

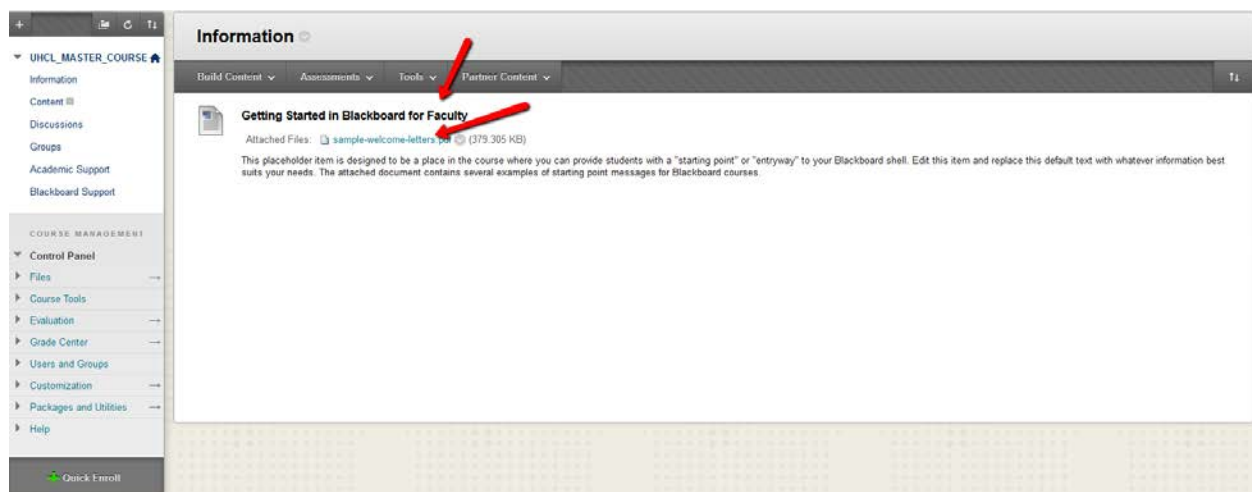
## Disaster Recovery – Blackboard Basics

In the event of an extended campus closure, UHCL faculty may want to rely on Blackboard to make up lost instructional contact hours for their face-to-face, web-supported, or partially online classes. This handout will describe how to edit or add several basic elements to a new blank Blackboard master course or provisioned offering: (1) edit the placeholder item to create a welcome message on the default content page in a new course, (2) upload a syllabus file as a link on a content page, and (3) add Blackboard’s Announcements tool as a link on the course menu and make the new Announcements page the entry point/landing page for the course, and (4) create an announcement, including using the option to send it to students as an email. If you are interested in adding other types of content, interactivity, or assessment to your Blackboard course(s), please contact the Support Center, either at [supportcenter@uhcl.edu](mailto:supportcenter@uhcl.edu) or at 281-283-2828. Your request will be entered into the help ticketing system and assigned to our team’s designated Instructional Designer (ID) for your college, who will then contact you to provide further assistance.

**NOTE: This tutorial assumes that you have already completed the university’s mandatory Blackboard training and that you have requested and received one or more master courses in the Blackboard system. You may either edit your master with the following information and then use OPALS to provision a copy from which to teach, or you may provision the blank master and then edit it, using these instructions.**

### Overview

The following screen capture is the landing page of a new, blank Blackboard course. This Information page contains a text-based item, with an attached document, that you may edit with a welcome message that quickly orients students to your course. Click on its attached file (sample-welcome-letters.pdf) for instructions on how to edit the item with your own message.

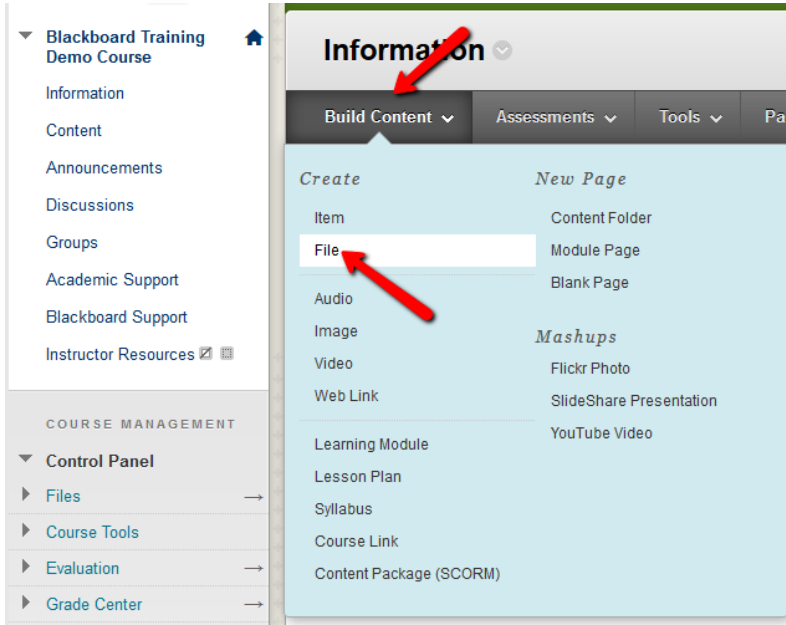


### Uploading a Syllabus File

Blackboard’s File tool enables you to quickly upload a copy of your course syllabus (or any other electronic file) to your course. Once deployed, students simply click on the name of the file in

Blackboard to open, view, download, or save it. The following steps describe how to upload a syllabus file to the landing page in this course.

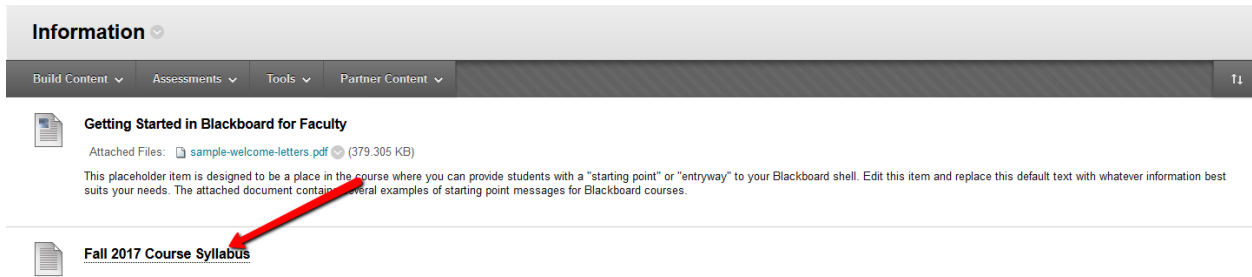
1. Begin by rolling over the Build Content button on the page and then selecting the File option from the resulting menu.



2. At the resulting Create File screen, complete the following steps: (1) type in a Name that will serve as the link on which students will click to open the file, (2) click the Browse my Computer button to locate the desired file on your computer and select it for use, (3) under File Option, set the Open in a New Window setting to Yes, and (4) click the Submit button to complete the process.



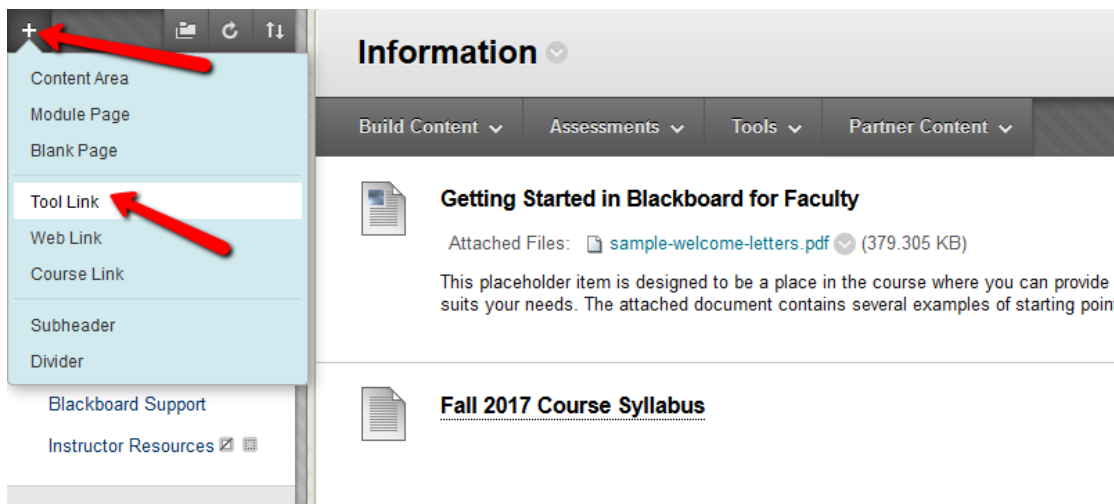
A clickable link that will open the syllabus file should now appear on your course landing page.



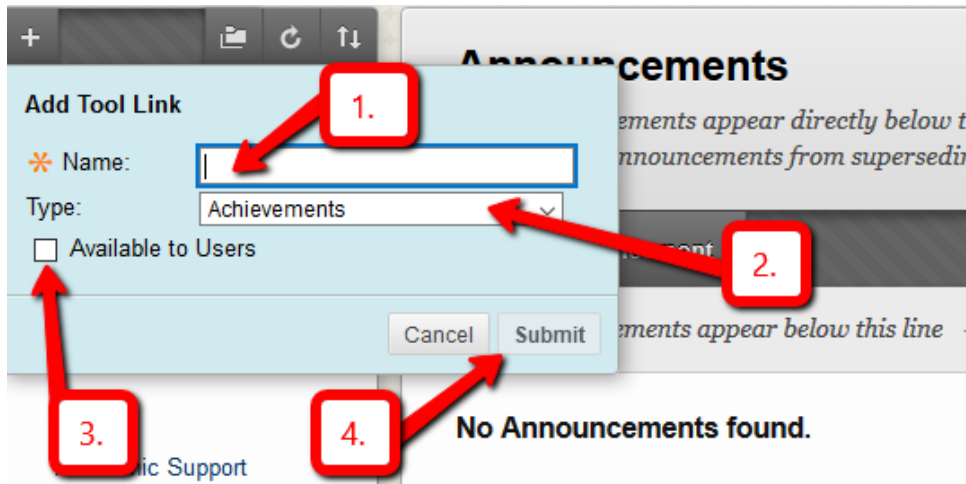
## Adding the Announcements Tool

Although Blackboard provides several tools that can be used for faculty-to-student communication, we highly recommend the use of the Announcements tool as a means to quickly and easily get information and updates to the students in a particular course. Below are the steps needed to add the Announcements tool to your course menu and then make the resulting Announcements page the landing/entry point for your course (making it the first thing that students see).

1. Roll over the Add Menu Item icon (plus sign), located in the upper left corner of your course menu and select the Tool Link option from the resulting menu.

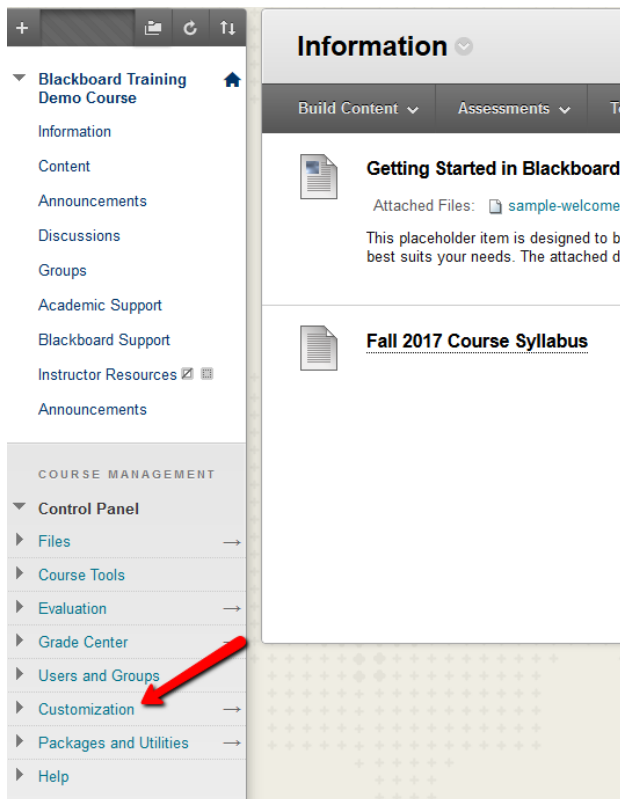


2. At the resulting Add Tool Link box, complete the following steps: (1) type in a Name for the Announcements page (most people simply call it "Announcements"), (2) select the Announcements option from the Type menu, (3) check the box next to Available to Users, and (4) click the Submit button to complete the process.

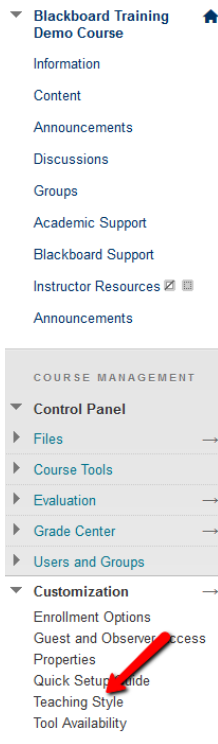


The new Announcements link should now appear at the bottom of your course menu.

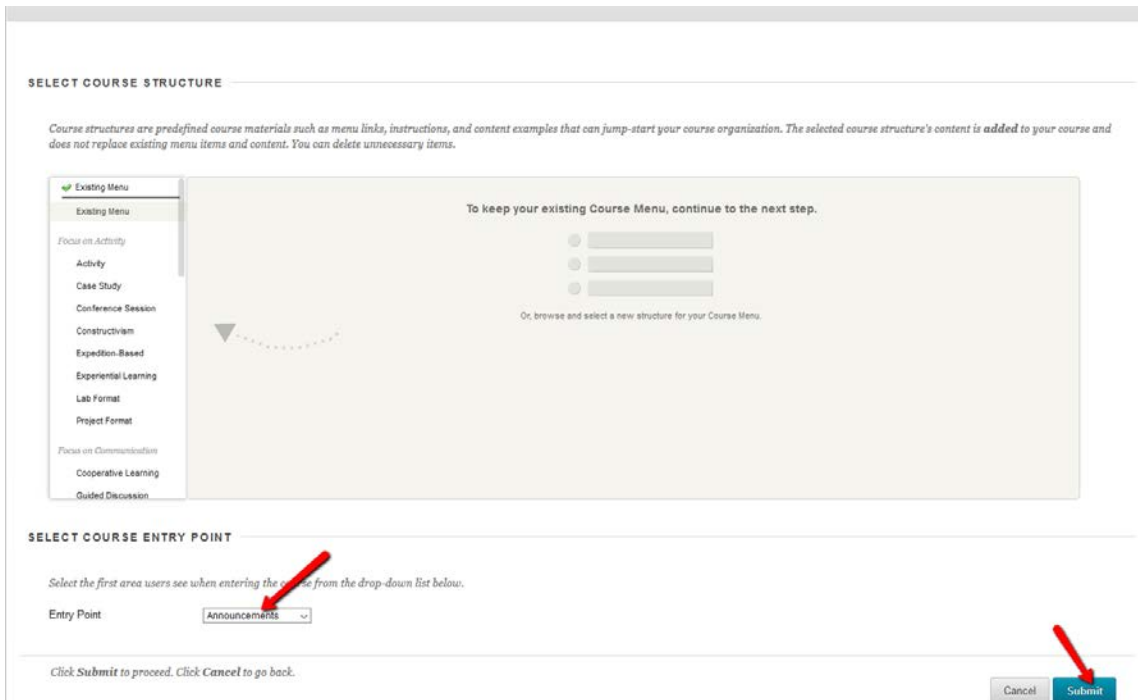
3. To set the new Announcements page to serve as the entry/landing page for the course, making it the first thing that students see, click the Customization link located in the Course Management menu.



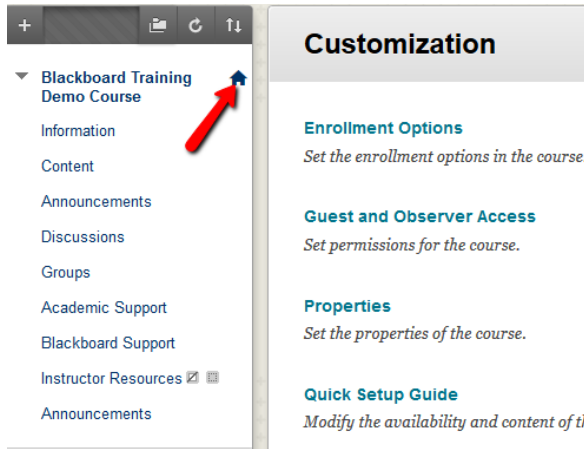
4. From the resulting expanded menu, select the Teaching Style option.



5. At the resulting Teaching Style screen, scroll down to the Select Course Entry Point area and select the Announcements (or whatever name you assigned to the new Announcements page) from the Entry Point menu. Then, click the Submit button to complete the change.



6. To ensure that the new Announcements page is now the course entry point/landing page, click the Home icon in the upper right corner of the course menu.

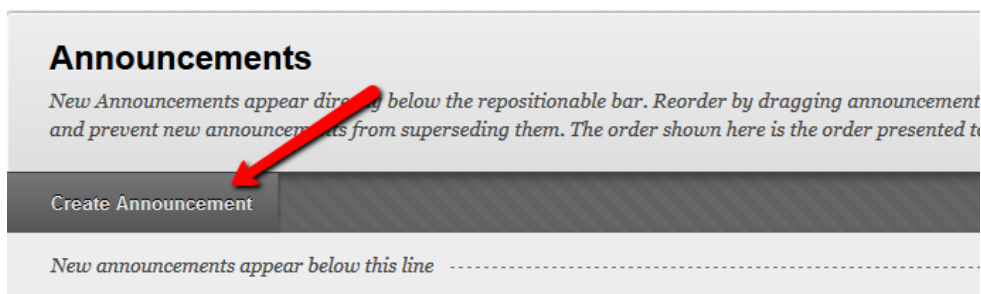


You should now see the Announcements screen, and are ready to create your first course announcement.

### Creating Course Announcements

Course Announcements are an ideal way to reach your student because they are made available to users through three communication channels: (1) students see them when they log into Blackboard, even before they click on the name of a particular course to enter it, (2) when you use the procedure above to make the Announcements page the course entry point, your Announcements will be the first thing that students see when they enter your course, and (3) using the Email Announcement to Students option when creating the announcement will send an email copy of it to the student's preferred email address (as set up in E-Services). The following steps describe how to create a new course announcement and send it as an email to your students:

1. From the Announcements screen, click the Create Announcement button to begin.



**No Announcements found.**

2. At the Create Announcement screen, begin by typing in a Subject for the announcement and then enter your message text into the Message box. **NOTE: We strongly recommend that you type your text into the Message box, rather than trying to copy and paste text from Word or**

another application into the box. Pasted text can end up appearing in a very messy form to students, even though it may look fine from your perspective.

**Create Announcement**  
*New Announcements appear directly below the repositionable bar and can be dragged to new positions to modify the order.*  
[More Help](#)

*\* Indicates a required field.*

**ANNOUNCEMENT INFORMATION**

\* Subject  Black

Message

Rich text editor toolbar and area.

Path: p Words: 0

3. Once you complete your announcement message, DO NOT CLICK SUBMIT JUST YET. Instead, scroll down the screen until you can see the Web Announcement Options area. Check the box next to “Send a copy of this announcement immediately” and then click the Submit button to complete your announcement.

Rich text editor toolbar and area.

Path: p Words: 0

**WEB ANNOUNCEMENT OPTIONS**

Duration  Not Date Restricted  
 Date Restricted

Email Announcement  Send a copy of this announcement immediately  
*Students are still notified of this announcement even if this option is not selected*

**COURSE LINK**

Click [Browse](#) to choose an item.

Location  [Browse...](#)

Click [Submit](#) to finish. Click [Cancel](#) to quit.

[Cancel](#) [Submit](#)

The new announcement now appears at the top of the Announcements page, as well as having been distributed to the students via email. **NOTE: When using the email option, you may sometimes end up with a message at the top of your screen saying that the message could not be sent to one or more students. This warning from the Blackboard system indicates that one or more students have a full or inactive email inbox set as their preferred email in E-Services. It does not indicate that NO students received the email.**

The screenshot shows the Blackboard interface for an 'Announcements' section. On the left is a navigation menu with items like 'Blackboard Training Demo Course', 'Information', 'Content', 'Announcements', 'Discussions', 'Groups', 'Academic Support', 'Blackboard Support', and 'Instructor Resources'. The main content area is titled 'Announcements' and contains a 'Create Announcement' button. Below this is a dashed line with the text 'New announcements appear below this line'. A red arrow points to this line. Below the line is an announcement titled 'Welcome to Class' posted on Tuesday, September 5, 2017 at 4:20:20 PM CDT. The announcement text reads: 'Welcome to INST 5130! Please plan to check Blackboard every other day to view the latest announcements for the course. If this is your first time in this Blackboard course, make sure that you click the Information link on the course menu to access the syllabus and other information.' On the right side of the announcement, it says 'Posted by: Jennifer Williams-Opatnik' and 'Posted to: Blackboard Training Demo Course'.

## Conclusion

Blackboard offers many additional tools and features beyond the basic elements presented in this tutorial. To learn more about Blackboard's full capabilities, you may want to review the [online self-help materials from Blackboard](#) or contact UHCL's designated Instructional Designer (ID) for your specific college. If you prefer, you can always contact the Support Center (either at [supportcenter@uhcl.edu](mailto:supportcenter@uhcl.edu) or at 281-283-28280 and your inquiry will be routed to your Instructional Designer.