



ALLIANCE STUDENT SUCCESS NEWSLETTER

Your connection to all things student success at Cambridge College.

Hello Cambridge College community, welcome to our Fall 2021 edition of Alliance, the Student Success Newsletter! Hopefully this term is going well for all of you and you are feeling happy and successful.

Because we are still primarily remote and have grown our online capacity through Cambridge College Global, this issue is specifically focused on success in connected and online classrooms. We begin with a reflection on virtual services and some examples of ways to connect with the College and staff virtually. From there, we have some tips and suggestions for ZOOM etiquette assembled by CELT Director Brooks Winchell. Following that, CCG Advisor Katie Adler talks with an online student about their experiences and why they chose a fully online program. We also hear from CC students with advice on how to navigate ZOOM courses and build community, and we hear from faculty about how they build community virtually. Finally, we round out the issue with an introduction by Dr. FeLisa Albert to her new Critical Consciousness Series and what CC community members can gain by attending its monthly sessions.

We hope you enjoy the issue! Email Tracy McLaughlin at tracy.mclaughlin@cambridgecollege.edu with any comments or suggestions.

THIS PUBLICATION IS
BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE TITLE III TASK FORCE AND THE
OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Designed by Leili Ansari

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ACADEMIC SUCCESS

VIRTUAL SERVICES

In March 2020, Cambridge College faculty had to transition their in-person courses to ZOOM-Connected courses. Since that transition, a primary focus of the College has been to maintain the quality of instruction, as well as the academic rigor of our courses. Through continuous improvement, five terms later, Cambridge College faculty have become proficient at delivering coursework remotely, and student satisfaction with ZOOM-Connected courses increases each term.

Student-serving offices also made significant changes to support students remotely. Tutors, undergraduate Success Coaches, graduate Advisors, and the CCPD moved all of their appointments to ZOOM. Other offices, such as Student Financial Services, the International Students Office, and the Office of Disabilities, also found ways to connect with students virtually.

Total flags raised in Starfish in 2020-2021

3981

The College was fortunate to have our Starfish Student Success platform in place (as a result of the College's Title III grant) which allows scheduling of virtual appointments and assists faculty in raising early alerts on students who need support.

The vast majority of support services continue to operate virtually. Students can connect with all of our student-serving offices by phone, email, or ZOOM.

This fall, these offices began offering some in-person services and meetings at our Boston campus. However, the vast majority of support services continue to operate

virtually. Students can connect with all of our student-serving offices by phone, email, or ZOOM. The MyCC portal remains the best repository for information, most of which can be found under the Student Success, Faculty, Finance, and Tutorials tabs.

The Office of Academic Affairs continues to send out Weekly Student and Faculty Updates with resources, reminders, and virtual events. This fall, the CELT, CCPD, Online Library, International Student Office, and the McCormack Chair are together offering more than 40 virtual workshops and events.

Finally, Dr. FeLisa Albert is hosting monthly virtual panel discussions called the Critical Consciousness Series for all members of the CC community on the third Friday of every month. For information about this series, read Dr. Albert's article at the end of this issue.

We continue to refine and develop our remote services. The Fall 2021 term features many options for virtual support and building a virtual community. These improvements have become essential for serving our students in the most convenient ways possible and will likely remain as an option for students moving forward.

3520

CC tutoring appointments in 2020-2021 (19% more than in 2019-2020)

THE ETIQUETTE OF ZOOM – UNPACKING THE NEW VIRTUAL SOCIAL CODE

By Brooks Winchell, CELT Director and Senior Faculty

It has been 20 months since the world shut down and everyone moved to ZOOM. ZOOM usage went from 10 million users to 200 million users between March 2020 and April 2020 (Evans 2020) and since then, ZOOM has become a way of life. But with our increased reliance on ZOOM, it is easy to develop bad habits or blind spots to others who may be offended by our virtual behaviors. It seems there are some ZOOM habits that are preferable over others and that an unwritten social code is developing.

“You're on mute”

It happens every day: you're in a meeting and someone (maybe yourself) is talking while on mute. It is clear that the person does not know they are on mute, so someone needs to say something. How you intervene

with someone who is on mute is nuanced and varies depending on the audience of the meeting. That said, a simple, “you're on mute” is fine, but, “YOU'RE ON MUTE!” can come across as rude.

“CAN EVERYONE MUTE THEMSELVES?”

On the other hand, when someone is talking or has a lot of background noise and is not on mute, that is a time to make a more forceful correction, as it is important to respect the silence of the virtual space—and by now, we should all be accustomed to muting when not talking. In general, it is polite to not call someone out directly, but instead use the non-accusational, “can everyone mute themselves?”

Sharing Video

This is a controversial issue. There are many reasons why someone might not share video, such as being in an embarrassing place, not having the right equipment, or simply not wanting to be on camera and see oneself. In many situations, video is not critical, so it is likely fine not to share. However, in important meetings or class discussions, video augments the interaction and lets others know that you are invested. In these times, it is a good courtesy to share your video, or make a note of why you are not sharing.

Reactions

Go ahead and use a clap, celebration, thumbs-up, or a heart where appropriate!

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What makes CCG online programs unique?

Cambridge College Global caters to working adults by providing students with the flexibility to log in and work on their own time. This is a feature that sets us apart, as many other online courses still require that students log into a scheduled weekly Zoom meeting or attend a weekly online lecture. For CCG students, those lectures are broken down into 10-20 minute pre-recorded videos that students can watch any time. Although sometimes confused with being self-taught, our asynchronous courses are far from that due to our highly engaged faculty members. Students are immersed in an “in-class” feeling by participating in weekly discussion posts, career-based assignments, and group projects that allow for creativity and full-class engagement. Deadlines for assignments are still required each week, but when the learning gets done before those deadlines is up to you!

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Responses recorded by Katie Adler

Ashley Nielson is a current student in the Cambridge College Global BSBA General Management program. Ashley is nearing the end of her program and has found CCG to be the perfect fit for her and her educational needs. Ashley looks forward to completing her Bachelor's degree and putting her education to good use in her career at Rockland Trust Bank.



Why did you choose an online program?

I have always preferred online programs over in-person for many reasons! Working full time and going to school can be very challenging at times and I love the fact that online programs give you the flexibility to work from the comfort of your own home.

I also have computer access here at my workplace so on my down time or breaks, I can log right onto the computer and work on my schoolwork there as well!

My favorite part of all of the classes I have taken thus far is the discussion boards.

The professors also do a phenomenal job with providing the tools and materials we need to succeed, and they are engaged with their students. They provide extra help when needed, including their contact information and reference videos on course material as well! I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here so far at CCG, and I recommend this school for anyone looking to further their education!

How do you form relationships with

classmates and professors in asynchronous classes?

My favorite part of all of the classes I have

taken thus far is the discussion boards. This is a great place to engage with other students, including our professor as well, and share/learn from one another.

I have also taken a class where we were all paired off in groups and worked together each week to get our coursework completed. This was a great way to learn from one another as well and form a relationship which I especially enjoyed.

Online learning may not be as effective as in-person learning when it comes to building relationships, but it comes close! I have really enjoyed learning from my professors and fellow classmates and I look forward to the few classes I have left to engage with my future classmates and professors as well!

THE ETIQUETTE OF ZOOM ▶ Continued from page 2

Screen Sharing

Screen sharing comes with a whole host of potential etiquette issues. In general, when you are going to share your screen, it is a good idea to ask first. Try to avoid scrolling too fast while sharing (I am often guilty of this) as it can make people dizzy. Finally, avoid sharing when it is not appropriate and be cognizant of what you are sharing. If you are engaged in a discussion, try to remember to stop sharing so everyone in the meeting or class can see one another.

Ending a Meeting

One of the oddest behaviors to come out of our transition to ZOOM is waving or giving thumbs up at the beginning and end of meetings (I was never a thumbs up person before the pandemic). While some may not like signoff waving, I personally find it lovely and endearing. It makes me feel so good when people wave that I have started waving goodbye in my in-person meetings as well.

ZOOM life is a new frontier for all of us, and like it or not, it is here to stay. It allows us to connect with anyone, anywhere, anytime, and has revolutionized classes and education. We can't ignore the power of this change, but should embrace it as part of our new social fabric—as long as we remain aware of its limitations and recognize the emergence of this new virtual social code.

WE ASKED, STUDENTS ANSWERED

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER STUDENTS STRUGGLING TO NAVIGATE ONLINE OR ZOOM COURSES?

Don't stress and do not give up

- Stick with it! I find some online classes more beneficial than in person at times. It can be more intimate. Breakout rooms are an excellent option for meeting during class with our peers. And all from our homes. I embrace it!
- Do not give up because it will get easier. Do not be afraid to ask questions.
- Think of remote learning as a viable option rather than a last resort. For those already working from home, it takes away the commute. It is not as hard as it might appear.
- Take your time, and do your best!

Ask for help

- Ask for help and try to find some tutorials to watch. Ask for support services if needed for internet and laptop access.
- Check out the webinars the College offers or the YouTube videos on MyCC.
- Go to the orientation and use the Library,

which has a lot of resources.

- If you are having trouble with Zoom, call IT. I was told that, instead of launching from the link, I should try to connect from the browser. I did and never had another problem with Zoom.

Communicate with your professors

- Everyone is just as confused as you, so don't be afraid to ask questions. Chances are someone else has the same question as you, but they are afraid to ask.
- Bringing any issues to the professor is what worked for me, every time.
- Ask questions and don't stop until you understand. The professors are also trying to figure all of this out, so what may seem like a stupid question might actually be an issue that needs to be addressed.
- Communicate with your professor about where you are struggling; they are always willing to help problem solve.

Prepare

- Find a quiet, out-of-the-way room with little foot traffic in a quiet, private setting.
- Try to practice with a family member or a friend and Zoom with them several times in order to become more familiar with it.
- Invest in a good internet connection.
- Make sure you read the entire syllabus.

Get organized

- Write all your due dates down for classes and stay organized.
- I put the links to my classes in my calendar, so I just have to click on the day to find the links I need. I use the same calendar for assignments, etc.
- Make sure to read/listen to directions. Ensure the camera is on during class.
- Keep your cameras on and be on time. Do not miss class.

Reach out to your classmates. They are always willing and able to help!

HOW DO YOU BUILD COMMUNITY AND FORM RELATIONSHIPS IN YOUR ONLINE OR ZOOM CLASSES?

Show interest in your classmates

- Same way as in person. Talk to people. Chat when it's appropriate to do so. Ask questions. Lots of questions. Be willing to open up dialogues with other students.
- Sign on early to have an opportunity to talk to classmates before class.
- Email your classmates for any extra help.
- Compliment your classmates on the plants they have.
- Reach out to a student with a compliment on something they said in class.
- Usually, unless you are in a U shape class, you see classmates' backs and an occasional profile. Zoom gives you an opportunity to look people in the eye (if you want to) and interact with them as you please. I have grown to like Zoom classes.

Actively participate in class

- Participate actively in class. By working together, you build rapport. All my classmates this term have been great!
- Being engaged and adding to discussion helps a lot. Sometimes (if comfortable and useful) sharing personal experiences will help people relate to you.

Utilize discussion forums

- Contribute to discussion posts!

- Post comments on your classmates posts to share your own view or relate to the opinions and ideas of your peers.

Participate in breakout rooms

- The breakout rooms are a great way to get to know students better.
- Talk as much as you can during break out groups and ask what other classes your classmates take and try to relate to them.
- When we have an opportunity to introduce ourselves, I write down names; I take advantage of the breakout rooms—ask questions, exchange phone numbers and talk about more than only class-related subjects.

Build connections with group work

- When professors put you in groups, take advantage of this opportunity to learn about each other.
- Email people from the class, especially if you do groups or write papers together. Put your number in the chat room.
- When we are put into breakout rooms on Zoom or during regular classroom

discussion, exchange phone numbers, then chat outside of class with people who you click with. Build a network of likeminded people who you touch base with periodically. If you meet a friend you like, ask them what classes they are taking next semester and try to take the same classes.

The group projects gave us space to collaborate and share our lives and stories with one another.

- I have developed friendships with those students who I have worked on group projects with. The group projects gave us space to collaborate and share our lives and stories with one another. We exchanged phone numbers and text each other about school related things.

Take advantage of the Zoom chat

- Send private messages in the chat on Zoom. I have actually made more than a handful of friends doing that. One even helped enroll my son in his basketball camp for free this summer. Super grateful!
- Offer information through email and personal classroom chat, even if it's hard.
- Use the chat by posting questions to the chat, so that other students can respond. It can drive new thinking based on other's replies.

FACULTY'S TOP TIPS

BEST PRACTICES FOR ENGAGING STUDENTS IN REMOTE OR ONLINE COURSES

The Office of Academic Affairs asked Cambridge College faculty what they do to build community and relationships in their online or ZOOM classes. Here is a sample of the recommendations we received.

Make the beginning of class count

- Send a Welcome email prior to the first class session.
- Hold informal check-in before each class; begin every class with an icebreaker
- Open class with a moment of meditation focused on breathing, allowing people to get focused and relaxed in a way that works for them.
- Use the Main Page to send out weekly announcements.

Set expectations

- Set the expectation that one outcome of class is that students will know each other because networking is key for current and future success. Start with introductions and ask students to listen for any connections they have with the other students (major, prior work, interests, etc.) and post that in the chat.
- Use a Class Participation Rubric. Pair

students who speak up in Chat or verbally with those not as comfortable speaking up so they become a support for each other.

Use breakout rooms and small groups

- Use Breakout Rooms at least once, sometimes twice each class. Intentionally mix up the groups, so students are getting to work with everyone in the class over the course of the term.
- Enter each breakout room to observe, offer feedback on the task, and answer questions.
- Provide extra time for collaboration in breakout rooms.
- Arrange assignments to be completed in small study groups.

Solicit feedback from students

- End every class with a debriefing.
- Use the Discussion Forum to ask for concerns, questions, etc.

Engage students through content and interactive games

- Show a TED talk relevant to our current cultural situation, such as 'The Danger

of a Single Story'. Then discuss the talk in breakout rooms and as a whole class. Watching it together makes all of us equally prepared, and everyone has had experiences of being "single-storied" or "single-storying" others. This lays the foundation for discussing how to overcome such biases.

- Using specific examples based on one's own professional experience when replying to discussion posts helps connect with the class.
- Use Kahoot! games, which are interactive online live learning games that promote community and demonstrate comprehension.

Meet with students outside of class

- Hold informal (optional) sessions every week.
- Meet with students one-on-one to discuss their writing, raise questions, and simply have a general check-in. This is also a good time to make a plan for anyone catching up.
- Offer students extra Zoom sessions or meetings by phone to answer questions or give support when needed.

Advice from students for professors:

- At the beginning of the term, teach students how to navigate the course on the student portal.
- Be more specific about how to find information, such as articles and videos, for assignments.
- It would be helpful if all teachers put their Zoom links on their MYCC page and not just in email.



CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS SERIES

VIRTUAL PANEL CONVERSATIONS ON RACIAL INEQUITIES

We are pleased to share that the virtual monthly panel discussions on racial inequities and social injustices have been well received with discussions focusing on a myriad of insightful and thought-provoking topics.

The Critical Consciousness Series presented by Dr. Felisa Albert was born out of Dr. Albert's recognition of the need for a space where the voices of the College's black and brown community can be heard and be held, a space where they can be uplifted, acknowledged, and supported.

The sessions include open and honest conversations on racial inequities based on current topics, historical events, digital content, academic resources and personal experiences.

Critical consciousness is rooted in the ability to recognize the historically oppressive social forces that have shaped - and continue to shape - society and to take action against them to effect knowledge, understanding, and change in a meaningful and tangible way.

To learn more about the series visit CC's website at <https://www.cambridgecollege.edu/critical-consciousness-series>.



EVER-CHANGING COVID NUMBERS & GUIDELINES ALTERED THE COLLEGE'S REOPENING PLAN

While Cambridge College was hoping to reopen more fully at the start of the Fall semester, there was a need to evolve this plan to ensure student and employee safety.

The Lawrence, Springfield, Puerto Rico and California campuses moved to a fully remote format for all classes. The Boston campus has reopened in a limited capacity. There are some in-person courses offered at this time, and more employees have returned to the office.

Students wishing to come to campus to meet with a CC staff person are encouraged to make an appointment prior to the visit. To visit campus, proof of COVID vaccination (or a medical or religious waiver) is required. At a student's first visit to campus, they must bring their CDC vaccination card and a valid photo ID. They will then

receive a Cambridge College Vaccination Card and be able to enter more easily in the future.

Enrolled students that simply want to access the computer lab or a quiet space for study need only show an ID and proof of vaccination (either a CDC Vaccination Record Card or a Cambridge College Vaccination Card) upon arrival. All people entering the building must also attest to several COVID safety questions each time they visit, and **a mask is required to be worn in the building regardless of vaccination status.**

For visitation procedures at CC's regional locations, please contact that site directly to plan your visit. For updates or more details, please visit <https://www.cambridgecollege.edu/covid-19-updates>

APPLY FOR SPRING SCHOLARSHIPS BY DECEMBER 1ST

Average award of \$1000 per term per year.

Faculty or personal letters of recommendation needed, so [prepare your application today](#).

Learn more at
[cambridgecollege.edu](https://www.cambridgecollege.edu)

REGISTER FOR SPRING CLASSES TODAY

Registration opened on November 1st and classes are beginning to fill up! Students are encouraged to make an appointment with their advisor ASAP to plan for the spring term.

Questions,
comments,
or feedback?

Email
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