

UBlearns System Update

Blackboard on UBlearns to Upgrade to Version 8.0

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The UBlearns service will complete an upgrade to the latest version of the Blackboard application after the conclusion of the Spring '08 semester.

Version 8.0 introduces a number of new features and enhancements to existing features, including a redesign of the Gradebook, now called the Grade Center, and Self and Peer Assessments. Enhancements to the Discussion Board are also included.

Grade Center (formerly Gradebook)

This new and easy-to-use grading tool increases efficiency and enables customization, analysis and flexibility. Instructors can enter scores more easily, select display data, send email via the Grade Center, create and print reports and customize display of the Grade Center. New features include the following:

Action Bar is a redesigned tool bar with multiple functions. New icons display new capabilities.

- **Add Grade Column**
- **Add Calculated Column** is a drop down menu with options for creating calculated columns.
- **Manage** displays Grade Center Management options when the action link is triggered.
- **Email Students** enables instructors to email selected students, all students, selected observers, or all observers directly from the Grade Center.
- **Create Reports**
- **View Grade History** allows the grade history of selected students to be displayed.

Customize Display of the Grade Center

- Instructors can organize the Grade Center to change the order and display of columns, assign columns to Grading Periods and categories, and freeze or unfreeze columns.
- Columns listed under the option 'Shown in All Grade Center Views' will appear in all views no matter how far to the right you scroll.
- Users can be hidden or displayed, reducing the number of rows in the grid.

Smart Views

Instructors have the ability to customize the Grade Center to display a subset of students based on selected criteria.

Create and Print Reports

Reports can be created using instructor-controlled elements to display specific grades and student information.

New Grade Calculations

An instructor can calculate grades by combining multiple columns to see such performance results as class average, grades based on a weighted scale, or total points.

Grading Schema

Instructors can create a Grading Schema using multiple grading scales that match assessment grades to chosen grade displays, such as letter or percentage.

Grade Center Accessibility

The Grade Center has two options.

- The **Interactive View** allows columns to be frozen and has inline editing capabilities.
- The **Non-Interactive View** displays the Grade Center data in a simple grid. There is no inline editing and no ability to freeze columns, making it easier to navigate by keystroke and to accommodate screen readers. This is the default setting.

Self and Peer Assessment

Two new features help students and groups identify their own strengths and weaknesses.

- The Self Assessment feature enables students to review and grade their own assessment submissions following criteria set by the instructor.
- The Peer Evaluation feature gives students the opportunity to review and grade work submitted by their peers using criteria set by the instructor.

Discussion Board

- The tree view is once again a display option.
- The ability to mark discussion board posts read or unread has returned.
 - It now takes only two clicks to mark every post in a collection as read.
 - One click collects every unread post in a forum.
- Processing graphic lets you know your discussion board is loading. No more blank pages wondering if your click was received.

Service interruption information will be posted to CIT Alert! and the UBlearns login page when the upgrade timing is confirmed. Contact us at: ublearns@buffalo.edu to work through potential problems. ■

How to get help

Application support: ublearns@buffalo.edu or 645-2803

Course consultation and instruction: ubtlc@buffalo.edu or 645-7700

Advisory or Building Block development server information: ubetc.org/ublearnsadvisory or 645-6522 ■

UBlearns Workshops and Training

The Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) is offering a series of workshops for faculty to learn how to apply the course management features of Blackboard™ on UBlearns. Enhancements for the scheduled upgrade to version 8.0 will be highlighted.

The workshops are designed for faculty who are interested in finding ways to use UBlearns to supplement traditional instructional methods. Workshop participants will learn how to post course syllabi, schedules, assignments, student grades and other materials to UBlearns.

If you have questions about UBlearns, please contact the TLC at ubtlc@buffalo.edu to schedule a time for small group or individual training. Consultation is also available for faculty who would like to learn how to more effectively integrate UBlearns into their teaching.

Keep an eye on the Teaching & Learning Center website (ubtlc.buffalo.edu) and/or subscribe to our listserv (ubtlc.buffalo.edu/events/listserv) to be kept up-to-date as new workshops are scheduled. ■

UBlearns Express Workshop Schedule

To register for upcoming UBlearns workshops, go to ubtlc.buffalo.edu/workshops.

Date	Time	Location
5/13/2008 (Tuesday)	9:00 AM – 12:00 PM	212 Capen Hall North Campus
6/16/2008 (Monday)	1:00 PM – 4:00 PM	212 Capen Hall North Campus
7/31/2008 (Thursday)	1:00 PM – 4:00 PM	212 Capen Hall North Campus
8/11/2008 (Monday)	1:00 PM – 4:00 PM	B2C Abbott Hall South Campus
8/14/2008 (Thursday)	9:00 AM – 12:00 PM	212 Capen Hall North Campus
9/9/2008 (Tuesday)	9:00 AM – 12:00 PM	212 Capen Hall North Campus
9/19/2008 (Friday)	1:00 PM – 4:00 PM	B2C Abbott Hall South Campus



Instructional Technology Support Services

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UBlearns update is a newsletter for faculty and staff to share knowledge about teaching and learning using UB's centrally supported course management environment. UBlearns Update is a joint publication of the UBlearns Advisory Group, the UBlearns Support Team and Computing and Information Technology. To submit articles for consideration, contact Lisa Stephens (stephens@buffalo.edu), Associate for Instructional Resources, Academic Services, Computing and Information Technology.