

## **ATI Retention Task Force Best Practices Initiative**

Back in October 2020, Dr. Kris Boone asked the Retention Task Force to find a way for staff and faculty to share their experiences and solutions this past semester in engaging students whether that was through advising, teaching, or other support services. As a committee, we chose a panel discussion because we wanted to present and hear from a variety of voices throughout our community. In addition to recording this event, we collected anecdotes, suggestions, and ideas from our colleagues and students across campus. It should be noted that the committee made a conscious decision to maintain the integrity of the contributor rather than over-edit. What follows is a compilation of information shared over the course of the Autumn 20 semester as well as what was shared during the panel discussion.

A special thank you to the Retention Task Force members for their hard work in organizing the panel discussion and compilation.

Dr. Laura Deeter, panelist  
Lisa Dicus  
Dr. Carri Gerber  
Dr. Thomas Janini

Denise Rotavera-Krain, Chairperson  
Dee Dee Snyder  
Mick Steiner, panelist  
Dr. Victor Ujor

Thank you to our contributors and panelists for their time and contributions to this event.

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Dr. Ryan Haden  
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Cate Hunko  
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Peg Lambert  
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Dr. Shawn Wellert  
Dr. Karen Wimbush  
Dr. Jon Witter

Thank you to Dr. Kris Boone for providing the time and virtual space to share this important work.

In addition, thank you Chris Dicus who was responsible for monitoring Zoom and recoding the panel discussion.

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### **Part I: ATI Student Focus Groups - Feedback Collected by Mick Steiner**

#### **Learning Experience:**

#### **Do you have access to the technology needed to complete your AU 2020 courses?**

- Yes – mainly relies on the i-Pad
- Majority said yes.
- No - Software applications – Can only access these in the library and now the library is closed.

#### **Are you able to connect with your instructors on a timely basis given the virtual world?**

- Faculty respond to emails in a decent amount of time (within a day or so)
- Since we are all online, faculty use and check their email more often than they did previously. Going to their office is pointless. There is some frustration when they don't get back right away. Typically get back within 48 hours.
- The nature of asking questions has changed. It was easier and more likely to ask questions when meeting in person.
- Some professors have been better at responding timely than others.
- Most responses are received within 48 hours.
- Mrs. Ramsier is really great at getting back to students.
- Some reply within hours or minutes.
- Sometimes the delay in communication does impact students – they need additional time plan to get to campus or cannot complete assignments on time.
- Extensions should be given when responses are not provided in a timely fashion.

#### **Are you able to keep a consistent schedule? (i.e., I am planning out my day so that I have a schedule for studying, homework, connecting with peers, attending office hours, etc.)**

- Yes.
- Planner is her best friend. Works on assignments immediately after classes.

- Appreciates the to-do list on Carmen, though all assignments (including quizzes) need to be entered in as an assignment. Would be great if all professors could do this. Completed assignments also come off the to-do list.
- Appreciates having the instructor in class more than the async format.

**Describe the manageability of the workload in your courses.**

- The workload has been really manageable. Professors are helpful given the dynamic. Sometimes the show flexibility if there are Wi-Fi issues. Has been given lots of extensions.
- Most classes are manageable; about the same workload as with in-person classes.
- Students are frustrated that professors seem to be on the same schedule when big assignments /quizzes are due all in the same week.
- One student noted have more work to do but it's simply then nature of being a second year with a more major-specific course load rather than the nature of being solely virtual.

**Please provide any additional information you would like us to know about your learning experience in AU 2020.**

- Nothing

**Communication and Support Resources:**

**Comment on updates and information from Ohio State ATI/CFAES received throughout the semester.**

- Good amount of communication so far (Buckeye Buzz, emails from President are helpful). If you are capable of checking your email, you are well aware of what is going on.
- 2 liked the regular updates from Dr. Kress. Lots of info. Sometimes have to skim it.
- ATI campus – would like to see more campus specific information. Lots of guessing about what's going on and when.
- Given vague information – have to wait for further detail – creates worry and is irritating.
- Would like to know what the options are up front when it comes to academics – what is being planned for spring.
- Sometimes it's challenging to know if information is Columbus or Wooster specific. Just have to assume that ATI is the same.

**What support services are being offered or have you heard of this semester? (i.e., Student Success Services, Program Excel, College Success and Career Counseling, Advising; Disability Services; Professional Tutor; Learning Lab.)**

- Learning Lab has been promoted a ton, faculty have made it known that office hours are available. Mental health; Student Success Services.
- Mental health and connecting with the counselor.
- Mental health.
- 2 said the Learning Lab and professional tutoring.

- 1 requested accommodations due to the passing of a loved one.
- Thinks it's easier to connect with support services because we can email them directly.
- Can access any service at your keyboard (Don't have to worry about someone seeing you using the services). Safety net behind the screen.
  - I am connecting with at least one support office on a regular basis.
    - Yes
  - If "disagree, strongly disagree" ask "I need more information on support resources" (yes/no).
    - Don't need more information; well covered.

**Please provide any additional information you would like us to know about your experience with communication and support resources in AU 2020.**

- Getting the curfew text is annoying.
- Students may consider ignoring actual important texts in the future.
- Curfew text does not apply to out of state students.

**Mental Health and Well-Being:**

**Tell me about your level of worry and anxiety this semester? What is contributing to this state of mind?**

- There are always external factors. Personal responsibility to get work done. Can't wait for the reminder in call. Anxiety and worry are high especially as we get closer to finals –doesn't know what to expect as a freshman.
- This semester has been hell. It's been challenging to figure everything out.
- Got rid of Dr. Belanger in the middle of the semester. Was not able to connect with a new counselor yet. Intake person had to check with supervisor to see if the student could even be helped.
- Stressed out. More stressed about next semester. Not sure why I'm paying out of state tuition. Starting from scratch. Brother goes to ATI as well. Really wish it wasn't this way. Can't handle the unknown.
- Running into an issue with planning classes for next semester because the Community Leadership major requires a shadowing experience, but offices are now allowing visitors right now. She may have to push her classes back.
- Wish we knew now whether or not we are planning to come back next semester. Want more communication.
- When something is figured out, students don't always find out right away. Would prefer all ducks in a row before communications go out. Would rather hear the final plan instead of bits and pieces.

**How has your mental well-being been impacted or changed since the start of the semester?**

- Mental health has gotten worse. Some roommate conflicts worsened it. Has felt like a bit of a rollercoaster up and down.
- Stressed out person in general – but this semester puts her at the top of puts her over the edge in stress level due to time, money spent, unknowns (three times as stressed per usual).
- Stress is hard. Hard to retain the information and keep learning under all of the stress.
- Most students are not learning - just trying to get things done by 11:59 pm.
- It's more or less memorizing to pass because money and time is on the line.

**Please provide any additional information you would like us to know about your mental health and well-being:**

- Nothing

**Connecting with Others/Social Well-Being:****Has the semester been what you expected?**

- This semester has been better than I expected with social distancing and all of the events that the RAs put on. I was impressed with the amount of events that happened.
- Not sure what I expected. She is shocked we made it this far. Thought we'd be shut down a long time along. Expected more at the same time. Mixed emotions.
- Doesn't feel like I'm having the college experience – just sitting at home in front of a screen.
- Never thought I'd go into quarantine 3 times. Missed a month of school. It's been a struggle to make up labs.
- We have made it this far – expected more from the university in terms of communication.
- A lot of students live alone, and they don't have what they need. Communication would help.

**What challenges have you faced in making friends or connections on campus?**

- Really the knowledge of the expected social distancing. I haven't put myself out there a ton. At work or doing homework or relaxing. Doesn't put herself out there to make friends or connect.
- Commuting student – only on campus on Tuesday. Has not really had any communication with ATI students whatsoever.
- Lives off campus to save money. Pretty much by herself all of the time. Not meeting new friends. Go one Zoom and then done. Major is small and some students left last year so hasn't met many new students.
- I know my roommates – that's it.
- Everything is grab and go, no big groups, no way to form memories that college is supposed to be about
- Around people on the street but everything has been put a halt on that. Don't want to overstep someone's comfort zone with interactions. Stick with old friends instead of making new. Hard to have the normal college experience.
- All of this doesn't help with mental health – and already struggling with classes.

- Only get a few words across in classes to make a friendship or connection.

**Are you finding ways to get involved on campus and if so, how?**

- Sees the events going on through the RAs or forgets when they are happening. Has not gotten involved outside the village but would like to volunteer with a thrift shop.
- No – not involved this year; it's too hard.
- President of the greenhouse club –mostly second years. First years don't want to get involved but what to see a face. No one wants to do anything.
- VP of ACELT – Zoom scavenger hunts. Movie over Christmas break. 10 to 15 people on Zoom. Social media is not working right now. Hoping that a new semester may eliminate some of the Zoom stress and exhaustion.
- Most of the clubs are hands on so there is not much to entertain students with at the moment.
- There are opportunities but it's hard to make them work in a virtual world.

**Please provide any additional information you would like us to know about your ability to connect with peers:**

- Use to-do list on campus by inputting all assignments in Carmen.
- Could we have an afterhours triage helpline?
- Social cohorts somehow within major? Students just haven't gotten to know each other.

## **Part II: What Has Been Effective**

**Best Practices Panel Discussion:*****Kris Boone:***

- All courses have Carmen sites.
- All academic mentors and tutors are in Carmen and can assist students more readily.
- Was able to go to some big conferences I couldn't attend in the past.
  - Attended Starting Strong Conference: great ideas from Columbus State's bridge program.

***Mick Steiner:***

- Gen Z seems to appreciate forming small close knit friend groups – small group interactions seemed to work for many.
- More opportunities for introverted/shy students to find group of friends in smaller group interactions.
- Due to de-densifying the apartments, roommate relationships are more successful. 10 room changes – usually 50-60.
- Drop in events to pick up a treat, take/make craft, small group interactions.

- Linking friends to other friends – simplest approach is best.
- On campus jobs connect students to fac/staff.

***Katie LeMasters:***

- Establishing the Emergency Fund—generous donors allowed us to help more students. Ten students helped through this fund.
- Streamlining all forms of communication.

***Liz Parker:***

- Set up discussions although time consuming to set up, was well worth the effort.
  - Got to know the students and learned that their level of knowledge was high.
- Instead of a final exam used a culminating project.

***Mary Ann Frantz:***

- More flexibility to meet with students at their convenience.
- Lots of collaboration between Academic Affairs, Library, IT, etc.
- PE staff who were seeing students Face to Face in Fischer—students appreciated the interaction.

***Laura Deeter:***

- Holding classes in person as much as possible allowed me to create a positive connection with the students—her lab was outdoors a lot.
- When they did Zoom, there was already a connection from doing the labs in person.

***Jodie Holava:***

- Collaboration with Columbus and regionals, able to share resources to provide programming:
  - two groups: student activities and programming.
- Virtual Homecoming maintained Buckeye tradition.
- Some in-person activities.

***Rachael Ramsier:***

- Learned new ways to communicate to establish relationships with students.
- Innovations in Carmen—used more functions.

***CFAES Students (via Jeanne Osborne):***

- The flexibility faculty are extending to students is effective (working with them and helping them so they can continue progress while dealing with family pressures and emergencies, quarantine, illness, extra working hours).
- Consider breaking your Zoom lectures, both live and recorded into 7-8-minute modules with a break to review key concepts, do a quick knowledge check, create a breakout for a short discussion, ask if there are any questions, review questions that are posted in the Chat, ask

everyone to move for 30 seconds in whatever way they like (stand up, raise their arms, wiggle their toes...), etc.

- Do a breathing exercise (there are lots of them out there like at:
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5\\_N98E5-7jo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_N98E5-7jo)) at the beginning of class, before an exam, or make it available to your students in asynchronous settings. This can help relax everyone
- Evaluate the frequency of assignments, both low stakes and high stakes along with your exams – make sure that these aren't overloaded in your efforts to convert your course to distance. It was a very big ask of all our faculty to convert courses that are most effectively delivered in person to an online setting in such short amount of time. Now that we and our students have some experience with the courses, it would be a good time to get feedback and evaluate what is working and not working – the amount of work you are doing to grade activities is an important consideration as well.
- Help students get connected to resources – David Wirt and the counselors at CCS can be very helpful to students who are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, and stressed. Dave prepared the following statement that can be added to your syllabus or Carmen site: David Wirt, [wirt.9@osu.edu](mailto:wirt.9@osu.edu), is the CFAES embedded mental health counselor. He is available for new consultations and to establish routine care. To schedule with David, please call 614-292-5766. Students should mention their affiliation with CFAES when setting up a phone screening.

#### **CFAES Student Council:**

- Recording and posting recordings on Carmen with Power Points.
- Like using virtual office hours and have used them more than ever. More office hours.
- More real-time lectures.
- Like learning on own time too.
- Like virtual tutoring. Need more.
- Great flexibility with learning online that most instructors feel right now.
- Exams being “open book”.

#### **Academic Affairs:**

##### ***Jill Gallion:***

- Having regular department meetings to check-in with my co-workers has helped me feel less isolated while working remotely.
- The contact information listed on our office door indicating who can help with which information is very helpful. Students are getting directly connected to the person that can provide answers for them.
- The processing of student forms. Instructions for academic form processing is clearly spelled out on the website and I have linked that webpage from my e-mail signature. When students

inquire, I can easily refer them to that page. The workflow for approvals seems to be improving. Pending requests are tracked using email flags so reminders can be sent as needed.

- Communication via chat (Skype and Teams) has been very convenient for asking quick questions/giving quick answers without the extended wait for an email response. I like that you can see who is available.

***Cate Hunko:***

- Plus of using Zoom: I am more available for commuting students.
- Plus of using OnCourse:
  - Campaigns have been helpful with generating student appointments.
  - Short meetings (prep) before a longer meeting works well. I use OnCourse campaign to reach out to all students to make a short 15-30 min appt to review the requirements for making the transition.
- I have met with many First-Year students this school year.
- Going 100% online precipitated a change in how the Campus Change Request form: now it is filled out online and directly sent to me. The process has become much more efficient. I am now able to review and streamline my connections with Ben Carignan in CFAES – Columbus, which he and I planned over the summer.

***Katie LeMasters:***

- Workflow has improved. For the most part in my experience, students are directed to the person most able to help them and they get that help pretty quickly.
- Being able to flex my schedule has been invaluable, it works for my schedule as well as student schedules. Students are able to talk to me/contact me during times that work for them and for the things I can help them with. I can flex and help someone with an urgent question. This not only allows those I work with to have access to me for a slightly extended time if needed, but it also allows me to keep my days on track rather than getting behind the next day catching up on something that has come in at the end of my previous day.
- Setting boundaries has kept me from feeling burned out or overwhelmed at home and allowed me to maintain work life balance. On a related note, my personal schedule has been able to adjust to allow me to effectively participate in important activities outside of work in a way that would have been impossible previously.
- I have had more contact via email from students regarding job searches and had a significantly easier time setting them up with potential positions. There's less middleman time now, everything is done via email so there is less perceived "waiting" time, and I'm able to research prior to discussing their needs.
- Students are now able to reply digitally with their thank you information which makes the review/edit process easier.

- I have fewer interruptions in trying to problem solve issues I don't know a great deal about, which has been invaluable in helping me focus when I have to get scheduling done quickly to deadline.
- Meetings via zoom for the campus are extremely helpful. This allows us to share information more effectively.

***Julia Morris:***

- Working remotely allows for less interruptions and not having to lend a hand for a student with concerns in areas I am not specialized in when in the office.
- I am actually more accessible working remotely because my hours can be more concrete, yet flexible, considering I am not having to drive to and from work to get kids on/off the school bus every day. If I need to work overtime or earlier in the morning per say, I am able to do so. I would not be able to do that if having to be in the office all the time.

***Penny Nemitz:***

- Contacting them individually and even calling them. We have been using TEAMS for some of the contact.
- The students still like the one on one in person tutoring that some of the tutors have tried to do.

***Denise Rotavera-Krain:***

- I think because of OnCourse, I had fewer students forgetting to attend and if they had to cancel, they did so in a timely manner.
- I am now part of the career team in Columbus, which has helped me to be able to offer more to our ATI students and also lighten my load. Our plan is also to provide a soft handoff for students continuing on to Columbus for a BS.
- Academic Affairs has been using Teams to communicate with each other. Carri is great about keeping us informed of AA related decisions and we can ask each other questions about a student/policy etc. We can share files. It has also been a way for us to keep connected as a team.
- Ideas that could work for Spring Semester:
  - More synchronous online courses—keep students engaged by having them show up to class.
  - Get students to watch lecture by imbedding extra credit assignments or in-depth directions on assignments or silly questions to answer into the video.
  - Having students repeat back to instructor what directions are and/or teach to rest of the class.
  - End of week quizzes that include questions about their muddiest points, what they learned, and how to apply in real life.
  - Focus more on the learning, less on the testing.

- Here are two ideas that might be useful:
  - Give short quizzes at the end of the week and there is always a question one there that either
    - Asks about (3) things they learned and something that is still unclear/muddiest point
    - Asks about real-world application. How would you use X theory or X practice successfully in real life?
  - Valerie shared this *Inside Higher Education* article called “College Science Teaching” by Scott Jaschik (<https://bit.ly/38RsTI4>). Terry McGlynn, a professor of biology at California State University, Dominguez Hills, and author of *The Chicago Guide to College Science Teaching* (University of Chicago Press), believes good teaching is essential and to achieve that, some of the incentives of American higher education need to change. McGlynn answered questions about his book via email. I thought this was particularly interesting:
    - **Q: You raise the possibility that courses may not need exams. Why? Why might a professor prefer to keep exams?**
    - **A:** I think most professors keep using exams for three reasons: 1. Exams are an extrinsic motivator to get students to study. 2. We use exams to calculate grades, which are supposed to reflect student learning. 3. Practicality. They’re all practical motivations, but they’re not helping our students learn. We would do well to spend more time attempting to increase intrinsic motivation and use extrinsic motivators that are more helpful to students.

### Agriculture and Engineering Technologies Division:

#### **Robby Frutchey:**

- After lab did a lab “key” where he provided main ideas of the lab from last week.
- Did an intro to current week, sent 1 document per week with outline, materials, and link to lectures/videos.
- Advising: in person in classroom after class. Socially distanced. Asked to bring iPad and have degree audit with them. Robby wrote down courses and air dropped them to student.
- Doing more verbal evaluations rather than written.

#### **Sara Mastellar:**

- Students really like the in-person portion of class, even if they have to be distanced.
- Answering anonymized student questions to the whole class via announcements to help build community and reduce repeating myself.
- Self-grading quiz banks (once they are created).

***Liz Parker:***

- I created a discussion topic each week. The topic or question requires application of knowledge to something that interests the student. For example, “what’s your favorite food, how do you digest it?” The students have to post a comment or response to a topic or questions by Thursday and then respond to another student’s response by Sunday. I would never have learnt so much about the students in a normal classroom. The online format gives them the time to research, create and edit a response – it is a safer space to ask questions and to share knowledge and experiences.
- The final assessment is a creative project. The student is required to select three topics from the course, integrate them and present this “somehow” to “some” audience. It sounds a bit vague, but I used this in a 7-week animal health course. Let the students run loose and it is amazing what they come up with, (leptospirosis in Puerto Rico after the hurricane, rabies prevention in zoo animals, foot rot in small ruminants, devil facial tumor in Tasmanian devils).

***Karen Wimbush:***

- My courses this semester only have 1 lecture per week...so I provide both an unnarrated version and a narrated version so the students can choose which format they like.
- I have embedded video clips into the PowerPoint presentations, but I also found out that a lot of students do not view the PP on the laptops, so I started adding the videos (YouTube mostly) into separate files in a video module on CARMEN.
- I started making references to the lecture material in the riding labs, so maybe the students will connect to something we discussed.
- Next semester I will be having mostly synchronous ZOOM lectures and will require students to turn on cameras for attendance and participation points.
- Next semester I will give weekly quizzes (larger than my daily quizzes) and have both a mid-term and final exam rather than ‘unit’ exams.

***Ryan Haden, Shaun Wellert, Jon Witter:***

- The hybrid class format has been very successful all things considered. I had a live recitation on Fridays, and it was almost like using a flipped classroom model where they would watch the lectures and then we could discuss them and get more engagement in person. By having that in person class where I would call on them for answers it made them more accountable to watch the recorded material prior to coming to class.
- I’ve had to streamline some of my classes a bit which has really made me focus on the important ideas and aspects more and I feel like for some subjects they have grasped the material much better. I will probably alter the course moving forward based on that information.

**Arts, Science and Business Division:*****Subbu Kumarappan:***

- Two meetings per week (Mon and Wed) work better than only one or three meetings.
- Flexible HW deadlines.
- Ability to provide anonymous feedback.
- Dropping many low scores.
- Having invited speakers to change the flow in Zoom.
- Intermittent think-pair-share via Zoom break-out rooms.
- Students refer to HW video explanations (more than the lecture videos)

***Rachael Ramsier:***

- Using a mid-semester survey to gauge how students are doing through the course and adjusting delivery based on their needs. I have also become more proficient in creating short video content, posting to YouTube, and reaching out to others in ACEL teaching the same course to share their resources, and vice versa.

***Joy Rumble:***

- Being super responsive to student emails. I have been prioritizing student emails this semester. It has really helped them to feel at ease, knowing that I'm here even though they can't access me directly by stopping in my office.

***Jon Van Gray:***

- From what little interaction I have had with students, they do enjoy the flexibility that DL affords them. This also extends to Carmen assignments. I have attempted to provide access to assignments early in the semester and established due dates that are one-week later than they would be under "normal" conditions.

**Horticultural Technologies Division:**

- Synchronous better as compared asynchronous.
- Having some class sessions in person.
- Sending Carmen notifications twice a week (one at the beginning of the week and few hours before the class).
- Discussions with the industry via Zoom.
- Letting students do presentations via Zoom.
- Letting students to chat with each other a little longer during in person classes.
- Giving opportunity to do hands on labs.
- Reminding assignments multiple times.
- Showing how to navigate Carmen multiple times in the class.

- From students: for asynchronous classes students need quick responses from instructors, to catch up with the deadlines.

**Laura Deeter - Best Practices Panel Discussion:**

- More organizational use of Carmen.
- Took ODEE course to get new ideas for Carmen
- Video editing.
- Zoom advising + Schedule Planner – allowed for flexible meeting times, using both at same time. Stopped the last-minute drop in.

**Student Programming and Life:**

- Some staff adjusted their availability into the evening (being able to use Skype phone and Zoom makes this possible) because students work, have limited access to technology, etc.:
  - Having the flexibility to offer an in-person meeting is also helpful—the ala carte best practices suggested through NACADA.
  - Some students still need to access some staff on campus f-2-f.
  - Less stressful for some staff to flex time since no commute.
- If a student is late for an online appointment by a few minutes, call and ask, “Hey, I wondered if Zoom might not be working for you today?” or “Can I help you get connected?” rather than pointing out they are late for their meeting.
- We champion our faculty:
  - They are more supportive than faculty at other schools.
  - Very flexible with students (Some give students multiple chances to take an exam for example.)
- We had good support from Academic Affairs.
- To help students prepare for tests: encouraging students to go back to faculty members, if they can, to suggest resources for practice tests is effective because it connects the student to the faculty member and faculty can often recommend additional resources.

### **Part III: What Has Not Been Effective**

**CFAES Students (via Jeanne Osborne):**

- Students living on or near campus feel cooped up and trapped. They don’t have an outlet to relax and get away from the pressure of college so some travel home more frequently to get

some release, but this isn't possible for all students. This results in lack of motivation and exhaustion.

- Students are finding that they have to work more hours because of financial difficulty and are finding it difficult to balance family, school, work, sleep, eating, socializing, and relaxing.
- Students miss the in-person interactions, the relationships and social interactions with their peers and their instructors and the feel of college. This is also happening with faculty and staff.
- Students, like faculty and staff, are experiencing Zoom fatigue with the added complication that they are responsible for the material that is being delivered this less-than-ideal way.
- Students feel that for each of their online classes, there are frequent smaller assignments (e.g., participating in a Carmen discussion board, posting a reflection), but the big/high stakes assignments and exams are still there.
- With all or the majority of their courses online, students are finding it hard to keep up with everything and keep it all organized.
- Students are finding it hard to ask questions in real time in contrast to their experience with in-person classes.
- For synchronous courses, the pace of the lecture is challenging. They suggested that the instructor doesn't have the visual clues that the students are confused, and the instructor keeps going. There isn't time for students to post questions in Zoom and are left asking questions via email later.
- While office hours are available, they aren't necessarily lining up when the students have time to review their notes, so the confusion isn't addressed and builds as the course progresses.

#### **CFAES Student Council:**

- Dislikes:
- Much more added work that is confusing and sometimes not useful.
- Not understanding virtual labs and learning lab work online without prof there.
- Assignments/requirements not being upfront at beginning of semester or being given last minute; organization of classes lacking. (Example: 1. listing all assignments in syllabus and not popping an assignment on students in the middle of the semester. 2. Telling students exactly your expectations of virtual meetings – cameras on or off, participation in chats or breakout rooms, etc.).
- More interactive work in lectures. So easy to do other work when it's just lecturing.
- Not understanding what to get out of videos, each class – better learning outcomes.
- More participation grades in virtual lectures could encourage students to pay attention better.
- Breakout rooms – Work well if groups are formed well with more than 2 people and questions are good.

- Group projects have been much harder to do this semester with virtual work. Sometimes need more than one device depending on the project.
- Clearer messaging of how instructors want to communicate (email versus Carmen, response time – stick to it).
- Post lectures on time, especially for synchronous classes.
- Instructors going overtime online.
- Instructor’s cutting class too short. Not helpful when a student is driving into campus.
- Weekly virtual discussions (in groups with TA and prof and 20 students talking about the classes) counting it for points – hard to participate when talking over people and students are stressed to participate in the timeframe.
- Instructors who alternate weeks of in-person and virtual learning - giving too much work on week when virtual that it’s difficult to balance the work with other classes and obligations.
- Specific majors are struggling to do their stuff without being in person.
- Tutoring is more difficult for STEM.
- It feels like everything is due on Friday.
- Want to see: More engagement in class; Accountability for students- have attendance, quizzes, participation points; Not just lecturing at students.
- Professors are drowning in emails; There is not much you can do if a professor doesn’t respond.
- Columbus Classes that have done well with virtual learning:
  - Swine production lab
  - Kelly George - exotics class. She asks about mental health, always ends on time, topics are always known beforehand.
  - Animal welfare 4400 – asks about how students are, midterm eval on how to improve course, asks for students input.

**Academic Affairs:*****Jill Gallion:***

- I haven’t had any issues that I see as ongoing problems.

***Cate Hunko:***

- The minus side of Zoom is “Zoom fatigue” for me and the students.
- I miss working with students in person and having students stop in with questions.
- I miss setting up in the cafeteria or library and have students stop by just to ask a question.

***Katie LeMasters:***

- I personally have no issues that need addressed.

***Julia Morris:***

- I set up my availability for students to schedule meetings with me in OnCourse, but no one has taken advantage of the opportunity, so I would say that doesn’t work. If a student wants to “meet” with me, I offer Zoom/phone call as options when they contact me.

- It drives me nuts when they want to Zoom, and then they don't show their face. To me, there is no point then, we could just talk on the phone.
- I do miss seeing the students and colleagues.
- I think many were at a loss with starting a new school year with having a virtual orientation. I was amazed at the number of students who did not waive their student health insurance or didn't complete their MPN/EC in a timely manner.
- However, due to COVID, I am surprised I had less students ask about an EFC appeal due to a parent's loss of job or lay-off.

***Penny Nemitz:***

- Sending out mass emails.

***Denise Rotavera-Krain:***

- Holding workshops was a big no-go this semester. I tried them at different times on different days. No one ever showed up.
- Comments student shared with me:
  - Some professors did not adapt the amount of content for an online course. There were too many assignments to keep track of.
  - Some professors used platforms that were not compatible with the iPad which was the only device students had at their disposal.
  - Some professors did not allot enough time to take online exams.
  - Some professors did not stay on top of grading, so students did not have a clear idea of where they stood in a given class (true pre-COVID as well).
  - Some professors did not respond to email questions about assignments in a timely manner.
  - Students reported not being able to see what they got wrong on a test, quiz, exam so they could correct the mistake for next time and/or use it to study for next time.
  - Some students did not think they needed to study for online exams.
  - Students were confused about the difference between Online Orientation where they registered for class and the Online Orientation Class.
  - Many students did not watch videos of lectures.
  - Many students do not have the time management skills, self-regulation, and motivation to do online learning.

***Agriculture and Engineering Technologies Division:******Robby Frutchey:***

- Overall: 2<sup>nd</sup> years underchallenged, 1<sup>st</sup> years overchallenged.
- Synchronous: struggled to fill 2 hours, did lecture for 1 hour.

- Spoke to a colleague who was keeping students 30-40 minutes late in late evening lab. Rather than pushing through—regroup next week or rethink assignments, but too dangerous for students to be driving home that late at night (1.5 – 2 hours).

***Sara Mastellar:***

- Students have poor time management for working by themselves through recorded lectures.
- Teaching every which way is time consuming. It's been hard to keep up with timely posting of content and timely feedback.
- Students struggled with Carmen (modules didn't show up or app vs browser) and the iPads (Microsoft Office doesn't have all the same features). These seemed like totally unnecessary technological hurdles.

***Liz Parker:***

- I regularly made video and written announcements, but students regularly emailed me with questions I had just addressed in an announcement. I think the only way to communicate with students is via Carmen email because unless they adjust their settings in Carmen, they will not get the announcements.
- One student told me he didn't know where to find the course materials, so he just read the textbook for the first few weeks. He did not know how to use Carmen. I do send them an introductory video, again attached to an announcement, on how to use Carmen and how to access all of the materials but if they have no idea how to use Carmen this is a pointless exercise.
- I created shorter PowerPoints and short accompanying video lecture recordings. So instead of 3 lectures they might get up to 6 mini lectures, (10 minutes each), for the week. According to YouTube analytics about 50% of the class watched the videos in the first week or so but now less than 10% of the students watch the videos. This may be because I add speaker notes to all my PowerPoints, so they don't really have to listen to me talk to get all the information. But it is a bit disheartening to go to all the effort and them not be used.

***Karen Wimbush:***

- Asynchronous lectures...students do not have the discipline to actually sit down and do their class work on their own. I don't think they know how most instructors are formatting the course material (i.e., Weekly modules), so they need to learn how to sign on and complete the material. I think they just use their reminders on the phone to do the 'quizzes' and that's it.
- I have tried several different things to try to engage students...discussion questions on CARMEN, CHA photo contest...and overall, participation is not good.

***Ryan Haden, Shaun Wellert, Jon Witter:***

- The asynchronous class (exploring class with 30+ students), was rather disappointing and had very low views on recorded lectures. Need to be live with the students to help engagement, at least with my style of teaching. Extremely hard for me to engage students in that model.

**Arts, Science and Business Division:*****Subbu Kumarappan:***

- Need better coordination with scheduling remote class hours through Zoom – 3 credit hour classes have gotten 1 or 2 or 3 contact hours in a very random manner.
- Student engagement dropped significantly after week 9 – HW completion rate came from 90+% in week 1 to just 65% in week 10.
- Student viewing of lecture videos is unfortunately minimal.

***Rachael Ramsier:***

- At the beginning of the semester, we were directed to develop a course that provided the same rigor as face to face, but through an online module. NOT WORKING. I have found that online course delivery and online learning take so much more effort to work through the PROCESS that sometimes learning is prohibited if students are bogged down with busywork. I have discovered that I need to provide content that REALLY matters and show a direct connection to students why they are doing something and shave the other “stuff” or busywork off. If I don’t see a direct connection to the discussion posts, I don’t ask them. Rather I have students fill out guided notes or complete documents that demonstrate they have engaged with the material posted.

***Joy Rumble:***

- Group work in an online course. I tried it, thought it would help with engagement, but it added a lot of unnecessary stress to the students. The challenge of having to contact and get a hold of group members was too much during this time. Additionally, the various work schedules, commitments, and schedules of students made this difficult. Another complication was that students who solely rely on the Carmen App couldn’t easily locate their group. Even after I directed them to the desktop version and told them who was in their group, they were resistant to participate because they do everything through the faulty app.

***Jon Van Gray:***

- Email! Email was already an issue (as in, there is a lot of it that goes unread or fails to generate any replies), but I think it has really hit a wall in terms of its usefulness. Students seem even less inclined to reply than they have in the past. Given that I am not spending any time with students outside of the occasional one-on-one Zoom meeting it makes for a rather difficult relationship. I have tried texting via OnCourse to no avail—they have not taken the bait.

**Horticultural Technologies Division:**

- Some students completely ignored the emails, so information in advising and course related emails had to be repeated endless times.

- Recording sessions anyway is pointless. Students can join via Zoom even if the class is in person. Recordings need to be limited to situations where a student is sick and cannot attend the lecture.
- Students unable to use computers due to IT issues up until 3-4 weeks. This is difficult for the student as well as the instructor.
- From students: In asynchronous classes it is difficult to do group activities when assigned.

### Student Programming and Life:

- Multiple platforms for distance learning make things difficult.
  - More time spent on working the platform rather than on learning.
  - Asynchronous is more difficult for students:
    - Discipline, study skills
    - Rather take the synchronous option on another campus.
  - Info delivery on multiple platforms is stressful:
    - Email/website/Zoom/Buzz
    - Where did I see that information?
  - Wary of contacting someone they know nothing about:
    - PDF of getting to know you by faculty, low tech
    - Not knowing their instructor personally amplifies students' negative feelings.
    - + easier to connect with students when you can connect with their personal environment.
      - Pets on Zoom
      - Posters in the background
- Students perceive that faculty are making the exams harder:
  - Less than a minute on an exam question on timed exams,
  - 75 questions in ~ 55 minutes, with calculations.
  - Could be a departmental decision, faculty may be constrained.
- Long delays in email response are difficult for students:
  - 2 days for initial response
  - Additional follow-up questions take more time
- Students are fed up with being online and now even in-person events
  - Long delays in email response are difficult for students:
- Just want to finish classes and complete the semester
- Commuter students are particularly disconnected, do not feel welcomed
  - Could we do more with Fisher?
    - Board games, coloring books—make it more recreational?

- Can we set up mask free zones with other barriers?
- Some students are working more hours, some are working out of state, which creates difficulty for getting assistance. Some are choosing to work instead of enroll Spring Semester—opportunities they might not have had but the opportunities compromise academic responsibilities/forward progress.
- Tech issues
  - Students going home to dead zones.
  - Anxious about unstable Internet.
  - iPad not sufficient for students.
    - Many bought their own iPads when they thought the iPad would be sufficient.
    - Created a crisis situation.
    - MS Teams was also not iPad friendly.
  - Apple product users cannot upload papers with Safari.
    - Tells them they will be notified by email if the paper is not uploaded, but does not follow through. (Using Chrome is the solution.)
- For some students who are challenged with interpersonal communication skills, professors don't have as much interaction with them online and may not get an accurate sense of the student the students' needs/interaction skills. Some students appear as irresponsible in online communication, which it really is a result of communication challenges that are impacting their interaction.

## Part IV: Innovations We Tried or New Experiences We Had

### Academic Affairs:

#### *Jill Gallion:*

- Students come to me with specific needs/requests. I do not generally need to seek students out, but I have used the TEXT feature in OnCourse a couple of times and have gotten quick responses.

#### *Katie LeMasters:*

- I find OnCourse to be a great asset in contacting students via text about important documents. My success rate is probably 85% in getting a response from students after texting when a call has failed, or voicemail is not set up. I start with a call and leave a VM if possible if the situation requires immediate attention. I follow up with an email and send a text telling them to check their email for an important message from me in the office of Academic

Affairs. If not requiring immediate attention, I'll send an email then wait a week. If no response, I'll send a follow up email and OnCourse text which almost always gets me a timely response.

***Julia Morris:***

- I am using the Buckeye Buzz for all FA & Scholarship information/deadlines/reminders/check lists for communication opposed to biweekly emails like in the past.
- I have created SAP, loan/MPN/EC, and other such handouts to be more specific and helpful.
- I have updated the FA portion of the ATI website to better guide our students (current and prospective).
- Zoom is helpful if I need to share my screen.
- I like the convenience of messaging in Skype, I wouldn't have used this feature if on campus.
- Explaining the CARES emergency grant is an experience I obviously wouldn't have had prior to COVID.
- The number of staff/faculty in the campus wide meetings is amazing, I think. We would never have those numbers when on-campus. When we go back, the meetings should always be offered via Zoom and recorded. I find it important that many partake in those meetings.

***Penny Nemitz:***

- It seems to work when they are interacting with a number of staff/tutors i.e... Denise to Penny to the appropriate tutor.
- Having the tutors be part of the roster so they know exactly what is needed and what the professor is looking for and they can ask questions too.
- Students just want to 'talk' sometimes they don't need academic help they need to just have some type of contact...**particularly in the beginning of the semester.**

***Denise Rotavera-Krain:***

- One thing that has been great over all is OnCourse. I can send out a mass communication that directly links them to signing up for an appointment with me. That worked really well with the first-year students and I met about 100 students that way.
- When meeting with students on Zoom, I intentionally ask how they are doing in other parts of their lives. This has worked really well, and I truly believe it has facilitated my relationships with my students.
- While we were all aware that many of our students struggle financially, COVID really put the spotlight on this issue.

***Katie LeMasters – Best Practices Panel Discussion:***

- OnCourse was a game-changer:
  - Sent email first, then texted student to ask them to check for an important message in their email-95% response rate.

- Early Alert: instructors entered notes and Academic Affairs could see the notes immediately
- Orientation: OnCourse Alerts – program coordinators could send alerts to Academic Affairs and Academic Affairs could see them in their In Boxes and respond immediately
- Had more interaction with students about jobs.
- Used online forms, no perceived wait times.
- Can give students more accurate time frame for processing requests.

**Admissions:*****Dave Dietrich:***

- Using videos and texting for recruitment.
- Providing opportunities during and after work hours to engage with Admission staff.
- Incoming/prospective students want to hear from faculty.

***Laura Deeter:***

- Zoomed in on a high school visit with Admission counselor—wonderful experience, great way to connect with prospective students, learned a lot, want to do it again.

***Subbu Kumarappan:***

- Would like us to consider continuing Program Coordinators Zooming with Admission staff on high school visits.

***Pamela Thomas:***

- We were able to use alumni to help recruit.

**Agriculture and Engineering Technologies Division:*****Robby Frutchey:***

- Will do asynchronous next semester (10-15-minute lectures 3x per week, MWF)

***Sara Mastellar:***

- I tried making “pre-lab” no stakes quizzes that required students to work through material before lab or be turned away from the in-person labs. I was hopeful that this would help keep students on track. It became one more thing for me to manage. Students clicked through the quiz to avoid being turned away from in person lab without actually working through the material.
- Making demonstration videos is time consuming. For some students the videos worked well, but others still requested to see the same skills demonstrated in person.
- Having to “police” masks and distancing is tiring.
- Students didn’t pick up on classroom norms as easily/quickly.

- Typically, some students fade out over the semester. It seemed to happen more quickly this semester and I have a more pronounced bimodal distribution in my courses.
- Sheer number of absences and multiple students at different places in the hands-on skill building, which required reworking in person activities to catch students up while also not holding others back.
- Grading and handing back subjective work are more time consuming than filling out a paper rubric and passing it back. Grading now contributes to screen fatigue.

**Liz Parker:**

- I created a discussion topic each week. The topic or question requires application of knowledge to something that interests the student. For example, “what’s your favorite food, how do you digest it?” The students have to post a comment or response to a topic or questions by Thursday and then respond to another student’s response by Sunday. I would never have learnt so much about the students in a normal classroom. The online format gives them the time to research, create and edit a response – it is a safer space to ask questions and to share knowledge and experiences.
- The final assessment is a creative project. The student is required to select three topics from the course, integrate them and present this “somehow” to “some” audience. It sounds a bit vague, but I used this in a 7-week animal health course. Let the students run loose and it is amazing what they come up with, (leptospirosis in Puerto Rico after the hurricane, rabies prevention in zoo animals, foot rot in small ruminants, devil facial tumor in Tasmanian devils).

**Karen Wimbush:**

- One of the 1<sup>st</sup> year students organized a barn ‘secret santa’ and that has been a hit...it is not ‘virtual’ and perhaps more ‘real’...
- I think the one on one advising this summer got some good interaction between myself and the students without the parents as in the picture as usual...
- Jon Witter has developed great courses resources.

**Ryan Haden, Shaun Wellert, Jon Witter:**

- Some new lab activities, mixed results, nothing that I will continue most likely.
- I will be happy when I don’t have to be mask police anymore...

**Liz Parker – Best Practices Panel Discussion:**

- Culminating Project: Take any the topics, integrate them, and then teach to an audience (i.e., children, industry, farmers, conference presentation) - peer review 5 others.
- Mini Lectures – max 10 minutes long
- Dissection videos
- Navigation buttons in Carmen
- More workshops (i.e., suturing, how did they die?)

**Arts, Science and Business Division:*****Subbu Kumarappan:***

- Emails work better than Microsoft groups, etc.
- Keeping it simple is better than trying new things.
- Have had 20+ speakers from various states and even other countries – this is not new; but the remote classes helped reach out to new speakers much beyond the normal scope of my in-person classes.

***Rachael Ramsier:***

- I am sending out “midweek” memos to update students on new information I think they should be aware of. Mainly, this new information is an echo of something already been disseminated, but I also want them to hear it from me that it is important and to take notice. I also reach out and ask how students are doing via email. I don’t wait for them to approach/email me.
- It is very challenging trying to get to know them. I desperately miss the interaction with students 10 min before class and 10 min after class. I also don’t get to see some of their faces because they NEVER turn their camera on. I pride myself on knowing every student by name and facial recognition each semester. It is important to me, as an educator, as someone who cares, and this semester there are students who I have never seen. It is bizarre and upsetting.

***Joy Rumble:***

- I really stepped up my Carmen game this year. I’ve found really organized and consistent Carmen shells from week to week are very beneficial and appreciated by the students. I’ve also incorporated modules that are a mixture of read/watch/ and apply. It seems to really be going well, but I did realize about 4-5 weeks in that the number of application activities I had incorporated was too much. We’ve scaled those back and things have been going much better.
- In my synchronous online stats lab, we usually cover material for 40-60 minutes and then the remainder of the time they have to work on lab assignments. They are free to log off of zoom and use the time as they please, but they know that I will be on zoom until the end of class. It has been really fun and beneficial to see the students sign back on and ask questions throughout the lab time – sometimes multiple times in one lab session. While they had similar time in the face-to-face setting, I’ve found that I’ve been able to spend more intentional one-on-one time with students when they log back into the zoom to ask questions – I think maybe it’s because it’s a more private setting rather than when we are in the computer lab with more students around.

***Jon Van Gray:***

- I have tried to use discussion forms to discuss aspects of the class with students, but they are hit-or-miss. I feel that it is more an issue of timing and having more open-ended questions. It is difficult to have targeted discussion when students are going to work through and digest

materials at varying rates. It is something that I would like to invest more time in developing for next semester.

- I think student meetings have been really useful in addressing the uncertainties we are all facing these days. Students seem to find comfort in the fact that they are not alone in their feelings and that many of us are right there with them. While this shared experience does not make up for f2f teaching/advising, I think it is useful for establishing a relationship and providing some degree of support to students that are, well, uncertain.

***Rachael Ramsier – Best Practices Panel Discussion:***

- Increased commuter participation
- Could have later meeting times and not worry about commuting home
- OnCourse for advisors: used text feature to give and get feedback quickly; able to easily search for students to send specific messages.
- ODEE course: learned new ways to use Carmen (Carmen outlines, bitmoji, time stamps)
- Gave choices for reading assignments.
- Scaled back written discussions and replaced them with live discussion options.

**Horticultural Technologies Division:**

- It would be great if there is more hands-on training on Carmen, important deadlines, forms are located and other critical information in the GENSTDS 1201 College Orientation class. Perhaps repeated again in the middle of the semester or during the last session.
- Students need to have an opportunity or encouraged to resolve IT issues before the classes start, not after.

***Laura Deeter – Best Practices Panel Discussion:***

- More organizational use of Carmen.
- Took ODEE course to get new ideas for Carmen.
- Did video editing.
- Zoom advising + Schedule Planner – allowed for flexible meeting times, using both at same time. Stopped the last-minute drop in.
- More guest lectures b/c not needed to be in person – will likely continue post-COVID.
- Created in Carmen an Announcement for the Week to remind students what's coming up.
- Every week in Carmen posted an overview and learning objectives.
- Used bitmoji.
- Created an interactive map walk in the arboretum and practice quiz.
- Consistently order of materials and activities every week in Carmen.

**Student Programming and Life:**

- Using time flexibly to meet with students (being able to use Skype phone and Zoom makes this possible)
  - Using flexible meeting times is a big advantage in reaching students and being able to adjust/add meetings in the moment, when students need them.
  - Students are contacting us in the evening (when they have time to be able to do these things) to talk through solving problems, filling out scholarship apps. Etc.
  - When students know we are available, they are more likely to reach out/communicate with us.
- Because we are Zooming with students, we sometimes get a more intimate view/understanding of their personal circumstances. In some cases, it has been helpful for building rapport with students or getting a better understanding of the challenges they are dealing with.

**Mary Ann Frantz – Best Practices Panel Discussion:**

- Able to provide services (work on scholarship applications, work with service providers) in the evening because students tend to tackle solving problems in the evening. For some, evening is the only time they can do their work due to other responsibilities, especially if they are living at home.
- Students need a place “to go” in the evening to state a concern.
- When we have our faces out there online, students feel more comfortable to reach out to us. They feel like they know us a little. Similarly, faculty who post their own bios/photos make a difference for students.
- Sometimes it is helpful if faculty insist that the Zoom camera is on. We do this when we can to establish that face-to-face connection, even if the following meetings are on the phone, etc.
- Seeing what is in the background when a student Zooms with us gives us insight into their lives and helps PE better understand their circumstances. It also provides a personal aspect of them and gives us something to spark a discussion about—we can comment on what is going on in the background (dogs playing, younger sibling making noise, etc.) – helps them own the conversation.

**Jodie Holava - Best Practices Panel Discussion:**

- Communication with clubs and orgs.
- Student Leadership Council – 26 students in first year!
  - Brainstorming, sharing ideas.
  - Connecting with CFAES in Columbus.
  - Events
    - Jan – Organization Fair
    - Feb – Regionals – Spring into Success series

## Part V: Ideas for the Future

### Establishing Consistency in Carmen Sites – Best Practices Panel Discussion:

**Kris Boone:**

- Perhaps we need to establish need to establish standards for Carmen sites to make them more easily accessible for students. i.e., all Carmen sites should have a tutorial similar to X when they come to a lab for the first time.

**Laura Deeter:**

- Make sure that students have notifications set to ON so that they get reminded whenever an announcement is made in Carmen.
- Contents
  - Overview
  - Pictures
  - Special Quarantine Directions
  - Annotated PDF for those with poor internet connection
  - Icons and templates in Keep Teaching
- Provide material in multiple modalities.

**Carri Gerber:**

- We can take a copy of each site to share with others and trigger changes.
- Liz, Laura, Rachel, Subbu, Nathan C. and Jon have good Carmen sites.

### Staying Connected with Your Office/Division – Best Practices Panel Discussion:

**Kris Boone:**

- Teams became a repository for knowledge in many of the groups she was a part of.

**Mary Ann Frantz:**

- PE: have Zoom meetings every week and one meeting is dedicated.
  - One of the meetings is dedicated just for connecting, different theme every week (favorite music, etc.) shared and learned so much about each other

**Carri Gerber:**

- Posted silly things in Teams; felt as if connected every day.

**Katie LeMasters:**

- Academic Affairs – coffee breaks in MS Teams
  - Updates
  - Try out new technology.
  - Get to know each other better, played Pictionary, had side get-togethers.

**Rachael Ramsier:**

- Jon Flad was very accessible and responsive.

**Wrap Up – Best Practices Panel Discussion:****Laura Deeter:**

- Lower midterm/exam stress
  - Ask fun questions such as create a meme.
  - Tell me three things you learned, were unexpected, that you want to learn for the future.

**Mary Ann Frantz:**

- Program Excel can help faculty and staff by helping students learn how to do a task for their class; if you help PE staff learn how something is done in your class, PE can help multiple students learn how to do it.
- David Wirt was very helpful and understanding of ATI students' needs.
- As we move into the next semester, please review links in courses and keep them updated.
- We found that a great way to motivate students is to find out where they are confident and help them build on it in more challenging areas.
  - Sometimes a student does not know how to complete a task. Ask "Were you able to do X task?"
- Motivation is everything.

**Rachael Ramsier:**

- Psychological needs must be met
- Relatedness
- Support autonomy and choice
- Provide direct, helpful, timely feedback