Faculty often inquire about whether they should or should not ask their students to turn web cameras on during synchronous online sessions.

### Pros of cameras on
- May build engagement and trust
- May foster community within the class
- May enhance student presence
- May create a sense of accountability
- May facilitate learning student names
- May simulate in-person instruction

### Cons of cameras on
- May create digital inequity for those students with limited bandwidth or internet access
- May lead to privacy issues and concerns for students
- May increase student self-consciousness
- Creates risk to FERPA-protected data
- Leads to exhaustion when staring into faces at close range

### Suggestions
- Consider why you want students to have their cameras on. Will the camera enhance their learning? Do the pros outweigh the cons for your particular class situation?
- Turning cameras on should not be mandatory
- Recognize we do not always know the entire student situation; be patient, supportive, and maintain flexibility to account for situations when a student is uncomfortable or unable to turn the camera on.
- Recognize that many students will have poor bandwidth; camera usage will increase bandwidth requirements.
- Recognize that students may be in locations or situations that make it difficult, impossible, or uncomfortable to turn on a camera.
- Establish expectations for cameras at the start of the semester, including a statement in the syllabus explaining when and why the camera should be on.
- Consider starting the semester with a class discussion about pro's and con's of camera use and establishing in collaboration with the students a suggested class guidelines for camera use; this may lead to better class buy-in to camera use.
- Cameras can be required for an assessment or an authentication procedure if students are informed of this expectation in your syllabus.
- Considering asking students to turn on their camera when asking or responding to a question.
- Do not use a camera to monitor whether or not a student is attending or paying attention in class.
- Explain in the syllabus that faculty desire visual feedback and non-verbal cues during class and ask students to be flexible with camera use when possible.

### Resources:
- “Should showing faces be mandatory?”, Inside Higher Ed, May 2020
- “8 ways to be more inclusive in your Zoom teaching”, Chronicle of Higher Education, April 2020
- “Should students show their faces on Zoom?”, Norman Eng blog
- “Why is Zoom so exhausting?”, Chronicle of Higher Education, April 2020
- “Synchronous online classes: 10 tips for engaging students”, Faculty Focus, June 2017