Some Suggestions for More Effective Use of Blackboard

Increasingly students are seeing course websites as an essential course-based resource. Virtually every SPH class employs a course website. The following information is intended to help you use the webs even more effectively to promote student learning and share course information through the school.

**Consistency in placement of materials is important.**

In general it’s best to place the course syllabus and information about scheduling and other course logistics in the Course Information section. This not only helps students, but also allows faculty who are advising students to better determine what material is being taught in your course. They may have other sources of determining these things, but clearly this is the most current listing of this information. Students outside your class also benefit from being able to look at the course offering in a little more detail. (See **Securing Sections of Your Course Web** below)

**Organizing your information**

Students find it most to have folders by class or course concept rather than by type of material, that is readings in one folder, slides in another. Instead create separate class folders in which to place the objectives, slides, readings, etc. for that class.

**Include Staff Information**

Including the contact info for you and your TAs in the staff information section is also appreciated by students and reinforces the message that you are willing to be contacted.

**Securing Sections of Your Course Web**

The Blackboard site is available only to persons with a BU username and Kerberos password. By default when your web is created it is set to limit access only to students enrolled in your class. We encourage you to open your web, at least the course information section, to enable the BU community including academic advisors, to see what your course is about. To open your course web to BU guests go to Control Panel/Settings/ Guest Access.

To If you want to limit certain sections of your web to only current students, you can do so by going to Control Panel | Course Options | Manage Course Menu. Choose the content area you want to limit access to, and click Modify. Then deselect Allow Guest access. Only students enrolled in your web will be able to access this section. Note that online quizzes and discussion boards are only visible to students enrolled in your web.

**Blackboard for Non-degree Students**

Students who are not enrolled in your class can easily be added to your web. If you have students who are remediating core courses or finishing incompletes you can go to the One Help site and choose "Add users to a site." You will then type in the student name and their username, and they will be added to the web.

**Some Things Students Like**

Students have indicated they like having relevant new clips available on the course web either in the external links section of in Course Documents or on the Announcements page. They also appreciate the opportunity for feedback with online quizzes and having problem sets (and the answers) posted on the web. Question pools can be created that test questions can be drawn from to customize quizzes based on concepts for which a certain class may need more practice. Students also appreciate the ability to check their grade online when instructors use the online grade book. Putting PowerPoint files up after class for review or note taking guides posted in advance are also helpful.

Blackboard support page, OneHelp at [http://www.bu.edu/help/blackboard/](http://www.bu.edu/help/blackboard/)