



This Week on the Ohlone eCampus

Week of January 18, 2021

Focus Topic: Welcome Letters and Publishing Your Courses

It is normal to feel a bit nervous about the start of a new semester. Even though you have one full virtual semester under your belt, you may still be a bit uncomfortable teaching through a screen. Students are likely apprehensive as well and are awaiting your cue. One way to cue “It’s going to be a great semester!” and “I’m eager to get to know you” is the “welcome letter.” The welcome letter helps students know up front what the expectations for the course will be. It also allows them the opportunity to reach out to you before the semester starts with questions or concerns, they may have. This week, we’ve put together some sample welcome letters to help you get started.

Sample Welcome Letters

You will want to use your own voice and cover your own content, but sometimes it is nice to see what others have done. Here are two sample welcome letters to get you started. Please note that these sample emails are VERY long and wordy. Feel free to select only the sections that apply to you and your class and edit as you see fit.

- [Sample Student Welcome Email – Synchronous Class Sessions \(PDF\)](#)
- [Sample Student Welcome Email – Fully Online Course \(PDF\)](#)

This article discusses [4 Easy Ways to Welcome Students to Your Online Course](#). Even if you already have a welcome letter, you may find it helpful.

Feeling courageous? How about trying a welcome video to help humanize your course? Check out [this self-paced, quick lesson on welcome videos](#) created by online guru Michelle Pacansky-Brock. Just follow the instructions for creating and embedding the video in your course.

Considerations

- Waitlisted students do not and will not have access to Canvas.
- Include the letter as an attachment to one of your first Canvas announcements for those students who register after you sent your letter and for easy reference for all students.
- Coordinate opening of your course shell and your welcome letter. (Default opening once course is published by instructor = Sunday, 8/23 at 5 pm). Is your home page ready?

Checklist

Ready? Set? Check? Here's a list of items the DE Committee put together (based on the OEI Rubric and best practices) to help you make sure you've got all the t's crossed and l's dotted.

Welcome and Orientation

1. Instructor initiates contact prior to or at the beginning of the course.
2. Instructor welcomes the students to the course in some way.
3. The course provides an orientation on how to navigate your online course.
4. There is an early online activity requiring a student response that should be completed during the first three days from the course start date and prior to the No Show drop deadline.

Remember to publish your course

Students will have access to published courses on **Sunday, January 17 at 5:00 pm**. Publishing your courses before the first day of class provides students an opportunity to explore the course, determine how best to navigate through, and even start the Orientation Unit, if you have one. They can make sure they have all of the learning materials to be successful before the first day of class so they can hit the ground running as soon as you open your virtual door! **Help:** [Canvas Guide: How do I publish a course?](#)

Learning College Week begins Tuesday, January 19th

There are lots of great learning opportunities during the Spring 2021 Learning College Week, January 19 – 21. You will find a complete schedule of the offerings, along with course descriptions and the zoom links on the [Master Calendar](#).

eCampus Office Hours during LCW

We're available Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday to help with any questions you may have as you put the finishing touches on your welcome video, Home Page, quizzes and more.

Day	Time	Meeting Link
Tuesday, 1/19	9:00 – 11:00 am and 1:00 – 3:00 pm	Zoom link
Wednesday, 1/20	9:00 – 11:00 am and 1:00 – 3:00 pm	Zoom link
Thursday, 1/21	9:00 – 11:00 am and 1:00 – 3:00 pm	Zoom link

Help us help you.

It is important to us that we meet your professional development needs; otherwise, it's like throwing a party and no one shows up! Please consider completing this [survey](#) to help the worker bees as they plan professional development classes, workshops, and communication for the spring semester.

Tech Support

Yes. We are beginning to sound like broken records. That is because far too many students still don't know or are uncomfortable asking for tech resources. Please help us get the word out by beginning the conversation with your students prior to the start of the semester. Then, continue the conversation into the first week of class. Chromebooks, laptops, web cameras and WiFi hotspots are all available. The more we get the message out, more students will have what they need to be successful. Let them know about the [Emergency Technology Equipment Request Form](#) (Chromebook (to keep), Laptop (loaner), HotSpot, and Webcam).

Student support for IT / Tech Problems

Mariah Garza is available to assist Ohlone students who have technology issues. She can help students check their internet speed using [Speedtest by Ookla - The Global Broadband Speed Test](#) and interpret the results of that Speed Test. Students complete the [Technology Support for Students](#) form and Mariah will be in touch. In fact, faculty might want to check their internet speed as well. If your UP speed is less than 5mbps, please contact IT Support to request a hotspot.

New Processes for Spring

There are several new processes in place for spring. For complete details, please refer to [the January 11th eCampus Weekly Update](#). Of note, there's a [new Caption Request process](#), [Student Consent to be Recorded form](#), and [new Zoom update](#).

Coming Soon

Another great way to check your Canvas pages for accessibility: **PopeTech Accessibility Checker**