**Virtual Event Best Practices**

*Below are several notes on best practices for using Zoom webinar to host virtual events. Many of these best practices can be translated to Zoom meetings as well.*

**Q&A Process**

* If possible, collect questions starting at the beginning of the event in order to ensure a strong pool of questions and select the first question far in advance.
  + Students should type questions in the “Q&A” box (*NOTE: The Q&A box feature is only available in Zoom webinar, not in Zoom meetings. If using Zoom meetings, you will have to rely on the “Chat” feature*). If they are selected, a staff member should reply to tell them they are selected and give any instructions (i.e., be ready at X time, state your name and year when you ask the question, etc.).
* Once you select the first question and are ready to go to Q&A, promote the student to panelist mode so they can ask their question
  + Privately chat the student and remind them to turn on their video and un-mute themselves to speak
* Have a system in place with the moderator if you want them to announce the questioner’s name.
  + For our GU Politics event, we texted Mo (the moderator) the name of the student about a minute in advance so that he knew to say their name aloud.
* Demote the student back to attendee mode once their question has been answered so they disappear from the panelist box and can no longer speak or be seen unless re-promoted, ensuring no disruptions to the panel.

**Panelist Process**

* Begin the panel in practice mode so panelists may chat beforehand. Only the host can change the panel from practice mode to broadcast mode.
  + You may want to create a “holding” slide with your event name, logo, and the disclaimer that the event will begin shortly. Once in broadcast mode, the host of the webinar can share their screen with the slide in full-screen mode so participants see the slide before the event begins.
* Once in broadcast mode, whoever is speaking will be spotlighted (this means they will show up in the large screen)
  + To manually spotlight someone, the host should click the three dots to the right of the person’s name. There, you can click “spotlight” to bring that speaker into the large screen.
  + Remind other panelists to mute themselves when not speaking. *NOTE: the host can also mute participants if they forget to mute themselves to minimize background noise. The host can also un-mute participants if they forget to un-mute themselves before speaking.*
* You cannot go back to practice mode once you have entered broadcast mode.

**Attendance**

* For our first GU Politics event, about one-third of the people who RSVPd tuned in to watch the event live.
* After the conclusion of the event, Georgetown Zoom Support will provide a full attendee report of how many people tuned in, what percentage of the time each individual watched it for, and other helpful data points.

**Live Streaming**

* If you choose to live-stream your Zoom webinar, you can “go live” to either **Facebook** or **YouTube** directly through Zoom. You do not need an outside vendor to do this. However, we engaged Optimum for post-production and found it helpful to also have them handle the livestream.
  + You may also engage Optimum to livestream to a different platform if you have another preference. Twitter offers a livestreaming option, but they do not currently support live captioning.
* There is the option to “go live” from your Facebook page, which will be fairly easy for folks to find. However, you can also get a “Facebook live” link which will direct folks right to the video, which may be helpful for guests to more directly find the content.
  + Note that there is a slight delay of about one minute between the time you choose to “go live” and when the panelists can see the live stream.

**Moderator Tips**

* Encourage the audience to share their thoughts on social media using an event hashtag and tag your handle across social media channels.
* Remind students that you will be inviting them to ask questions via video chat during the second half of the event. Students should submit their questions by opening the "Q&A" option at the bottom of their Zoom screen (or chat function, if not using a Zoom webinar) and asking their questions there.
* Thank any co-sponsors, as well as Optimum Audio and AI Media, if applicable.

**Other Tips**

* To end the session within Zoom webinar, the host should exit and click “end meeting for all”. Note that this will end the webinar for all attendees and panelists at once.
* GU Zoom Support can help you record the webinar as it is happening using the cloud recording function. This is useful if you are interested in posting the video elsewhere after the event ends.
* Per university guidelines, live captioning must be contracted for any audience larger than 200, and can be coordinated with the Office of Strategic Communications ([gucomm@georgetown.edu](mailto:gucomm@georgetown.edu)).

**Important Contacts**

**GU Zoom Support:**

[zoom@georgetown.edu](mailto:zoom@georgetown.edu)

*AI media (captions)*

[onlinesupport@ai-media.tv](mailto:onlinesupport@ai-media.tv)

[info@ai-media.tv](mailto:info@ai-media.tv)

*Optimum (live-streaming, post-production needs)*

Woodra Keene: [woodra@optimum-audio.com](mailto:woodra@optimum-audio.com)

**Sample Communications**

*Below please see a sample email communication with important tips for panelists who may be unfamiliar with using Zoom.*

Dear NAME,

Below are the details for tomorrow’s virtual event. Please read through the directions carefully and let me know if you have any questions or need assistance with any of these items:

**Download Zoom**. If you don't already have Zoom installed, please download the program by clicking [this link](https://georgetown.zoom.us/download). Here, you can download Zoom (please click the first option— "Zoom Client for Meetings") to your computer or tablet. Please do this prior to tomorrow afternoon, so you can let us know if you have any trouble downloading the client. You do not need to create an account if you don't plan to use Zoom again, as we will allow you to join with a custom link.

If you already have Zoom downloaded, you can skip this step. This is all you'll need to do before tomorrow.

**Join the Webinar through the link that will be emailed to you tomorrow afternoon.** I will write you to confirm that you've all received your individualized links once our university tech team sends them out. Please plan to join the link at TIME so we can give a quick run down and make sure everyone is in place for our TIME start time.

* Please make sure your computer camera, speaker, and microphone all work prior to tomorrow's call. You can alternatively plug in a headset if you prefer, and we can test the sound on the call tomorrow.
* We ask that you please mute yourself when you're not talking so we can minimize background noise for the video, which we will remind you of tomorrow.
* We will be recording the call to post online for later viewing, for those who can't join us live.

**Be ready for a "live" Q&A with students during the second half of the event!** After you have a discussion amongst yourselves, we will turn it over to students for Q&A. Our staff will manage queueing up students, and once it's their turn to ask a question they will be viewable via video so they can ask you their question directly.

**Feel free to let me know if you have any issues.** I'm also happy to do a test Zoom call with you if that's helpful.

Looking forward to tomorrow!

Sincerely,

NAME