



Community Conversation with Students & Equity in STEM Pedagogy Student Panel Discussion
Campus Wide Report
Office of Student Equity and Success

EVENTS SUMMARY

On March 17, 2021 from 5 pm – 7 pm, the Office of Student Equity and Success hosted its fourth Community Conversation with Students, and on April 9th from 11 am - 12:30 pm the Equity in STEM Pedagogy group held its monthly meeting featuring a 4-student speaking panel. The theme of the Community Conversation with Students & The Equity in STEM Pedagogy focused on the strengths and weakness of the online learning environment from the perspective of both faculty and students. The Community Conversation with Students event was facilitated by Ken Songco, Director of Student Equity and Success, and Sarah Sullivan, English faculty, and the Equity in STEM Pedagogy student panel was organized and facilitated by Ashley Faris, Chemistry faculty, and Raiida Thompson, HSI-STEM.

The Equity in STEM student panel had four students on the panel and was attended by 40 STEM faculty and administrators. The Community Conversation with Students had 69 participants in: 42 students and 27 faculty, staff, administrators, and community members. In addition, 7 faculty, 2 administrators, 1 student, 2 classifieds were recruited and trained to lead 6 break out rooms. With the large group, two students and two faculty members shared their experiences with distance learning and teaching. [A google document](#) was also shared and used by all to write down their experiences. Following those two activities, attendees were sent into a breakout room with a faculty facilitator in each except for one that had a student facilitator. The breakout room designated time was set at 30 minutes.

What follows is a summary of the main points that came out from discussions in the breakout rooms, the shared google document, and the Equity in STEM Pedagogy student panel.



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3/17 COMMUNITY CONVERSATION STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Ethnicity	Percent
African American	5%
Asian	30%
Filipino	10%
Hispanic	32.5%
Two or More	5%
White	12.5%
Unknown	5%

Age Group	Percent
19 or less	20%
20-24	27.5%
25-29	5%
30-34	5%
35-39	10%
40-49	12.5%
50+	20%

Out of the students who participated in the Community Conversation, 45% are first in their families to go to college, 57.5% are low-income, 2.5% are AB540 students, and 2.5% identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender.

Gender:

Female—72.5%

Male—27.5%

Non-Binary—%

Enrollment Status:

Full-Time: 35%

Part-Time: 62.5%

Not Enrolled: 2.5%



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Distance Learning: What worked & what did not?

Student & Faculty Perspectives

The following summary contains the results of the two events' dialogues. Some common threads that repeated throughout were: *Adaptability and flexibility in instructions and due dates, the complexity, and challenges of taking a proctored exam, and having lectures recorded and transcribed.*

Three questions were asked on the shared google doc, in the breakout rooms, and of the student panel:

- 1) What has worked well in the way your professors set up and taught your online courses? What helped you feel welcome, engaged, and supported to learn? Why did these practices work well to support your learning?
- 2) What has NOT worked well in the way your professors set up and taught your online courses? What do you think may have hurt your learning and success in the way your courses were designed and taught? Why did these practices not support your learning and success?
- 3) What do you wish your professors were doing differently in order to help you learn? What types of teaching methods, practices, procedures, etc. do you need in online learning? What would help you and your peers learn and succeed? Why?

The feedback collected is grouped into two major categories of what worked, what did not work (questions #1 and 2). Each category is further divided into the students' perspectives and faculty's perspectives. We found that the answers to many of the questions asked fell into one of these three categories: *General, classroom environment, and instructional*. The students' answers to question #3 were very similar to the answers that some students shared in the breakout rooms regarding what worked well, therefore some ideas listed for question #3 are embedded in what worked well section. Please refer [to the google doc](#) for complete record of answers given.



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Distance Learning: What worked & what did not?

Student & Faculty Perspectives

What has worked well in the way your professors set up and taught your online courses? What helped you feel welcome, engaged and supported to learn? Why did these practices work well to support your learning?

Students' Perspectives

In General:

- Flexibility of online classes especially for those students with children and/or work
- Reduction in commute time, especially for those who rely on public transportation.
- Students living overseas can continue their education.
- The easy access to the built-in notes and resources that online classes have.
- Some shared that they can focus more with little distractions.
- Some students felt that they can manage their time more efficiently in an online environment.
- For those who have always taken online classes, the transition to distance learning was a welcomed change because then they did not feel alone.
- Some shared that they liked the discussion boards and group lessons of the Zoom classes.

Classroom Environment:

- Approachability of the instructor makes a huge difference in feeling welcomed in a class, especially those who invite students to seek help and ask questions.
- Communication is key for a successful learning environment. It is sometimes hard to do that online, but one good thing that came out of the online classrooms is the open environment that the instructors provided in terms of messaging.
- Many instructors are very gracious in accommodating students' schedule when it comes to meeting with the student especially when the student is not able to make the office hours.
- The inclusion of a resource module for students of all that is available to them on campus
- Students appreciated it when instructors welcomed the students as they entered the zoom meeting—it showed them that the instructor acknowledged their presence.
- The check-ins that some instructors did at the beginning of the class helped students feel welcomed, heard and seen.
- It helped the general tone of the class when the professor was able to relate to students by bringing their personality into the class.

Commented [KS1]: Is this resource module referring to something like basic needs resources or the Student Support Hub that we created on Canvas?



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Distance Learning: What worked & what did not?

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- The use of humor to break the ice was much appreciated.
- Students liked the occasional getting off topic especially during long lectures.
- Offering alternative solutions to students who needed to drop classes, (i.e., offering kind words to students, and helping them explore other options they can pursue the following semester)
- Instructors letting students know about resources available.
- Allowing students to have camera off
- Offering study sessions for students

Instructional:

- Flexible instructors who adapted the structure of their class to accommodate students, or who were willing to extend deadlines depending on student's circumstances.
- Not having due dates or being able to turn in late work is helpful.
- The availability of transcripts to video lectures especially from the perspective of students who have unseen learning disabilities.
- Having a clear syllabus and clear expectations of what will take place ahead.
- Having the zoom class meetings be recorded and shared with the class.
- Offering a preview of what the instructor sees at their end on proctored tests. Students who received a "tutorial" or a run through of what to expect from a proctored test found that very helpful.
- Being able to make a comment through Zoom because some students still want to participate but are not comfortable speaking
- Having the teacher share their screen.
- The use of a variety of teaching methods that touched on the different learning styles of students.
- The pace of the assignments, for example, have assignment shared on Sundays and have them due on Wednesdays each week.
- Allowing a larger window of time for taking an exam as opposed to one specific time.
- Engaging lessons by the instructor who engage their students which builds a more dynamic learning environment.
- Giving feedback on assignments turned in.
- Allowing for some work assignments to be done in class, and providing feedback at that time
- Instructors giving extra points for students showing their cameras or putting up their photos.
- Synchronous environment of the class sometimes works best for some students because of the live experience it provides.

Commented [KS2]: Does this mean having students putting their thoughts in the chat or private messaging the instructor if they have questions?



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- Providing students with tools that can provide additional help is important.
- It helped when instructors conducted regular check-ins throughout the lecture, or when the instructor mixed up the flow of the class.
- There was an expressed appreciation of the work and effort that the professors are putting into their classes, and the sentiment that when students are engaged, then the instructors are also engaged.
- When a student asks an instructor a question, the instructor responds and records their answer and/or solution to that question, then posts it on Canvas so that other students who may have that same question (but are too timid to ask) can see what the response was.
- Have a deliverable/worksheet to be completed during a breakout room; this ensures that all will participate, and a discussion will ensue.
- Hold students accountable for their work in general and in the breakout rooms.
- The use of quick ice breaker
- Best and most creative lessons were those that were hands on, and project based.
- “Teaching in Reverse” Method: What a student needs to learn in the class is broken down into skills that are divided in modules with lecture videos in the modules. Students can retake quizzes until they pass. Heavy on student engagement and activity.

Faculty’s Perspectives

In General:

- Ability to attend conferences that could not have been done in person allowing for more tools to use in teaching.
- Connecting with students at a higher, deeper level
- Growing educator and as a human being
- Higher levels empathy
- Self Reflection: Reassessment of requirements for the course that had become too familiar, or the “norm” and having to think of other ways of doing that.

Instructional:

- Using surveys at the beginning of the class asking students what they need, how they learn best, and also using those surveys mid semester to see if a gear switch is needed.
- Use of scaffolding on long assignment which makes it so that you can tell what the student’s original work is.
- Using honesty statements that students sign before each test instead of Proctorio.



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Distance Learning: What worked & what did not?

Student & Faculty Perspectives

- Using unique short answer questions instead of Proctorio style quizzes.



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Distance Learning: What worked & what did not?

Student & Faculty Perspectives

What has NOT worked well in the way your professors set up and taught your online courses? What do you think may have hurt your learning and success in the way your courses were designed and taught? Why did these practices not support your learning and success?

Students' Perspectives

In General:

- Unstable internet or poor internet quality
- Very distracting home environment
- Stress levels are up.
- Issues with using own Word program rather than the Mission Word 365
- Lack of connection with other students
- Lack of personal interaction with instructors
- Instructor not using the camera during office hours meeting-- the student felt that the instructor was not listening to him/her.
- Some students struggle with technology use, so a club that can teach or orient a student to how to use the technology would be helpful.
- Needing to know if a class will have Zoom meetings or not rather than have a TBA in the catalogue.
- Parents are being challenged by trying to work from home while attending to the needs of their children, or attempting to do homework assignments, or attend class while also tending to the increased demands of their children doing remote school.
- At home, it is hard to be motivated vs. when you are in a class where you feel like all students are in the same boat, learning together or struggling together.
- Students miss doing labs in person.
- Taking one online course per year, that is ok, but to take all the classes online is sometimes a struggle.
- Synchronous is preferred over asynchronous, but in person is preferred over online.

Classroom Environment:

- The instructor not showing any interest in students nor interacting with the class.
- Instructor not listening when there are any questions.
- Instructors who get annoyed when students ask questions.
- Instructor not prepared and uses class time to organize documents.



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- Hostility towards students when they ask questions which breeds an environment where students do not feel comfortable reaching to the instructor.
- Sexism towards female students that some students had reported and shared with peers. Female students being belittled in a male dominated class and then the male students in the class follow the suit of the instructor.
- Sexism is also prevalent among students themselves.
- Ageism is also something that some students have experienced in their interactions with other students.
- Negativity needs to be kept out of the lesson and the class, and with online classes, sometimes things can be misconstrued and misunderstood. Encourage students to keep comments positive and engaged.
- Some students prefer seeing other faces on zoom as seeing black squares makes it harder to be motivated.
- Some reasons given as to why some students keep cameras off is the fact that there are other people in the household walking around them. One idea that was proposed to solve this issue is to create avatars to take the place of the black squares.
- Students tend to turn their cameras on in the breakout rooms because of the small number of people in there.
- Not all students have access to cameras.

Instructional:

- The platform used for lab classes is not very accessible.
- Overloading a class with work beyond what a 3 or a 5 credit course warrants
- Rules for the class inconsistent and changing.
- Strict proctored tests—the software is unreliable.
- Listing the due dates for assignments inside a module instead of listing them on the calendar
- Awkward breakout rooms due to the lack of clear guidance on what students need to do once in the breakout room.
- Pre-recorded videos are the only learning content available.
- Students not sure how to attach and submit the assignment through Canvas. One student sent an assignment to the wrong location and the professor considered it late.
- Student's grades still showing N/A in Canvas even though the semester is on its seventh week.
- Instructor gives the material for students to study but does not use the Zoom meeting to go over any of the material.
- Too much work assigned to be completed in one week.



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Faculty's Perspectives

In General:

- Teaching completely online is “daunting.”
- Not having the right home environment for teaching
- Managing personal life with children at home and managing course load is overwhelming.
- What methods and modes can students use to raise when they face sexism or microaggressions—go to HR? or is there a different method? Faculty is also having discussions about this issue.

Instructional:

- Difficult to track all students in an online class environment.
- Having 35 students in an online class is too much.
- Found challenges attaching assignment within Canvas.
- Teachers need better understanding of options within Proctorio (that they can turn off the option to “kick out” students for violations)
- Difficult to build engagement when many students have cameras off and see a lot of black squares.
- Need of staff support as students run into technical problems.
- Certain disciplines do not translate well online and requires in person instruction.

How to keep the conversations going:

- Refer back to the shared [Google document created by Sarah Sullivan](#) capturing more thoughts of our students during the 3/17 Community Conversation.
- Use this report and have a conversation in your department or division meetings to discuss ways we can support our students online.
- Bring this report up as an agenda item in certain shared governance meetings to discuss ways to improve distance education with other college constituents.
- Refer back to the ASG survey on Distance Education conducted in Spring 2021 to have further conversations on how to support our students online.