

## COURSE DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT TEAM



### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Support Center**  
*Technical questions, Blackboard problems, or referral for Blackboard-related assistance.*  
281.283.2828  
supportcenter@uhcl.edu
- **Jingshan Xiao, Coordinator of Library Digital Services**  
*Questions about getting copyrighted materials (e.g., articles, commercial video) and permissions to be used in a Blackboard course.*  
281.283-3912  
xiao@uhcl.edu
- **Brent Goucher, Multimedia Specialist**  
*Assistance with creating custom video content to be used in a Blackboard course.*  
281.283-2988  
goucher@uhcl.edu
- **Disability Services**  
*Assistance with creating accessible content (e.g., documents, captioned video) to be used in a Blackboard course.*  
281.283-2648  
disability@uhcl.edu
- **UHCL Blackboard Updates & Tips Blog—**  
<http://blogger1.uhcl.edu/blackboard>

### OUR TEAM

The Course Development & Support Team, a component of University Computing & Telecommunications (UCT), is responsible for providing faculty and learner support related to instructional technology web applications. Our Learning Technology Administrators (LTAs), Samantha Houston and Jenn Ray, address issues ranging from reports of technical problems with

Blackboard to managing web-supported and online course offerings each semester. Our team of Instructional Designers provides Blackboard and related instructional technology application training and support for faculty and they consult with faculty members on the design, development, implementation, and maintenance of web-based instruction and instructional interventions.



[Jenni Willis-Opalenik](#)  
Instructional Designer III  
281.283.2981  
willisopalenik@uhcl.edu



[Amanda Bruce](#)  
Instructional Designer II,  
SCE  
281.283.2933  
bruce@uhcl.edu



[Candace Lehw](#)  
Instructional Designer II,  
BUS  
281.283.2934  
lehw@uhcl.edu



Henry Newkirk  
Instructional Designer,  
HSH  
281.283.3055  
newkirk@uhcl.edu



[Thuan \(Alex\) Nguyen](#)  
Instructional Designer I,  
SOE  
281.283.2922  
nguyent@uhcl.edu



[Samantha Houston](#)  
Learning Technology  
Administrator (LTA)  
281.283.2971  
houstonsam@uhcl.edu



Jenn Ray  
Learning Technology  
Administrator (LTA)  
281.283.2996  
ray@uhcl.edu

## BLACKBOARD/OPALS (COMPLETE) TRAINING

Although mandatory for new and existing faculty who have not previously used Blackboard at UHCL, we welcome “repeat customers” to this training, as well.

Sessions include three components:

1. Introduced to UHCL policies and resources relating to course requests, technical and instructional support, and the Quality Assurance (QA) process for fully online courses;
2. Hands-on activities, in which attendees will learn how to use many of Blackboard’s basic tools and features;
3. Demonstration of the OPALS application and its use for requesting and provisioning Blackboard courses.

### Face-to-Face Training

Due to extremely limited enrollments, we have suspended our face-to-face (F2F) training sessions, with one exception. New, full-time faculty will have an opportunity to complete their mandatory Blackboard training requirement during New Faculty Orientation (NFO) in August 2017.

### Fully Online Training

This training has rolling enrollments, permitting us to enroll participants continuously, upon request. You do need to have a UHCL computer account (email and login) BEFORE we can enroll you in the online training.

This delivery mode will provide full Blackboard training, distributed in a semi-structured, facilitated fully online course.

Participants should expect to spend four to six hours in training-related activities and may complete the training at a pace which best suits their needs and schedule.

If you have any questions about Blackboard training at UHCL, or if you need to register for the training, please contact Samantha (Sam) Houston, either by telephone at (281) 283-2971 or by email at [houstonsam@uhcl.edu](mailto:houstonsam@uhcl.edu).

---

## USING AUDIO AND VIDEO CONTENTS IN BLACKBOARD

Using audio and video is a great way to supplement the typically heavy reading load that students face in online courses. In addition, audio and video files enable the online instructor to establish and maintain a sense of presence in their Blackboard courses. If your audio or video files reside on the web (e.g., YouTube or another site), you can provide links to those within your Blackboard course. However, if you have audio or video files that you want to upload into Blackboard, please do not do so before contacting your designated Instructional Designer. In order to keep individual courses and our entire Blackboard database system as “lean and mean” as possible, we will obtain the files from you, compress them, load them onto the university’s streaming media server, and then deploy them into your Blackboard course(s) as embedded audio or video items. This also ensures faster and easier access to those contents for your students.

### Do You Use Online Quizzes and Tests?

If you use online quizzes or tests in Blackboard, you may want to make sure that your students review UCT’s document, “**BB9 Quiz Tips**”. This PDF file is available on the University’s Blackboard Login page (within the “For Students” region) and covers critical information that students should know and steps that they must take BEFORE starting an online test or quiz to prevent technical problems.

## HOW COMPATIBLE ARE YOU WITH BLACKBOARD?

Many “technical problems” reported by Blackboard users are preventable if users adhere to the published guidelines for which devices, operating systems, and browsers are used to access UHCL’s Blackboard Learn system (2015 Q4 Release). First and foremost, users should NOT be using tablets or smart phones to access Blackboard, unless they are using the Blackboard Mobile app. Although you may be able to successfully complete some tasks in Blackboard on a tablet or smart phone, Blackboard does not consider those devices to be

supported and problems are frequently reported by users on those platforms.

Blackboard is compatible, in most instances, with the following operating systems: Windows 7, Windows 8/8.1, Windows 10, Mac OSX 10.8, Mac OSX 10.9, Mac OSX 10.10, and ChromeOS. Similarly, in most cases, Blackboard is compatible with the following browsers: Chrome, Firefox, IE 11, and Safari (Mac ONLY).

However, there are specific combinations of operating systems and browsers that are NOT compatible with

UHCL’s current Blackboard system.

[Tables of currently supported browsers and operating systems](#) are available online.

In addition, Blackboard now has a [Browser Check Tool](#) that may be accessed either directly or from the UHCL Blackboard login page.

We strongly recommend that instructors advise students to use both of these tools throughout the semester to ensure that their devices are fully compatible with UHCL’s Blackboard Learn system.

## BLACKBOARD LOGIN PAGE



Fall 2016 (and older) Courses

*Looking for Blackboard courses from Fall 2016 or earlier? [This link will take you to the older system.](#)*



**FOR STUDENTS**

- Is My Course Ready?
- Blackboard - Getting Started
- Blackboard Quiz Tips
- Submitting Assignments
- More Blackboard Support

**FOR FACULTY**

- OPALS Course Request & Provisioning
- Blackboard Training Info
- RESPONDUS
- More Blackboard Support

**RESOURCES**

- Blackboard Browser Check ✓
- Technical Requirements
- Blackboard Blog
- Playing Video/Audio Content
- Contact the Support Center

UHCL’s Blackboard login page is a “one stop shop” for faculty, staff and student needs relating to Blackboard at UHCL. A quarterly video is posted, offering information for all users about Blackboard updates and “hot topics”. Information areas, for both faculty and students, provide quick access to UHCL’s support pages and documentation, Blackboard On-Demand training, and the OPALS application (for faculty). The Resources area provides quick access to the Blackboard Blog, Technical Requirements, and information on how to contact the Support Center for assistance.

## UHCL Blackboard Blog

The UHCL Blackboard Updates and Tips Blog is a great way for faculty, staff and students to stay informed about our Blackboard system at UHCL.

To subscribe to the blog, use the [Blackboard Blog link](#), located in the “Resources” area of the [UHCL Blackboard login page](#). If you would like to receive email notifications when we update the Blog, please use the Subscribe feature on the Blog site to sign up and stay up-to-date about Blackboard at UHCL!

## CUSTOM BLACKBOARD TRAINING

In an effort to better meet the needs of specific schools and programs, UCT's Course Development and Support Team now offers customized face-to-face trainings for groups of 6 or more upon request.

Sessions on specific tools and features are available in one- and two-hour increments. Each session can cover one of the following topics, or another specific topic of your program's/school's choosing:

Grade Center, Blackboard Collaborate, Video Everywhere, Grading Rubrics, What's New in Blackboard Learn, Inline Grading, SafeAssign, Communication (Email, Course Messages, and Announcements), and Using RESPONDUS with Blackboard.

If your school/program is interested in scheduling a small-group session, please contact your designated instructional designer (ID) to discuss your needs. Contact

information for the IDs is provided on the first page of this newsletter.

Don't have time for a face-to-face class, but need something more than a handout? Check out the many short video tutorials on "[Blackboard Learn: For Instructors](#)," available on YouTube.

## ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENTS IN BLACKBOARD

According to the [DO-IT Center at the University of Washington](#) (2014),

Several terms have emerged in recent years that describe similar though somewhat distinct design concepts. The terms **accessible design**, **usable design**, and **universal design** are all approaches to design that can result in products that are easier for everyone to use, including people with disabilities. These concepts apply to design of the built environment, of customer services, and the other products and environments, including information technologies such as hardware, software, multimedia, distance learning courses, websites, curriculum, and instruction.

UHCL, like all higher education institutions, has an obligation to ensure that instruction and instructional materials are accessible to all students. Therefore, faculty who provide instructional materials to students within Blackboard should endeavor to ensure that those items are accessible. For both audio and video files, it is recommended that instructors also provide a printed transcript, making the information presented in those files accessible to students with low or no hearing. Print-based items, such as Word documents, PDF files, and PowerPoints, should be formatted to enable those students who require the use of screen reader to access those files. UHCL's Disability Services office has a wealth of information online to guide faculty in understanding accessibility issues in higher education and in [creating accessible instructional materials](#). We strongly encourage you to check out those resources on the web.

## End-of-Semester "Housekeeping"

There are two types of data backups that we encourage instructors to make at or toward the end of each semester.

The first is a copy of their Blackboard Grade Center data into an Excel spreadsheet (if they use the Grade Center during the semester). For step-by-step instructions, review the handout, "Downloading the Grade Center to Excel," which is available on the Blackboard Faculty Support page. The second is a more comprehensive backup of the entire course. Instructions on creating and downloading a course archive may also be found on the Blackboard Faculty Support page.