



Faculty Senate

8/30/21

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

Welcome back to campus – we are excited to be in person, and we enjoy the hustle and bustle of a more normal campus life. However, dimming our excitement is the reality that we have endured a long 18-month COVID pandemic. The past 18 months have been an emotional roller coaster beginning with initial lockdowns amid COVID unknowns; followed by the vaccine's promise of normality; and continuing with the arrival of the COVID Delta variant. Along the way we've faced increasing racial tensions and political divides, with many of us also experiencing the deaths or illnesses of loved ones.

While our campus return is exciting, the return has exacerbated COVID-related stress and anxiety levels. We understand feelings of frustration at the University's inability to require use of face masks and to mandate vaccinations that are key to maintaining personal and community health. For many, the uncertainty created by this reality contributes to our stress and taxes our mental and emotional health.

We want you to know you are not alone. As your colleagues, we share your frustration, stress, and worries. We hope you are able to spend some time and energy on caring for yourself in ways that provide joy and relief. While self-care is necessary and beneficial, we recognize that it is not a replacement for professional assistance. If you are having difficulty managing your stress and anxiety, are persistently feeling low, are not enjoying activities you previously enjoyed, or are having thoughts of self-harm, we encourage you to seek UI resources available to you for help.

The Mental Health at Iowa website (<https://mentalhealth.uiowa.edu/>) provides an overview of services available to faculty, staff, students, and community members. The University Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers free, confidential counseling as well as confidential well-being checks either in person or by Zoom (<https://hr.uiowa.edu/employee-well-being/employee-assistance-program>) and referral to community resources. Appointments can be made by calling 319-335-2085 or by emailing eaphelp@uiowa.edu. In addition to University EAP services, UI Health Care and community private practitioners are available. Please be aware that UI Select Level 1 and Level 2 have a \$10 copay, and UI Choice Level 3 (out of state) has a 50% coinsurance fee for mental health visits.

We also ask that you share these resources with any colleagues who may be experiencing mental health challenges and encourage them to seek help. In these trying

times, we must take care of each other. Thank you for taking care of the emotional and mental health needs of you, your loved ones, and your friends and colleagues.

Sincerely,

Teresa Marshall, PhD
Professor, College of Dentistry
President, University of Iowa Faculty Senate

Ana Rodriguez-Rodriguez, PhD
Associate Professor, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Vice President, University of Iowa Faculty Senate

Melissa Lehan Mackin, PhD
Associate Professor, College of Nursing
Secretary, University of Iowa Faculty Senate

Joe Yockey, JD
David H. Vernon Professor of Law, College of Law
Past President, University of Iowa Faculty Senate