10 Tips for Faculty to Get Ready for a New Quarter

Tip 1. Web Browser Considerations for Blackboard
Please note that not all web browsers are compatible with Blackboard. Check your browser compatibility here: http://www.ohio.edu/oit/bbsupport/browserChecker.cfm

Tip 2. Accessing Blackboard
A Blackboard link is available on the Bb Support page at http://www.ohio.edu/oit/bbsupport/ or you can type in the URL location https://blackboard.ohio.edu/. Make sure that you know your Ohio ID and password. If you do not know your Ohio ID and password, contact the OIT Service Desk for assistance. Your courses will load into Blackboard eight weeks prior to the start date of the course.

Tip 3. Viewing Your Class Roster in Blackboard
The student roster for each class is updated twice daily (2am and 2pm) from PeopleSoft to reflect accurate enrollments. Student enrollments load in Bb two weeks prior to the start date of the course. An automated process that occurs between PeopleSoft and Blackboard makes changes to the class list. Instructors need not make manual changes except in certain circumstances. To view a class roster, use the following instructions:
   1. From the course menu, click the Tools link.
   2. Select Roster. (If you do not see Roster as an option, you may need to adjust the course's tool availability. See “Managing Tool Availability” documentation.)
   3. Change the middle drop-down box of the search field from Contains to Not Blank.
   4. Click the Go button.
   **NOTE:** Instructors can also find a list of enrolled students in the Grade Center. In the Control Panel, click Grade Center to expand the menu, and then select Full Grade Center.

Tip 4. Copying Course Materials From a Template or Among Multiple Course Sections
The copy course function enables instructors to copy materials from one course to another. Instructors can select individual sections of a course, such as content areas, the Grade Center, the Discussion Board, Assignments, etc., or all materials and settings.
   **NOTE:** You must be listed as an instructor in both courses to order to copy the course materials.

To perform a course copy, use the following instructions:
   1. Enter the course from which you wish to copy content (i.e. the source course).
   2. In the Control Panel, click to expand the Packages and Utilities area, then select Course Copy.
   3. Leave the Copy Type set to Copy course Materials into an Existing Course.
   4. Select the Browse button to open a secondary window. Find the destination course (i.e. the course into which you wish to copy content) in the list provided, or search by Instructor Name, Course ID, or Name/Description.
   **NOTE:** The course list may consist of multiple pages; advance or click Show All at the bottom right.
   5. Once you find the course, select it by clicking on the associated radio button, then click Submit in the lower right corner of the sub-screen.
   6. Check the boxes for the course areas you wish to copy (Course Information, Course Documents, Assignments, External Links, Contacts, Discussion Board, etc.). It is recommended to choose all areas, then delete items not needed in the destination course. Items that are not utilized in the originating course will not be affected in the destination course.
NOTE: If the source course contains Bb Assignments/SafeAssignments or Exams, the Grade Center Columns and Settings must be copied in order for the graded items to remain intact.
7. In the Course Files section, click the Calculate Size button to determine the size of the course, but note that there is no limit imposed on course size. Use the Manage Package Contents button to remove items from the package to adjust the size or discard files that are not needed.
8. Never check the Copy Enrollments option. Enrollments are managed through an automated process and are based on data supplied by PeopleSoft/Registrar.
9. Click Submit to request the copy.

NOTE: Though you may immediately receive an email notification that the copy was completed, it still takes some time for content to show up in the destination course, especially if the course file is large. Please wait a few hours before becoming concerned. If you submit another copy request, there will be duplicate files in the destination course.

Tip 5. Organizing Blackboard Site
The ability for instructors to adjust the Course Menu can be extremely beneficial in meeting individual class needs. Each course shell contains some default menu items, but instructors are encouraged to personalize the menu. Listed below are a few suggestions on how to use some of the various possible content areas found in each Blackboard course:

Announcements: This area is used to display updates, reminders and announcements posted by the instructor. When a student enters a Blackboard course, this area appears as their default screen.
Course Information: This area is used to display general information about the course such as a syllabus and a course schedule.
Course Documents: This area is used to provide the majority of the material delivered to students online, such as lecture notes, PowerPoint slides, reading materials, study guides, outlines, etc.
Assignments: This area is designed to hold course assignments, test, quizzes, or surveys. Students may also submit assignments in this area.
Discussion Board: This is an area that allows students/instructors to have online discussions by posting questions, comments and responses through the use of forums and threads.
External Links: This area might list helpful websites that students can visit to support class work.
Contacts: Instructor and TA contact information (phone numbers, email addresses, office locations, etc.) can be listed in this area.
Tools: Students can use this area to check their grades. Additional tools are also available here.

Tip 6. Making a Blackboard Course Available to Students
All Blackboard courses are marked as unavailable until the instructor makes them available to students. If the courses are marked as unavailable, the instructor is the only person who can see them. This allows the instructor an opportunity to develop content and control its release to students. To make the course available to students, use the following instructions:

1. Enter the course you wish to make available.
2. In the Control Panel, click Customization to expand the menu.
4. Find the Make this Course Available option and select Yes.
5. Click Submit.
Tip 7. Emailing Users Within Blackboard
Instructors can send email to individual users, to groups of users, or to all users in a course. From the Course Menu, select the Tools menu item and then select Send Email. Instructors can also look to the Control Panel and click Course Tools to expand the menu, then select Send Email.

Tip 8. Assisting Students with Blackboard
The direct URL to the student Blackboard support site can be found at:
http://www.ohio.edu/oit/bbsupport/howto/students/index.cfm
NOTE: It's always a good idea to take a few minutes at the start of the quarter to demonstrate to students how you expect them to use your Blackboard site.

Tip 9. Designing the Appearance of a Course
Instructors can change the color of the course menu, add a course banner, and change the default layout of a course. To make these changes, go to the Control Panel area, click to expand Customization and select Teaching Style.

Tip 10. Additional Training and Support Materials for Instructors
Throughout the year, the Office of Information Technology provides several workshops. To find information about Blackboard and other teaching with technology workshops please visit:
http://www.ohio.edu/oit/bbsupport/events.cfm.

Instructor handouts and video clips about using Blackboard can also be found at:
http://www.ohio.edu/oit/bbsupport/howto/faculty/index.cfm.

Email correspondence regarding Blackboard can be sent to: bbsupport@ohio.edu. Users can also contact the OIT Service Desk at: (740)593-1222 or http://www.ohio.edu/oitech.