



ALLIANCE STUDENT SUCCESS NEWSLETTER

Your connection to all things student success at Cambridge College.

Welcome to our March issue of Alliance, the Cambridge College Student Success Newsletter! This issue marks one year of living in the COVID-19 pandemic. We start this issue with some suggestions for conquering the new frontier of digital literacy. We then move into an interview with Howard Horton, Executive Director of CC Global, to learn more about what CC Global is and its ambitious push to greatly expand online learning at Cambridge College. We then share an inspiring conversation with a CC Global student and their advisor, Katie Adler.

In the second half of the issue, we move into an interview with five faculty members who were nominated by students in the fall student survey. Dr. Tracy McLaughlin met with them in a conversation to hear about their best strategies for remote teaching and how they have made it successful. The issue ends with a reflection on the year in review by CELT Director Brooks Winchell, and our final call to action.

We hope you 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

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ACADEMIC SUCCESS TIPS

NEW FRONTIERS OF DIGITAL LITERACY

After a year of remote learning, most of us have made significant developments in our own digital literacy. Perhaps you learned how to use ZOOM or MyCC in new ways, or maybe you learned how to submit a paper electronically or collaborate on a shared document, or share a document, or now know what a shared document is.

Wherever you are, acknowledge the progress you have made and the ways in which your technology skills have improved over the year. Yes, it can be frustrating to not be able to do something, but look at how much technology has helped us survive and how critical it has become for education!

Moving forward, technology skills will be just as important as reading and writing or teamwork skills, so strive to always learn and develop your digital literacy. Here are some challenge areas for growth:

Learn how to better manipulate ZOOM

Do you feel comfortable logging onto ZOOM Meetings and muting and unmuting your microphone? If so, do you also know how to pin and unpin participants, share your screen, or share a file in the chat? How about turning on side-by-side view mode or using digital filters? Challenge yourself to learn something new on ZOOM.



Learn how to record and share videos

Have you ever made and shared a video? Learn how to do it using ZOOM or applications on your devices. Already familiar with creating videos? Do you know how to edit them or splice videos together?

Learn how to navigate MyCC

Do you know where most things are on MyCC? Can you access tutoring, TutorMe, or sign up for advising/coaching? Can you get into your course portals, upload assignments, or post to the discussion boards? Check out the “Tutorials” tab in MyCC for resources to help you improve your MyCC skills.

Move your files to the cloud and learn Google Drive or OneDrive

Want to really take it to the next level? Move all your files to the cloud and free up your computer's hard drive. All students and faculty have access to Google Drive with nearly unlimited storage. All staff have access to OneDrive with nearly unlimited storage.

Learn how to manipulate PDFs

PDF is the publication standard for documents, but it can be challenging to manipulate PDFs. Learn how to rotate them, cut them, merge them, or add feedback. Want to take it to the next level? Learn how to use Adobe Acrobat.



Learn how to create accessible documents

Speaking of Acrobat, do you know how to assure your documents and presentations are accessible and Office of Civil Rights [OCR] compliant? Doing so doesn't take much time, but it allows people with disabilities to more easily access your documents.

WHAT CAN Starfish DO FOR YOU?

STUDENTS:

Starfish provides you with a central location to connect to the people and services that can help you finish what you start—all accessible from the side navigation menu of your Starfish Home page.

Whether you are checking professors' feedback through your dashboard, or responding to email messages from Advisors or your Success Coach, Starfish is your information portal to success. Within Starfish, students have the ability to “Raise Your Hand” and create a flag on themselves when they realize they will need help in any area ranging from academic support to personal concerns.

NEED HELP? RAISE YOUR HAND!

This feature is designed specifically for students. You can raise the following issues to ask Student Services for help:

- I need help
- I need help in a course
- I need help transitioning to online/remote learning
- I need Career Exploration Services
- I need technology support
- I need to be connected with the International Student Office
- I need help with language skills or reading/writing

When you Raise your Hand in Starfish, a Student Service Representative will contact you directly to assist you.

WITH STARFISH, FACULTY CAN...

Flag a student who is struggling in your class or needs assistance to ensure that the student's advisor or success coach is in the loop and reaches out to the student

Send a referral to connect students to Student Services Offices for additional academic support or assistance

Store notes and send messages to all of your students in your class or program

Access student data, such as contact information, review note history, or create a to-do list for your students

Enable students to self-schedule appointments with you

FACULTY:

Starfish gives you a convenient way to keep track of your students by raising flags when you observe a pattern of behavior that concerns you. Using Starfish ensures that the people on campus who can intervene are aware. It also allows your students to easily book an appointment with you, their Advisor, or a Student Services Representative who can help.

Getting started is easy. Starfish is accessible through MyCC by clicking on the Student Success Network link under “Direct Links”. Starfish will automatically display all students whom you have been assigned to, or who are enrolled in your courses, in your student list.

Responses recorded by Leili Ansari



in a deep exploration right now to have some of our financial degree programs delivered in Africa.

What do you think will be your biggest challenge?

The online college market is well-saturated with highly branded universities that have a bit of a head start in the global market, and there are now a lot of smaller players who are launching online programs at a record pace as a result of the pandemic. Breaking through and establishing CC Global in a manner that achieves substantial enrollment, and as a market leader, will take a carefully crafted and well-executed business plan.

You bring a lot of experience with online programs from NECB. From your perspective, where do we have room for improvement in this space, and how will CC Global address this?

NECB was an early adopter of online programming twenty years ago when a major grant from the Sloane Foundation enabled the transition of all curriculum to the online modality. With this experience now coming into CCG, the online courses created will not only follow “best practices”, but many will be “best in class.” An insistent focus on quality is very important. I think CC is moving in the right direction, not only

with the establishment of CCG, but also in recognizing the future of integrating virtual learning into on-ground programs and having our faculty (through “Connected Learning”) take measures to increase student active

engagement, which is the key to learning in any modality.

Why do you think CC Global is important to launch now? When students are able to return to in-seat classes, how will CC Global remain relevant?

As a school focused on adult learners, CC must have a strong position with fully online options, as this is the fastest growing

segment of the higher education market. Whether it's CC Global, fully campus-based programs, or blended versions, we want to give our students the “optionality” of when and how to pursue their credentials and skills acquisition. In fact, in the post-pandemic period, you can expect students to demand this kind of flexibility.

What are you most looking forward to?

Succeeding! Well, of course, that is our major objective. But, along the way, I would also like to see CC Global continue the tradition at Cambridge College of curriculum innovation and increasing the ability of online delivery to bring knowledge and skills to students for whom a college education has been previously limited or denied.

What does the launch of CCG mean for our current students, faculty, and staff?

The immediate impact is that CCG, through its New England Institute of Business, can now offer CC students a much larger array of fully online business, finance and management certificates and degree programs. These highly ranked programs, including associate through master level degrees, have some great specializations, such as business ethics and compliance; digital marketing; finance; social entrepreneurship, and human resource management. In addition, students who are taking campus-based programs, with appropriate permissions, may be able to blend in one or more of the 250 CCG online courses in our inventory to fulfill program or elective requirements.

Over the next year, CCG intends to launch more fully online programs in new academic areas, which will help students attain the flexibility needed to balance work and family needs with their studies. We anticipate that faculty will have more opportunities to teach online and to perfect the craft of online teaching, incorporating new technologies and instructional methods to make for a highly engaging and effective educational experience. With a growing number of fully online students taking courses and programs through CCG, we expect CC staff to become more accustomed to working with students who never set foot on the campuses and to become expert in providing them with high-touch supportive administrative and academic services.



**Cambridge
College
GLOBAL**

For those at Cambridge College who don't know: what is Cambridge College Global?

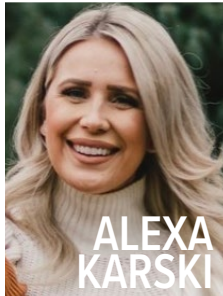
Cambridge College Global (CCG) is a new division at CC which will be focused, most prominently, on the fully online learner. The organizational structure of CCG is a bit unique in that it will house a marketing function (both consumer and B2B); an admissions team; a student advising team; program chairs; and instructional designers. This holistic approach recognizes the unique challenges in recruiting fully online students from non-traditional CC markets; in creating award-winning online programming; and in servicing students who are not proximate to our campuses.

What excites you about CC Global?

I am very excited about the blossoming of our fully online programs at CC. It is a further iteration of the CC mission by breaking down barriers and providing relevant, industry-oriented programs to a wider berth of deserving students. The fully online student can come from anywhere and can participate in asynchronous classes at any time of day or night (hence, our name “GLOBAL.”) In fact, we have already signed an agreement with a school in Singapore to carry our Bachelor of Science in Digital Marketing, and we are

We want to give our students the “optionality” of when and how to pursue their credentials and skills acquisition

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: ALEXA KARSKI



Responses recorded by Katie Adler

Alexa Karski is a student in the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration program at the New England Institute of Business (NEIB) at Cambridge College. Alexa found her way to NEIB through her role as a Branch Manager with the Boston

Firefighters Credit Union, which was an unexpected career move for Alexa. This unexpected change has Alexa looking to grow her career, and her education at NEIB has allowed her to start that journey.

Balancing work and school with an 11-month-old and a new little one on the way, Alexa is a real-life superwoman! I was able to sit down with Alexa and get her thoughts on the challenges facing students who are not only working adults but also parents.

Being a Branch Manager at Boston Firefighters Credit Union sounds interesting. What led you there?

Working at the BFCU sort of fell into my lap. An old friend reached out, thinking I would be perfect for a teller position because they wanted someone friendly and outgoing who could meet the high standards of service we offer to our members. Within the year, my bosses saw something in me that led them to promote me to a Member Service Representative. The next year we were opening a second branch for the first time and although it felt like a long shot, I decided to apply for the Branch Manager position, which I was chosen for. After one year managing our smaller branch, I was asked if I would be interested in coming back to our main location to be the Branch Manager of our larger, busier branch. I jumped at the opportunity, knowing it would expand my knowledge and grow my skill set. Before the BFCU, I was working as a lifeguard, so you can imagine my surprise and gratitude for the amazing opportunities the BFCU has provided me with since starting as a Teller in 2014.

Can you give us a glimpse of what being a Branch Manager entails?

Being a Branch Manager requires a lot of multitasking. Every day in the office is different for me. I never know what I am going to get! I am responsible for daily functions dealing with our ATM machine,

cash machine, coin machine, various reports, and branch balancing. I continue to provide member service, specifically to members looking to have their needs escalated to a supervisor. I look over loans that have been underwritten to make approval/denial decisions. I work with outside vendors to ensure we have the supplies we need and that all of our machines and equipment are functioning properly. I monitor our phones to ensure that calls are being answered and voicemails are being returned. And my favorite part of all is I have 15 direct reports, who are cross-trained member service representatives. They wear many hats, and have many questions throughout the day. Along with answering their questions, I also try to set a good example and be the best leader possible, encouraging them to want to better themselves and grow in their careers here at BFCU. This also means I am responsible for the tough conversations with my team, when situations arise. Although that part of the job is never easy, getting to have a one-on-one conversation with someone that can help them improve their habits or work ethic and ultimately grow them as an employee is a very rewarding part of my job.

What prompted you to start your program with NEIB at Cambridge College?

I have always known that I wanted a degree, if for nothing else than to just accomplish something for myself. When I found out that BFCU paid for our education with NEIB at Cambridge College, it was a no brainer. Although I am happy in my position as Branch Manager and have been able to obtain this career without my degree, I know that having a degree will only benefit my hopes for growth in the future.

What, in your opinion, makes NEIB at Cambridge College the right place for working parents?

NEIB at Cambridge College is the perfect place for working parents because it can all be done online. Getting back into school later in life is hard; doing it with small children

is even harder, so to then be expected to pack up and go to a physical classroom at a scheduled time seems pretty impossible. At NEIB, I don't have to worry about that. I can do my school work on my own time, even when there is occasionally a little chaos in the background!

As a mother with a little one on the way, how do you keep motivation for classes?

I will be honest, it is very difficult to maintain motivation for classes while being in my second trimester of pregnancy, chasing after an 11-month-old, and working full time. There are definitely days that I devote to homework that I wish I could be devoting to my family. What drives me, however, is that one day I will be able to tell my kids the circumstances under which I managed to get my degree, all without missing a single bedtime story or kiss goodnight. I want my children to know that they can accomplish anything, no matter how far out of reach or impossible it may seem. Being able to use my own life experience as an example for them in the future is what keeps me going.

Given how life functions these days, what would you say has been the biggest challenge during the pandemic?

Our biggest challenge during the pandemic was also our biggest blessing. Having a baby at the very beginning of the pandemic was terrifying, to say the least. Since then, it remains a worry for my husband and I to make sure we are doing everything possible to keep her safe, while both being essential workers. Distancing from family and friends to limit exposure has also been a major challenge. We are beyond ready for life to go back to normal!

What are you most looking forward to in 2021?

In 2021 I am most looking forward to the birth of our baby boy, who is due to arrive in June! Along with his arrival, I am looking forward to my maternity leave where I can spend quality time with both babies.

EXCELLENCE IN ZOOM INSTRUCTION

A CONVERSATION WITH SHERI DAMON, ED STONE, KATHY HASSEY, CHERYL WILLIAMS & SANDRA ARABIAN

At the end of the fall 2020 term, Cambridge College students were asked to tell us about a faculty member who they felt excelled at remote instruction (NEIB was not included in this survey). In response, an astounding 180 instructors were nominated. Associate Provost Dr. Tracy McLaughlin sat down with five of our nominees to learn more about the strategies they used to make remote teaching and learning work for them and their students.

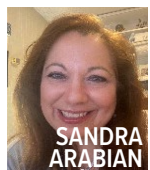
Sheri Damon and Ed Stone both teach at the School of Psychology and Counseling. When not teaching at Cambridge College, Sheri runs her own Wellness and Therapy practice and Ed works as a School Adjustment Counselor.

Kathy Hassey teaches at the School of Education in the College's Masters Program in School Nurse Education. Kathy is a Cambridge College alumna and is the Director of the School Health Academy at Northeastern University.

Sandra Arabian teaches in the Health Care MBA program in the School of Management. Sandy is also a graduate of the College and is the Director of the Trauma Program at Tufts Medical Center.

Cheryl Williams teaches the LRN 175 course at the School of Undergraduate Studies at both our Boston and Lawrence locations.

Tracy McLaughlin: First, let me congratulate you on being nominated by so many of your students, and thank you for the excellent work you are doing. Can you share with the Cambridge College community how you approached remote instruction?



Sandra Arabian: I really love the mission of Cambridge College; it is why I am here. I'm very invested in my students and the one thing I always tell them is that their success is my success. I tell them, "we are in this together: I am ready to take you by the hand and help you over that finish line". I am interested in them as individuals and in what they bring to the class, and we start every class talking about some of their personal things.



Sheri Damon: I approached synchronous Zoom instruction by trying to understand all the variables that come into play as students are trying to be present in a class via Zoom in their bedroom or bathroom or car, wherever they need to work from. To help them shift gears away from everything else, I start every single class with either a mindfulness or a grounding exercise. I want to be sure that we give ourselves the opportunity for the 2 hours and 45 minutes of class time to just be present.



Ed Stone: One of the things I like to do is to record a video of myself and send it to the students, as a way to connect a little bit more or bring more of myself to the class. That is something

that I started to do last spring in response to everything that was happening in regards to the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, and Rayshard Brooks. I felt that it was not possible for me to come into a class setting without speaking to what was happening in the world around me and how that impacted me and how that might impact the students in my classes.

I try to be super aware of what I'm seeing from my students. Especially on Zoom, I constantly ask, "Am I losing people?, Do they need a break?, Are they still with me?" I also try to be really flexible in terms of being willing to go wherever the class takes us. When there are conversations that people are clearly very interested in, I try to devote attention to that and then I try to connect it back to the learning.

Cheryl Williams: When I heard that we had to go remote, I decided to become the best remote instructor in the world, and I attended every CC class and webinar, sometimes even twice. In my face-to-face classes, I build in an engagement activity for the students every 20 minutes. And I thought, why don't I try doing that while we're remote? I was blown away by how much more engaged my students were.



To me, equity is of fundamental importance. For example, I don't require that students have their video on. I believe that it is incumbent upon me as an instructor to keep my students engaged. If a student is off-task, that's on me. The way I do it is to check every 10 minutes for understanding, and if a student can simultaneously cook brownies, keep up with the chat, and show her understanding, I'm ok with that.

Sandy Arabian: I too feel responsible to make sure that the students stay engaged. Before this all happened, I had a conversation

with another instructor about how to keep students engaged while teaching on Zoom. The way you do this is that you make the content relevant by showing them how it relates to their own experiences. One other

This has been a whole lot more work than face-to-face, but I think it's really been worth it.

Kathy Hassey

thing that I did to engage my students is that I invited other faculty to be guest speakers on Zoom.

Sheri Damon: Like you, the pieces that I really worked on were engagement

activities, using every aspect of Zoom, including breakout rooms and polls. My goal was to help students form relationships with each other, so that they don't feel that they are in this class alone.

Kathy Hassey: For a lot of the activities that I like to do in my face-to-face classes, I now use the breakout rooms in Zoom. I learned to make the breakout rooms smaller, to force my quieter students to engage more.



Acknowledging everyone's trauma was really important in the beginning, and I let students talk about everything they were experiencing. I have also conducted many Zoom meetings individually, especially with students who appeared to be struggling. Students are so thankful for that, and they email and say "Thanks for just checking in". I also save their chats, and then respond to their chats. I feel that this has been a whole lot more work than face-to-face, but I think it's really been worth it.

Ed Stone: Research in Counseling Psychology shows that the relationship between the client and the counselor is seven times more likely to predict a successful outcome than the treatment itself. In teaching, as well, it's all about relationships, and that's been a theme that I'm picking out as I listen to this conversation. The second thing that came to mind is that information is static, but learning is fluid and alive, so being able to adapt and adjust to what is going on around us enhances learning and fosters that intrinsic desire to share and exchange ideas. I think that's really what it's all about, no matter what the subject matter is.

“GOING REMOTE”: A YEAR IN REFLECTION

BY BROOKS WINCHELL, CELT DIRECTOR

In 2019, no one could have possibly imagined the scope of what would occur in 2020 and 2021. When COVID-19 hit, we had to close our doors and “go remote” on March 13th, 2020. Going remote meant changing everyone’s lives and habits. At first, most of us thought we would be closed for two weeks and would have the minor annoyance of wearing a mask and using hand sanitizer for a short time. However, here we are a year later, still in the midst of a full-blown pandemic with half a million American lives lost.

The COVID-19 Pandemic, racial injustice, and all the associated disparities have hit America harder than any other country, and it has hit many members of the Cambridge College community hard as well. There have been numerous challenges and more still to come, with many of our students and faculty serving as front-line workers. However, there is another story at Cambridge College as well: one of resilience, which has always been a core trait of our students and of our College.

Faculty

Our Cambridge College faculty, long beloved by the students, stepped up immediately to meet the challenge of adapting their teaching styles for Connected distance learning. They themselves became students and learned how to use technologies that were new in many cases, or with which they were only partially familiar. Yet they are dedicated, resilient, and love our students, so they adapted. They learned how to

engage students on ZOOM and how to submit electronic feedback. They began communicating more regularly with students or meeting with students individually to help keep the connection.

Students

Our students have stepped up as well. Rather than stopping, most have continued on and have adapted to the new remote teaching modalities and strategies that their professors were using. They optimized their own learning spaces and approaches to make remote learning effective for themselves and have advocated for their learning and technology needs when they arose.

Staff

Our offices also had to change and find new ways to support students remotely. In many cases, this meant sending more emails or meeting individually with students on ZOOM. All of our advisors, coaches, tutors, and support staff worked hard, often longer than usual hours, to support students individually or in groups. They began holding many more events and virtual workshops across the College to build connections and community.

In addition, the College began more regular communication and working to build an inclusive remote community. This Student Success Newsletter, *Alliance*, is one example, but we have improved communication in many other areas as well, such as surveying students and faculty more

regularly to understand their perspectives, updating MyCC, and sending more regular communications from all our student-serving offices. We have taken it further by stepping up to the moment with important conversations on race and justice and reaffirming our leadership in these areas, which were the foundations of the college.

The entire pandemic has been challenging for all of us and deeply challenging for some of us, but there have also been so many great moments of inspiration. Our Cambridge College community has adapted to this new reality and has made so many impressive innovations. With vaccines being delivered now and numbers declining, there is hope for a return to a new, more flexible Cambridge College soon. For now, we must continue to be resilient, but we should also pause to acknowledge all of our many achievements over this past year and recognize how strong we have been together.

Questions,
comments,
or feedback?

Please email
studentsuccess@
cambridgecollege.edu

DID YOU KNOW? TEMPORARY 0% INTEREST ON FEDERAL STUDENT LOANS

Direct unsubsidized loans normally accrue interest while you’re in school, but from March 13, 2020, to September 30, 2021, the interest rate on all U.S. Department of Education (ED) loans is temporarily lowered to **0%**.

Learn more at
studentaid.gov

GET VACCINATED

It has been a surreal year living in this pandemic. However, scientists and pharmaceutical companies have worked harder than ever to develop vaccines at record pace. They did not cut corners in the development of their vaccines and assured that they were developed using the appropriate trials and testing.

We now have vaccines from three companies available - Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson. Many of us hadn’t heard some of these companies’ names before the pandemic, but now we all know them. Many of us now even know the difference between an mRNA vaccine and a standard vaccine and can quote the efficacy rates of each. We also know that they are proven to be highly effective against COVID-19 and that they carry very few side effects.

At Cambridge College, we feel assured that the COVID vaccines are all safe. So please, as soon as you are eligible, get vaccinated against COVID-19 and urge others to do so as well. These vaccines are the solution to ending this pandemic and getting us all back together again!

