

# ALLIANCE STUDENT SUCCESS NEWSLETTER

Your connection to all things student success at Cambridge College.

## Welcome to our new Student Success Newsletter!

Cambridge College's student success initiatives continue to grow, resulting in many improvements in our student support services. Much of this change is the result of projects that are funded by our Title III Strengthening Institutions Grant, including the redesign of our undergraduate first-year experience and onboarding process, the implementation of the Starfish Student Success Platform, and the expansion of our professional development opportunities. Some recent changes are also a result of our student-centric response to COVID-19. With the help of NEIB and their expertise in online learning, we have been working hard to enhance the remote teaching and learning experience of our students.

The purpose of this newsletter is for every member of the Cambridge College community—students, faculty, and staff—to know about our latest efforts to support student success. This month's issue is designed to share some of the tools and resources that form the foundation of student success at Cambridge College. This issue includes key features in Starfish and academic support opportunities, an official introduction of the New England Institute of Business to our community, and a review of the adjustments we've made in response to COVID-19. Enjoy the issue!

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

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# ACADEMIC SUCCESS RESOURCES



## SUPPORT FEATURES FOR STUDENTS & FACULTY

As you have likely heard by now, as part of our Title III Strengthening Institutions grant Cambridge College was able to acquire the Starfish Student Success platform! Starfish is now available to all students at all locations, including all NEIB students!

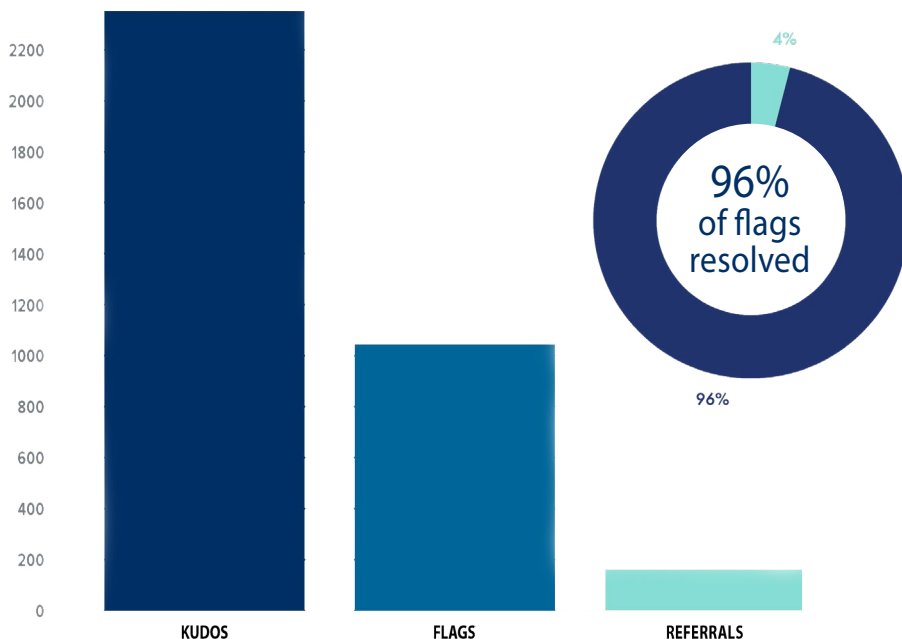
In Starfish, students can “raise their hand” to ask for help from an advisor/success coach, ask for academic support and technological support from the Academic Success Center, share student concerns with the Office of Student Affairs, or ask for career support from the Center for Career and Professional Development. Faculty can also raise flags on students to connect them with support from these offices.

In addition, all students from all locations can make appointments with all of our tutors via ZOOM through Starfish. Simply click on the “Academic Success Center” service and you can see all of the tutors’ names, tutoring skills, and general availability. To book an appointment, click “Schedule an Appointment” and follow the directions.

Along with booking appointments with tutors, some advisors and all the success coaches also use Starfish for scheduling appointments. Students will see their advisors under “Your Connections.” Click on the advisor’s name and click “Schedule an appointment” to book.

Finally, faculty at Cambridge College are invited to participate in progress surveys which allow instructors to quickly send kudos or raise any concerns they have about their students in order to connect students quickly to any needed support services. These surveys are launched early in each term. Over the last academic year (fall 2019 through summer 2020), 672 flags and 1,866 kudos were sent through progress surveys alone. This summer and fall, we launched surveys at all four CC schools. It is clear that faculty are using Starfish to connect students to supportive services, and we expect many more flags (and kudos!) raised in the 2020-2021 academic year.

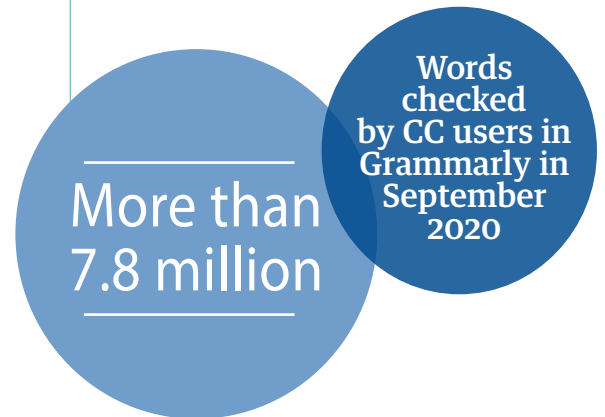
## ALERTS RAISED IN STARFISH 2019-2020



## 3 TIPS TO MAKE THE MOST OF grammarly

All active students, faculty and student-facing staff now have access to Grammarly Pro. Grammarly is a great tool for supporting clear and correct writing. Use these 3 tips to improve your writing!

- 1 Look for patterns in the suggestions that you receive. Do you frequently see suggestions about commas or subject-verb agreement? If so, try to work on sharpening those skills. Click into the comments for deeper explanations and examples.
- 2 Click “Plagiarism” on the bottom right to run a plagiarism search. This is helpful for any papers with sources.
- 3 Click “Overall Score” to see your performance score. There is also an option to download the full report.





# New England Institute of Business at Cambridge College

## AN INTRODUCTION



BY BILL LYNCH  
DIRECTOR OF ACADEMIC ADVISING AT NEIB

### Hello Cambridge College community!

The New England Institute of Business (NEIB) is the newest member of the Cambridge College network. Below is a brief overview of who we are, what programs we offer, and how our fully online students do the exceptional work they do.

### Who is NEIB?

The mission of the New England Institute of Business at Cambridge College is to provide high-quality, affordable, and accessible undergraduate and graduate online degree programs, as well as professional training for students interested in careers in business, public administration, information technology, and healthcare.

**Asynchronous at NEIB  
means higher-level learning  
for our students...around  
the country to around  
the globe**

NEIB (formerly the New England College of Business, NECB) was founded in 1909 by the New England banking industry. Since 2009, our programs have been offered fully online in an asynchronous model. That means not everyone needs to be online at a specific time for the course to function. However, please do not confuse asynchronous with “self-taught”, as our highly engaged faculty members create an in-class feel in the online setting. Infused with outcomes-based learning, enthralling discussion boards, and industry applicable assignments, asynchronous at NEIB means higher-level learning for our students from points around the country to around the globe!

### What Programs does NEIB Offer?

While our initial focus areas of Banking and Finance are still a source of pride for us, we

have expanded into other business and healthcare administration areas over the past 111 years.

Some of our highlights include:

- Doctor of Business in Quality Systems Management
- Associates, Bachelors, and Master of Science in Accounting
- Master of Science in Business Ethics & Compliance
- Master of Science in Human Resource Management
- Bachelor of Science in Digital Marketing
- Bachelor and Master of Science in Quality Systems & Improvement Management
- Associate and Bachelor of Science in Healthcare Administration
- Master of Science in Healthcare Management

This list is just a sample of our program offerings. You can find a full view (with all concentrations) on our website or by checking out the NEIB section of the Cambridge College catalog (NEIB begins on page 282).

### Fully online programs: How does that work?

NEIB students connect to our Learning Management System (LMS) Canvas. As it is browser based, Canvas exists wherever the internet does, allowing students to only be a click away from their education. We would not advise students to attend on a phone or mobile device alone as there are drawbacks to that, but, as our ubiquitous technological companions advance, Canvas is there to support students.

Each course contains the same style welcome, introduction, and week-by-week overview sections. These are the vital universal elements that we build upon to make the program a cohesive learning experience.

The weekly Discussion Boards allow students to interpret material in their own words, supported by research of current topics and literature. There are the expected aspects of assignments and quizzes, both of which are outlined in the syllabus and the built-in calendar/To-Do list which assist students in realistically planning and anticipating the workload. Removing the anxiety of “finding stuff” allows our students to excel from day one!

NEIB’s course schedule keeps things moving and reduces the time it takes a student to go from their first day to Commencement.

The structure is:

- Undergraduate Sessions- eight (8) weeks in length, six (6) sessions per year
- Master’s degree Sessions- five (5) weeks in length, eight (8) sessions per year
- Doctoral degree Sessions- ten (10) and twenty (20) weeks in duration, two (2) to four (4) sessions per year

### What about Student Support?

The support resources in Canvas are 24/7, to work within student schedules. This includes tutoring, Grammarly, and our plagiarism checker, TurnItIn. Students can access tutoring at any time, install Grammarly to improve their writing, and each assignment is scanned by the plagiarism checker, TurnItIn, which can be used independently to maintain academic integrity for each assignment.

The most effective resources for student support are our dedicated people! Each student is paired with an Academic Advisor upon enrollment with whom they work throughout their degree. Advisors are the “main switchboard” for the College for a true concierge-style approach. Our hands-on Academics team regularly works with Academic Advising to ensure students have a seamless experience. Carrying this theme throughout each session are our amazingly dedicated Faculty, who themselves are working professionals like our students. These teams working in tandem demonstrate to students that NEIB truly does employ a community approach to student success!

### There you have it, NEIB in a nutshell!

NEIB’s students, staff and faculty are all excited to be part of, and to bring our expertise in online education to, the Cambridge College community!

Keep an eye out for more features on NEIB in future newsletters. Thanks for reading and getting to know us a little better! ❖

# UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC SUCCESS COACHING

## A TITLE III INITIATIVE

Beginning with the fall '19-20 term, Cambridge College implemented an exciting new success coaching initiative, allowing us to take a more proactive and personalized approach to academic advising to better support our undergraduate students. This is one of several new initiatives supported by the College's Title III grant, which helps us strengthen our student support services.

The Academic Success Coaching model was designed by our Student Success Team and success coaches to ensure that all new undergraduate students are assigned their own personal success coach as soon as they are admitted. Our coaching approach is highly individualized and rooted in the idea that each student's unique experiences bring value to their own and their classmates' education. Coaches engage their assigned students in an ongoing conversation about their unique strengths and challenges, providing the encouragement and concrete support that help students stay motivated as they embark on their academic journey.

### Initial Meeting & Assessments

Academic Success Coaches work with students from admission through graduation, playing a key supportive role in students' successful transition to and through the College. Coaches reach out to new undergraduate students within 48 hours of their acceptance to introduce themselves and explain the College's onboarding process.

Coaches also ask students to fill out a brief intake survey, which offers initial insight into students' strengths and any challenges they may be facing.

Because writing skills are critical to students' success, each student also completes a writing assessment. Results influence the recommended course sequencing and writing support services but do not impact course requirements. The College has created free writing support programs to ensure that all students can meet the writing expectations of their courses.

Next, all students have an in-depth advising appointment to get to know their coach, review the results of the intake survey and writing assessment, and learn about what to expect at Cambridge College. Coaches help students understand the requirements of their academic program and any transfer credits they may have, and together, they make a plan for the student's first term.

### New Student Night & Orientation

After the initial coaching appointment, students are ready to attend a New Student Night. Here they meet a few other incoming students and register for their courses. They are also introduced to support staff, learn about the financial aid process, set up their school email addresses, and practice navigating MyCC.

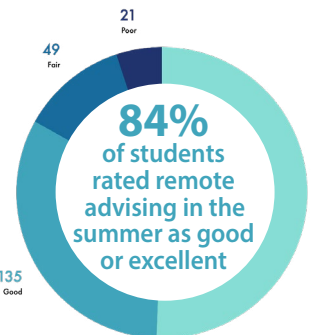
The next step is New Student Orientation. Here, students meet all other new students, garner advice from currently enrolled students, and meet their professors. There is a

strong emphasis on welcoming students into the Cambridge College community. Students leave Orientation ready for their first week of classes.

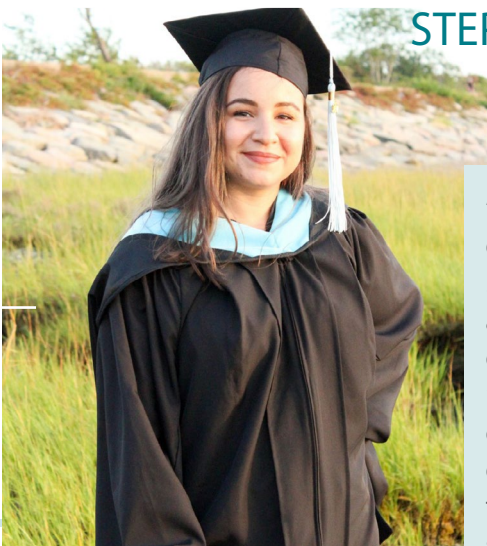
### First Term & Beyond

As the term begins, students enroll in LRN175: Principles and Processes of Adult Learning. LRN175 helps students understand themselves as adult learners and provides a supportive community for their first term. One of the early assignments in this class asks students to take the College Student Inventory (CSI). The CSI provides valuable information about students' attitudes and expectations for their first term and college experience. Students are encouraged to meet with their Success Coach during the first half of the term to review their CSI results and discuss their transition to the College. This meeting is the first of two required meetings for the term. Throughout students' time at Cambridge College, coaches continue to help students clarify and meet their academic and career goals, supporting students through any challenges they may face.

Because the College is operating remotely due to COVID-19, our Success Coaches now meet with students via ZOOM, and assessments are administered virtually. Regardless of the setting, our priority continues to be the support and success of our incredible students.



## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



### STEPHANIE VASQUEZ, M.Ed. '20

Stephanie Vasquez was a student speaker at September's Virtual Commencement Ceremony

"I've learned that it doesn't matter how old you are or even how young you are, because here at Cambridge College all are welcome and everyone is capable of achieving and obtaining a degree regardless of your race, age, gender, or circumstances. This school has such a great sense of community and diversity that you learn so much just from being surrounded by your peers.

As a mom of two young boys born during my undergraduate and graduate experience, there were naysayers who criticized me for spending my weekends away from my kids when attending classes. But what they didn't realize is that I was investing in those weekends for the future of my boys."

Stephanie Vasquez, M.Ed. '20

# MEET DR. FELISA ALBERT

## ACADEMIC SUCCESS COACH & SENIOR FACULTY

### Why did you choose to work at Cambridge College?

Cambridge College's mission to serve adult learners is one model that should be envied. As an alumna, I believe deeply in Cambridge College's values, which are rooted in access, innovation, excellence, diversity, and collaboration. Cambridge College not only understands that circumstances in life can sometimes alter the course of one's education, often making the goal of attaining a college degree more difficult, but also believes that it is never too late to earn a college degree. At times, I think we as an institution forget how important this College is, which is why I want my accomplishments to be a reminder for students that it is never too late to receive your College degree. I hope with my new role as an Academic Success Coach, combined with my current role as Senior Faculty for the last few years, that I can be a resource as well as being proactive instead of reactive during the students' educational journeys.

### What is your coaching style?

I let individual experiences and the knowledge of a person determine my approach and coaching style. My style is definitely collaborative based on three non-negotiables: ownership, accountability, and willingness.

### What drives you?

Faith, family, and knowing that it is never too late. Helping people understand that...life is an ongoing process of getting to know, and more importantly, accepting yourself.

### What is the most important thing you want students to keep in mind while they are studying here?

Believe in themselves; clear their minds of self-doubt; set goals (reach goals, make new goals, repeat), understand there will be obstacles (and create an action plan); embrace the challenge; and ask for help to stay on track.

### How can students who are dealing with ongoing trauma caused by racial injustice in America focus on their education?

Historically, racial injustices have been rooted in the education system, so focusing on school while faced with ongoing trauma caused by racial injustices are synonymous.

Black communities do not have the option to isolate race as they navigate the spaces they occupy within society. Because racism can affect a person physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, it is important for students to know that resources are available and it's my job as their coach to help guide them in that process. Also, it's important to provide opportunities for them to come together for open and honest discussions about the racial climate, to share strategies to assist them with their academic journeys, and to suggest ways to practice self-care.

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During this current racial climate, race conversations should be a moral commitment.

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### You are facilitating a series of faculty conversations on race with Dr. Barbara Reid. Can you tell us why this is so important and what you hope it will accomplish?

As a society, we are faced with the burden, choice, and individual accountability of how we process, internalize, and react to being in a racial crisis that is rooted in and continues to be the fabric of this country. Unquestionably, institutions reflect structural racism when they continue to be complicit in refusing to acknowledge and address issues related to race. Having conversations about race is the starting point in order to understand the historical impact of race. If these conversations bring division among people, it's not because of the conversation, it's because people were already silently divided. And if that is the case, we must then figure out how to get to a shared vision of racial equity. Action must then follow.

Diversity continues to be one of the core values that drives Cambridge College, especially since most of the adult learners are from Black and brown communities. However, students are not seeing themselves in the majority of the faculty who are leading their programs of study or teaching their courses, which can be problematic within classrooms. I believe there is a public health urgency that during this current racial climate, race conversations are not only a must but should also be a moral commitment.

The continuous various acts of racism can no longer be ignored. Besides being murdered, Black and brown communities are still fighting for their lives at all levels of their being. As a society, those who remain the constant target of racism should not cope, deal with or struggle in silence. Because of my race, I share the same racial burden as many of my students and colleagues. More importantly, I fully understand that I am Breonna Taylor, my husband is George Floyd, and my son is Trayvon Martin (to respectfully name a few). I choose to be a leader when it comes to the dynamics of race and racism in the spaces I occupy. My degrees and being an expert in racial and health disparities do not exclude me from how race impacts my life. If anything, it has heightened my racial consciousness and empowered me to speak unapologetically, openly, and honestly about race relations. As an alumna, I will continue to create ways for students to engage in meaningful conversations such as Virtual Coffee Hours to connect, share their experiences, reflect with fellow students from diverse backgrounds who understand the fight for racial justice, and learn how to be successful students. ❖



### ABOUT DR. ALBERT

For the last 23 years, Dr. Albert's professional career has spanned the fields of education, race relations, public health, nursing, and women's health as a consultant, health professional, and educator whose dissertation has been published by ProQuest Publishing services. Dr. Albert is an experienced facilitator in racial equity leadership who uses a collaborative approach, leads with truth, and elicits learning of both the hearts and minds.

Dr. Albert holds a Doctorate in Public Health with a concentration in Advocacy and Leadership in Racial and Health Disparities, a Master of Arts in Women's Health, Bachelor of Science in Human Services from Cambridge College ('07), and an Associate Degree in Nursing (RN). She also has a certificate in Holistic Health Coaching and Nutrition.

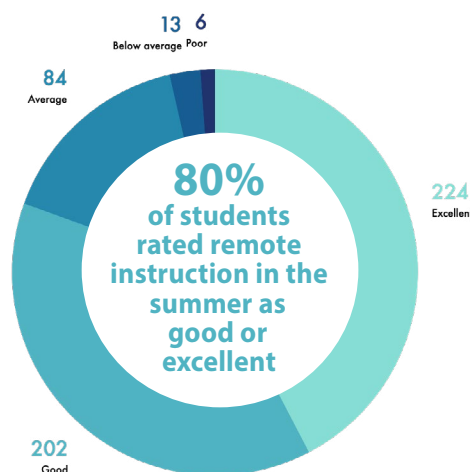
# ADJUSTING TO COVID-19

As we all know, COVID-19 has upended higher education as we know it. Like other schools, Cambridge College was forced to close all in-person activities and “go remote” in March. It seemed impossible at first. How could we pivot an entire school that had been operating in person and has been based on an experiential learning model for the last 50 years?

Fortunately, our Cambridge College instructors are extremely dedicated to students. They led the charge to move into a remote format, teaching mostly via ZOOM and asynchronous discussion forums. Our Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching and Office of Online Programming also helped by developing a set of Connected Learning Guidelines for faculty and offering additional training, videos, and support resources to faculty who needed it. Enhanced ZOOM and MyCC training resources for students were also developed.

All our tutors, advisors and support staff also pivoted quickly and moved to online platforms and began meeting via ZOOM.

Starfish was a huge benefit to student tracking and appointment making. We launched early alert surveys to all schools in



the summer, through which faculty raised 313 flags to connect students with advisors and support staff. (Faculty also raised 929 kudos to encourage students to keep up the good work.) Students accessed our online tutoring

platform TutorME at three times the rate of the fall 2019 term. We also launched several ZOOM academic workshops for students.

We quickly realized that many of our forms for the OneStop student financial services and registrar were not easily completed virtually, so we turned all of our forms into fillable PDFs and began accepting electronic signatures. We also launched our weekly student and faculty updates through the Office of Academic Affairs to keep students and faculty in the loop about new developments, College events, and training opportunities.

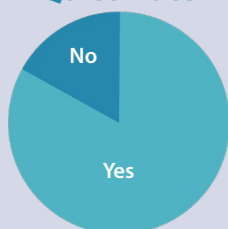
COVID-19 has been and continues to be one of the greatest challenges our College has ever faced. We are proud of the progress that we have made and of our students and faculty for rising to the challenge. However, there is still much more work to be done. The Student Success Team will continue to build new and stronger supports for students and faculty, especially with technology. We are at a revolutionary point in time and hope to use it to optimize the way we provide remote instruction and support.

Of the 529 students from all Cambridge College schools and all locations who responded to the student survey sent out in August, **11%** do not have reliable internet and **17%** do not have a quiet place to complete coursework or study.

## Reliable Internet



## Quiet Place



The Boston campus is open daily with access to computer labs:

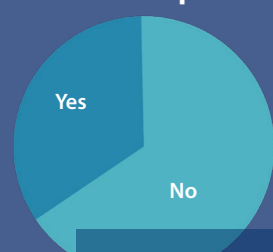
8:00 AM to 6:00 PM – Monday, Wednesday, and Friday

8:00 AM to 9:30 PM – Tuesday and Thursday

7:00 AM to 7:00 PM – Saturday and Sunday

Be sure to wear a mask and maintain social distance.

## Shared Computer



**34% of students do not have their own computer**

## Students, do you need a laptop to complete your coursework?

“Raise Your Hand” in Starfish or let your coach/advisor know! We can help.

Faculty and staff can also use Starfish to flag students in need of technology support.

## EVERY VOTE COUNTS



MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD ON NOVEMBER 3

VISIT [IWILLVOTE.COM](http://IWILLVOTE.COM) to find your voting location