April 29, 2020

Dear Colleague,

Congratulations on being nominated by your Provost to participate in the inaugural cohort of the Online Teaching Essentials workshop, sponsored by the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs and hosted by CUNY School of Professional Studies. In order to affirm your participation in this course you have to complete the following two actions by Friday, May 1.

- First, please connect with your campus liaison — who is sending this message to you on my behalf — regarding next steps, including Blackboard Basics training and verification of your email address in Blackboard.

- Second, please fill out this form, which will aid in our planning efforts moving forward.

This 3-week fully online workshop offered May 7 to May 27 will give you first-hand experience of what it is like to learn online in an asynchronous environment and will be conducted in Blackboard. Participants who successfully complete requirements based on specific grading criteria and rubrics of the workshop will receive a certificate of completion and will be eligible for payment up to $500.

As always, I commend for your commitment to the advancement of CUNY’s mission.

Sincerely,

José Luis Cruz, Ph.D.
Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost
Workshop Description

Participants who complete the course will:

- Gain first-hand experience in and appreciation of the needs of an online learner;
- Identify widely accepted best practices for online teaching, including principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL);
- Reflect on how to apply to one’s own course the instructional design principles, organizational and facilitation skills, and communication and assessment strategies introduced in the course;
- Become familiar with the basic operations and features of a Blackboard classroom from both student and instructor perspectives.

All participants are asked to familiarize themselves with the basics of Blackboard before beginning the workshop, availing themselves of their home campus resources.

The Structure of the Course

Module I: Understanding the Online Learning Environment
Module II: Structuring the Online Learning Experience
Module III: Communicating and Interacting Online
Module IV: Online Presence and Engagement
Module V: Effective Online Assessment
Module VI: Course Schedule and Reflection

In each module, participants will review resources related to the topic, engage in discussions with peers in the same or a similar discipline, and complete practice exercises. Experienced online faculty will serve as peer facilitators guiding groups of 25-30 through the discussions and Blackboard exercises. The final project is a draft course schedule that serves as a plan for teaching an online course.

Although all required activity is asynchronous or time-flexible, participants are expected to complete tasks within module time frames. Total estimated time on task is 9-12 hours, though actual time may vary. In order to successfully complete this workshop, participants must complete all required activities, including discussions, practice labs, the group activity, the syllabus and schedule project, and the reflection, and earn 85/100 points.