

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Vincent Boudreau, President of The City College of New York
Ken Ihrer, VP of Operations & CIO at The City College of New York (CCNY)

From: Juan A. Tlatelpa

Date: February 13, 2021

Subject: Problems with Blackboard Collaborate Ultra and solution

The purpose of this memo is to inform you that many CCNY students are facing difficulties with the Blackboard Collaborate Ultra program that some of our professors have been using. These problems are disrupting interactions between students and their professors. Students end up missing important information regarding lessons, homework, exams and sometimes class in general. These problems include:

- Bad and slow performance
- Poor picture quality
- Not being able to hear others
- Not being heard
- Not being easily accessible on mobile devices

The reason students are facing these problems is because the Blackboard Collaborate Ultra program that our professors have been using is not an application, it's a web browser. It's common that web browsers perform slower than applications. Websites perform using their coding, while applications perform using their built-in framework which allows them to work up to 5 times faster. The bad and slow performance of the website causes both the picture and audio to randomly drop. In my experience, my professor was using the BBCU program, and during the lecture as he was speaking his audio kept on cutting off. Our professor had to leave and join the meeting several times until we could hear him. Because of this problem the lecture ended up being shorter than usual due to the amount of time it took to resolve the issue. Another instance in which a problem occurred due to the bad and slow performance was when my professor was screen sharing and the picture quality dropped. These problems occur often disrupting the amount of time we have in lectures.

Solution

To solve these problems, students believe that the professors that are using Blackboard collaborate ultra should stop and start to use the Zoom app instead. Yes, there is a mobile application for BBCU. However, the app isn't good, its not up to date, the most recent update was 3 years ago. Unlike both the BBCU website and app the Zoom application is constantly being updated. With all the Zoom updates the application can run smoother and faster lowering the chances of problems occurring. Not only will switching from BBCU to Zoom fix the problems that happen because of the bad and slow performance but, it will also make it more accessible.

Students will no longer have to use a computer or laptop, using Zoom will allow for students to join using their phones and tablets. Joining from a mobile device will also help students that work to join a class that wouldn't normally work with their schedule.

I look forward to hearing your response to this issue. Please contact me by email at jtlatel000@citymail.cuny.edu

Sincerely,

Juan Antonio Tlatelpa