



## **FACT<sup>2</sup> Statement on Webcam Requirement for Remote Instruction**

Synchronous online learning technologies pose new challenges with respect to student privacy and equity. To raise awareness of the challenges facing students in digital environments, the FACT<sup>2</sup> Council makes the following observations and recommendation:

- Students may wish to maintain privacy and not share a view of their living quarters or home identity with their classmates and instructors.
- Students may have low-bandwidth or mobile connections that will not provide stable or affordable video connections.
- Although some students may be able to use virtual backgrounds, this will not work for students who use phones, tablets, and laptops with processors that do not support virtual backgrounds.
- Noisy environments can also interfere with student use of their microphones. Alternative student interaction can take place using chat, polls, and other similar alternatives.
- Class attendance and participation can be tracked using active learning techniques without requiring students to turn on their cameras.

Therefore we endorse City University of New York's Guidelines on [Requiring the Use of Cameras during Live Classes](#):

*As is the case with many colleges and universities that have chosen online and distance learning modalities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, faculty utilizing Zoom, Blackboard Collaborate and other digital technology to deliver course curriculum/material must be sensitive to issues of privacy. To that end, faculty offering classes through web conferencing digital technology like Zoom cannot require that students turn on their cameras during live classes, unless there is a pedagogical need to do so.*



Further, we recommend that any requirement of student live webcam use be disclosed to students prior to course registration and included in the syllabus, along with information on how to seek a reasonable accommodation for disability-related limitations on webcam use.

This recommendation is intended to raise awareness of privacy, equity, and inclusion issues. The ultimate decision regarding student camera use rests with individual faculty members.

Faculty are encouraged to work with local support services for campus policies, resources, and support.

*December 8, 2020*