

How do you welcome and follow-up with students at the beginning of the semester?

Your Name	What You Do
curry	<p>I send out my Welcome Letter with a link to an information website and grant limit access to my Canvas course about two weeks before the semester starts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here's my Welcome Letter to Enrolled Students • And my Welcome Letter to Waitlisted Students • Explore my ENGL 100 Information page <p>At the end of Week 1, I ask students to participate in a discussion activity by referencing the orientation materials they viewed and their experience in the class so far to answer this question: How might the spaces and devices you plan to use for this class help or hinder you as an academic reader and writer this semester?</p>
Jim	<p>I send out a brief email before class but most of my focus is over those first two weeks.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Syllabus: I have integrated my syllabus into my canvas home page and present it as a student success guide. My syllabus includes a few of my prepostero type videos and emphasizes the importance of their voice. My number one priority in the syllabus is to affirm and encourage students. I ask students to text me a reaction to the syllabus -- which establishes another one to one communication channel. I also include some syllabus related questions in my week one quiz -- which, like all of my quizzes, - students can retake as often as they wish. 2. One to one in Zoom. Over the first two weeks of the semester, I meet one to one with each student in zoom. The foundation for this meeting is a survey I have students complete that asks them to share their goals for the semester, any challenges they want to alert me to, their work and study plans and schedules, their plan to connect with and use campus resources, and their technology access / knowledge. This survey then structures our 20-30 minute conversation in zoom. Being in zoom allows me to also make sure the student is comfortable in the zoom, canvas, and google doc spaces I build my class around. 3. Connecting to Each Other: In the first two weeks, I focus on having the students talk to / write to each other as much as possible. My goal is to center community and connection in the class. In zoom this happens in small break out activities coupled with large group shares and in canvas this happens with discussions that focus on having students share something that is both personal and linked to our first course readings (so this depends upon the course). In canvas those first posts include video posts and response posts to multiple classmates. 4. Focusing on Reading: A key point for me in those first days is to establish the importance of the class readings and strategies for completing those readings. So a key in both the zoom and canvas

	<p>spaces is to get students responding to the readings by sharing passages that interest, concern, confuse, or otherwise engage them and to get them making connections to their lives. I am not looking for deep analysis yet -- but I am pushing for every voice to be shared and heard.</p> <p>5. Connecting to the Campus: I also want to do whatever I can to connect students to key campus resources like counseling, basic needs support, the library, the social justice and equity center, service learning, mental health resources, the career center, etc. So I devote primary syllabus, email message, and one to one conference real estate to reminding students about these tools and asking students to develop individualized plans for how they might use those tools during the semester. Believe it or not, I also include some questions about these services in my quizzes -- just as reminder. This gets at the question of the role of my quizzes, which I think of more as an instructional tool than an assessment tool. But that is a topic for another space!!</p>
Tyrone	<p>I try to do a lot of what curry and Jim proposed. I would add one more activity. In the introductory message I send to the class, I set a time I'll be on Zoom before the semester begins. I call it an optional "meet and greet" where students can try out their technology and I can answer questions. I usually only get about five students to show up, but the ones who do really appreciate the opportunity to try out Zoom, log on to Canvas, and to speak with me before the class actually begins.</p>
Chad	<p>Before the semester begins, I send the following items to my students to give them a meaningful sense of the course, me, and to get a better sense of their needs and interests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very Honest, Very Human Welcome Email • Course Overview Vids • Student Favorites • Pre-semester Survey <p>Similar to Tyrone, to make the first class meeting a little less stressful, I'm also planning to host some kind of pre-semester, drop-in-and-say-hi-and-possibly-ask-questions Zoom session.</p>

