

Dear Colleagues:

Here we are, on the verge of the fall semester. If you're anything like me, you're facing the new term with a mixture of curiosity, excitement, and concern: It's hard to keep those responses in healthy balance, as we've probably all learned, but it helps to know that none of us is contending with the complications and uncertainties of the 2020/2021 school year alone.

In the final pre-term CTE update, I have just a couple items to touch on, but they are pretty important, whether you're teaching virtually or in a blended format, so please read on.

- Please Contact Your Students
- “Zoom-bombing” and Virtual Intrusion: Steps You Should Take
- Global Changes to Zoom Entry Protocols: At Drake and Beyond
- What to do if You Encounter Disruption
- Virtual Office Hours: Rooms within Rooms

### **Please Contact Your Students**

Because there are differences in the ways different professors expect students to access virtual learning spaces in the first week of class, it's important that each of us reaches out now, if we have not already done so, to explain to our students how they will access their virtual learning environments.

Students are already nervous enough about the way the fall semester will unfold, and they've begun asking about when they'll hear from their instructors. So, please provide them some peace of mind by touching base today or, at the latest, tomorrow to give them the guidance they need.

### **Zoom-Bombing and Virtual Intrusion: Steps You Should Take**

Hackers and intruders have become quite sophisticated in harvesting publicly available virtual meeting links and IDs and coming up with other ways to identify meeting links, and then intrude on those meetings. The disruptions they create range from annoying to triggering and re-traumatizing for some users.

Drake meetings have not been immune to such intrusions.

But there are a handful of steps you can take to make it practically impossible for an outsider to intrude on your course.

- Use Drake ITS's knowledge base as a [starting point for using Zoom](#) effectively.
- Create a unique meeting password and share it with invitees separately from the link to the meeting itself.
- Never post meeting links/ID#s, lists of meeting invitees, or passwords in a publicly accessible forum: Email, Outlook Calendars, and inside Blackboard Learn are much safer places to post this information.

- Better yet, for Zoom, take the time to set up Zoom as a component of your Blackboard courses and run all class meetings through the Blackboard-integrated interface rather than the web client or desktop application.
- For Zoom, ask invitees...
  - to set up their Zoom profile by logging into their Drake-sponsored Zoom account and setting up their user profile and profile image;
  - for student users, to use the Zoom feature inside Blackboard to enter the meeting.
  - for non-student users, to download the app and use it to enter meetings, rather than through the zoom.us web client.
- If a user enters the waiting room with a display name you don't recognize, send them a private chat message from the main room asking them to identify themselves before you admit them.
- For Collaborate Ultra, ask student users to enter the meetings through the in-course Collaborate Ultra menu instead of using guest links.
- Create separate events when you do plan to invite non-Drake-associated individuals into your learning or meeting spaces so they do not have access to repeating meetings, such as classes.
- Turn on or create waiting rooms whenever you have the option to do so, and then admit students and guests individually. Ask students and guests to check their chat panel inside the waiting room in case you need to message them without admitting them to the main room (for office hours, for instance--see also Global Changes to Zoom Entry Protocols, below).
- Set meeting protocols to prevent participants from using their audio or video or sharing their screen upon entry, so that if an intruder does make their way in, they can't disrupt the meeting. You can then individually give users permission to activate these functionalities.
- Once a meeting has started, lock the meeting so others cannot join after that point.

### **Global Changes to Zoom Entry Protocols**

As of this week, Zoom waiting rooms are a required feature of all meetings: all non-host participants will be forced to wait for admission in a waiting room unless they are using their drake.edu-associated account. This protocol will help prevent intrusion into your Zoom meetings and classes.

- Instructors using Zoom will need to admit participants from the waiting room into the main room.
- That's why it's so important that students and guests use display names that are recognizable to the host.
- Do not "admit all" if you don't recognize every name on the waiting list as a member of your class.
- Even if you expect all users to have a drake.edu associated account, please consider using a password anyway, in case an invited participant needs to join through a different entry point.

### **What to Do if you Encounter Disruptions**

No system is perfect and, just as in face-to-face meetings, disruption is always possible in a virtual forum. Here are some steps to take to prepare for and respond to that possibility:

- Establish steps you expect participants to take if there is a disruption to the meeting **in advance**. (These steps are not unlike steps you might take in F2F situations). Here are some possibilities:
  - If a disruption occurs, participants should leave the meeting.
  - If you can, try to identify the screen name of the individual creating the disruption and remove them from the room and then lock the room.
    - However, if you can't do this quickly and with ease, you should abandon the meeting.
  - In the meantime, authorized participants should have followed pre-determined steps, such as opening their Drake email and waiting for a message from the host about next steps.
  - As the host, set up an alternative meeting space in advance, such as through Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, which you can direct participants to join for now.
  - After the meeting is over, touch base with meeting participants and check on their emotional and psychological well-being, especially if the intruder shared traumatizing or triggering content.
  - Recheck the security protocols on all upcoming meetings and revise them if necessary to align with the advice enumerated in the section above.

## Virtual Office Hours

Everyone will need to set up virtual office hours, whatever modality you're teaching in, since (at minimum) the first and last weeks of the semester, along with finals week, are fully virtual. You can use Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate Ultra for virtual office hours. Whichever you choose:

- Make sure there is a waiting room from which you can admit students to the main room for private one-on-one or small-group consultation.
  - In Zoom, you may want to use the main room as an “inner” waiting room, after you've admitted students from the required outer waiting room, so that you can customize the message students in that inner room see as they wait to meet with you.
    - In this case, you would use a break-out room as your private meeting room, or “office.”
  - In Collaborate Ultra, you can use a similar set up, as described [here](#).
    - If you're using Collaborate Ultra, you will need to provide guest links to students who are not enrolled in the course in which you create the Collaborate Ultra office-hours meeting space.
  - In both Zoom and Collaborate Ultra, consider posting access links to the meeting inside Blackboard instead of emailing links to students or—heaven forbid!—posting them publicly.

Thanks for taking the time to read through this and to secure your virtual meetings. If you have additional questions about using Zoom, Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, or other virtual teaching-and-learning features and practices, please continue to use this [link](#) to request assistance.

This is the last you'll hear from me, I expect, before the beginning of classes. Please don't hesitate to email me at [teaching.excellence@drake.edu](mailto:teaching.excellence@drake.edu) if you new questions arise as the first week unfolds. In the meantime, best of luck for a safe, productive, and minimally irritating start to the new semester. It's been a lot of work for everyone involved; I hope it proves to have paid off.

All best,

Craig