

Emerging with Momentum

June 15, 2022

Dear 'RooNation,

Having recently concluded another academic year and sent the Class of 2022 out into the world with confidence, I can't help reflecting upon their experiences over the past four years while also envisioning what the future holds for the College and the classes yet to come. It is so gratifying to know that as we've weathered more than two years of disruption and upheaval, Austin College is emerging with momentum!

Everyone and everything have felt the impact of a pandemic that swept around the world, but we have remained undaunted. We have persevered without interruption. Of course, there have been moments of pause and pivot, but progress was not lost, and dreams were not delayed.

Indeed, we have been busier than ever and are emerging from this fog with a focused sense of optimism and momentum. New and needed programs, like Kinesiology, Science and Data Analytics, Neuroscience, Public Health, Health Care Administration, Robotics Advanced Instrumentation, Sport Management, and Philosophy, Politics & Economics, have been launched. New co-curricular offerings like Esports, 'Roo Band, Global Living and Learning communities, and Public Health Ambassadors join stalwarts like A Cappella Choir, string quartets, jazz ensembles, chamber orchestras, improv troops, theater productions, athletics, Service Station, Greek life, Student Assembly, ACTivators, and many others. Further still, the First Year Experience and New Student Orientation have an entirely new look. Mini-courses, summer courses, and summer science research opportunities bring newfound energy to a contemporary Austin College calendar that speaks to the needs of today's students.

Our physical surroundings also continue to be revitalized—the latest being the exciting renovation of Jerry E. Apple Stadium, slated for completion later this summer. It will include a new artificial surface, lights, additional seating, and a fitness track that the entire campus community will be able to enjoy for years to come.

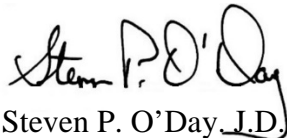
All of these programs, initiatives, and projects demonstrate our continued dedication to student scholarship, extraordinary research opportunities, and a transformative college experience. We have also deepened our commitment to inclusion, equity, and diversity, and broadened our approach to mentoring. In these ways, we support all our students toward success. Together, everything underscores the undeniable momentum we're feeling on campus and beyond.

There is, however, more to do. Continuing to grow the College's endowment is vital in our effort to remain accessible and affordable to all those who wish to learn here. The student experience in and beyond the classroom must continue to be second to none. In addition, our campus, including our residence halls, must not be overlooked. Indeed, this is home to our students and those who work here. This place needs to reflect the true culture of Austin College—a place that is personal and welcoming, a place where everyone experiences safety and belonging, a place that cares. We are committed to continuing our work to achieve all these things, and we look forward to launching bold and visible projects that speak to the needs of our students, faculty and staff, alumni, and prospective students and their families. Stay tuned.

In the meantime, we are confident. We are current. We are contemporary. We continue to transform students so they can transform the world—one life and one career at a time. We are Austin College, and we are emerging with momentum!

I hope all of 'RooNation has a wonderful summer, and I look forward to welcoming everyone back to campus for a new year soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven P. O'Day". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steven P. O'Day, J.D., L.H.d.