



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Foundry College Offers Forge Learning Platform to Educational Institutions

Proprietary LMS replicates classroom experience online by providing community for students

San Francisco, Calif. — March 12, 2020 — Foundry College, a new kind of college offering live, face-to-face classes in an online environment, today announced that it will begin offering its learning management technology platform, the Forge, and its innovative teaching methods as a managed service to educational institutions. Purpose-built for higher education, the Forge online classroom replicates and improves upon a physical classroom experience by engaging students in active learning, providing faculty with real-time data to support student learning, and facilitating a sense of community between students and faculty—something that asynchronous online learning platforms cannot do.

“It’s becoming increasingly clear that live, face-to-face instruction in an online environment has a vital place in modern education—and not just due to recent global events,” said Stephen M. Kosslyn, CEO and President of Foundry College. “The Forge platform provides a better learning experience than is possible in asynchronous online courses. Both faculty and students actually feel as though they are sitting together in a classroom and engaging with the material and each other. It’s the closest thing to ‘being there’ without being in the same physical space. Live video feeds for all participants means that students have direct access to the instructor and their classmates throughout class—they are part of a conversation, not passive recipients.”

The Forge uses cutting-edge forms of active learning to promote student success by engaging students dynamically with the lesson. A scrolling video grid allows all students to be seen on video and to engage with the professor by raising their hand, answering a question in the in-class chat window, or engaging with a poll that the professor has launched. Faculty can also “spotlight” a student, moving them into position to address the full class. The nature of the platform guides and encourages instructors toward effective active learning methods—even if they were not previously aware of them.

A key feature of the Forge is that it can automatically create breakout groups of 2-8 students during class. The Forge uses data, both collected in real time (e.g., from an in-class quiz) and from the database (e.g., compilation of all prior quiz scores) to put students into breakout groups. Students can be automatically grouped together by comparable knowledge/abilities or by a range of knowledge/abilities—depending on what would be most useful for the particular activity. Faculty can also configure breakout groups by hand, if desired. Students can engage in debates, role-playing and other experiential learning in the breakout groups—all at the touch of a button.

Faculty (and support staff) can monitor these student breakout groups via “heat maps” to gauge how much of some variable (e.g., talking, cursor engagement in the group document, etc.) is occurring in each group. Faculty can engage live with a single breakout group or all groups simultaneously to provide guidance, answer questions or make an announcement. The Forge backend also provides faculty and student support staff with useful data dashboards that note student attendance, engagement and progression—all in service of facilitating student learning and success.

“I like that Foundry College classes are interactive,” said Markela Harrington, a current student at Foundry College. “I can raise my hand at any time and get immediate answers to questions and support from the professor.” Harrington also enjoys the community aspect of the live online classes. “The student community at Foundry College is great. I expected to learn new skills but I did not expect to meet a friend—and now I have made several!”

Those interested in exploring Foundry College’s platform, curriculum or pedagogy—for upcoming sessions of classes or orientation activities—should contact partnerships@foundrycollege.org.

About Foundry College

Foundry College is a new kind of college that offers live, face-to-face classes in an online environment that promotes the community of a traditional classroom experience. Every class combines live, instructor-led lectures with small-group active learning sessions to ensure that new skills and knowledge are effectively integrated, retained, and can be put into immediate practice. Foundry College’s proprietary learning management system, the Forge, can host up to 200 students and uses performance data to facilitate student learning and success. Created by a team led by Dr. Stephen M. Kosslyn, Foundry College launched in 2018 and is headquartered in San Francisco. www.foundrycollege.org.

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