Beginning the Semester Checklist

**Edit Mode**

One of the most important details instructors need to know about Blackboard is where to find the **Edit Mode** button which allows instructors to manage their courses. This button is located in the upper-right corner of each Course area and in any subfolders. With **Edit Mode** ON you can easily manage course content. With **Edit Mode** OFF you see what your students see; however, you can also click on **Student View** to see what your students see. Just remember to click **Return to Teacher View**!

**Show/Hide Course Menu**

Blackboard allows users to decide if they want to **Show** or **Hide** the Course Menu. In the event that the Course Menu is hidden, users will only see the Announcements area. To Show or Hide the Course Menu click on the arrow located between the Announcements area and the Course Menu when in the Show position and in the far left hand side of the Announcements areas when in the Hide position.

**Copy Course**

You may copy content from previous semesters if the course you want to copy content from is located on Blackboard.

1. Enter the course you want to copy content from.
2. Select **Packages and Utilities** in the **Control Panel** area of your existing course.
3. Select **Course Copy**.
4. In the **Select Copy Type** area, select **Copy Course Materials into an Existing Course**.
5. Click **Browse** to locate the **Destination Course ID**.
6. **Search** by Course ID, Instructor or Name/Description to access your course list.
7. **Select** the button next to the **Destination Course ID** of the course you want to copy the content to.
8. Select the items you would like to copy and click **Submit**.

An email will be sent once the Course Copy task is complete. Once this email is received, check the destination course to verify that the selected materials were copied successfully from the original course.
Check the Course Menu

Confirm that the Course Menu consists of the buttons or links that you wish to use. If necessary, rename or modify the list of buttons. Make sure and check the Course Menu with Edit Mode ON. Instructors have direct access to edit and organize the Course Menu and may use the drag and drop feature to change the order of menu items. Course Menu items that do not contain any content are automatically hidden from student view but are visible to the instructor while in Edit Mode.

1. In the upper right-hand corner, select Edit Mode ON.
2. To add a new link to the Course Menu, click the “+” and select the area you want to add.
3. Rename, Hide or Delete links as necessary using the pull-down menu next to each link. Note: If you remove a menu item, all information within that area is removed permanently.
4. Organize your course menu using the drag and drop feature. For longer course menus you may want to consider creating Subheaders and Dividers by clicking on the “+” icon and selecting these features.

Turn Off All Unnecessary Tools

To simplify your class you will want to hide the links of all the tools you will not be using. If you decide to use a tool later in the semester you may make it available at that time. Both course and communication tools are combined into a single Tools area in the Course Menu.

1. In the upper right-hand corner, select Edit Mode ON.
2. Select Tools on the Course Menu.
3. Click Hide Link next to the tools that you are not using.
4. To view the Tools that will be available to students, turn off the Edit Mode button.

Customize Your Course Design

You may select a color and style for your Course Menu.

1. Select Customization in the Control Panel area.
2. Click on Style and select Buttons or Text, choose the Default Menu View, and the Default Content View.
You also have the option to change the Entry Point of the course and Upload a Banner.

You may also create a Banner very easily in PowerPoint.

1. Open a new PowerPoint presentation and select a Blank Content Layout.
2. Resize the slide 7 to 8 inches in width and 1.5 inches in height.
3. Design your banner using WordArt, Text boxes, ClipArt or digital Photos.
4. Save the Banner as a JPEG file.
5. To upload the Banner into Blackboard, select Customization in the Control Panel area.
6. Click on Style and scroll down to Select Banner, click Browse and Select the JPEG file of the Banner you created in PowerPoint and click Submit.
Changing the Course Entry Point

Each new course has the option for instructors to enable a course Module Page that contains the modules that are designed to provide students with information on what has changed in the course since they last visited, what items require attention and what items are past due or due in the near future. Instructors can modify the course home page to meet their needs. For those instructors who prefer to have the Home Page as the course entry point they may do this easily by changing the entry point.

1. Click the “+” on the Course Menu and Create Module Page.
2. Make it Available to Users.
3. In the Course Panel area, select Customization and Style.
4. Change the Course Entry Point to Home Page.

Changing Notification Settings

Instructors can decide the types of notifications that their course Notification Dashboard will provide. Notifications can inform users of newly posted content, when assignments or assessments are available, when items are past due and when items have been submitted for grading.

1. Click the Edit Notification Settings button. (The Edit Notifications Settings button is at the top left of several modules, i.e. What's New, To Do, Needs Attention and Alerts. Each Edit Notification Settings button takes the user to the same page.)
2. To edit all courses at once, click Courses I am Teaching.
3. In the Dashboard column, uncheck any notifications that should not be sent for the course(s). Also notice the settings for email and mobile.
   NOTE: Currently Blackboard Mobile is not enabled.
4. Click Submit.

Update Your Contact Information

The Faculty Information link should contain information students will need to contact the instructor. This includes email, office location and office hours. Instructors may also add notes and upload a picture.

1. Select Faculty Info on the Course Menu.
2. Select Create Contact, complete the template and click Submit.

Upload Your Syllabus

The course syllabus and all revisions should be located in the Syllabus area located on the Course Menu.

1. Select Syllabus on the Course Menu.
2. Under Build Content, click on Create Item and type in the name of your Syllabus and a description. Make sure and include the file type.
3. Browse for the file on your computer, Name the Link, select the Options and click Submit.
Update Deadlines, Dates and Materials

Go through all course content and make sure all URL’s and documents are current and reflect the current semester.

Make your Course Available

All courses are set to unavailable by default. As soon as the course is ready it is the instructor’s responsibility to make the course available.

1. Select Customization and Properties in the Control Panel area.
2. In the Set Availability, Make Course Available area select Yes and click Submit.

Post a Welcome Announcement

In your welcome message you may want to include the date/time of class, a brief course overview, instructor’s name and contact information, any textbook information, as well as how you intend to use Blackboard.

There are several ways to post Announcements in your course.

From the Control Panel area:

1. Select Course Tools.
2. Click Announcements link and Create Announcement.
3. Fill in the Subject and Message fields and select the appropriate Options.
4. Click Submit.

If your course opens to a Home Page and your Announcements are located within the Announcements module:

1. Select Tools on the Course Menu.
2. Click Announcements link and Create Announcement.
3. Fill in the Subject and Message fields and select the appropriate Options.
4. Click Submit.

If your course opens to an Announcements page:

1. Click Edit Mode ON.
2. Click Create Announcement.
3. Fill in the Subject and Message fields and select the appropriate Options.
4. Click Submit.
Send an Email

Send an email to your students once the course is made available. You may want to consider copying and pasting the Welcome Announcement into the body of the email.

1. Go to the Course Tools area in the Control Panel.
2. Click Send Email.
3. Select the Users.
4. Type in a Subject and a Message and click Submit.

Combining Course Sections

To request help combining course sections, email the Learning Technology staff at jallen@tamut.edu or lscott@tamut.edu.

Request a TA be Added to your Course(s)

To request that a TA be added to your course, email the Learning Technology staff at jallen@tamut.edu or lscott@tamut.edu.

Ways to get Blackboard Help

2. Email a Learning Technologist: jallen@tamut.edu, lscott@tamut.edu.
3. Call the HelpDesk: (903) 334-6603.
4. Email the HelpDesk: helpdesk@tamut.edu.
6. Sign up for one-on-one appointments at: https://lt-tamut.youcanbook.me.
7. Enroll in a workshop; email Julia or Linda for upcoming workshops.
8. Request a customized workshop for your department by contacting Julia or Linda.