

Good afternoon: Welcome to our first meeting of the general faculty for the 2022 – 2023 academic year. I am pleased to see you here and on zoom. As usual we have a full and informative agenda. So, I won't take long.

I do want to say a few words as we approach the winter holidays. Before Thanksgiving our nation was racked by two high profile shootings in public places – a nightclub, Club Q, and a Walmart. These came on the heels of gun violence at UVA in which students were killed and injured and mysterious killings in Idaho. Perhaps like of some of you, I entered the week of the Thanksgiving holiday, holding grief, outrage, along with personal joys with both hands. Such a co-mingling of emotions is challenging. For those who feel these experiences in very personal ways, they are more difficult still. And just because the news cycle has moved on, doesn't mean individuals – either us or those around us – have. So, in these last weeks of the semester, please accept my encouragement toward gentleness with yourselves and all those around you. We all have deadlines to meet and obligations that can't wait. But take your moments of grace where you can and give them to others where you can as well.

At the Advisory Committee meeting earlier this week, members shared safety concerns with the Chancellor which he took very much to heart. We are working to plan some events and trainings to help all of us feel as prepared as possible for dangerous and difficult situations should they, God forbid, arise on our campus. I expect we will hear more from Chief James in coming weeks and months about such concerns.

This morning I attended the faculty assembly meeting along with member of our faculty assembly delegation Jan Hannig, Kim Brownlee, and Andy Hessick among others. (I happened to see them on zoom. We may have had other delegation members present too.) We had a conversation with President Hans in which he addressed some aspects of the Return-on-Investment Study which I think will merit more discussion in this forum in the new year. Likewise, there was a detailed presentation on the new funding model which I believe Vice-Chancellor Knuffman will discuss with us today.

In addition, I want to recognize the good news that came out this week about an increase in graduate school stipends. The Graduate Student and Professional Student Government has been very effective in their advocacy efforts. I'm proud this body supported them in various ways in that effort and want to congratulate them on their success. Please join me in a round of applause.

Finally, there is to be a parking and transportation five-year planning committee and I've been asked to nominate some faculty members for participation. If you are interested, please contact me.

So, with that, I'll wish you a peaceful holiday season and will look forward to our work together in 2023.