



## Post-Webinar Plática\* Q&A with Lupe Dannels from Diablo Valley College

\* Plática = talk, or chat

CLP hosted a series of webinars to support student services faculty, staff, and administrators at community colleges across California as they re-orient to providing services completely online during the Covid-19 pandemic. Find information about the series (and additional materials) at <https://www.careerladdersproject.org/problem-solving-moving-student-supports-online-a-clp-webinar-series/>. Lupe Dannels, a counselor at Diablo Valley College (DVC), was one of the presenters.

[Lupe's presentation](#) focused on how her colleagues and students are benefitting from institutional support and how she's maintaining her sanity and staying grounded during this challenging time. We asked her to expand on some of the subjects she touched on.

**CLP: You mentioned that Zoom may raise student privacy concerns. Do you know if this issue has been raised on your campus? Usually, a college will screen and analyze its technology tools for classroom usage.**

**Dannels:** Our district has its own Zoom license, and I suspect that this was to give us more control over its use. So I have to log in through my college's website to use Zoom as a security measure. You can set Zoom to require authentication and requiring registration and a password are things that are locally controlled. I know that Zoom is also used in telehealth and that there are similar privacy concerns there. My recommendation for people at other colleges would be to check with your instructional technology staff to find out which video conferencing tools they recommend for classes. Some good discussion questions for counselors would be, "Who is using Cranium Cafe and who is using Zoom? And which one is better for different scenarios?"

CLP note – [Zoom has a guide for compliance with FERPA \(Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, a federal law\)](#). But it would be good to check with your institution about any student privacy issues that you may encounter or have questions about.

**CLP: As colleges start to look toward the summer and fall terms, how do you envision the start of the school year if you cannot hold orientations or meet incoming students in person?**

**Dannels:** We already have had an online orientation; now, everything relating to orientation will be online. At our campus, online orientation is part of the application process, and then the students

register for Ed Planning, a class that is usually held in person. But, we have been providing online sections of that class for some time, and it's now fully online. In our Guided Pathways implementation, we have been creating success teams to help build community within interest-area groups, and we will now have to be doing this online if that is how our college proceeds. One of our faculty has created a number of videos for students that address "how to do \_\_\_" on various issues. I see the orientations continuing online, and it will be a little different first meeting our students online. But the good thing is that we can at least see their faces.

Our experience through this shift will help us as we move forward. We have worked with our institution to develop dynamic forms to ease administrative processes. We continue to add to our toolkits with different platform experiences.

**CLP: You mentioned how important it is for counseling staff to address their own needs during the pandemic. Are any of your colleagues feeling burned out by spending the extra time and planning that providing services online can take?**

**Dannels:** Our department has about full-time 30 counselors plus about 8 part-timers. We get together online once per week for training and to share the most current information. I'm probably the most senior in my department. The colleague I just referred to who has recorded videos is one of the newer ones. The younger members of our team are more integrated with technology. I have had counterparts in my department who have been overwhelmed because they don't use as many technology tools.

We went from people being overwhelmed in how we responded to having a variety of modalities to contact students. Some less technologically savvy counselors have phone interviews and phone contacts, and we already do our ed plan online so students can see them. There was a flurry of activity right before we all started working from home. There's probably about 28 counselors who have joined a GroupMe just to hang out and converse with each other unrelated to work. There, we talk about some of our outside activities. Our institution is doing a good job, but I'm spending more time on some things than I was before. We have to create space away from the computer for us because it will overwhelm us. There's always a student somewhere who wants to talk to you or reach out; they will be in one of your inboxes, somewhere.

**CLP: Is there anything you have learned about your students and their abilities to adapt?**

**Dannels:** Students are resilient, creative, and for the most part this is just a new thing for them to adapt to. Some students are learning that they actually like online courses. Like us, they are spending way more time on this than they imagined they would. Others have struggled, not with the technology but with the material, and that falls on us as an institution. Are we able to make that content more easily understandable online? Another issue that has come up is that I'm seeing more of where our students live. There's an added dimension to our understanding of where they come from. I had one student who did her whole session in her car because we ask them to find a place where it's quiet when they do a

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video conference or a Zoom session. What does it say about her environment? I think it signals that there are a lot of people and a lot of commotion because she didn't have a lot of privacy. We are now getting insight into what we wouldn't have seen before the pandemic.

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