Changes to Blackboard for Spring 2018 Semester

Blackboard Migration:

- Our Blackboard (BB) vendor is migrating UIW's hosted environment to a cloud-based software as service (SaaS) environment before January 2018. The major benefit of the change to SaaS is that the Blackboard technical support will not have to bring down the system in the future to make version changes.
- To do this, Blackboard's technical support has to upgrade several versions of BB as well as shut the system down for five days. Migration will occur December 26th and be completed by January 2nd.   Courses will not be available during this time.
- Test Environment – In November, Blackboard technical support built a test environment with existing UIW fall courses. The UIW Instructional Technology team lined up faculty and administrators to assist in testing the new version in November and early December.
- All courses and organizations within the current Blackboard system will be transferred.

New Features to Expect in the Upgrade:

- <u>Bulk Delete</u> - This is a time-saving feature that allows faculty to delete multiple unused Grade Center columns using the Column Organization option in the Grade Center.
- <u>Drag and Drop</u> - Instead of using the Browse My computer button, faculty may drag and drop links and documents directly into content areas, assignments, journals and blogs.
- <u>Submission Receipts</u> – When students submit their assignments, they will receive a receipt with a date/time stamp noting that the assignment was turned in.
- <u>Integrated Video</u> allows faculty and students an opportunity to create and record on the fly through the Blackboard LMS and add the recording to Blackboard content.
- <u>Attendance Tracking</u> – lets faculty keep attendance.
- <u>Inline Grading</u> - There have been minor changes and improvements to the popular inline grading tool.
- <u>Cloud Storage Integration</u> allows students and faculty to upload course documents and content directly from their OneDrive.
- <u>Training</u> - Instructional Technology Services will hold several Blackboard User Group meetings which highlight the new features.   Check Training Schedule and The Word Today.

The vendor has assured us that this transition will be seamless; however, some issues could arise. We ask faculty to review their Bb course(s) when they return in January and let the UIW Blackboard Administrator, Jody Hilderbran – (hilderbr@uiwtx.edu) know of any irregularities.

Instructional Technology Services
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