



ALLIANCE STUDENT SUCCESS NEWSLETTER

designed by @briagoeller and @goodtrubble

Your connection to all things student success at Cambridge College.

Cambridge College's student success initiatives continue to grow, and much of this change is the result of our Title III Strengthening Institutions Grant. Each issue of Alliance will include messages from students, faculty, and staff across the College to highlight these initiatives' ongoing efforts and far-reaching effects.

Welcome back to the spring 2021 term! Hopefully, the year is starting well, and things are beginning to feel more predictable following President Biden's inauguration. As you settle into the day to day "routine" of the spring term (as routine as pandemic living can be), we're glad you're taking some time to read our February issue.

In the pages that follow, we're introducing our new Reading & Writing Studios, created to help develop students' baseline reading and writing skills. Along with a few helpful email etiquette tips and an overview of the new Cambridge College Online Library, we're setting the stage to usher us into a productive new year. We asked undergraduate students for their advice about starting classes during the pandemic, and one student's words were especially motivating. Keep reading and you'll also learn about the College's exciting new Black History Month series, "Cambridge College's Black Gems of Excellence".

To all our faculty, students, and staff, we welcome you to a new term, a new year, and a fresh start. Enjoy the issue!

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

Designed by Leili Ansari

IN THIS ISSUE:

Academic Success News & Tips

- Reading & Writing Studios
- 5 Email Etiquette Tips

10 Questions with Jeff Cronin

New Online Library Interface

Student Spotlight:
One Student's Words of Wisdom

Meet Kathleen Hartnett
& Lee Okan

Introducing Cambridge College's
Black Gems of Excellence

Spring FAFSA Reminder

ACADEMIC SUCCESS NEWS & TIPS

INTRODUCING READING & WRITING STUDIOS

The Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) is proud to introduce the new Reading & Writing Studios, initially created to support students who score below 4 on the WritePlacer assessment. Designed by Learning Specialist Kathleen Hartnett and Professional Writing Tutor Lee Okan, the Studios are being piloted this Spring 2021 term with new undergraduate students. The Studios are designed to help improve students' baseline reading and writing skills through a flexible framework of weekly mini-lessons.

Participating in weekly Reading & Writings Studios will allow students to foster the reading and writing connection. Students will see models of strong writing and will discuss how these examples help them become not only better readers but stronger writers, too. Students will also be introduced to technology tools that will help them gain an ease with college-level reading and writing.

The studios will be offered as a shared cohort or as individualized sessions. Each session will be offered once a week for 45 minutes. Students may join Level 1, which focuses on reading and writing at the paragraph level, or Level 2, which focuses on reading and writing at the essay level. Students may pick and choose sessions from either level. Starting in February, a studio in level 1 and level 2 will be offered each week.

Level 1 - The Paragraph

In this level, students will look at the paragraph as a "mini essay". Every paragraph tells a story: there's a beginning, there's a middle, and there's an ending.

Level 1 focuses on the paragraph and consists of the following sessions:

- Writing Process
- The Reading & Writing Connection
- Getting Started with Writing
- Pre-writing using free writing and mapping techniques
- Developing solid paragraphs

Students will learn how to narrow their topics, develop reasons, and organize their thoughts into a cohesive unit. We will model professional writers as mentors — as well as each other! — to analyze what makes a paragraph, and practice writing strong, clear paragraphs!

Level 2 - The Essay

In this level, students will take skills and strategies learned from Level 1 and begin to hone their skills in being better college-level readers and writers.

Level 2 emphasizes the writing process:

- Pre-writing/brainstorming
- Outlining/organizing ideas
- First drafts
- Revision

Students will also spend some time "unpacking assignment" descriptions and determining which type of essay best suits our writing goals.

Level 2 emphasizes the reading and writing connection through reading the writing of experts, as well as analyzing peer writing. It's all about helping students learn how to save time with reading and writing and becoming better on their own.

For more information, please contact Kathleen Hartnett at kathleen.hartnett@cambridgecollege.edu or Lee Okan at lee.okan@cambridgecollege.edu.
Meet Kathleen and Lee on page 5!

5 EMAIL ETIQUETTE TIPS

1 Be Clear and Specific

"If you need a yes or no answer, make sure there is a yes or no question.... If you need to set up a meeting **don't just say you need to set up a meeting; suggest a specific time and place**"

2 Consider the Subject

"A subject line could be the difference between someone reading your message and ignoring it...**Keep it short and obvious:** your reader should be able to tell from the subject line what they can expect from the rest of the email."

3 When to CC or BCC

"There are some situations in which a cc isn't a necessary courtesy. **If you are referring directly to someone in an email, it's polite to copy them in;** no one likes to feel others are talking about them behind their back. **If you are sending an email about a group project, cc the other members of the team** so no one feels left out."

The 'b' in 'bcc' stands for 'blind', and it means that the primary recipient of your email will not see that you have copied someone else into the correspondence. They are a silent witness."

4 Using 'Reply All'

"When to reply or reply all is an important judgement call. On the one hand, you don't want to needlessly hit reply all and bring more unnecessary email into the world. On the other, you don't want to look underhanded, or like you are talking about people behind their backs."

5 Is it Really Urgent?

"If the email is urgent, you may note that in the subject—but exercise restraint. Each time you play the urgent card you are decreasing its value."

From *Kill Reply All: A Modern Guide to Online Etiquette, from Social Media to Work to Love* by Victoria Turk, Penguin Random House LLC, 2019. Emphasis added.



10 QUESTIONS WITH JEFF CRONIN

Could you give us a glimpse at what an eLibrarian's role entails?

Most of my job at the Cambridge College Online Library involves reference support and teaching. I receive hundreds of reference questions every year. I teach weekly webinars on various research topics and I also meet one-on-one with many of the doctoral students as they research their dissertations.

You're also an instructor for NEIB, do you feel that your role in Library services is a benefit to this area in terms of assisting students with the quality of their work?

My role as a librarian definitely helps. Especially since the course I most often teach is Information Literacy for College Success, the first course in the NEIB Undergraduate curriculum, which prepares students for doing college-level research.

From a reference standpoint, is it easier working inside of a digital space, or are there drawbacks to both virtual and physical environments?

I think it depends on the type of question posed. If the reference question is one that can easily be answered in a short email with no follow-up required such as "How would I cite this article?" or "What database contains the full-text of the Harvard Business Review?" then there is no difference. However, if it is one that requires a conversation, then virtual is more challenging. I'm finding that setting up short one-on-one Zoom sessions works very well in that case.

NEIB's eLibrary has recently merged with the Cambridge College Online library. Would you be able to give us a glimpse into the work that went into this?

A lot of work went into creating the new Cambridge College Online library and it began immediately after the merger in March. We began by reviewing the databases that both libraries licensed. After that, we set about designing a new library that would incorporate

We set about designing a new library that would incorporate the best features of both. It was very much a team effort.

the best features of both. It was very much a team effort.

What, in your opinion, is the best feature (or your favorite feature) of the newly merged Online Library?

I think the EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS) is a search tool that all of our students and faculty will grow to love. This tool gives users the ability to search over nearly all of our databases. They can filter the search results by data, language, format, etc.

Having such extensive access to so many scholarly resources can be overwhelming for students. Do you have a "Quick start" tip for students when beginning research?

I think the EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS) is the best way to begin library research. You're right that we have an extensive collection of databases. In total, they provide over 25,000 full-text journals, over 360,000 full-text ebooks and data and analysis on thousands of companies and industries. While the databases and the library layout

has been designed to be user-friendly, I encourage students to attend one of the weekly webinars I teach on APA and Introduction to the Library. They're only one hour and I think it's a good investment of time. Students should also know that we offer 24/7 reference assistance so it is important that they reach out for help because that is what we're here for!

What excites you most about continuing to be part of the CC network?

The opportunity to work with the Cambridge College faculty, staff, and students. I'm very impressed with everyone I've met.

What works are on your current reading list?

I've always been a "restless reader," i.e. I usually can't read just one book all the way through. I usually have 3-4 going at one time. At present I'm reading *Evicted* by Matthew Desmond, *Uncle Tungsten* by Oliver Sacks, and *Chances Are...* by Richard Russo.

Our library provides over 25,000 full-text journals, over 360,000 full-text ebooks, and data and analysis on thousands of companies and industries

What are you most looking forward to in 2021?

An end to the COVID pandemic. I've grown accustomed to working at home and it hasn't affected my productivity. Zoom has proved to be a

great tool for working with others. However, I do look forward to meeting with others in-person once we're past the pandemic.

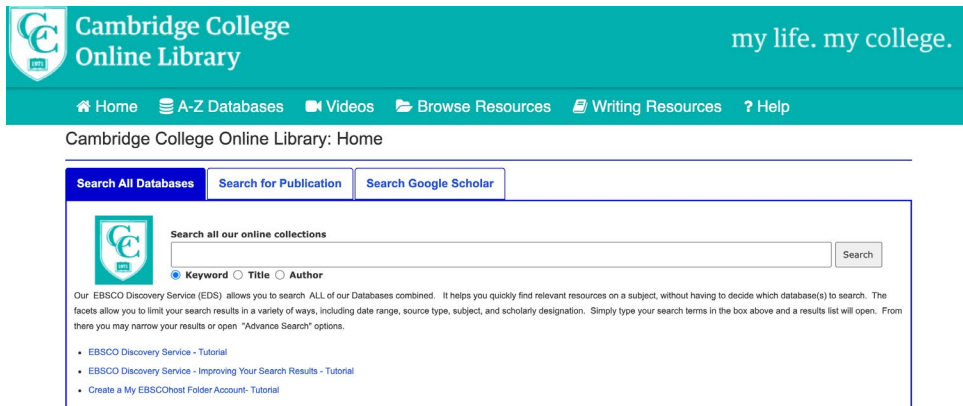
Now for the serious question: what is your favorite part of Boston, and why?

I grew up in Hingham and Norwell on the South Shore of Boston. They are two beautiful old New England towns. Visiting them brings back such wonderful memories.

NEW ONLINE LIBRARY INTERFACE

If you have logged onto the Cambridge College Online Library recently, you may have noticed some changes. Over the winter break, Library Director Anthony Viola and Librarian Jeff Cronin were hard at work completing the Cambridge College/NEIB library merger, a project that began back in August. It was a large effort that involved selecting the best of both libraries and combining everything into one larger library to better serve all students and faculty.

There are many new changes for Cambridge College students and faculty that you will notice upon logging in. The library homepage is much cleaner and simpler than it was before, with our Ebsco Discover Service (EDS) search engine featured up front on the page. There is also a new "Email your librarian" button that will send an email to both of our CC librarians, Anthony Viola and Jeff Cronin. Feel free to reach out to either of them for assistance with research or for class visits.



Along the top, you will notice a new "A-Z Databases" tab that will allow you to search through all of our approximately 100-article databases. CC students now have access to several great new databases such as expanded Gale offerings, Plunkett, and IBIS world market reports. They are very well organized on that page and easily searchable. The "Videos" tab has also been updated, and there are more free video resources in addition to our popular Kanopy and Academic Video databases. Finally, there is a new "Writing Resources" tab with resources to help students with writing or research, including links to APA 7 resources.

NEIB students and faculty also now have access to many more databases in subject areas, such as psychology, human services, and education. They also can now access the video databases referenced above, and they now have access to EDS for better and more comprehensive searches.

We are very proud of our new Cambridge College library, which is on par with the libraries of much larger schools and universities! We encourage students to use the library for all their research and faculty to use the library for research and/or for class materials.



EDS searches performed in 2020

122,614

22,472 searches in October 2020 alone

117,063 items viewed in all of 2020

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Words of Wisdom

We asked students who began studying at CC in the fall of 2020 to share their advice for students starting classes this spring term.

Be Cool! Stay Calm!

"The professors at Cambridge College are well seasoned. Very experienced. Very knowledgeable. I find them to be fair and honest. They are there to help make sure that you are not stressed out. Although that's not always the case!! (haha) Seriously, the staff here are your biggest cheerleaders. You do the work, you get an A. My first-year professors and my success coach are the best and I wouldn't have it any other way. Stay on task! Be yourself! And as my grandfather used to say, 'Listen to learn, and learn to listen'. Your classmates are trying to get the same education you are. You're not in this alone!! Take your time! Try to stay organized! Attendance is important. Leave your camera on because participation matters. Enjoy your classes! Pay attention! Good luck!"

Tiffany Bocage, Multidisciplinary Studies Major

MEET KATHLEEN HARTNETT & LEE OKAN

LEARNING SPECIALIST & WRITING TUTOR

What are your backgrounds, and what initially led you to Cambridge College?

Kathleen: My educational background includes an Applied Linguistics MA with a concentration and certification in ESL instruction for English language learners (ELLs). I have teaching experience in K-12, in college, and in community-based organizations. I was an academic advisor for several years where I developed a program for students on academic probation. This experience led me to develop the Integrated Student Success Program (ISSP) at Cambridge College.



Lee: I am a creative writing Ph.D. candidate and an adjunct professor at institutions around the Boston area. I came to Cambridge College as a tutor; I've really enjoyed getting to know students in a 1:1 setting.

What is your teaching/tutoring style?

Lee: As an instructor, I like infusing hands-on projects and activities into my lessons, such as creating a website or a podcast in lieu of writing a report, or acting out part of a story in class. I like getting students immersed in the content. As a tutor I am very empathetic and motivating. A lot of what I do is reassuring students that it's going to be okay and guiding them through the assignment and onto resources so that they can keep going.

Kathleen: My teaching style is geared to helping students reach goals, surpass obstacles, and experience learning as enjoyable. As a teacher, I incorporate inquiry-based, project-based learning and culturally relevant teaching and learning (CRT). I am also interested in Universal Design for Learning curriculum design. I also follow approaches based on theories related to socio-cultural teaching and learning. In my practice, I strive to stay informed by best practices and recent research. I believe in strength-based advising/coaching models that emphasize student efficacy and of course a sense of humor!

I try to connect the new information I am teaching to students' background knowledge. I am a proponent of technology that will help students gain more ease with college-level reading and writing.

What inspired you to produce Reading & Writing Studios?

Kathleen: A few years ago, I initiated the Essay Base Camp so that students scoring low on the WritePlacer test could access more consistent writing support outside their classes. Over time, I wanted to incorporate reading strategies into the writing support process and offer a more structured curriculum design. Brooks Winchell, Lucilia Valerio, and Lee Okan have also offered inspiration for the studios.

Reading & Writing Studios allows students to choose which sessions they attend. Why is it designed this way?

Kathleen: We wish for students to be able to decide what topics they would like to learn about depending on their needs and interests. Lee and I have designed two tiers for the spring: R&W Studios anchored at the paragraph level and the essay level. Students do not have to commit to either level but can choose from both. There is a menu of topics for each level and students may mix and match.

What is most important for faculty to know about Reading & Writing Studios?

Kathleen: Faculty members may wish to recommend some of their students to participate in a studio session relevant to their class either in a small group or in an individualized session and are welcome to reach out to us with any questions or suggestions.

How does the remote format influence how you work with students?

Kathleen: Learning remotely during the pandemic made it clear that mini lessons with clear goals and objectives work best for most students. Contending with both challenges can be daunting, but breaking things down step-by-step makes it doable for many.

Lee: I've used the philosophy of "need to know" in teaching students remotely, meaning I try not to overwhelm them with too much information or technology. I've slowed down a lot of what I teach, which means things sometimes get left out, but I feel in slowing down and paring down my students are overall more successful.

What advice do you have for students as they begin a new term and a new year?

Lee: I would recommend that students starting a new term ask for help. What do you have to lose? There are so many people at Cambridge College who want to help students (and if they don't know the answer, they will find someone who does). So, if you ever get stuck, ask for help.

Kathleen: I also recommend that students plan ahead. Learning during a pandemic is more challenging than it is in normal times and attentional and memory challenges often arise, so getting extra support can make an enormous difference.

What are you looking forward to this year?

Kathleen: I am looking forward to working with my wonderful students and colleagues. I am grateful for being at Cambridge College with its amazing community.

Lee: I'm looking forward to rolling out the R&W Studios with Katy. We've put a lot of work into these studios and the feedback from faculty and students has been so encouraging.

Have you read any good books lately?

Kathleen: I am reading some August Wilson plays and *The Overstory: A Novel* by Richard Powers.

Lee: I'm teaching a children's literature course, and as one of the required readings, I selected *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White. I think for children and adults, White tells such a compelling and universally relevant story. For any students that would like to take a break from their classes and just read for fun, this is a great read.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

CELEBRATING CAMBRIDGE COLLEGE'S BLACK GEMS OF EXCELLENCE

BY DR. FELISA ALBERT

“Would America Have Been America Without Her Negro People?”

W.E.B. Du Bois (1903)

Black people are consistently reminded about their history of slavery, racism, and discrimination. Black History Month is the time to be intentional about understanding and celebrating Black excellence in the face of adversity. This month provides an opportunity, not only to focus on the struggles faced by Black people, but also as a moment of reflection, while honoring the history, contributions, and achievements of Black people. Too often, such achievements and recognitions have been white-washed, altered, and omitted from the history books and other forms of intellectual content.

This month, I will be engaging several esteemed Black faculty from the

Cambridge College community to highlight their achievements and perspectives. This month-long series will culminate with a college-wide virtual conversation led by a faculty panel. The panel will discuss various topics, including but not limited to: racial equity and social justice, cultural sensitivity and awareness, motivational/coaching sessions for Black students, and personal and professional advice on how to be a Black Gem of Excellence, or an ally for one.

Unquestionably, highlighting the College's Black Gems or exploring Black history for the 28 days of February is not enough. While we celebrate the real stories within Black culture, people must take ownership and continue to seek knowledge about the contributions of Black people throughout the year. As society moves forward, Black people are no longer looking to be tolerated. Rather, they are affirming their belonging and full equity as citizens and human beings. Modern-day campaigns, such as Black Lives Matter, show that the fight for full freedom and equality remains

a priority in the Black community. These movements continue the legacy of those who have come before us who have made the groundbreaking accomplishments that we seek to honor this February and throughout the year.

Stay tuned for more details about this month's CC's Black Gems of Excellence series!

Questions,
comments,
or feedback?

Please email
studentsuccess@
cambridgecollege.edu

REMINDER: COMPLETE YOUR FAFSA FOR SPRING 2021

If you have not completed your FAFSA for the spring term, you still have time!

Log onto www.fafsa.gov and complete your 2020-21 FAFSA today

Questions? Contact your [financial aid counselor](#) or email sfs@cambridgecollege.edu

SAY YES TO SUCCESS

It is true. The United States is saddled with many overwhelming burdens at this time. The political rhetoric over the last four years has been more divisive than ever. Americans are deeply divided and have recently witnessed unprecedented violence, such as the attack at the Capitol.

On top of that, for the last year, we have been living in the surreal state of COVID-19, which has required everyone to change their behavior and their lives. It has also devastated our economies, closed many businesses, and put many people out of work. On top of all that, racial inequity and tensions have become more obvious, amplified by COVID-19, and people are frustrated. Our world is in such a state of disarray that it is easy to give up or blame others.

However, giving up will not make change. It will not move people ahead, and it will not help to alter all the problems of this world. It is up to each of us to stand up and persist, which is infinitely harder than giving up. This is at the core of Cambridge College's identity. This institution has always been about radical change and persistence in the face of oppression. It is in our DNA and it is in the character of our Cambridge College students. They are resilient and don't quit but work harder, try more, put more in. We love our students for this, and it is why we are all here.

If ever there was a college equipped for weathering a pandemic, this is it. So don't any of you dare think about giving up now. Find the resolve that we know is in each of you and tap into it. Make "Success" your mantra and crush this semester!