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# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Collaboration is the key to innovation.

**Dr. Tiffany Brooks**

**VIRTUAL PANELS**

Thank you, Dr. Brooks, for your willingness to share and collaborate!



## Virtual Panel Discussions

A virtual panel discussion is an effective way to expose students to a diversity of opinions and perspectives about important topics in a discipline. By inviting a panel of experts with real-world experience, students have the opportunity to learn about recent trends and best practices in the field. This is an opportunity for students to make critical connections between the course curriculum and the world in which they live and work. The panelists can help students connect the dots by sharing personal experiences that demonstrate applications of course concepts and which are memorable for students. Conducting a virtual panel provides the freedom to invite guests from anywhere in the world, and with the widespread use of virtual conferencing today, panelists are likely to feel comfortable with the technology. During a virtual panel discussion, experts can interact with each other as well as with the students. To get the most out of these interactions, prepare panelists with clear communication about the learning objectives and level of the course, and prepare students to ask questions. To serve as the moderator, you should be prepared to make connections and facilitate transitions and interactions throughout the discussion.

## What motivated you to host virtual panel discussions in your courses?

I have found my students enjoy hearing from other professionals, and I truly believe having different voices allows for multiple perspectives to be presented to my students.

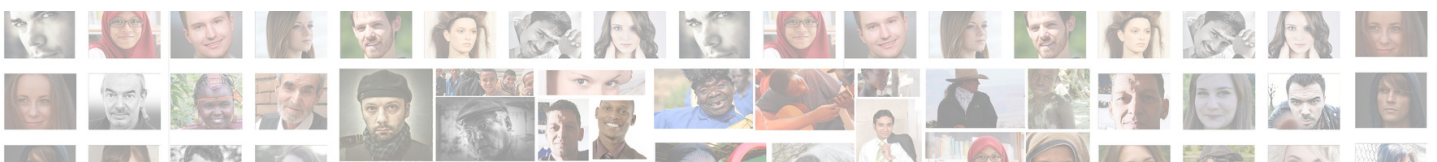
## What have you learned is important for hosting an effective panel?

### Preparation, Moderation, Technology, Follow-up

- I have found one of the most important components includes drafting a potential list of questions. Then my panel participants appreciate me sending those potential questions to them ahead of time. I warn my panel that I make it more conversational and tend to go where the conversation takes us, but this does allow for them to prepare ahead of time.
- In regards to technology, I do ask the participants if they are comfortable with the platform that we are utilizing. Generally, I use either Google Meets or Zoom, so most are familiar with them.
- I always provide their emails and other forms of contact information, so the students can follow up with them if they want to after the class meeting.

## How have you incorporated virtual panel discussions into your synchronous courses?

In my synchronous courses, I schedule a time during the class meeting. Our clinical courses are 3 hours long, so I generally schedule the panel in the middle of the class meeting. This allows the class to check in and discuss the normal class items prior to the panel beginning. I try to schedule a break when the panel participants are joining. Then, I aim to leave processing time at the end with just the class, so the students can be open about their reflections after the panel participants exit the platform.



## How have you incorporated virtual panel discussions into your asynchronous courses?

When I utilize panels in synchronous courses, I ask for permission to record them. I have asked panel participants and students for permission to use the recordings in other classes. I always give the option of editing the video to block students' and panelists' names from their profiles. I have found it easiest to re-use panels I have already created since it has students' questions and answers during the panel. But it would be very easy to meet with panelists via a meeting platform and record it the same way. When I integrate the panels into asynchronous courses, I typically either use an embedded Kaltura Quiz or Discussion board to allow for processing of the information presented.

## How have students responded to these learning experiences? Have the virtual panel discussions impacted student performance?

In course evaluations, I regularly receive feedback that this is an integral piece of their learning. They enjoy hearing from other clinicians and hearing the nuances of different experiences. I think their student performance is enhanced by their engagement being increased, especially in asynchronous courses. There is one panel I regularly share with students, and almost every semester I have students quoting one expert in the field. They describe that moment as encouraging and inspirational to their involvement in the field.

