What’s New in Blackboard?

We are pleased to announce new features coming to Blackboard on May 19th! A number of new and improved tools will help you enhance the online learning environment and make what you already do in Blackboard easier. This handout provides an introduction to some of the most exciting and helpful new features that are coming soon.

Building a Course Site

**User Interface**
The new user interface is a streamlined, cleaner version of the current Blackboard interface. You will notice slight differences in appearance, but basic course tools, buttons, and editing options appear in the same place and function in the same way. A global navigation menu has been added, making it easier to access other courses, notifications, and your calendar.

**Content Editor**
The redesigned content editor makes it easier to create dynamic and engaging course content. Better support of MS Word copy/paste, integration of emoticons, and an enhanced math editor give you greater flexibility in the content you can display, while full-screen and preview modes give a better overview of your content.

**Video Everywhere**
Video Everywhere, which is integrated into the new content editor, allows you to record from a webcam and instantly post the video to Blackboard. The videos are hosted on YouTube, so all you have to do is sign into YouTube with your ACC Gmail credentials and create your own channel to get started.

**Teaching Styles**
Not sure how to organize your course menu? Check out the built-in Teaching Styles. You can choose the best match for your course, or just find ideas and inspiration.

**Announcement Cast**
If you teach multiple sections of a course, you’re going to love announcement cast – a course tool that allows you to post announcements to multiple courses at once.

**Notifications**
Notifications inform Blackboard users of upcoming due dates and any messages or alerts they have received. These appear in the notifications dashboard, global navigation menu, and each course site’s homepage. Setting due dates for all assignments and assessments will make this feature a powerful organizational tool for students.

**Calendar**
The calendar feature has been rebuilt, allowing you to personalize your view of the calendar - filter by course, apply colors and labels, and view by day, week or month. You can export to Outlook or Google Calendar. Course items created with due dates are automatically added to your calendar. Drag and drop functionality has been added to make moving an item to a new date/time simple.

**Date Management**
If you assign dates to your assignments, assessments, or other course content, adjusting all the dates from one section to the next can be time-consuming. But with the new date management tool, you can automatically adjust all dates in a course at once. Shift all dates by a certain number of days, or base the shift on the course start date; of course, you can also review all dates and adjust them as needed.
Assignments & Assessments

Test Exceptions
A new test option lets you create test exceptions regarding the amount of time allotted for the test (in cases where a student requires additional time) and/or the window of availability (if a student needs to access the test at an earlier/later date than the rest of the class).

Test Feedback and Results
While you have always been able to determine what feedback students see on completed assessments, you now have the ability to set conditions for when they see it and for how long that feedback is available.

Grading

Inline Grading
Grading has been streamlined, as you can now review assignments in your web browser and use annotation tools to provide comments, highlight text, and/or draw illustrations directly on the document’s inline view.

Retention Center
The retention center provides an overview of student performance that lets you monitor progress, discover which students are at risk, communicate with struggling students, and help them take immediate action for improvement. You can also keep track of patterns over time.

Item Analysis
Item Analysis helps you evaluate the quality and validity of test questions, identify questions that are poor performers, diagnose the problem and fix it in a streamlined workflow. Thanks to the automatic re-grading feature, you can easily edit the test question, its answers, or its value, and the corrected score flows automatically into the Grade Center.

Interactive Tools

Discussion Board Interface
Discussion boards have been redesigned – the streamlined interface makes it simpler to see all of the messages in a thread at once and to reply inline.

Achievements
As a fun way to reward students for performance or help them monitor their course progress, instructors can award badges and certificates to students who achieve certain milestones or performance metrics.

Training and Support
We hope you are excited about the Blackboard upgrade! Instructional Development is in the process of updating ACC’s Blackboard support materials and training (support website, QuickStart handouts, and workshops) to bring you step-by-step instruction on using all the new features. Revised support materials will go live on May 19th, when the upgrade to our Blackboard system is complete. Can’t wait? Log on to our demo server http://bbdemo.austincc.edu/ now to begin exploring. You will receive a certificate error when you first access the demo server, but we assure you it is safe! Continue to the website, and use your ACC eID and password to login. You can find instructional support for the new features now via Blackboard On Demand http://ondemand.blackboard.com/.