

# Bottega University

## Newsletter

JULY 2021

As the world reemerges from the effects of the Coronavirus virus, the theme of this newsletter centers around that reemergence back into society with articles from our faculty. Dr. Andrea Clarke, who is our newest member of faculty, provided a brief orientation along with a host of things that she has done to remain engaged during the virus. Next, Randall Robbins, who is also a healthcare worker, provides us with some recommendation for entering back into society and his own perspective. Finally, I provided some of my own recommendations and personal perspectives for going back into society. We hope you enjoy these articles and expressions that we, like everyone else, collectively endured this past year with social distancing and avoidance of contact. These are the major themes of the articles about the experiences collectively during the reengagement into a society we all once knew.

Dr. Troy Roland, Academic Dean/Compliance Officer, Bottega University

## Reemerging to Society Following the Coronavirus: The Need to Embrace Life's Challenges

by Dr. Troy Roland

As the world reemerges from the effects of the Coronavirus virus, several of my own personal reflections are prominent in my mind as the joy of human touch of family and friends which have all been wonderful expressions of joy and appreciation were replaced with signs of negativity and irresponsibility. Once innocuous things like going out to dinner has now become a symbol of fear and danger. One could say that far beyond the effects of the virus are the aftereffects its psychological damage. Nevertheless, as we must also endure these changes as well as the personal changes. In my own private thoughts, the return to society has now been placed with whereby we have collectively. Please allow me to share some of my own thoughts to myself as the reemergence to society becomes necessary.

### Look Before You Jump

Look before you jump," is the original proverb that most of us have learned when we are young .As we grow old in age ,we try to add qualitative additions to the old proverb ,and now as a result of this pandemic, it appears it is more like "If you look too minutely, you will never jump." This is why we must move towards entering into new arena by disengaging the fear of unknown, which always holds us back, thereby putting focus on the foray of opportunities that exist with our return to a society.

Continued on Page 5



# What are online discussion posts and ways to make them more effective

by Marvin Hunt



Online discussion posts are often responses to questions asked in the online classroom each week. Students are typically required to respond to at least two of their classmate's discussion posts by the end of each week. In addition, students may reply to their instructor whenever the instructor replies to a student's discussion posts. This engagement increases learning and may cause others in the classroom that were not as engaged to begin participating in the conversation. Such involvement often conveys new ideas, shared experiences, and critical information or knowledge that may lead to a type of synergy in the classroom that can last throughout the remainder of the academic course.

Therefore, it is essential for the instructor to continuously monitor the online discussions happening in the classroom so that they may understand

when their involvement could be necessary to increase student engagement in the course. These endeavors do not mean that an instructor's involvement will result in immediate increases in student engagement in the classroom. However, the instructor's consistent presence does send a message to their students that their instructor is interested in what the student is posting as well as their learning outcomes.

I think that a few practical ways the instructor can help students facilitate online discussions in the classroom are as follows:

- Convey clear expectations
- Clarify your role
- Create a sense of community

## Convey clear expectations

Be sure to provide clear expectations. For example, the instructor requires the student to use at least two sources from Google Scholar when replying to another student's discussion post or (the length of a post has to be 1-2 paragraphs). In those examples, the expectations need to be identifiable and understood by the student and the instructor. In addition to replying to the instructor or other colleagues, students need to understand the expectations for online discussions clearly. Some universities have students read and sign a Discussion Guideline Policy before students can participate in online discussions. It often is available under each discussion question for easy access (Simon, 2018).

## Clarify your role

As online academic discussions are not under the same physical environmental factors as in-person learning, it is crucial to establish your role as an instructor in online discussions. Students will come with their senses of expectation for online learning discussions, making it essential for instructors to be involved. Instructors have involvement within an online course by responding to students' posts in an engaging manner that may challenge and motivate the student (Simon, 2018). The instructor's input in an online discussion can set the tone for guidelines, formality, and engagement.

## Create a sense of community

"With encouragement and individualized attention, students will quickly connect to the instructor and begin to provide support to other students" ("Section 4.3 Creating, "2021, para 4). The following guidelines are suggestions for building community in an online environment:

- Affirm and recognize students' input;
- Provide opportunities for students to develop a sense of group cohesiveness;
- Maintain the group as a unit; and
- Help members to work together in a mutual cause "Section 4.3 Creating, "2021, para 4).

Instructors are a critical component of online learning discussions. When instructors respond to students' discussion posts, it can boost their confidence within the course, making the online learning environment more interactive and engaging. Students may be inspired and respond by developing discussion posts on another student's work or replying to the remarks that formed in their discussion posts.

## References

- "Section 4.3 Creating" (2021). Section 4.3 creating a sense of community. Retrieved from [https://www.angelo.edu/faculty-and-staff/instructional-design/online-teaching/section\\_43.php](https://www.angelo.edu/faculty-and-staff/instructional-design/online-teaching/section_43.php)
- Simon, E. (2018, November 21). Ten tips for effective online discussions. Retrieved from <https://er.educause.edu/blogs/2018/11/10-tips-for-effective-online-discussions>

# Meet Faculty: Dr. Andrea Clarke

Bottega University is excited to announce the hire of our newest member of faculty, Dr. Andrea Clarke who comes to us with many years background in higher education, healthcare and general business. Bottega University interviewed Dr. Clarke to discuss her professional and personal background.

**"Dr. Clarke, how long have you been in higher education and what is your professional background?"**

I have over 13 years of university experience working at the administrative, management, and academic levels. Within this time period I have also served as a Faculty for the School of Business, Student Service Manager, and Dean of Faculty. In addition to my experience, I have earned a Doctorate degree in Healthcare Management and Leadership, a Master's degree in Healthcare Administration, and a Bachelor in Business Administration.

**"What you enjoy doing when not teaching?"**

Dr. Clarke: When not teaching, spending time with friends and family is an important focus. However, any opportunity to hop across the world is my hobby. I have traveled to Canada, Mexico, Hawaii Islands, Peru, Caribbean, Australia, New Zealand, India, Dubai, and Europe. I am looking forward to more travels this year and the coming years.

I also collect bottles and with the proceed, I purchase food, and other necessities and give to the poor, homeless and orphans. In my spare time I also enjoy swimming, boating, golfing, horseback riding, and dancing. I am considering learning how to ride a bicycle, but I am intimidated as I see it as a two-wheel monster!

**"What do you enjoy the most about teaching?"**

The decision to pursue a career in academia was for the opportunity to offer instructional strategies and support to ensure students stay focused, attend class, complete their degree, and become successful business professionals, leaders and entrepreneurs. It is my hope that my influence and support will "keep the flame of education alive" and inspire students accomplish their educational goals, and ultimately, their vision for their lives. Education in a non-traditional environment ensures that anyone with the interest, passion and determination to achieve their educational goals can, and I have a deep passion and commitment to deliver the quality education these students deserve.

**"Is there anything else that you want to add as to what led you to Bottega?"**

My onboarding experience as a new remote faculty at Bottega University was systematic and informative. Shortly after the interview, I received an email congratulating me on becoming a member of the faculty, and the enrollment into two onboarding courses offering in-depth information needed to be successful.

The first course is the NS101- Student Orientation Course introduces Canvas from the student's perspective and the university's policies and procedures. NS101 is a valuable guide when students have questions about where to find something in their courses. The second course is FT101 - Faculty Orientation course which introduces faculty to Bottega University. Emphasis is on resources, Canvas navigation, and getting acclimated. After the completion of both courses, acknowledgment of completion is required. Bottega University also provides a FAQ source as another avenue for quick access to most asked questions. Additionally, there is mentoring by the Dean for the first term - A direct channel to the Dean to discuss any hiccups.

In my experience, Bottega University provides a robust onboarding process, and substantial support for new faculty, offering opportunities to directly communicate with administration, and colleagues. Bottega's students are worldwide offering a rich source of faculty engagement. I am excited to become a part of the Bottega University's family, and look forward to the journey of growing with the university as it expands.

**"What lessons have you learned as a result of the COVID-19 virus?"**

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly disrupted lives, families, and the education systems in ways that we could not have imagined nor prepared for. It would seem as remote faculty I am positioned for a situation like this! However, the shifting landscape caused a rift impossible to prepare for and forced me to reassess what's valuable and essential in life.

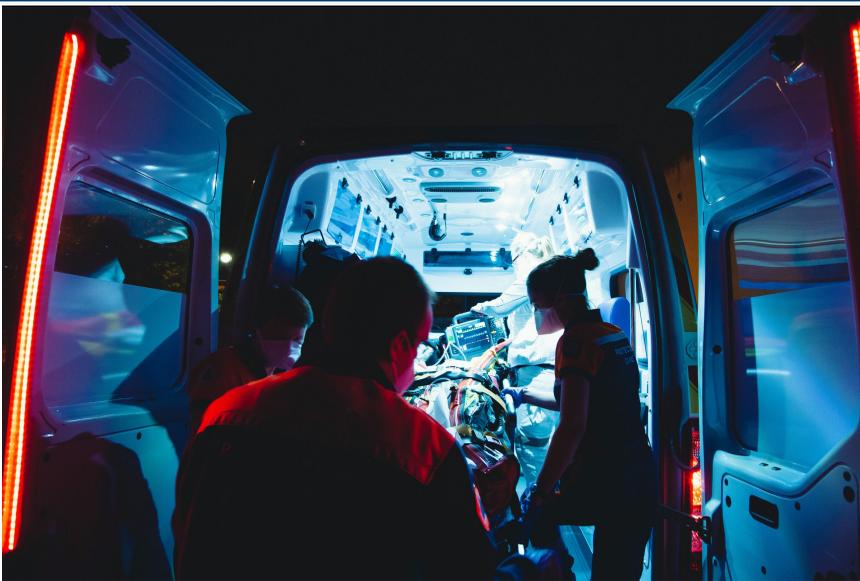
The pandemic hits faculty, students, and families in brutal and challenging ways. It promoted worry, anxiety, fear, depression, uncertainty, and many other emotions. Both faculty and students would at least know one person that passed away due to COVID-

Continued on Page 5



# Frontline Healthcare After COVID-19

by Randall Robbins



When I am not teaching for Bottega University, I am also employed as a Firefighter/Paramedic in the Southeastern US. The majority of our calls and responses are medical in nature rather than fire-related. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent period of quarantine, my department's average daily call volume plummeted as the citizens of the city stayed home and monitored their health more closely than before the pandemic. There was a span of about three months where the number of medical dispatches we received each shift was miniscule or even nonexistent. However, as the population became more complacent and more false

information was distributed, the citizens in my coverage began venturing forth and quarantining less. This resulted in a dramatic uptick in calls as they were falling ill and getting injured while outside the home. During this period of rising call volume, my department and many fire departments of surrounding cities enacted policies to protect their first responders and their citizens from cross-contamination from the responding health care workers through the use of screening questions at the time of dispatch and personal protective equipment.

Now that the pandemic is considered by many to be nearly over and the ratio of at-risk persons that are vaccinated is increasing, our average call volume is back to levels similar to what they were prior to the spread of COVID-19. As a healthcare worker and first responder, I encourage each and every person to take caution in the coming months as the body's immune system might be more subject to infection after long periods of isolation. The previous year's flu season was relatively mild due to quarantine and the lack of individuals interacting with each other in public spaces and potentially spreading viruses and bacteria. Each year's flu vaccine uses the information on viral strains from the previous year's flu season to dictate the formula for the current year. This means that this year's flu vaccine may not be as effective as previous years' and the rates and severity of flu infections could be worse. I still encourage everyone able and willing to get the vaccine as it is the best passive prophylactic available against the spread of the flu and its ever-evolving strains.

Many states are beginning to loosen or even eliminate their quarantine requirements and wearing masks inside is no longer legally required everywhere.

From a frontline healthcare worker, please be cautious and monitor your own health and well-being closely. Aggressively treat any symptoms that you may experience and, in case of illness, consult medical professionals early and limit the opportunities of transmission to others by avoiding public spaces.

Congratulations to everyone who made sacrifices during the COVID-19 pandemic by quarantining, wearing masks in public, and doing their best to limit their own exposure as well as potentially transmitting illness to others.

**Stay safe and healthy!**



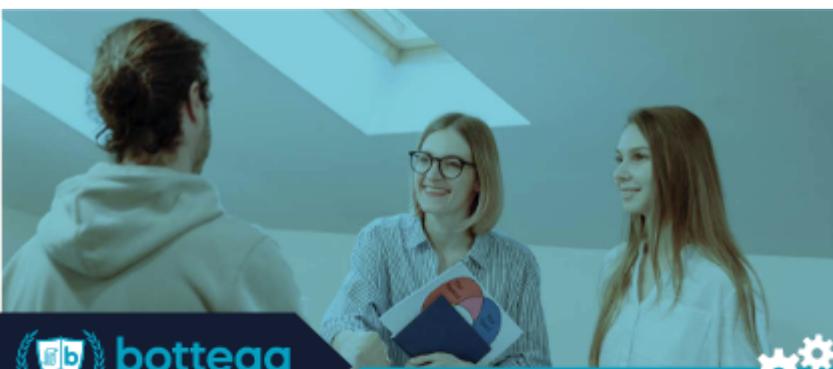
19. Both my sisters and my only child are nurses! You could imagine how petrified I was for them. Today, as I attempt to reemerge, I realized that **there will always be troubles** - many beyond my control. The important thing is to be content, peaceful, and happy in the midst of it all. The truth is we need very little in life to be content and peaceful. My Covid-19 reemergence strategy is to:

- Accept that there will always be troubles in life,
- Live each day content and peaceful despite what hardships may come
- **Be** a positive influence to that I encounter in life
- Be grateful for each day
- I have never been happier!

**Welcome to Bottega University Dr. Andrea Clarke!**

## We are Stronger Than Our Obstacles

Most times, people refrain themselves from availing the opportunities disguised in envelope of problems. The need of an hour is to awaken ourselves and welcome to confront the problems as we will come to know our efficacy to handle them. As we reemerge from the Coronavirus, we will realize our area of strength. During



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\*According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (May, 2018)

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this time of reemergence, it is an opportunity to be stronger than the obstacles in front. In that spirit, we must indulge ourselves in life once again with level of assuredness while we continue to abide by the numerous guidelines by the scientist who advise us to wear mask and continue social distance in public settings.

### Avoid Negative Thoughts About Our Reemergence

We should focus on exerting our energy in making the targets achievable rather than wearing it off by being engrossed in negative notions of not being able to achieve. The moment of the reemergence to society is bestowed upon us, we must realize this reemergence as the opportunity at our footsteps. Sometimes we tend to forgo the positive with doubts revealing our list of problems at the vanguard but we must avoid the negative thoughts to focus on the fruits of joy from this reemergence. We should deliberate on paving the path to be successful rather than focusing on the results of failure.

I am hopeful that these personal reflections resonate with our students, staff, and faculty at Bottega University. May we all enjoy the reemergence to our family, friends, and loved ones while we also honor the words from the scientist, but also begin to reemerge into a life that not that long ago existed with touch, closeness and togetherness, we will all persevere.



# Graduation Rates

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