

CTE Campus-Wide Message June 2, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

June is upon us, and most of us are fully engaged in the usual summer planning: from finding time for family and friends to wrapping up fiscal-year-end business to selecting textbooks and course materials to making at least some progress on scholarship derailed in March, we are always plenty busy in the early summer. As we are all too aware, this summer has added additional challenges, not least of which is the ongoing work of developing high-quality virtual versions of our courses against the possibility of fall's complications.

This update focuses mostly on fostering active, synchronous engagement and community in virtual learning, but also includes information about upcoming live faculty support sessions and updated online self-service resources.

In this Message

Because this message is somewhat longer than usual, here is a quick navigation guide so you can scroll down to particular topics of interest:

- Fostering Engagement, Communication, and Community
- Student Camera Use
- Zoom
- Updated and Additional Resources for Faculty
- Virtual Exam Proctoring
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Fostering Engagement, Communication, and Community

- **Blackboard Discussions:** Discussion forums and threads within your Blackboard course can serve not only as places to engage in scheduled discussions of course material, but also as places for more informal exchange: Forums focused on general questions about the course; conversations about students' learning experience more generally; and crowd-sourced Q&A forums about navigating the new realities of teaching, learning, life, the universe, and everything can be places for low-stakes exchange to allow students and instructors to get to know each other in a less circumscribed environment. You can easily subscribe to forums to receive email alerts when students post unscheduled questions and comments.

- Email: I mention email here mainly to encourage you *not to use it as your primary means of communication* unless absolutely necessary. Inevitably, emails get lost, overlooked, or misdirected; unlike most of us, many of our students are not in the habit of communicating via email. If you *do* plan to correspond with students via email, consider using the “Send Email” function in the Blackboard tools menu. As an alternative, you may want to use Blackboard Announcements (you can check the “send as email” option, too) and other features of the learning management system. If you’ve decided to use the LMS as your main means of communicating with students, you may still receive unexpected emails from them, often because they feel they need on-demand, individualized help. To maintain your own sanity, feel free to direct them back to the channels you’ve already designated. It’s particularly useful for students to learn to ask questions and reveal gaps in their learning in discussion forums or live sessions, so that others can learn from the questions their classmates raise. Whatever you decide, alert course participants early—and remind them often—of your expectations about when and how to communicate with you and their peers. Using part of the first virtual week of the fall semester to introduce students to these expectations and some basic communication etiquette may be a good idea.
- Synchronous Video Conferencing: Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, Teams and, later this summer, Zoom (see below) provide features for both plenary and small-group virtual discussions. While instructors can certainly use these features to deliver content through lecture and provide demonstrations through screen-sharing, these tools are at their best when used to promote real-time exchange: question-and-answer, virtual office hours, collaborative breakout groups, or real-time problem-solving.
- Pre-recorded Audio and Video: As a supplement to messages delivered via Blackboard announcements, email, textbooks, rubrics, and other text-based communications, recording your own audio and video summaries, highlights. For many students, hearing your voice and seeing your face outside scheduled synchronous sessions can provide a more human touch to virtual learning. To ensure accessibility, please consider using audio and video formats as part of an array of content-delivery messages that include text-based delivery, as well.
- Social Media: While we can’t require students to use social media, and we certainly can’t use social media as a substitute for other forms of communication, as a supplemental forum for engagement and exchange, social media may provide some students with a more intuitive way of staying in touch with you and their classmates. A dedicated Facebook group, Twitter feed, or Instagram account can be a place for non-essential, supplemental, or lighter interactions. Remember, however, that social media does not provide the kind of data protection required by FERPA, so please do not use social media to exchange confidential information, and, please, support students’ decision not to use social media. Additionally, books like Tim Bono’s *When Likes Aren’t Enough* and Jared Lanier’s *Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now* (this coming year’s [Humanities Reads](#) selection) offer salutary warnings about the implications of social media use.

Student Camera Use

Many of us find it useful, as we engage with our students, to use video to provide access to us and the resources we share. However, there are factors we need to keep in mind as we consider how to use video effectively.

- Because of concerns with student personal and data privacy and student internet connectivity issues, we cannot *require* students to turn on their cameras during synchronous sessions (but see “Virtual Proctoring,” below). While it may be pedagogically useful to see students’ faces, the risks associated with requiring them to reveal themselves and their surroundings are too high to make it a requirement.
- Remember, if we see evidence in a virtual session of activity that would ordinarily require us to report it, we are still obligated to report it *as if it occurred in your classroom or as if a student has disclosed it*.
- Instead, we can strongly encourage students to turn their cameras on, especially when they are speaking. You may find a syllabus statement like this useful:
 - *A substantial part of your learning in this course will depend on your active and attentive engagement in class discussions and other collaborative learning opportunities. I strongly encourage you to turn on your camera during collaborative exchanges to help sustain a sense of community and co-presence as we learn together. However, doing so is not required; if you have reservations about doing so, please let me know in advance so I can plan accordingly.*
- Seeing students’ facial and physical reactions to what is taking place in class often provides evidence of students’ attentiveness. As an alternative to seeing their faces in a virtual environment, consider planning occasional check-in questions that require students to respond in the chat or by raising their hands to show they’re with you. You may even wish to call on students who you think may be checking out. Again, it’s best to let students know in advance what your expectations are and how you might decide to ensure student attention.
- This [infographic](#), from Oregon State University, offers some factors to consider when deciding when and how to engage students on camera. It also offers links to far-flung resources from across the web for further reading and consideration.

Zoom

As you’ve probably heard, we are in the process of obtaining a university-wide enterprise license for Zoom, the video-conferencing application that many of us have found to be more useful and intuitive than Blackboard Collaborate Ultra.

Drake ITS is in the midst of contract negotiations with Zoom to ensure compliance with FERPA and other data protection requirements. Once the contract is settled and signed, university-wide access will likely not be available until after the beginning of the upcoming fiscal year, and there will be a period of some weeks during which the integration of Zoom into Blackboard will

be completed. The CTE and ITS will continue to work closely together to clarify this timeline and to communicate developments as they occur.

The features available through the enterprise-licensed version of Zoom are likely to vary somewhat from the private versions many of us are familiar with, and, once embedded into Blackboard, navigating to and logging into Zoom will be a different process. Still, those who wish to begin exploring now what Zoom might enable can visit the online Zoom help center at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/categories/200101697>. Again, please be aware that there will inevitably be differences between how the Zoom website presents features and what will be available to us through our enterprise license.

Updated and Additional Resources for Faculty

The CTE, ITS, Academic and Emerging Technologies, Drake Online and other university partners continue to collaborate to bring updated resources for instructors online.

- With continued gratitude to Sandra Harris, I am pleased to provide this [link](#) to the CTE's newly re-organized resource pages. The resources available there are more intuitively categorized and organized according to the order in which most of us will need them. Thanks, also, to everyone who continues to send links to useful advice my way; we have begun to include these links within the accordion-menus where they seem most relevant instead of as a list of general resources.
- We have moved some of the documentation supporting Blackboard-specific design and features to
- Because some have noted that emails like this one come at irregular intervals and often not at times when it's convenient to peruse their entire content, we will include an archive of these messages and related attachments on the CTE's resource page. This archive will become available in the second week of June.
- Real-Time Online Support Sessions will take place throughout the month of June.
 - Tuesday, June 9, 10-noon: **Integrating Community Engagement into Courses:** In this conversation we will explore a variety of pedagogical ideas for integrating experiential community components into courses. We will specifically discuss strategies related to remote and online teaching. Please register by noon on Friday, June 6. Registrants will receive a follow-up message with details about joining this session. Hosted by Renee Sedlacek Lee, Director, Community Engaged Learning. Questions? Please contact renee.sedlacek@drake.edu. Registration Link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/integrating-community-engagement-into-courses-tickets-107595314482>
 - Tuesday, June 16, 10-noon: **Equity and Access in the Virtual Classroom:** This conversation will focus on strategies for addressing and accounting for difference in virtual teaching-and-learning environments, including how to engage students in discussions of topics that require care or may evoke

emotional responses. Please register by noon on Friday, June 12. Registrants will receive a follow-up email with details about joining this session. Hosted by Erin Lain, Associate Provost for Campus Equity and Inclusion. Questions? Email erin.lain@drake.edu. Registration Link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/equity-and-access-in-the-virtual-classroom-tickets-107596207152>

- Tuesday, June 23, 10-noon: **Mindfulness and Ethical Leadership in Uncertain Times:** In this session, we'll discuss strategies for engaging students in thinking about their personal and professional development and their roles as ethical leaders, especially given the challenges and opportunities posed by current uncertainties. Looking ahead to fall, we will talk about how we can mindfully prepare for teaching in uncertain times by focusing on our mission, commitments, and values as professors across the institution. Please register by noon on Friday, June 19. Registrants will receive a follow-up message with details about joining this session. Hosted by Renée Cramer, Herb and Karen Baum Chair for Ethics in the Professions. Questions? Please contact renee.cramer@drake.edu. Registration Link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mindfulness-and-ethical-leadership-in-uncertain-times-tickets-107596654490>
- Tuesday, June 30, 10-noon: **Global Learning in Virtual Spaces:** How can we maintain our commitment to global citizenship in a travel-restricted context? This discussion will guide participants in developing virtual learning experiences that foster a global mindset among their students. Please register by noon on Friday, June 26. Registrants will receive a follow-up message with details about joining this session. Hosted by Annique Kiel, Executive Director, Drake International. Questions? Please contact annique.kiel@drake.edu. Registration Link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/global-learning-in-virtual-spaces-tickets-107597085780>
- Drake Online and Continuing Education will be hosting brief Drake Online Design Dialogues, bi-weekly sessions on developing online courses in Blackboard. The sessions are open to all and will begin June 4 at 11:30 a.m. and continue every other Thursday at the same time. The sessions will be held in Blackboard Collaborate and hosted by Christina Trombley and Shannon Hilscher. Sessions will center around a single topic but will also allow for dialogue and questions. Sessions will also include faculty experienced in teaching online at Drake. Space is limited, so register early at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/drake-online-design-dialogue-tickets-106261414752>.

Tentative session topics are as follows:

- June 4 – Organizing your course
- June 18 – Discussion groups
- July 2 – Rubrics
- July 16 – Small Groups

- July 30 – Grade Center
- August 13 – Using Video

Virtual Exam Proctoring

For high-stakes exams, particularly in programs whose licensure or accreditation criteria require them to be proctored, online exam administration creates special challenges. The Respondus Lockdown Browser, long available and integrated into Blackboard, provides only partial protections against cheating. To ensure that test-takers do not consult notes or rely on others to complete their work on such exams, Drake will license Respondus Monitor, a video proctoring service, for use in classes. Respondus Monitor video-records students as they take exams and uses AI to detect signs that a student’s attention has turned away from the on-screen exam. When it detects these signs, it “flags” the relevant segment of the recorded video and invites instructors to review that footage to make a determination as to whether cheating is likely to have occurred.

Respondus Monitor will be available for any faculty member who believes its uses is warranted. As you decide whether to subject your students to video proctoring, however, please consider the following:

- If you intend to use video proctoring in your course, please inform students of that decision at the beginning of the semester, within the add/drop period, and explain why.
- Video proctoring is highly invasive and will be perceived as such by students. The awareness that they—and their surroundings—are being recorded may affect their performance on the exam and color their sense of their experience of your course.
- Just as with video-mediated synchronous interactions, if, in reviewing video recorded segments of a proctored exam, we see evidence of activity that would ordinarily require us to report it, we are still obligated to report it *as if it occurred in your classroom or as if a student has disclosed it*. In other words, video recording counts as disclosure.
- There are many alternatives to high-stakes exams:
 - Frequent, lower-stakes quizzes; open-book exams; open-note exams; and writing assignments and presentations are all ways of testing students’ familiarity with course material in more academic-dishonesty-resistant ways.
 - Assigning opportunities for students to apply, rather than recite knowledge, to challenges or problems that you devise uniquely for your course.
 - Asking students to recite or sign a course-specific honor code has been shown to have a significant effect on students’ willingness to cheat.
 - Creating exams that can only be completed within the time allotted if a student has gained fluency or mastery over the material makes cheating such a time-consuming activity that it will preclude completion of the exam.

The take-away is this: Please use Respondus Monitor only when there is no other means of allowing students to reliably demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

Still to Come

In closing, I want to acknowledge that there are still a number of things we'd all like to know, and to promise to do my best to find answers to outstanding questions and make relevant information widely available. Areas where we're awaiting further details and final decisions include:

- The effects of Covid-responsive practices on course enrollment, student learning modality, room assignments, and room capacities.
- Guidance on structuring (and balancing) in-person and virtual class meetings in a blended format.
- The availability of synchronous, just-in-time, and on-demand support for planning after the beginning of the new fiscal year.
- A detailed timeline for Zoom availability and training.

As always, if there are other areas of concern or matters related to teaching and learning you'd like to learn more about, please don't hesitate to contact me at teaching.excellence@drake.edu.

In the meantime, best wishes for a healthy, productive, and somehow, also restful June. And, given the tumult of recent days, if you have a chance to thank someone—at Drake or beyond—who has made your professional or personal life better, take a few minutes to brighten their day and lift your own spirits by doing so.

All best,

Craig

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