

Sample Communication Templates

When there are major events at MIT or in the world, it can be helpful to provide opportunity for conversation. This could be with students in a class or with colleagues in your department or team. Broadly speaking, we encourage department heads and faculty to acknowledge what has happened, recognize that it will have an impact on people's work, and make sure faculty, staff, and students are aware of support resources. The sample templates below, which can be inserted in between your email introductions and closings, are provided to help you invite people to a community conversation or to acknowledge the challenges that people might be facing.

Sample Email to Invite Faculty and Staff to Department Meeting

Dear colleagues,

We know **[event]** may be a significant source of stress for many in our community. I certainly am feeling it. I want to invite each of you to a meeting on **[date]** at **[time]** time to check in and learn how you are feeling and what you are hearing from students as we navigate this difficult time. Although you are under no obligation to attend, my hope is this will be an opportunity for us to connect with one another and determine next steps as a group.

If there is anything related to this situation that you would like to discuss privately, please feel free to reach out to me directly. I also want to make sure you are aware of the resources available to the MIT community, which I have listed below:

- 1) [MIT Center for Work Life and Wellbeing](#)
- 2) [Resources for Faculty and Staff to Support Students](#)
- 3) [Student Support Resources](#)
- 4) [MyLife Services](#)

Sample Email to Colleagues to Acknowledge Events without a Meeting

Dear colleagues,

We know **[event]** may be a significant source of stress for many in our community. I certainly am feeling it. No matter what your feelings, beliefs, or opinions are, it's important that we take care of ourselves and support each other during these uncertain times. While some students may be focused on other things, many will be looking to us to see how we respond. These moments can be an opportunity for us to truly make an impact on the lives of our students. Please check in with your students. Acknowledging what is happening and understanding that it might impact them makes such a difference. In your communication to students, please also be sure that they are aware of the vast array of [support resources](#). There are also resources for faculty and staff that you might find helpful [here](#).

If there is anything related to this situation that you would like to discuss privately, please feel free to reach out to me directly.



Sample Email to Students to Acknowledge Events

Dear students,

I know that we usually spend our time talking about **[course name]**. However, in these uncertain times, I anticipate that many of you may be thinking a lot about the **[event]**. I am too. No matter what your beliefs or opinions, you deserve support at this time. That might mean talking to friends or family, reaching out to one of the many support resources at MIT, or taking some extra time for self-care. Please know that, while your learning is of course important to me, your wellbeing is most important. If you need anything from me or the rest of the teaching staff, please let us know.

These additional templates below are provided to help you to check in with students without acknowledging any specific events or if you have already acknowledged the events in a previous communication. When major events happen, students can feel a greater sense of isolation and confusion and ongoing check ins from faculty, staff, and peers can be helpful.

Sample Email to Individual Student to Offer General Check-In

Dear **[student]**,

I just wanted to reach out to let you know that I am thinking about you and I hope that you are doing well. I just wanted to **[insert something that you want to acknowledge about them personally - it could be how well they did in a recent class or project, how they positively contributed to something, or you want to check in with a life event that you're aware of such as their graduate school or job search progress]**.

I know that IAP and the spring semester will look a little different this year but I just wanted to remind you that I will continue to be available if you need anything. **[Insert information about ways that the students can connect with you and each other, including office hours, upcoming events, or other ideas.]**

There is no need to respond to this message but don't hesitate to reach out if you need anything.

Sample Email to Class/Group of Students to Offer General Check-In

Dear **[class/group]**,

I wanted to reach out and let you all know that **[I am/we are]** thinking about you. **[I/we]** know that the past few months have been difficult but **[I/we]** just wanted to remark at how **[impressed/proud/happy]** **[I am/we are]** by how we have persevered together.

IAP and the spring semester will certainly look different this year but **[I/we]** want to remind you that **[I/we]** will continue to be available if you need anything. Also, don't forget that there are all of the regular support resources that are still available to help you as well. **[Insert information about ways that the students can connect with you and each other, including office hours, upcoming events, or other ideas.]**

There is no need to respond to this message but don't hesitate to reach out if you need anything.



Examples of Open-Ended Questions to Ask Students When Meeting

- It's been some time since we last connected. I'm glad we have a chance to connect now. How have things been since we last talked?
- This **[an article, a book, a media clip, or something else that you know aligns with their interests/area of study]** made me think of you. I'd love to talk with you about it after you check it out.
- I've been thinking about you and wanted to check in and see how things are going since I haven't heard from you in a while. Does **[insert time and date]** work for you? If not, what times/dates work for you?
- I noticed that **[insert some observable change in behavior (i.e. they are showing up to meetings late or not showing up at all)]** recently. I'm worried about you and want to make sure you're okay. Can you tell me what's going on? Note: If you're concerned about a student, you should contact a [support resource](#) to share your concern.

