

An Overview of Blackboard Communication

Announcements

Students can view important messages from Instructors on the Announcements page of a Course.

Announcements are organized and displayed by:

- current date
- last seven days
- last thirty days
- view all course announcements

When accessed through a tab, all Announcements of interest to the user appear. These include Announcements from all courses the user is enrolled in and system-wide announcements. Users can sort the Announcements by category or post date.

Use the drop-down menu to select a view or click on the tabs to view Announcements for a specific period of time. The default is View Last 7 Days.

Collaboration

Allows the instructor and students to participate in real-time lessons and discussions. Chat sessions can be recorded and archived. This is "synchronous" communication, so everyone participating must be available at the same time. Unless someone else happens to be "listening" online (either coincidentally or by prearrangement) when you send your chat message, you will get no response. Macintosh users should see Using Virtual Classroom (chat) on a Macintosh.

Be aware that Collaboration tool (Chat) sometimes loads slowly.

The Virtual Classroom allows the instructor and students to participate in real time lessons and discussions and also view archives of previous classroom sessions. The virtual classroom, as we call the chat room, can be used to hold "live" classroom discussions, TA sessions, and office hour type question/answer forums. You can even have guest speakers and subject matter experts talk with the class in the Virtual Classroom.

Discussion Board

Allows course participants to post and reply to messages. A Forum in the discussion board groups conversations are grouped into threads that contain a main posting and all related replies. The discussion board can contain an unlimited number of forums

Discussion Board Features

- The date and time of posted messages are logged
- Messages can be sorted by date, author, or subject
- Messages can be searched by author and keyword
- Messages can be collected for easy printing
- Messages can be posted anonymously

Groups Pages

The Groups Pages area organizes students into collaborative groups. Group members are able to send email to members of their group, exchange files, enter discussion forums and enter a virtual classroom discussion. All of the tools available from group pages (with the exception of the file exchange) function the same in the course Web site. The file exchange function allows group members to exchange files with their fellow group members. NOTE: Any group member may remove files in the file exchange, even if that member did not upload the file.

Messages

The Messages feature gives each course a private and secure system for communication that functions similar to email. Keep in mind that Messages cannot be sent or received outside of the users in the course.

Messages are usually accessed through the Communications area of a course. Although, as with most features, the Instructor can restrict access or change the layout of the Course Menu so that Messages are accessible directly.

Roster

The Roster lists the students, instructors, and teaching assistants associated with a specific course. The roster also links to the Blackboard student homepages

Send Email

Students and Instructors can send email to various individuals and groups within the course. Note: Email addresses are not displayed in the *To:* area of the message. Messages are sent as a blind carbon copy (e.g., no name in the *To:* area of the message). Messages are sent to the e-mail address listed in the Blackboard system. Blackboard uses the NDSU email address for NDSU students, faculty, & staff.

Email Options

All Users emails all students enrolled n the course

All Groups emails all groups created in the course

All Teaching Assistants emails a person with the TA role

All Instructors emails all instructors in the course

Select Users emails selected students, TA, or instructor in course

Select Groups email selected groups in the course