

The 2nd Interim Report of the Blackboard Ultra Training

(Jan. 1 – Jul. 31, 2023)

July 31, 2023

Jae Kim, Ph.D.

Center for Teaching with Technology
Instruction and Research Technology
William Paterson University of New Jersey

Table of Contents

Overview	3
Blackboard Ultra.....	3
Base Navigation	4
Highlights of the Ultra Course View.....	4
Migration Timeline	5
The Goal and Objectives of the Workshop (The Original)	8
The Organization of the Blackboard Ultra Training (The Original)	9
The Goal and Objectives of the Workshop (The Revised)	10
The Organization of the Blackboard Ultra Training (The Revised)	10
The Workshop and the Participants.....	11
Survey Results.....	13
How satisfied with Blackboard Ultra.....	13
Preference (Ultra vs. Original)	13
Level of Satisfaction with Ultra Features	14
Level of Agreement with Statements about Blackboard Ultra.....	16
Workshop Format	17
Pacing of the Workshop	17
MOST Liked about Blackboard Ultra	18
Least liked about Blackboard Ultra	18
Features needed to be covered more	19
Any recommendations	19
Suggestions for the future Blackboard Ultra Institute.....	20
Conclusion	23
Appendix A. Climate Survey.....	24

Blackboard Ultra Institute: 2023 Spring & Summer Report

January 1 – July 31, 2022

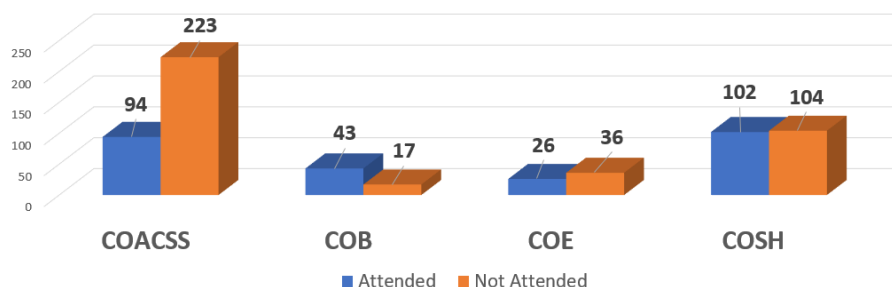
OVERVIEW

William Paterson University of New Jersey (WPUNJ) has decided to migrate to the Blackboard Ultra Learning Management System from the previous version, Blackboard Original. During the spring and summer 2023, to provide faculty with guidance as they plan on implementing the new Learning Management System in action, Center for Teaching with Technology (CTT) developed Blackboard Ultra Institute. The workshop materials were developed to be offered both in-person and online format. The Blackboard Ultra Institute was offered eight times a week during the spring and summer 2023. The in-person institute was offered fourteen times and the online workshop was offered 114 times with 268 faculty members attended. As of July 25, about 41 % of faculty members who have been assigned to teach the fall courses (265 out of 645)

As of 07/25/2023

Attendees by College (268/645)

	COACSS	COB	COE	COSH	Total	Percentage
Attended	94	44	28	102	268	41.49%
Not-attended	223	17	34	104	378	58.51%
Total	317	61	62	206	646	



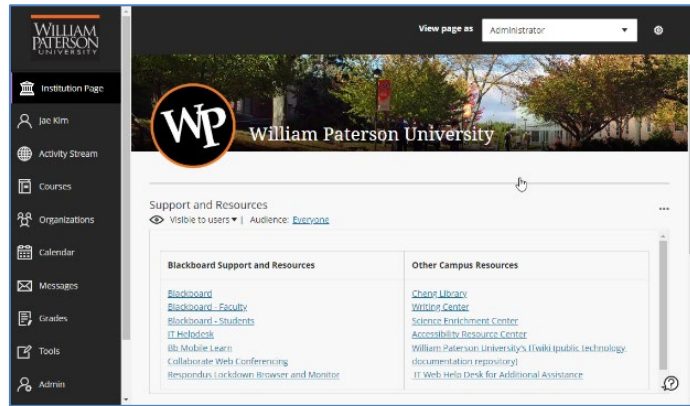
The goal of this report is to provide formative feedback to improve the faculty experience with the use of new technologies in teaching and learning using a brand-new Learning Management System, Blackboard Ultra, at William Paterson University.

BLACKBOARD ULTRA

Blackboard Ultra is the premium learning management system product offered by Blackboard. It has two components, the "Ultra Base Navigation," and "Ultra Course View". The Blackboard Ultra interface brings with it a streamlined design and many upgraded tools and functionalities.

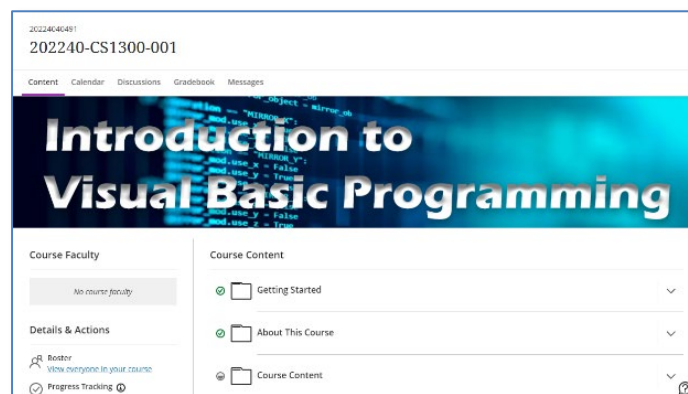
BASE NAVIGATION

Blackboard Ultra Base Navigation is Blackboard's more modern, intuitive portal to your Blackboard courses and organizations. It provides quick access to the most critical information from across all your courses. Blackboard Ultra Base Navigation creates a more engaging, efficient, and enjoyable experience for both students and instructors. From the moment users log in, the users have access to core features in the left-side navigation. They can easily return to the list from wherever they are - even if they're in a course. The list peeks from behind the other layers they have open, including while working in a course.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ULTRA COURSE VIEW

The Ultra Course View is a simpler and more modern course experience for instructors and students. It is



cleaner with a more modern design and easy-to-use workflows. It also has powerful new tools that are not available in the Original Course View, like Discussion Analytics. Blackboard Ultra Course View provides,

- **Clean, Modern Look** - The Ultra Course View is cleaner and more modern than the Original Course View. It is simpler to use and more intuitive, as well. Tools are contextual to reduce clicks and content appears in the course using peek layers that slide from the right.
- **Content Displayed on a Single Page** - Content is displayed on a single page within learning modules and folders that expand and collapse, so it is easier for students to find the content and assessments they need.
- **Add Content Wherever You Want** - Quickly add files, links, assignments, and other content and assessments wherever you want! In addition to uploading files from your computer, you can also add content from cloud storage systems like OneDrive for Business, Dropbox, or Google

Drive.

- **Add Files via Drag and Drop** - Quickly add files to your course by dragging them to the content panel of your course. You can drag one or multiple files, or even a folder.
- **Brand New Text Editor** - The brand-new text editor in the Ultra Course View is optimized to create content that is mobile-compatible, so that you and your students can access it directly from a smartphone browser. The text editor is simplified, but includes tools for formatting text, adding links and media, and embedding mathematical and scientific formulas in your text.
- **Easy-to-Understand Item View for the Gradebook** - The Item List is your new default view of the course gradebook. You can view all the coursework you have assigned and your grading progress. Quickly see how many students have submitted an assessment, how many you need to grade, and how many grades need to be posted. You also can see when you have completed grading an item. Use the toggle in the upper left to switch from Item to Grid view. The Grid view is a traditional spreadsheet-like view of the Gradebook.
- **Keep Grades Private until You are Ready to Post** - You can control exactly when students are able to see the grades you have entered. Once you enter a grade, it is private until you Post it. You can post individual grades, or wait and post all of the grades for a particular assessment at once.
- **Automatically Assign Zeros for Past Due Assessments** - If your assessment has a due date enabled, Blackboard can automatically assign a zero to any student who does not submit the assessment by the due date. You can override the zero with a grade, of course, but the automatic zero can help students realize that they have missed a due date. While automatic zeros is enabled by default, you can disable it in the Gradebook settings.
- **Set Accommodations to all Assessments** - In the Ultra Course View, you can set accommodations for a student once via the Roster, and then they will apply to all assessments in your course. Accommodations can affect due dates, by never marking a student's submission as late, or the time limit, by providing extra or unlimited time for assessments with a timer.

MIGRATION TIMELINE

Prior to the migration, the previous Blackboard Original Learning Management System was moved from in-house server to a cloud-hosting service (SaaS: Software as a Service) on May 2020. On May 2022, WPUNJ has enabled Blackboard Ultra Base Navigation. Starting summer 2022, CTT has met with faculty volunteers for using it for the first time, provided training and assistance to the faculty members with course conversion from the old (Blackboard Original) to the new (Blackboard Ultra) and specific features of the Ultra Course View.



The detailed migration process is described in the following table.

Spring 2022	Summer 2022	Fall 2022	Spring 2023	Summer 2023
<p>Enable Blackboard Ultra Base Navigation</p> <p>Set the Blackboard Learning Technology Plan</p> <p>Select 8-15 courses for course migration project with K16</p>	<p>13 courses were sent to K16 for conversion (6/1)</p> <p>7 volunteers were identified for piloting the Ultra Experience</p> <p>Trained and assisted volunteers to convert or develop their courses in Blackboard Ultra</p> <p>The first 100 courses migrated over the Blackboard Ultra for K16</p> <p>Begun Communication Plan for Fall 2022</p> <p>Sent reminder to Deans, Chairs, and Faculty</p> <p>Planned for Faculty training both in-person and remote sessions</p> <p>Developed the Blackboard Ultra Institute (focused on course design and development), a certificate program that could be offered in fall 2022</p> <p>Develop supporting documents and video clips</p>	<p>Piloted selected courses went live in Ultra Course View</p> <p>Offered Blackboard Ultra Institute</p> <p>Trained and assisted faculty in course conversion</p> <p>Sent out the reminder of Blackboard Ultra to Deans, Chairs, and Faculty</p>	<p>Reached out to department chairs for the department-specific Blackboard Ultra training opportunities</p> <p>Offered the fast track Blackboard Ultra training to faculty twice a day everyday</p> <p>Offered the department-specific Blackboard Ultra Training</p> <p>Provided individual consultation on Course conversion and redesign</p> <p>Offered webinars on specific topics using Blackboard Ultra such as Making a Course Banner, Gradebook, Assessments and Assignments, etc.</p> <p>Sent out memos to the faculty members who did not take the Blackboard Ultra training three times</p>	<p>Continued to reach out to faculty members who did not take the Blackboard Ultra training</p> <p>Continue to offer the fast track Blackboard Ultra training to faculty twice a day everyday</p> <p>Continued to provide individual consultation on Course conversion and redesign</p> <p>Continue to offer webinars on specific topics using Blackboard Ultra such as Making a Course Banner, Gradebook, Assessments and Assignments, etc.</p>

THE GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP (The Original)

The workshop was created to provide faculty with guidance as they plan to implement the new Learning Management System in action.

At the end of this session you will be able to:

Session 1. What's New, Course Set Up, and Content Building

1. Identify the core features of the Base Navigation menu and their functions
2. Explain the major changes in the Base Navigation of Blackboard Ultra
3. Identify the tools that have been used in Original Course View and how to find them in Ultra Course View
4. Explain the features of the Blackboard Ultra Course View including a course banner, course availability, and student preview mode
5. Explain how to plan and build the structure of your Blackboard course in Ultra Course View
6. Differentiate the folders and learning modules
7. Describe the features of Ultra Text Editor
8. Describe how to add different types of content, such as images, videos, web links, and LTI tools

Session 2. Communication and Engagement

1. Update information that appears in User Profiles
2. Create and schedule a Blackboard announcement
3. Create a Message, using it tool email students
4. Create a Discussion forum, linking it to a content area and enabling its grading options
5. Use the Discussion options that allow you to track and grade student participation
6. Schedule individual or recurring Zoom sessions, linking them to content areas
7. Schedule individual or recurring Blackboard Collaborate Ultra sessions, linking them to content areas
8. Identify and compare the differences between how these communication tools work in Blackboard Ultra versus Original

Session 3. Assessments and Feedback

1. Add Assessment items (assignments and tests)
2. Create a question pool
3. Grade students' assignments in different Gradebook views
4. Add student exceptions in the Ultra Gradebook
5. Add manual columns and attendance column to Gradebook
6. Review the Gradebook settings in their Ultra course and modify settings as needed
7. Create Grading Schema in the Ultra Gradebook
8. Create assessment categories in the Ultra Gradebook
9. Create rubrics in the Ultra Gradebook
10. Track student progress by using the Progress Tracking Tool

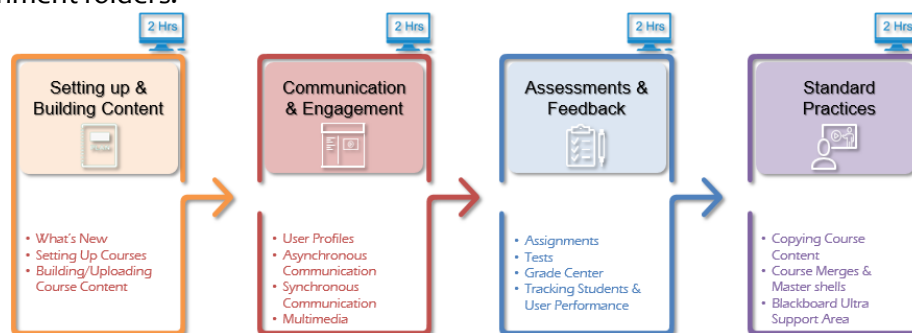
Session 4. Adoption, Unique Features, and Best Practices

1. Explain what major factors need to be considered when converting an Original course to Ultra
2. Describe different ways to build an Ultra course
3. Describe best practices for converting and building Ultra courses
4. Identify major Original tools and features that are not available in Ultra
5. Describe unique Ultra tools and features

6. Use new Ultra features in your Ultra course shell
7. Apply online course design best practices and the Ultra course templates in course building
8. Explain how you would take advantage of the unique Ultra features and tools to convert your existing course or build new Ultra courses.
9. Identify resources of Ultra help sites, tutorials, and guides.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACKBOARD ULTRA INSTITUTE (The Original)

To achieve the stated learning objective above, a two-day in-person / online workshop was developed and offered to provide the essential knowledge and skills in Blackboard Ultra with the participants. The workshop was comprised of self-study and hands-on components. A self-study component was consisted of reading lecture notes, exploring the Web resources, and responding to the discussion questions as needed. Each session, participants were asked to read the lectures and additional readings provided by the facilitator. After completing the readings and the lessons, they were asked to answer a series of questions designed to stimulate reflection on the discussion board. The hands-on component was consisted of a set of the Do-It-Yourself assignments. The participants were encouraged to complete each feature of the Blackboard Ultra tools. They were asked to post their works to the designated assignment folders.



The following is the schedule of the workshop:

	Day 1 In-person	Days 2 Remote	Day 3 In-person	
10:00 am – 10:30 am	Session 1 – Getting Started <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • What's New (Interface, Base Nav., Features) • Course Building and Navigation 	<i>Self-paced asynchronous activities</i>	Session 3 - Assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignments • Tests • Rubrics 	10:00 am – 10:30 am
10:30 am – 12:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building/Uploading Content • Multimedia (Mashups, YuJa, images) • Tracking Student/User Progress • User Profiles <p>Presenter: Jae Kim</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade Center 	10:30 am – 12:00 pm
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	Session 2 - Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous Communication (Discussion Boards, Messages, Email, Announcements) 		Session 4 - Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard Practices and Procedures • Getting Additional Assistance • Participant Presentations • Group Discussion and Q&A 	1:00 pm – 2:00 pm
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synchronous Communication (Zoom, Collaborate, WebEx, Teams) <p>Presenter: Housen Maratouk</p>			2:00 pm – 3:00 pm
			Presenter: Ming Jian	

THE GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP (The Revised)

The workshop was redesigned to provide faculty with fast-track guidance as they plan to implement the new Learning Management System in action.

At the end of this session you will be able to:

Session1. Course Set Up and Content Building

1. Create a course banner using the Blackboard Course Banner Creator and upload it to Blackboard Course
2. Demonstrate the course conversion by proceeding with the course copy
3. Modify the course content after Differentiate the folder and learning modules
4. Create course content using Ultra Text Editor

Session 2. Communication and Engagement

1. Update information that appears in User Profiles
2. Create and schedule a Blackboard announcements
3. Create a Message, using it to email students
4. Create a Discussion forum, linking it to a content area and enabling its grading options

Session 3.Assignments, Assessments and Rubrics

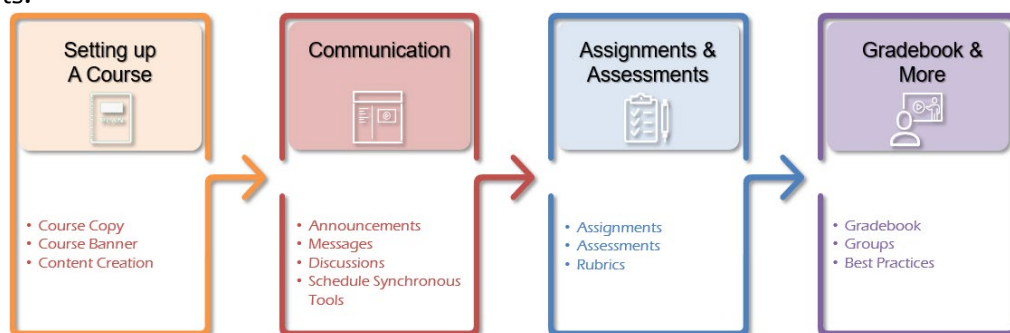
1. Creating an Assignments
2. Create an assessment
3. Create rubrics in the Ultra Gradebook

Session 4. Groups, Gradebook, and Best Practices

1. Create groups
2. Grade students' assignments in different Gradebook views
3. Add manual columns and attendance column to Gradebook
4. Review the Gradebook settings in their Ultra course and modify settings as needed
5. Create Grading Schema in the Ultra Gradebook

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACKBOARD ULTRA INSTITUTE (The Revised)

To achieve the stated learning objective above, a 90 minutes in-person / online workshop was developed and offered to provide the essential knowledge and skills in Blackboard Ultra with the participants.



THE WORKSHOPS AND THE PARTICIPANTS

There were seventeen in-person workshops (including nine HyFlex workshops) and ninety-seven online workshops offered during spring and summer 2023. A total of two hundred sixty-eight faculty members was successfully completed the workshops. Among the participants, one hundred twenty-nine faculty attended for in-person workshops and one hundred thirty-nine faculty participated in the online workshop.

The following table shows the attendees of each workshop.

	Blackboard Ultra Institute	Department-specific Training	Online Blackboard Ultra Training	Total
Format	In-person	HyFlex	Online	
No. of Workshops	8	9	97	114
No. of Attendees	65	64	139	268

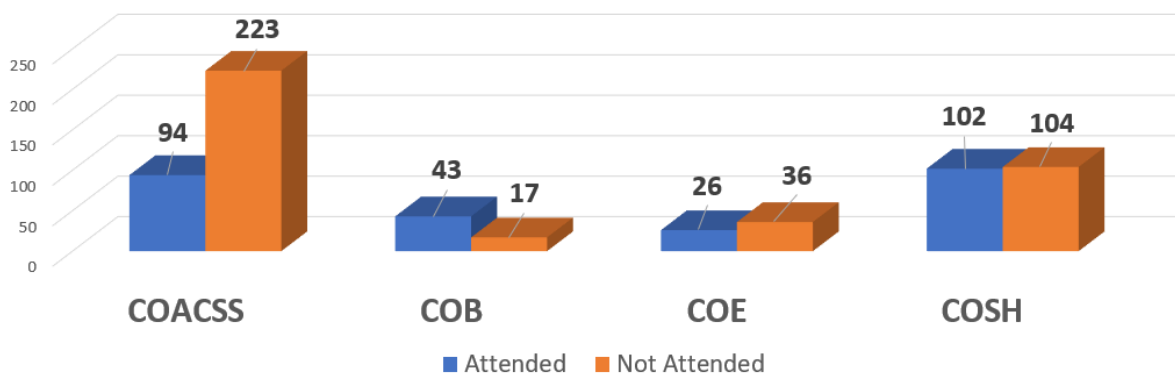
(* As of 7/25/2023)

Blackboard Ultra Institute Attendees (Spring & Summer 2023)

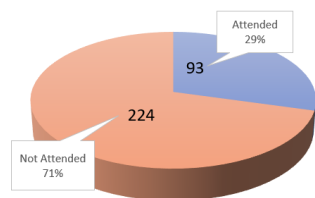
As of 07/25/2023

Attendees by College (268/645)

	COACSS	COB	COE	COSH	Total	Percentage
Attended	94	44	28	102	268	41.49%
Not-attended	223	17	34	104	378	58.51%
Total	317	61	62	206	646	

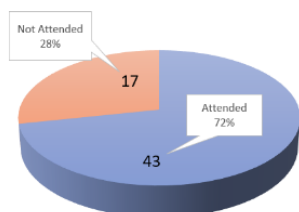


College of Art, Communication, and Social Science (317)



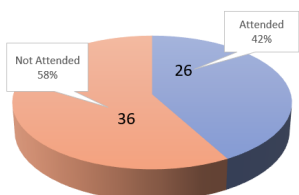
Arts	Communication	Soc. Justices	English
6/75	17/37	11/31	11/29
8%	43.59%	35.48%	37.93%
History	Languages	Philosophy	Pol. Sci.
4/14	13/30	4/5	2/7
28.57%	43.33%	80%	28.57%
Psychology	Women Study & AWS	Geography	Anthropology
19/69	1/4	1/2	5/14
27.54%	25%	50%	35.71%

College of Business (61)



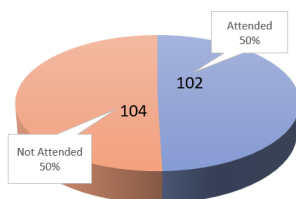
Accounting & Law	Economics & Finance	Management & Marketing
10/18	13/20	20/22
62.50%	65%	90%

College of Education (62)



Educational Leadership	Teacher Education	Special Ed. & Counselling
8/14	6/32	12/16
61.54%	18.52%	92.31%

College of Science and Health (206)



Biology	Chemistry	Speech Language	Computer Science
12/29	3/7	4/14	7/7
41.38%	42.86%	28.57%	100%
Kinesiology	Mathematics	Nursing	Public Health
6/26	9/25	54/61	7/37
23.08%	36%	88.52%	18.92%

Survey Results

Upon completion of the Blackboard Ultra Trainings, the participants were asked a climate survey (using Qualtrics software). The workshop attendees were invited to voluntarily participate in the survey data collection. Twenty-nine faculty members (out of two hundred sixty-eight) responded to the survey.

The survey included close-ended and open-ended questions related to the faculty members' experiences with Blackboard Ultra and their perceptions of its quality and utility. The survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete. No individual received compensation for participating in the survey. Respondents could skip any items on the survey and could terminate their participation at any time. See Appendix A, Climate Survey: Blackboard Ultra Institute, for a copy of the survey questions.

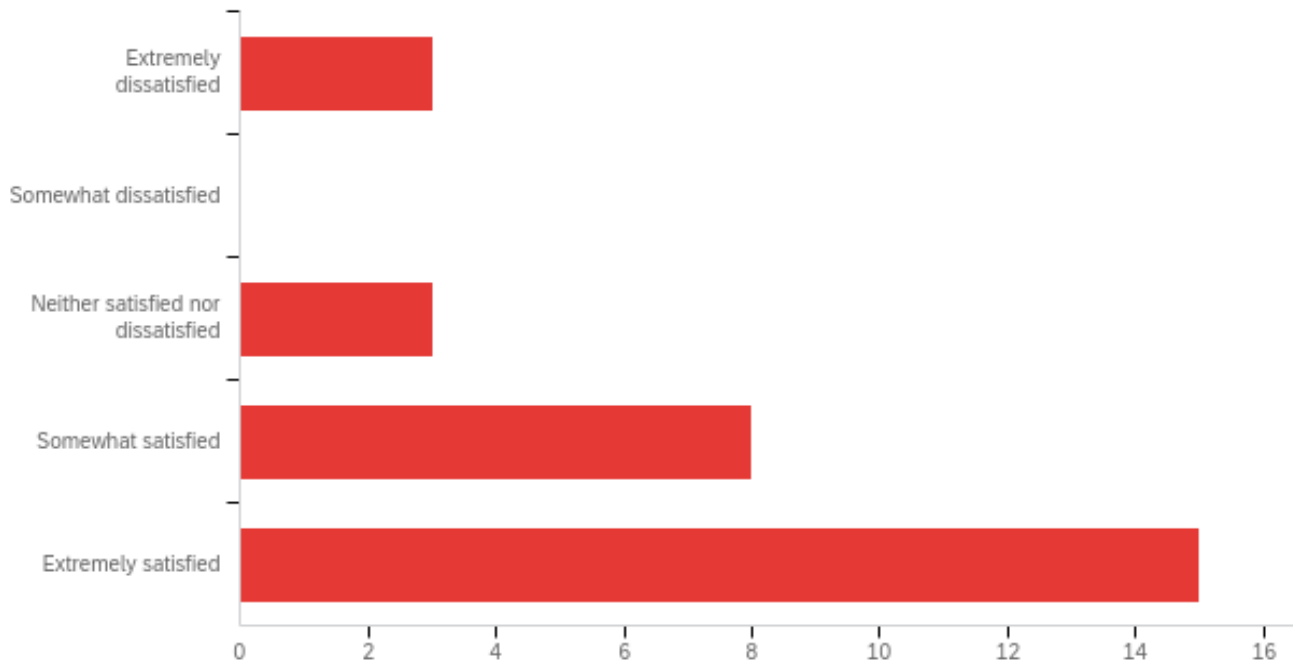
All survey responses are confidential and are reported in the aggregate. Individual comments are not reported with any combination of demographics that allows for identification of individuals.

At the end of the workshop, the following questions were asked to the participants:

1. Now that you have completed the Blackboard Ultra Institute, how satisfied are you with Blackboard Ultra for adopting it in your course?
2. You will have noticed differences between the older version, Blackboard Original, and the new version, Blackboard Ultra. Based on your experiences, which do you prefer?
3. Please rate your feeling about the Blackboard Ultra tools and features designed to support the following teaching and course management tasks:
4. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements about Blackboard Ultra:
5. Which of the following formats do you think works best for the Blackboard Ultra Institute?
6. How do you feel about the pacing of this workshop? Was it too short, too long, or just right?
7. What do you like MOST about Blackboard Ultra? Why?
8. What do you like LEAST about Blackboard Ultra? Why?
9. Are there any specific features or tools in Blackboard Ultra that you would have liked to see us cover and/or spend more time on? And is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience using Blackboard Ultra from the workshop?
10. Do you have any additional recommendations on how to improve the Blackboard Ultra Institute? This might include (but is not limited to) suggestions regarding content, pacing, scheduling, etc.

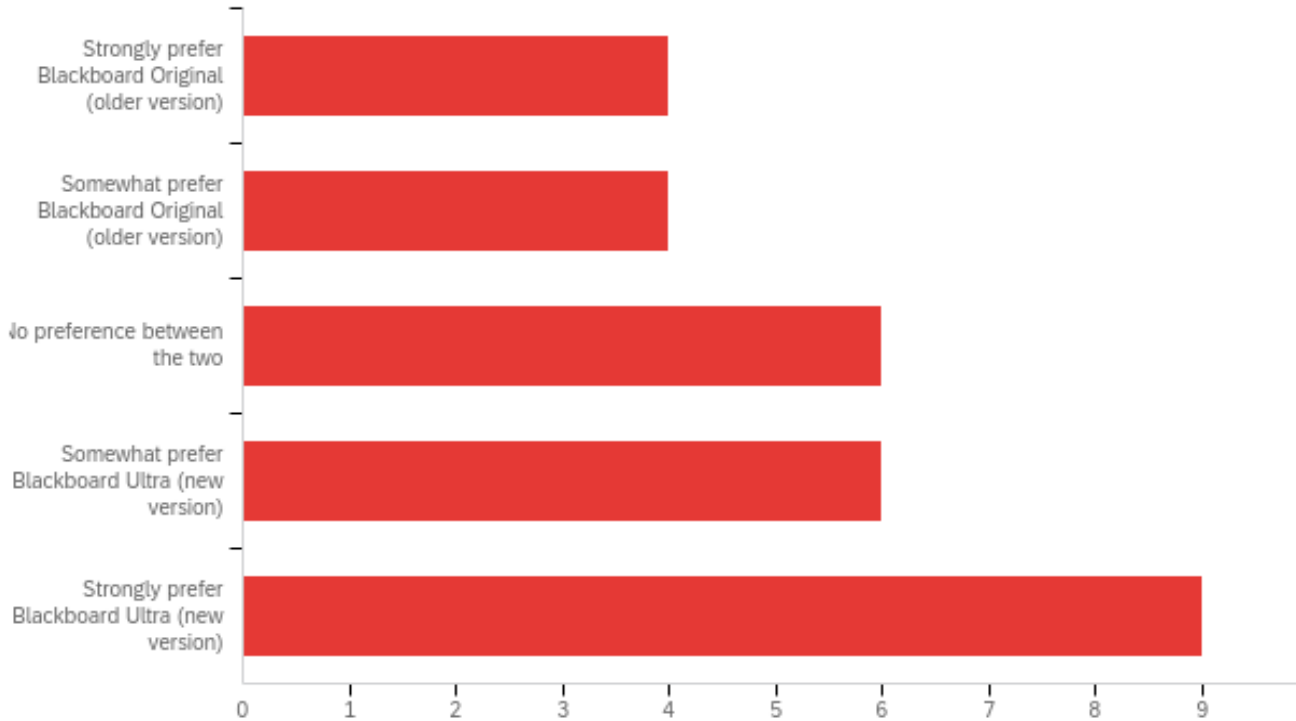
How satisfied with Blackboard Ultra

The faculty respondents were also asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the features of Blackboard Ultra. Twenty three faculty members responded that they are extremely satisfied (51.72%) or somewhat satisfied (27.59%). However, three participants (10.34%) replied that they are extremely dissatisfied. There were three respondents answered they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (10.34%).



Preference (Ultra vs. Original)

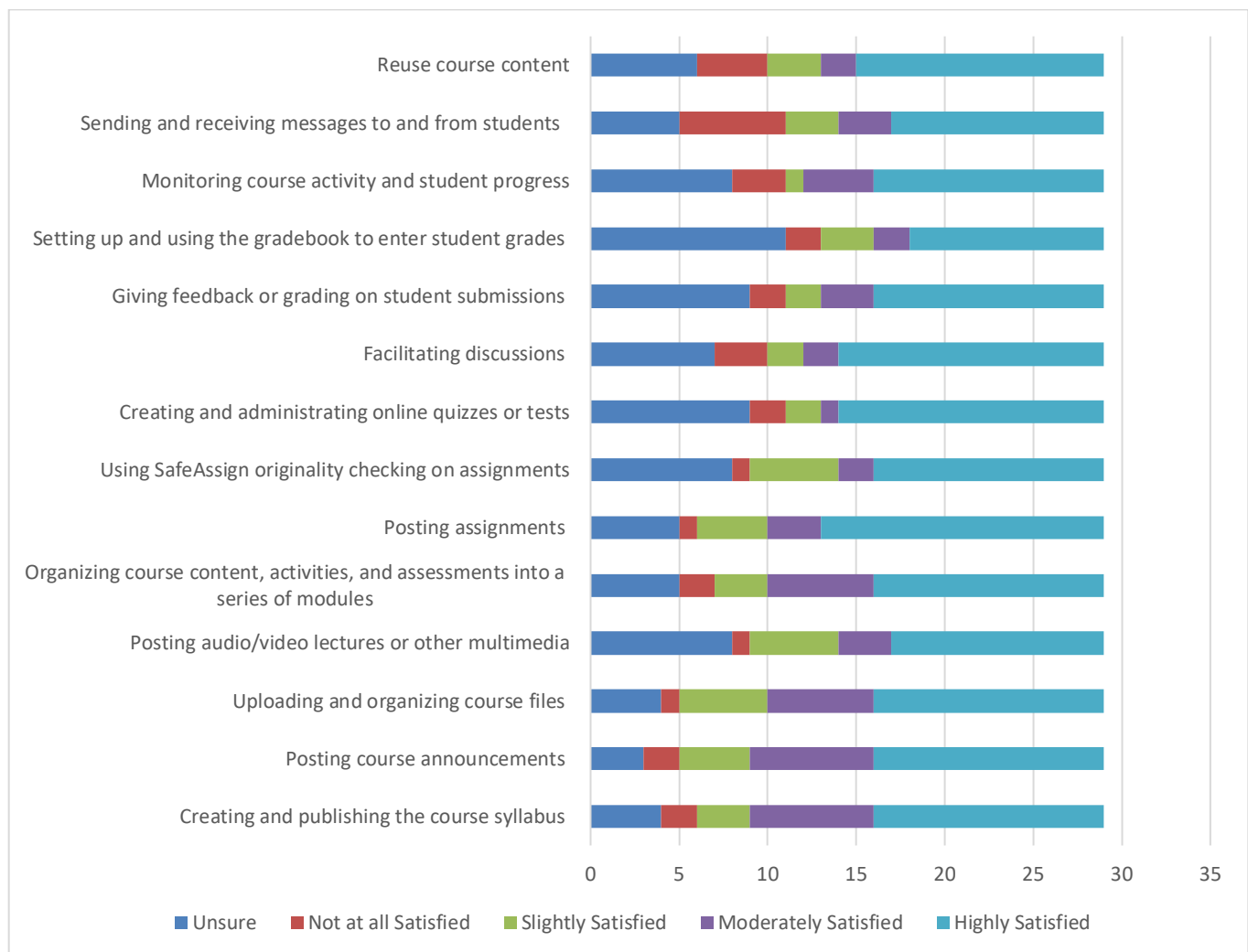
Fifty two percent (15) of faculty respondents prefer Blackboard Ultra over Blackboard Original and 20% (3) prefer Blackboard Original over Blackboard Ultra.



Level of Satisfaction with Ultra Features

The faculty respondents were also asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the features of Blackboard Ultra. Majority of the faculty respondents responded that they were highly or moderately satisfied with the features of Ultra as follows:

- Creating and publishing the course syllabus (69%)
- Posting course announcements (69%)
- Uploading and organizing course files (66%)
- Posting audio/video lectures (51%)
- Organizing course content, activities, and assessments into a series of modules (66%)
- Posting assignments (65%)
- Using SafeAssign originality checking on assignments (52%)
- Creating and administrating online quizzes or tests (55%)
- Facilitating discussions (59%)
- Giving feedback / grading on student submissions (55%)
- Setting up gradebook (45%)
- Monitoring course activities and student progress (59%)
- Reusing course content (55%)



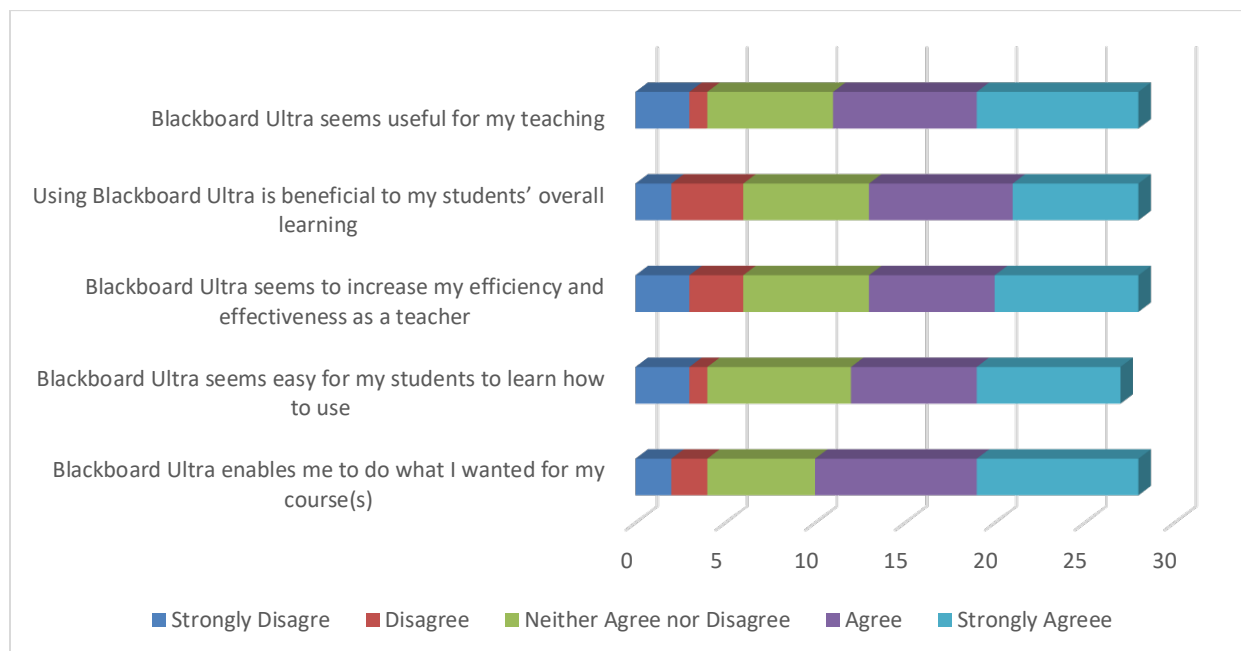
The highest rated features on a scale of 1 to 5 (unsure, and not at all satisfied to highly satisfied) were Posting course announcements with a mean of 3.86; the next highest rated feature was posting assignments with a mean of 3.83. The lowest rated feature was setting up gradebook with a mean of 3.00. About 10 faculty members responded they are not sure about some of the tools and features: setting up gradebook (38%), SafeAssign (31%), and grading and giving feedback (31%). 2-3 faculty showed that they are not satisfied with Blackboard Ultra features.

Please rate your feeling about the Blackboard Ultra tools and features:	Unsure 1	Not at all Satisfied 2	Slightly Satisfied 3	Moderately Satisfied 4	Highly Satisfied 5	Total N	Mean
Creating and publishing the course syllabus	4 (14%)	2 (7%)	3 (10%)	7 (24%)	13 (45%)	29	3.79
Posting course announcements	3 (10%)	2 (7%)	4 (14%)	7 (24%)	13 (45%)	29	3.86
Uploading and organizing course files	4 (14%)	1 (3%)	5 (17%)	6 (21%)	13 (45%)	29	3.79
Posting audio/video lectures or other multimedia	8 (28%)	1 (3%)	5 (17%)	3 (10%)	12 (41%)	29	3.34
Organizing course content, activities, and assessments into a series of modules	5 (17%)	2 (7%)	3 (10%)	6 (21%)	13 (45%)	29	3.69
Posting assignments	5 (17%)	1 (3%)	4 (14%)	3 (10%)	16 (55%)	29	3.83
Using SafeAssign originality checking on assignments	8 (28%)	1 (3%)	5 (17%)	2 (7%)	13 (45%)	29	3.38
Creating and administrating online quizzes or tests	9 (31%)	2 (7%)	2 (7%)	1 (3%)	15 (52%)	29	3.38
Facilitating discussions	7 (24%)	3 (10%)	2 (7%)	2 (7%)	15 (52%)	29	3.52
Giving feedback or grading on student submissions	9 (31%)	2 (7%)	2 (7%)	3 (10%)	13 (45%)	29	3.31
Setting up and using the gradebook to enter student grades	11 (38%)	2 (7%)	3 (10%)	2 (7%)	11 (38%)	29	3.00
Monitoring course activity and student progress	8 (28%)	3 (10%)	1 (3%)	4 (14%)	13 (45%)	29	3.38
Reuse course content	6 (21%)	4 (14%)	3 (10%)	2 (7%)	14 (48%)	29	3.48

Level of Agreement with Statements about Blackboard Ultra

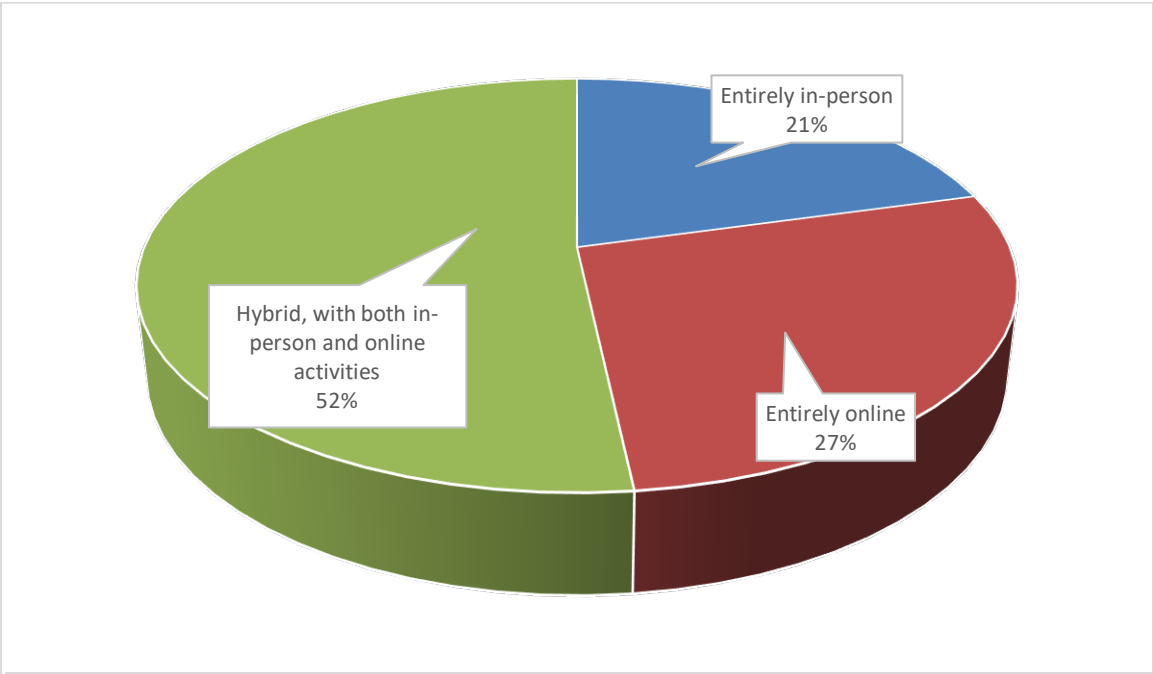
Respondents were also asked to rate their level of agreement with a variety of statements about Blackboard Ultra (see Table below). All of the statements were rated by faculty respondents with a mean of 3.50 or above on a scale of 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The highest rated statement was “Blackboard Ultra enabled me to do what I wanted for my course(s)” with a mean of 3.75 (agree rating). The lowest rated statement were “using blackboard ultra is beneficial to my student’s overall learning”, and” Blackboard Ultra seems useful for my teaching” with a mean of 3.50 (agree rating).

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements about Blackboard Ultra:	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither Agree nor Disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5	Total N	Mean
Blackboard Ultra enabled me to do what I wanted for my course(s).	2 (7.14%)	2 (7.14%)	6 (21.43%)	9 (32.14%)	9 (32.14%)	28	3.75
Blackboard Ultra seems easy for my students to learn how to use.	3 (11.11%)	1 (3.07%)	8 (29.63%)	7 (25.00%)	8 (29.63%)	27	3.59
Blackboard Ultra increased my efficiency as a teacher.	1 (10.71%)	1 (10.71%)	7 (25.00%)	7 (25.00%)	8 (28.57%)	28	3.50
Using Blackboard Ultra is beneficial to my students’ overall learning.	2 (7.14%)	4 (14.29%)	7 (25.00%)	8 (28.57%)	7 (25.00%)	28	3.50
Blackboard Ultra seems useful for my teaching.	3 (10.71%)	1 (3.57%)	7 (25.00%)	8 (28.57%)	9 (32.14%)	28	3.68



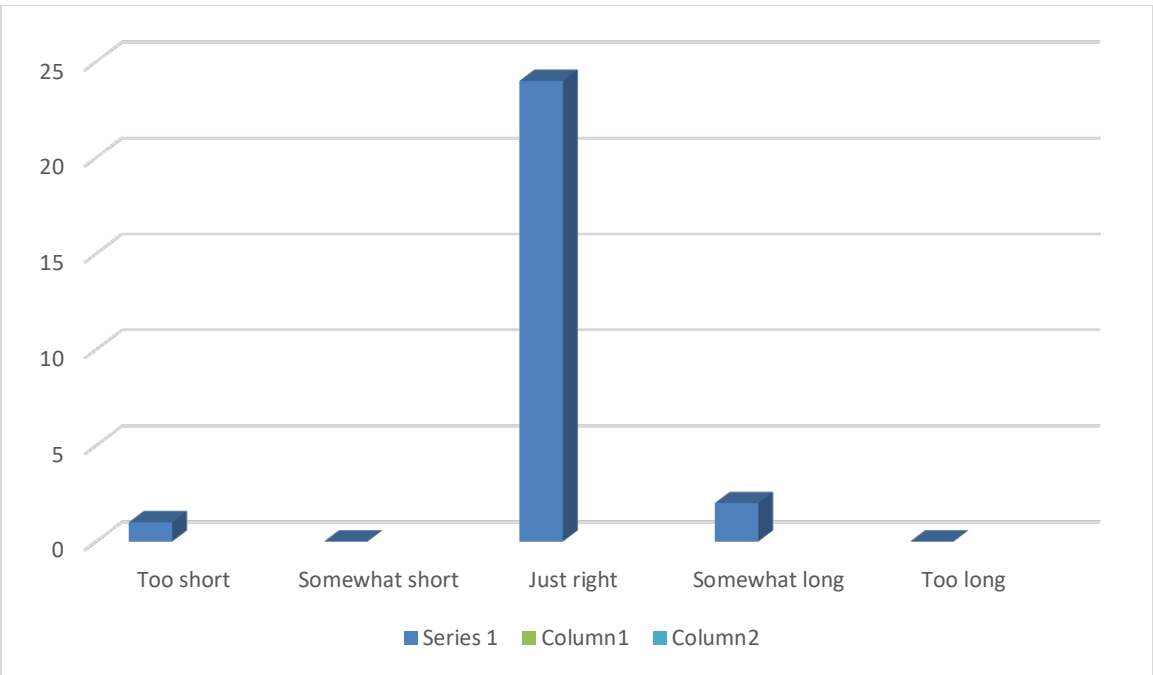
Workshop Format

Fifty-two percent (15) of faculty prefer Hybrid with both in-person and online activities and twenty-eight percent of faculty (8) prefer the entirely online format. Twenty percent of the faculty members (6) prefer entirely in-person workshop.



Pacing of the workshop

Eighty-nine percent (24) of the respondents replied to the pacing of the workshop was just right. Seven percent of participants (2) answered it was long. 1 faculty member rated it was too short.



MOST Liked about Blackboard Ultra

What do you like MOST about Blackboard Ultra? Why?

- All four presenters were excellent! Really thought they did a great job explaining.
- Design
- Has great features.
- How it is a bit easier than original.
- I have not used it yet but it seems more complicated than the previous version.
- I like the tool overall -- Ultra seems more efficient.
- In all honesty, to date I do not feel able to give an assessment of the benefits that Blackboard Ultra can bring to my teaching and students. To question 4, I gave "unsure" as an answer on many points because I need to use the new version of the platform in the classroom to give a more accurate assessment. What I can say with certainty today is that thanks to the training courses, I was able to set up my two courses without any great difficulty. The training was very well organized because it provided that essential introductory framework for those who were already familiar with the platform. Of course, I have some issues that I would like to clarify before the semester starts, but these are details for which I will open a ticket to ask for clarification. I do - to date - recognize the simplicity of the menu as an additional value over the previous version. I find that the menu is very clear and I think this will be better for students as well.
- It looks good and that's all about it.
- Its simplicity
- Not much. There is more flexibility in computing grades. But that's it. More bloatware and unnecessary features. Bring the original back!
- Really not seeing any benefits
- Seems streamlined, more condensed
- Setting up the tests, re-using items
- The clean design and the feature to see at glance what works have to be graded, are missing, etc.
- The grade book is easier than the original, manageable as well.
- The gradebook and others. It is easy than traditional blackboard. You are be just familiar, you have the curiosity to learn more.
- The grades function is much better than the previous version of Blackboard.
- Unsure. Need time to use it fully deployed.
- creating assignments which can be directly linked to reading or audiovisual link. This should make it easier for students to following the course material and the assignments.
- everything in one page

LEAST liked about Blackboard Ultra

What do you like LEAST about Blackboard Ultra? Why?

- the messaging system from students. I don't use BB on my phone.
- Unsure. Need time to use it fully deployed.
- Transfer of course content. The layout is horrible to view. Not attractive.
- To hard to transfer course material- maybe University should have had this done for us
- To date, the thing I like least about Blackboard Ultra is the following: in the past, I used to organize my activity week in this way, i.e. I used to name the folder Week 1, Week 2, etc. then the student - by clicking on the folder - could view an introduction to the week's topics/chapter and - most

importantly - see listed the activities planned for that specific week (the reference to the readings, the possible reference to the Discussion Board, the Quiz, the term paper) without having to resort to the syllabus. Now, however, the student is "forced" to do a double pass, namely click on the Week 1, Week 2, etc. folder located in the main section "Course Content" and then click again to access the contents/items within the weekly folder. Personally, I find this to be less aesthetically appealing for students than the option provided in the previous version of the platform.

- There is no date management tool. It is not easy to date shift everything. Batch edit is a band aid solution compared to date management. Also, the access to various other tools already available in BB Learn is simply nonexistent. There is an excessive need to click through the shell to get things done.
- Some of the terms used by the software either (1) don't make sense or (2) are inconsistent. This makes things confusing.
- So far, everything works out very well!
- Seems like a lot to learn at first.
- Nothing. I just need to learn and master using it.
- N/A
- N/A
- My transfer had all errors
- Less flexibility with customization and color design.
- I do not know it well enough to comment
- I am still new at it...no comment yet
- Gradebook setting is not intuitive and requires a steep learning curve. The interface doesn't allow for much customization with images, etc.
- Bloated, overly complicated, unnecessary.
- Actually, I love Ultra. When I don't use continually, I forgot something, especially the gradebook. So, I need to review my notes.

Features needed to be covered more

Are there any specific features or tools in Blackboard Ultra that you would have liked to see us cover and/or spend more time on? And is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience using Blackboard Ultra from the workshop?

- The workshops were useful and helpful.
 - The workshop was GREAT! Loved the instruction!
 - The grade book. I need more information
 - One on one moving course material
 - Not at this time
 - No
 - Need more info on question types and quiz generation or import.
 - N/A
 - More practice with Gradebook.
 - It would have been good to see more time spent on the grading function.
 - I would like to see again about the gradebook
 - I would like the new version of the platform to have the old feature expressed in the answer above!
- P.S. Honestly, I find the training sessions organized by The Center for Teaching with Technology to be simply fantastic, as is the whole day-to-day activity of this department. I have been teaching remotely for several years and, in addition, I live abroad, so knowing that I can always rely on the utmost

professionalism and courtesy of the Centre has always been a source of great support for me. Every problem and/or request for clarification that I have reported over the years via the ticketing system has always been resolved very quickly. Thank you for your outstanding work.

- Hands on time
- Gradebook
- As the Ultra doesn't allow to import Excel file to create quizzes, I found another solution to easily create quizzes. You can use this link (<https://ed.oc.edu/blackboardquizgenerator/>) to create a quiz zipped folder and upload it to Blackboard Ultra.

Any recommendations

Do you have any additional recommendations on how to improve the Blackboard Ultra Institute? This might include (but is not limited to) suggestions regarding content, pacing, scheduling, etc.

- Do the same thing in the workshop: in person and Zoom (Team).
- Excellent Institute. Learned much from Blackboard Ultra Institute.
- Excellent two-day presentation.
- It would have been nice to start us with prompts to find out what we wanted to learn. This way, the instructor could have tailored the session more specifically to our needs.
- Just keep working as a team is the great asset.
- Maybe as I continue to use BB Ultra.
- My course starts in Spring. I would need extra time via zoom from IT for help setting it up.
- N/A
- N/A
- No, it was fine.
- None
- Please let us know if there any other Ultra tools available. The current version looks extremely simplistic.
- Slow down not rush us through it.
- To date, in all frankness, I would not know what to answer to this question. As I wrote earlier, I need to use the new version of the platform directly in the classroom with the students. Certainly, I will be pleased to point out in the future any critical issues or aspects that I think could be improved - also in the interest of the students - for a better user experience.
- no

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE BLACKBOARD ULTRA INSTITUTE

Based on the feedback and comments from the participants, CTT will continue to improve the workshop materials, activities, and related services (i.e., Course Banner Creator).

Message function (Disappearance of Email function) in gradebook - Faculty complained that it is not user-friendly, and the faculty contact is not available on the student page. Faculty are looking for email feature on Blackboard instead of messages. Because faculty believe that it is the best way for students individually contact faculty.

Course copy process – Some of the faculty members were having an issue with course copy. To assist, provide multiple ways to implement course copy in their courses, such as a video tutorial, a job aid on course copy, and a hands-on session, etc.

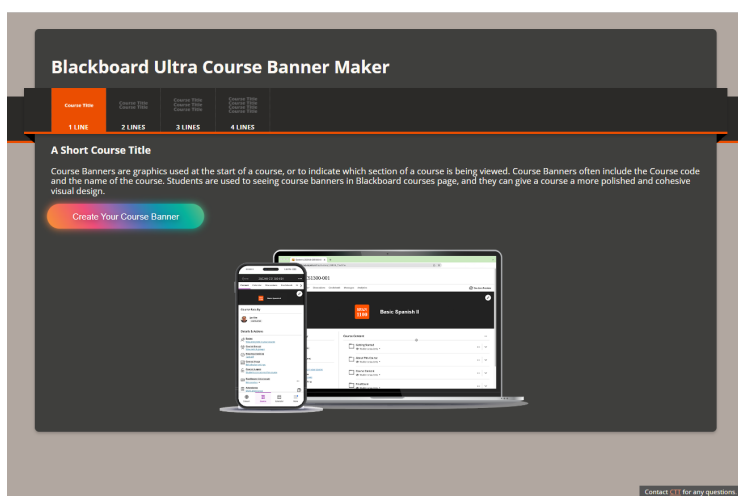
Gradebook settings – When course copy is done, all grading items will be transferred to the new Ultra course shell except for the weighted total column. To assist, provide a separate webinar for emphasizing the mechanics of gradebook with setting up the overall grade using weighted total column. In addition, provide a video tutorial, a job aid on course copy, and a hands-on session, etc. on setting up the overall grade.

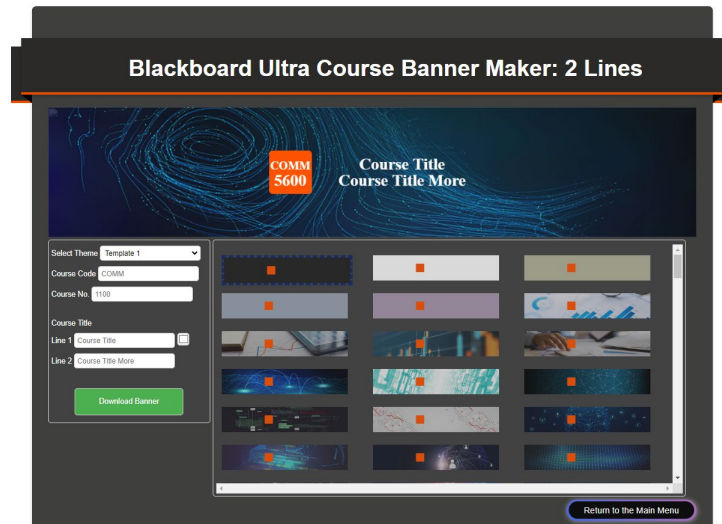
Address more in depth on creating tests, such as importing questions – Creating an assessment, such as a quiz, a test, or an exam, in Blackboard Ultra Course View using the assessment feature is one way to achieve it. However, if the faculty already has a test in other format, provide a walkthrough on the specific method to create them in Blackboard Ultra format. It may work better when the faculty meets one of the instructional designers individually.

Grading features – There are multiple ways to assess students' achievements in Blackboard Ultra Course View. Provide the in-depth process of grading students' works in discussion forum activities, assignments, tests, etc.

Rubric function - the ways to create it and/or import already existing are the same as in Blackboard Original. However, using it to grade student's work is not the same. Usually, the rubric was displayed on a separate page to make it easier to grade. In Blackboard Ultra, you will need to expand each grading item and then grade it one by one. It takes more time to grade one assignment and it may discourage faculty to use it. CTT contacted Blackboard Tech Support team and got confirmed that Blackboard is aware of the issue and working on the improvement to make it as same as usual. It is expected to be available in spring 2023.

The survey results suggested that the faculty did not prefer the entirely in-person workshop. However, they prefer the entirely online or hybrid workshop. For the upcoming workshops, CTT will offer it via online. In case of the needs of in-person workshops, CTT will offer individual workshops for the faculty. The course banner creation process seemed to be complicated because it uses Adobe Photoshop to get a course banner. It takes additional training on the application. To make the process of a course banner creation, CTT has created a web-based course banner creator. The faculty can simply select the background of their banner and then type the course code and title to make their course banner. The course banner creator can be accessed at <https://wpunj.edu/bb/CourseBannerMaker/index.html>





Some faculty recommended the following:

- An easy way to create and integrate audio/video feedback
- Gradebook - overall grade settings and calculation
- The introductory shell could have included example quizzes/test questions
- More Hands-on

CTT will make the workshop incorporating the listed items as needed.

Conclusion

William Paterson University of New Jersey (WPUNJ) has decided to migrate to the Blackboard Ultra Learning Management System. During the spring and summer 2023, to provide faculty with guidance as they plan to implement the new Learning Management System in action, Center for Teaching with Technology (CTT) developed Blackboard Ultra Institute for both in-person and online offerings.

During the workshop, faculty were guided through a well-developed process of gaining exposure to, and then experimenting with key features and functions of the Blackboard Ultra Course View. It was designed to walk faculty through the process of migrating online content from Blackboard Original into Ultra and then to gain familiarity with, and feedback on, the following tools: Folders, Learning Modules, Course Banner, Syllabus, Announcements, Discussions, Assignments, Tests, and the Grade Book.

During the Blackboard Ultra institutes, participants consistently reported that Blackboard Ultra was intuitive and easy to use. Participants further indicated a preference for Blackboard Ultra's modern interface, logical structure, tool functions, and efficiency. In short, and as evidenced in the faculty testimonials, the Institutes agreed that Blackboard Ultra could both improve and economize their instructional effort. Many participants who volunteered indicated they favored a move from Blackboard Original to Ultra.

CTT created surveys on the Blackboard Ultra Experience as well as on participants' overall experience in the Original. For each tool, participants were asked to rate its ease of use along a five-point scale, ranging from very difficult to very easy. Participants were also given the opportunity to provide an open-ended narrative response in each of the surveys. Faculty responses were consistently positive, especially regarding Blackboard Ultra's ease of use.

Faculty members participating in the Blackboard Ultra Institute and Blackboard Ultra trainings recommended that it would be the right decision to transitioning from Blackboard Original to Ultra. The faculty have found Blackboard Ultra easy to learn, easy to use, and an overall better system for hosting and delivering classes.

Appendix A
Climate Survey: Blackboard Ultra Institute



Thank you for attending and completing the Blackboard Ultra Institute. You have been invited to participate in this survey to express your perceptions and feelings about Blackboard Ultra.

Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. Should you decide to participate, your responses will be kept confidential and will be reported only in aggregate in published reports. Individual comments will not be reported with demographics that would allow for identification of individuals. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Dr. Jae Kim, Senior Instructional Designer at CTT, at kimj@wpunj.edu.

This survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. You may terminate your participation in the survey at any time. Then proceed to next page to begin the survey.

Blackboard Ultra Institute Survey

- Q1: Now that you have completed the Blackboard Ultra Institute, how satisfied are you with Blackboard Ultra for adopting it in your course?
Scale: Extremely dissatisfied, Somewhat dissatisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Somewhat satisfied, Extremely satisfied
- Q2: You will have noticed differences between the older version, Blackboard Original, and the new version, Blackboard Ultra. Based on your experiences, which do you prefer?
Scale: Strongly prefer Blackboard Original (older version), Somewhat prefer Blackboard Original (older version), No preference between the two, Somewhat prefer Blackboard Ultra (new version), Strongly prefer Blackboard Ultra (new version)
- Q3: Please rate your feeling about the Blackboard Ultra tools and features designed to support the following teaching and course management tasks:

	Unsure	Not at all Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Highly Satisfied
Creating and publishing the course syllabus (Content)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Posting course announcements (Announcements)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uploading and organizing course files	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Posting audio/video lectures or other multimedia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organizing course content, activities, and assessments into a series of modules or lessons (Content Area, Learning Modules)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Posting assignments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating Journals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using SafeAssign originality checking on assignments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating and administering online quizzes or tests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilitating discussions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Giving feedback on and/or grading student submissions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating and using rubrics to grade student work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Setting up and using the gradebook to enter student grades	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Monitoring course activity and student progress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sending and receiving messages to and from students (Course Messages, Send Email)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating and managing groups for group assignments, group discussions, and/or group projects (Groups)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reusing course content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Integrating an external learning tool or platform with the course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4: Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements about Blackboard Ultra:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	ⓧ Not Applicable
Blackboard Ultra enables me to do what I wanted for my course(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Blackboard Ultra seems easy for my students to learn how to use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Blackboard Ultra seems to increase my efficiency and effectiveness as a teacher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using Blackboard Ultra is beneficial to my students' overall learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Blackboard Ultra seems useful for my teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5: Which of the following formats do you think works best for the Blackboard Ultra Institute?

Scale: Entirely in-person, Entirely online, Hybrid, with both in-person and online activities

Q6: How do you feel about the pacing of this workshop? Was it too short, too long, or just right?

Scale: Too short, Somewhat short, Just right, Somewhat long, Too long

Q7: What do you like MOST about Blackboard Ultra? Why? (open text box)

Q8: What do you like LEAST about Blackboard Ultra? Why? (open text box)

Q9: Are there any specific features or tools in Blackboard Ultra that you would have liked to see us cover and/or spend more time on? And is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience using Blackboard Ultra from the workshop?
(open text box)

Q10: Do you have any additional recommendations on how to improve the Blackboard Ultra Institute? This might include (but is not limited to) suggestions regarding content, pacing, scheduling, etc. (open Text box)

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.