly across the country. It appears that a spike is beginning to occur in North Dakota, but the magnitude of the increase remains unclear. However, the good news is that Omicron, while more contagious, appears to result in milder illness (e.g., [here](#)).

We have been monitoring the situation and participating in system-wide discussion. The local conditions, while concerning, do not indicate that we will need to make significant modifications to our current COVID mitigation strategies. However, we need to remain vigilant and each do our part to reduce the spread. Here are some key points:

Face Coverings: Masks will continue to be required in all classroom settings and will be strongly recommended in all indoor settings. NDSU's specific guidance can be found [here](#). Faculty should rigorously adhere to these requirements for the classrooms. For questions about classroom management of this issue please review the Guidance Regarding Classroom Management and Masks in the email sent on January 7, 2022. This guidance was previously issued by Provost Fitzgerald and Vice Provost Oster-Aaland on August 30, and I want to remind faculty members about it.



Photo from @DeanBresciani on Twitter

Staying Home: If you are ill, do not come to work or attend class. Please remember to report to NDSU if you are COVID positive. The reporting forms for both employees and students can be found [here](#). If you are a student and are positive, please contact your professors to determine how to stay current with your work.

Isolation/Quarantine: Consistent with guidance from the CDC and the North Dakota Department of Health, if you are positive for COVID, you should stay home and isolate from other people for at least 5 full days (day 0 is the first day of symptoms or the date of the positive viral test for asymptomatic persons). After 5 days, *if you do not have symptoms*, you can come out of isolation, but you will need to wear a mask in public for an additional 5 days. Because of the difficulty of continuously wearing a mask with roommates, students who are isolating on campus can choose to remain in the isolation residence for a full ten days. Additional information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Vaccinations/Boosters: Vaccinations and boosters are recommended for all eligible recipients. Vaccines and boosters are free and readily available. You can locate a vaccine provider [here](#). Students can get free vaccines and boosters at Student Health Service.

Testing: We strongly encourage regular testing for all our students and employees. Students can be tested for free at the Student Health Service with an appointment. More information [here](#). Employees can be tested by the Fargo Cass Public Health site located at 3051 25th Street S., Suite K. No appointment is necessary and testing is free. NDSU will explore with public health officials if an additional testing site at NDSU is feasible.

Student Vaccine Incentive: The student vaccine incentive closed out on January 4, and I am extremely pleased to report that 7,052 students received the \$100 vaccine incentive. That's 60% of our in-person student population. Thank you to all the students who got vaccinated and to all the staff who made this incentive program possible.

With COVID still a significant threat and our recent cold temperatures and snow, I understand it is easy to not feel enthusiastic about the start of school. However, this COVID spike *will* pass, and the snow *will* melt. Soon enough, spring will arrive, and with it, the hope of finally moving past this pandemic forever. Until then, let's work together to make this a great semester.