

What's New in Blackboard Learn April 2014? (Faculty)

At the conclusion of the Fall 2014 semester, UHCL upgraded its installation of Blackboard Learn 9.1 from Service Pack 11 to the April 2014 Release. This upgrade has resulted in a number of new features and benefits that we hope will benefit both students and instructors as we move into 2015. These changes include:

- **Improved Browser and Operating System Compatibility.** Blackboard supports for primary browsers. Please review the list below for supported browsers and to see which versions of each browser are supported:
 - Internet Explorer (IE9, IE10, and IE11)
 - Safari for Apple (6 and 7) – NOTE: Safari for Windows is unsupported.
 - Firefox (24 – ESR channel and 28 – stable channel)
 - Chrome 34 (stable channel)

In addition, the following Blackboard tools and features require that users have the Java Runtime Environment (JRE) from Oracle enabled as a browser plugin:

- Multiple file uploads in Course Files
- Blackboard Collaborate
- Record from Webcam

NOTE: Due to increasingly sensitive content security protocols within the various browsers, ALL users may experience problems when trying to view unsecured contents (audio files, videos, third-party websites and apps) within Blackboard. If this occurs, please refer to the handout on “Viewing Unsecured Content” for instructions on how to address this problem within your preferred browser.

- **Test Enhancements.** Instructors can now add questions to an existing test in the exact location at which the new question should be added. A major new feature is the “exceptions” options for tests. Instructors may specify exceptions to the overall settings for a test (e.g., number of attempts, time of test, auto submit, availability window, and force completion) for individuals and groups of students. Finally, different levels of test feedback can be released to students based on specific events (e.g., show “Score” only after submission and then show feedback and submitted answers after the availability window expires).
- **Improved SafeAssign Integration and Reporting.** The option to use SafeAssign for an assignment is now activated when you set/edit the assignment options, instead of having to establish a separate SafeAssign drop box. In addition, the originality report has been re-designed for improved readability.
- **Improved Groups Management.** Instructors now have a single screen for creating and managing course groups. In addition, instructors now have the option of creating a Grade Center Smart View to readily access and post grades for group-specific students.




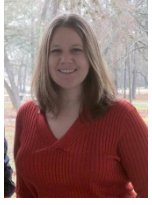
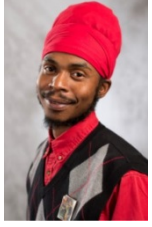

- **Improved Inline Grading.** Accepted file formats now include Word (.doc, .docx), PowerPoint (.ppt, .pptx), Excel (.xls, .xlsx), and PDF (.pdf). The inline grading interface is now also used when grading discussions, blogs, wikis, and journals.
- **Improved Discussions Tool.** There is now a “post first” option, thread posts appear on a single page, user avatars may be used, the “Reply” content editor appears within the flow of the discussion, and it’s easier to recognize instructors’ posts within the thread.
- **Improved Calendar Tool.** Increased personalization/customization, items with dues dates are automatically pushed to the calendar, and calendar items may be exported to Outlook, Google and other third-party calendars.
- **New - Student Preview.** Instructors will no longer need to request “zzaccounts” to test drive their course(s) as a student. Blackboard’s new Student Preview mode is a true student experience – even allowing instructors the option to save grades, etc. from work submitted while in Student Preview.
- **New - Date Management.** Instructors who use due dates, adaptive release dates and test dates can now update those on a single screen at the start of the new semester.
- **New - Test Access Log.** Instructors may now review a log of each student’s test attempt that shows a list of every interaction that the student engaged in during the test session.
- **New - Course Message Notifications.** In courses in which the instructor uses the Course Messages (internal course “email”) tool, students, TAs, and instructors can now adjust their notifications settings to receive an external email (either for individual messages or as a daily “digest”) when new messages are sent within the course.
- **New – Retention Center.** Summarizes user activity and submissions in a course for easy instructor review and intervention.
- **New - Adjust “Score Attempts Using” Setting from Assignment Options.** Instructors who permit multiple assignment submissions can now specify which student attempt to use as the assignment grade when they create/edit the assignment options, rather than having to establish that setting via the assignment’s Grade Center column.

Instructors who would like more information about these new features are welcome to take advantage of either or both of the following resources:

1. Visit the Official Blackboard Help Site for handouts and videos specifically targeted at instructors using Blackboard 9.1 2014 Release (UHCL’s current version of Blackboard). The link to that sites main page is located at the following URL: https://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/9.1_2014_04/

Once there, we recommend that you quickly review the “About Help” materials to familiarize yourself with the Blackboard Support Site and its features. The link to “About Help” is located at the bottom of the left-hand Table of Contents for Instructors.

2. Contact a member of UHCL’s course development and support team to schedule a one-on-one consultation/training session to review the new features.

Photograph	Contact Information	Role and Schools/Programs Supported
	<p>Jenni Willis-Opalenik Lead Instructional Designer willisopalenik@uhcl.edu (281) 283-2981</p>	<p>Assists faculty/staff with questions about support services, instructional design assistance, and Blackboard-related training. Also assists faculty with Blackboard- and OPALS-related questions as needed.</p>
	<p>Samantha Houston Learning Technology Administrator houstonsam@uhcl.edu (281) 283-2971</p>	<p>Maintains the Blackboard system, including ongoing upgrades to key components (Building Blocks). Assists students with Blackboard-related issues and assists faculty (or refers them to the Instructional Design staff).</p>
	<p>Judith Banat Instructional Designer banat@uhcl.edu (281) 283-2956</p>	<p>Supports faculty in the School of Education (SOE) and in the Mathematics Program in the School of Science and Computer Engineering (SCE).</p>
	<p>Amanda Bruce Web Developer/Instructional Designer bruce@uhcl.edu (281) 283-2933</p>	<p>Maintains the Blackboard login page, UHCL Blackboard Support web pages, and the Blackboard Tips & Updates Blog. Creates instructional graphics to support web-enhanced instruction in Blackboard. Supports faculty in the Computer Science Program in the School of Science and Computer Engineering (SCE).</p>
	<p>Jerome Chenevert Instructional Designer chenevert@uhcl.edu (281) 283-2922</p>	<p>Supports faculty in the Human Sciences and Humanities (HSH) and in the Natural Sciences in the School of Science and Computer Engineering (SCE).</p>
	<p>Candace Lehew Instructional Designer lehew@uhcl.edu (281) 283-2934</p>	<p>Supports faculty in the School of Business (BUS) and in Engineering in the School of Science and Computer Engineering (SCE).</p>