

**From:** Office of the Provost  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 19, 2020 12:07 PM  
**To:** STAFF-CLASSIFIED-AA-L@LISTSERV.JMU.EDU  
**Subject:** Message from the Provost

Dear colleagues,

I'm reaching out to all of you who provide such incredible support across Academic Affairs. The past few weeks have been, to say the least, a lot to handle, and looking ahead to the future can be an alarming prospect. While I'm speaking to you as provost and a fellow James Madison University employee, we all occupy various roles that might be pulling us in different directions right now, a difficult feat when we're all supposed to be practicing social and physical distancing.

For me, that looks like trying to balance being a capable provost, a considerate co-worker, a reassuring mom, a caring daughter, a funny friend, and more. We're all complex, beautifully layered people—in this new normal, we must remember that our lives are much richer than teleworking or being wrapped up in the “tyranny of the now.”

You'll also notice that as I described my many roles, none of them were perfect. We all need to give ourselves the time and space in the coming weeks to adjust to these significant changes in our routines and our lives. Be kind to yourself; in trying situations, we frequently extend goodwill to others, but you are equally deserving of that generosity of spirit.

You should know that the Academic Affairs leadership team sees you, honors you, and deeply appreciates you. While we finish the spring semester from a distance, know that you're not alone. You're part of a resilient community, a brilliant constellation. Each staff member shines as an individual, but we're strongest, brightest, best when we're together. Let's stay in close touch as we get through this disruptive time.

Please let me know if you need anything. You can reach me at [coltmahj@jmu.edu](mailto:coltmahj@jmu.edu).

Warmly,

Heather

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