UPDATE BLACKBOARD COURSE SITE FOR NEW SEMESTER
(updated for Bb Version 9.1 – April 2011)

Below is a general checklist for use when getting your Blackboard course sites ready for each new semester. The sections indicated below are the most commonly used areas. Some instructors may use additional content/course areas, while others may not use all those listed below. In either case, just be sure that you update whichever areas you are using each semester before making the course available to students.

_____ **Course Title**

The course title is taken directly from the registrar's system and often contains shortened words and/or abbreviations. This can make it difficult for students to recognize the course name, so you may want to change it. Also, if you are teaching cross-listed/combined courses, you need to update the Bb title to reflect both courses so that students do not get confused. To update the course title, do the following:

- From the **Control Panel**, select **Settings** from the **Course Options pane**.
- Select **Course Name and Description**.
- In the **Course Name** field, modify the name accordingly.
- Scroll down and click the **Submit** button.

_____ **Announcements**

When course content is taken from one semester to another, the Announcement section **is not** copied over. Therefore, you will need to create a new welcome/opening announcement at the beginning of each semester. To use the same wording from your previous course, simply copy/paste the text into a new announcement. This will give you the opportunity to modify the announcement if need be, and also give your new announcement a date that is consistent with the current course dates rather than retaining the old announcement date when copied over from the previous course.

_____ **Start Here**

Each and every course will have a **Start Here** section. Most of the information in this section covers general University and SOE policies and procedures, and will be identical from course to course. There are some differences from program to program, however, because of program-specific information that has been included. **Instructors should not change or remove** any of the information in this section, other than to update the faculty/instructor info as needed.

_____ **Syllabus**

Your course syllabus will be loaded for you once it has been submitted and reviewed, so you do not need to do anything in this section. **You should submit your course syllabus to Jackie Bruso (jbruso@regent.edu)** by the date specified by the Dean's office each semester. In general, syllabi are due one month prior to the starting date of the course.

_____ **Course Content & Activities**

This is the area where course materials and assignment information should go. For the majority of our courses, there will be a folder for each week of the course. Inside that folder will be any introductory information, study materials, and assignment details. Check this area to update any documents that have dates or other semester-specific content. To change a document posted in Course Content & Activities, you will need to open the file in the original application, make any changes to it, and repost in the course site. To do so, follow the steps below:

- From the content area where the document is located, right-click over the file name and select "**Open in New Window,**" which will open the document in the application in

which it was created.
- Update the file accordingly and save it on your computer.
- Go back into Bb and navigate to the content area where the item is located.
- Click the dropdown arrow to the right of the item name and select **Edit**.
- In **Section 2: Attachments**, click the "*Mark for removal*" link to the right of the original file to indicate that you want to remove it. Before submitting, browse to locate and attach the updated file.
- Scroll down and click the **Submit** button.

_____ **Assignments**

Although assignments should be listed in the Course Content & Activities area within the week in which they occur/are due, many instructors use this area to post specific assignment details and/or rubrics. Check this area to update any documents that have dates or other semester-specific content. To change documents posted in Assignments, you will need to follow the same procedures as the previous section (Course Content & Activities). Save/update your document(s) and repost them in the Assignments area using the steps above.

_____ **Community Discussion Board**

Because of the new Bb template, every course will have the same four forums in this area (Introductions, Questions, Prayer, and Coffee Shop). When course content is taken from one semester to another, there is no option to copy just the discussion forums without the associated postings. Therefore, the new course will have discussion threads **and** all the student postings from the previous course. To update this area, you'll need to remove the old student posts. To do so, follow the steps below:

- From the **Community Discussion Board** area, click the forum **name** to access the previous semester's student posts.
- Click the **check box** above the list of postings to mark each message for deletion.
- Click the **Delete** button.
- Depending on the number of postings, you may have to repeat this process more than once to remove all the messages.
- When all the previous postings have been removed, click the **OK** button near the bottom right to exit this forum.
- Repeat this process with each forum until they are all updated and ready for the new semester.

_____ **Group Discussion Board (Dialogue link)**

For most courses, the Group Discussion Board link is called *Dialogue*, although some programs may have it labeled differently. Regardless of the link name, this is the area where course-related, content discussions will take place. During the copy process, discussion threads **and** all postings from the previous course will be copied over. Use the steps above to remove the old student posts. To remove or update any of the forums, click the **dropdown arrow** to the right of the forum name and select **Edit**. Update as needed. If you do not need groups or you have more groups than you need, click the **dropdown arrow** to the right of the forum name and select **Delete**.

Once the groups are set-up, you will need to add students to the appropriate group. It's best to do this close to the beginning of the semester, since your course roster will likely change as new students are added. If you create the groups too early, you may not remember to include new students in a group as they are added to the course. To add students to a group, follow the steps below:

- From the Control Panel, click on **Users and Groups**.
- Click on **Groups**, which will display a listing of your groups.
- Click the dropdown next to the group you want to add students to and select **Edit**.
- On the next page, scroll down to the **Membership area (#4)**, and select the students you want to add to that group. Move them from the left side box to the right side box with the **> arrow**.
- Scroll down and click **Submit**.
- Repeat for each group.

If you need to add additional groups, follow the steps below:

- From the Control Panel, click on **Users and Groups**.
- Click on **Groups**, which will display a listing of your groups.
- Scroll over the button labeled **Create Single Group**. From the dropdown that appears, select **Manual Enroll**.
- On the next screen, enter the information about your new group.
- You can add users to it at this time or wait and do that at a later date.
- Scroll down and click **Submit**.
- Repeat for each group that you need to create.

_____ **User Tools/Course Tools**

Each course site has a link for **User Tools** so that students can view their grades, email one another, and access the Bb User Guide. By default, this section has links to many features, some of which you may not use in your course. It is best to hide the link to any features you do not wish to use (it helps avoid student confusion). To hide unwanted links from the User Tools area, click the **Hide Link** button to the right of the tool name. Once a tool is hidden, the button changes to **Show Link**, which you can then use to unhide the tool if desired.

_____ **Grade Center**

Since all instructors are now required to use the Bb online gradebook, you will need to make sure it is updated to reflect the current assignments, including the Course Power Objective. There are two ways to get items into the online gradebook: 1) automatically when assignments are created using the Assignment Manager feature, and 2) manually by adding them through the Control Panel.

If you use the Assignment Manager feature to set-up your assignments, you **do not** need to add those items to the gradebook manually.

If you do not use the Assignment Manager to set-up your assignments, you will need to manually create a gradebook entry for each assignment. To do so, follow the steps below:

- From the **Control Panel**, click on **Grade Center** and then **Full Grade Center.**
- Click the **Create Column** button.
- Enter a **Column Name**.
- Use the dropdown menu to select a **Primary Display** format, such as letter grade, score, text, percentage, etc.
- Use the dropdown menu to select a **Category**, such as essay, exam, homework, journal, etc. **If the column you are adding is for an assignment that is all or part of the course power objective, select that option as the Category**.
- Enter the **Due Date** if you'd like that to be displayed. If you do use this option, you will need to change it from semester to semester as course dates change.
- Scroll down and click the **Submit** button.

If one or more of the existing entries in your gradebook is for an assignment that is all or part of the course power objective, you will need to designate it as such. To do so, follow the steps below:

- From the **Control Panel**, click on **Grade Center** and then **Full Grade Center.**
- Click the dropdown menu to the right of the column name.
- Select the **Edit Column Information**.
- Use the dropdown menu next to **Category** to **Course Power Objective**.
- Click the **Submit** button to save your changes.
- Repeat this process for each item that you want to designate as a CPO.

Note: You should not have a separate column for the CPO. Simply designate one of the existing columns as the CPO by using the steps above.

The last thing to do in the Grade Center area is to check to make sure there are no items listed that you no longer need. To delete unwanted gradebook items, follow the steps below:

- From the **Control Panel**, click on **Grade Center** and then **Full Grade Center.**
- Once the Grade Center loads, click the dropdown arrow to the right of the item name that you want to remove.
- Select **Delete Column** from the submenu.
- The system will process/save your change and reload the Grade Center.

_____ **Course Availability**

The final step in getting your course ready for the new semester is to make it available to students. Be sure not to do this until you have carefully reviewed and updated all necessary areas of the course site. Once your are satisfied that the course is fully updated and ready for student access, follow the steps below:

- From the **Control Panel**, click on **Customization** and then **Properties.**
- In **Section 3: Set Availability**, change the indicator from No to **Yes**.
- Scroll down and click the **Submit** button.