

Student Responses to Remote Learning at BMCC

On January 26, 2021, the Office of Academic Affairs hosted a panel discussion with students about their experience with remote learning. The student panelists were Mah Noor (science major), Alex Hill (financial management), Josiah Ramesar (writing and literature, and GSA president), Yama Fay (psychology). The session was facilitated by Michael Hutmaker, Dean for Student Affairs.

The students were asked about positive experiences they had with remote learning, as well as suggestions they might have for faculty to assist with their learning. Below are some of their responses, edited for length and clarity.

Classroom

- I had breakout rooms and was doing group work that way. Because in the in-person classes, we were able to go into groups easily and connect with each other as students and all that. Now it's much harder to even find out who your classmates are in the first place and to get to know them on a more personal level. I feel like having those breakout rooms where we like to work together, and we discuss some things as well helps me a lot.
- Professors create more of an open dialogue, rather than just running through your lectures and slides.
- Be outgoing and interactive. It was a very safe environment where I didn't feel like, okay I just have to watch this lecture, and I'm done with the class. Even though I wasn't there in person, I felt like I still knew what the classroom environment was like.
- Create options for different students' learning style
- Have a positive demeanor - if the professor comes to the class and they're not feeling like teaching or they don't enjoy what they're doing, or they come in complaining and the negativity is around, then we feel it as well. But, if the professor is joyful and is happy to be there, and is enjoying what they're doing, then we feel that too.

Class work

- Be more understanding of student's situations

- Open the deadline for all our assignments and put them to the end of the semester so we had the time to go back and back again to the lessons and understand them before we post our answers.
- Provide more than one method of obtaining the materials. That would also allow us to deal with current situation – work, childcare, etc.
- Have flexibility in terms of how we can make sure we're doing our best—it is very important. And I like when we were near our finals, or midterms, one of my professors gave out many resources on different studying techniques
- Encourage students to make group chats in all our classes
- Flexibility with the timed assignments and the timed test. It is important to understand that, for some of us, being in one place for more than 30 minutes is not a privilege we have. (There is childcare, building construction, etc. getting in the way of attending a zoom class.)
- Have tutors that are familiar with the different material used by different professors in the same subject

Connecting

- Just be yourself, let us know you that you're human too from the first day. Have that open dialogue from the very first day to create that space where students know that you're okay and we're okay
- Make yourself relatable to us, a successful learning environment occurred more when my professors were open up front
- Make sure that everybody knows where all the resources in BMCC are, such as like Single Stop, tutoring, and all of that. It is very crucial on the first day,
- Be available by email. Say a student needs you immediately, and it is not the office hours, or they can get to your office hours on time but you are available on email and they can get to you quicker. You would be able to respond back a little bit quicker so that helps both of us.
- One great thing that my professors did was stay after class for like five to 10 minutes just to talk to students there and then. Because a lot of their office hours were times that I couldn't make personally, because either I had to work what I had other meetings
- Considering calling them “office hours,” students may understand “student hours” better and use them more
- Understand that students are being pulled in many directions - School responsibilities, and the expectations of my boss and family. It can get overwhelming. It can get extremely fatiguing,