The Perception and Satisfaction on Using Blackboard Ultra:

Faculty Perspectives

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Executive Summary

Overview

A survey for faculty on the perceptions and experiences with Blackboard Ultra was conducted in spring 2024 during the months of February and March. All faculty assigned to teach during spring 2024 were asked to participate in the survey to reflect their experience with Blackboard Ultra. The survey was sent out via targeted announcement on WP Connect and Blackboard Announcements by invitation. The survey was administered through an online platform, Qualtrics. Participation in the study was voluntary and respondents were assured of confidentiality regarding their participation and responses. The purpose of the survey was to collect perceptions and experiences with Blackboard Ultra in four aspects: satisfaction, use, impact, and support.

The survey was developed by Center for Teaching with Technology (CTT) based on the survey implemented in previous faculty and student satisfaction survey results on Blackboard Ultra. The draft survey questions were reviewed and updated by Faculty Senate Technology Council and Technology Across the Curriculum Committee (TAC).

> *The Faculty Senate Technology Council is a governance body elected by the faculty which has the responsibility to identify the technological needs of faculty, recommend technology policies and initiatives based on curricular and scholarship needs, participate in the University's technological policy-making and planning, and liaise with technology administrators on policy, curricular, and scholarship issues.*
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> *Technology Across the Curriculum (TAC) is a collaborative effort of faculty, the Library, and Instruction & Research Technology. TAC recommends technological resources and strategies to the university community in order to promote and support student success, educational excellence, and professional development.*
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> *The Center for Teaching with Technology (CTT) collaborates with faculty to enhance teaching with pedagogical best practices and emerging technologies in pursuing excellence and innovation in teaching and learning at WPU.*

Faculty members were asked to rate the importance of and satisfaction on Blackboard Ultra using a five-point, Likert-type scale consisting of 9 categories of both quantitative and qualitative questions. A total of 149 (20.78%) faculty completed the survey.

Highlights of Finding

Overall, 50% Dissatisfied with Blackboard Ultra	**Not at all Satisfied with Gradebook (42%)**	**Not at all Satisfied with Online Quiz/Test (36%)**
Dissatisfied (50%) Satisfied (41%)	**Gradebook Setup Functionalities**	**Online Quiz/Test Functionalities**
Satisfied with	**Need Training and Support on...**	**Disliked because...** - **Lack of flexibility** - **Customizing Gradebook** - **Issues with Messaging System**

Overall faculty satisfaction with Blackboard Ultra was divided - 50% reported being dissatisfied or extremely dissatisfied, while only 41% were satisfied.

Top rated features were posting announcements, creating/publishing syllabus, and uploading/organizing files. Faculty also commented that they liked discussion board display, calendar, and general interface improvements over previous system.

Lowest rated features were setting up the gradebook, creating online tests/quizzes, and organizing content into modules. Faculty pointed out that lack of flexibility in making content visible, lack of gradebook customization options, and issues with the messaging system were major pain points.

17% of faculty reported that they faced technical issues using Blackboard Ultra across different devices/browsers. They requested more specific topic-oriented training on gradebook, assessments, video integration, third-party tools like Perusall and Respondus.

The findings revealed significant faculty dissatisfaction and usability concerns with Blackboard Ultra that needed to be addressed through training, communication, and system enhancements.

Results

The results of the survey revealed both positive and negative experiences among faculty members with Blackboard Ultra. The following summarized the faculty members experience in four categories: Satisfaction, Use, Impact, and Support.

Satisfaction: Faculty members were generally not satisfied with Blackboard Ultra. Overall satisfaction rate was low, with 50% reporting being dissatisfied or extremely dissatisfied. Some of the features of Blackboard Ultra with high dissatisfaction included the gradebook (42% not at all satisfied), online assessments (36% not at all satisfied), and content organization (32% not at all satisfied). However, faculty expressed mixed opinions on Bb Ultra. While some faculty found it better than the Original, particularly noting its resemblance to Canvas, others struggled with the transition, citing issues such as increased workload due to re-uploading documents and difficulties in navigating the system.

Use: Faculty members reported that they used Blackboard Ultra primarily for course management and administration and noted it worked well for these purposes. The more experience faculty members had with Blackboard Ultra, the more likely they were to expand their use of the tool beyond course management alone. Some faculty described Blackboard Ultra as a poor fit with their desired teaching practices, particularly in regard to structuring/capturing interactions among students, and between students and course material.

Impact: Use of Blackboard Ultra showed a positive impact on teaching and learning. Over half of faculty who participated in the survey indicated that utilizing Blackboard Ultra led them to modify their teaching approaches, which they found to have a beneficial impact on their courses. As per their comments, their students expressed increased engagement in the courses, improved ability to monitor progress and handle assignments, and highlighted the value of reviewing course materials and practicing exams in enhancing their learning experience.

Support: 17% of faculty members reported that they had technical issues across devices/browsers. They requested extensive training on gradebook, assessments, video integration, third-party tools. Faculty also asked more comprehensive support and training sessions tailored to address their specific needs.

Generally, satisfaction with Blackboard Ultra for faculty was low. The survey results suggested that CTT continued to work with faculty expanding and deepening their use of features in Blackboard Ultra to increase engagement and maximize efficiency.

INTRODUCTION

In September 2023, Blackboard was migrated to the Ultra from the Original. Total of 616 out of 717 faculty members completed Blackboard Ultra training and converted 2455 out of 2636 courses to Ultra view. The faculty members who taught courses using the Blackboard Learn Ultra in their courses during the fall 2023 semester were received a customized link to an electronic survey (using Qualtrics software) via email to their university email addresses. They were invited to voluntarily participate in the survey for data collection. On February 12th, the invitation was sent out and on February 21st, the follow-up reminder was delivered via Blackboard Institution page. The survey was closed on March 15, 2024, at 10:00 am (EDT).

The survey included both close- and open-ended questions in regard to the faculty members' experiences with Blackboard Learn Ultra and their perceptions of its quality and utility. The survey took approximately 5 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, Faculty Survey: Blackboard Ultra Fall 2023 Semester, for a copy of the survey questions.

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

PARTICIPATED FACULTY

A total of 149 faculty (20.78%) completed the survey out of 717[1].
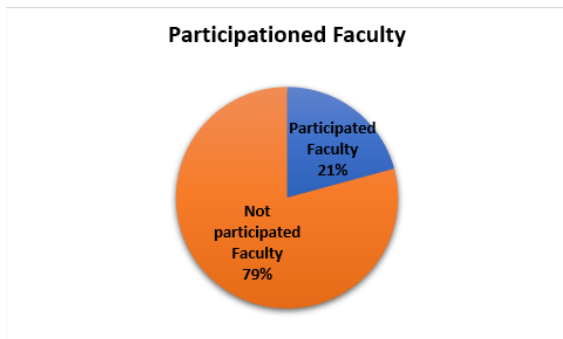
FALL 2023 COURSES
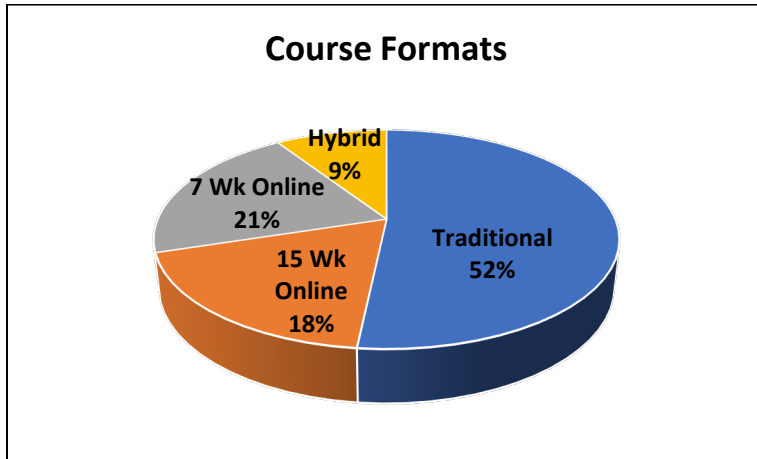
During the fall 2023 semester, Blackboard Ultra was used to teach in 2455 courses. Those courses were included the four different modalities. 1269 (52%) courses were structured as face-to-face format, 453 (19%) courses were offered as 15-week online, 506 (21%) courses were taught as 7-week

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[1] Statistics data from https://www.wpunj.edu/institutional-effectiveness/FACTBOOKS/factbooks.html

online, and 227 (9%) of courses were formatted as hybrid.

Course Formats

OVERALL SATISFACTION OF BLACKBOARD ULTRA

Faculty satisfaction with Blackboard Ultra measured on a scale from 1 to 5 with a mean satisfaction rating 2.82 and standard deviation of 1.44, indicated that there was a notable spread or variability in the responses, with some faculty members expressing strong dissatisfaction and others reporting higher levels of satisfaction. Among 149 respondents, about 50 percent of faculty reported that they were either extremely dissatisfied (23.02%) or somewhat dissatisfied (26.62%) in using it as compared to the Original.

Level of Satisfaction
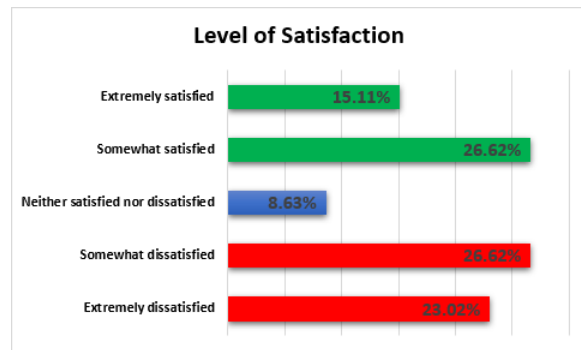
About 41 percent of them replied that they were either extremely satisfied (15.11%) or somewhat satisfied (26.22%), while about nine percent of them marked as neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. The results showed that a significant portion of faculty members (around 60%) were either dissatisfied or neutral about their satisfaction with Blackboard Ultra, while a smaller proportion reported being satisfied.

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH ULTRA FEATURES

The faculty respondents were also asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the specific features of Blackboard Ultra. It appeared that not all features were equally used across the courses. For example, a significant number of the faculty respondents did not use journals (70%), 3rd part tools (49%), and group (50%) features. Most of the faculty respondents used the features of uploading and organizing course files, posting assignments, creating and administering online quizzes or tests, and posting course announcements.

The highest rated feature on a scale of 1 to 5 (did not use and not at all satisfied to highly satisfied) was Posting Course Announcements (3.63); the next highest rated feature were Creating and Publishing the Course Syllabus (3.49), Uploading and Organizing Course Files (3.34), Giving Feedback on and/or Grading Student Submissions (3.32), and Posting Assignments (3.28); however, it appeared that only 70% of respondents used this feature in multiple courses. Features used by at least 50% of respondents and their courses had means in the slightly satisfied range (2.61-2.91).

The following results reveled insights into faculty satisfaction with various features of Blackboard Ultra:

Creating and Publishing the Course Syllabus: The majority of faculty (28.57%) reported being moderately satisfied, followed by slightly satisfied (25.57%) and highly satisfied (24.37%). However, 26 (21.85%) of the faculty expressed being either not at all satisfied or not applicable.
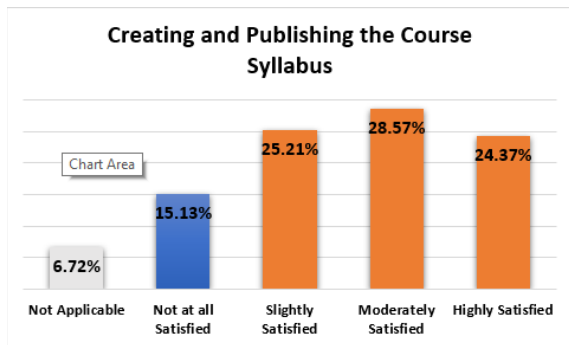
Posting Course Announcements: A significant portion of faulty (35.00%) reported being highly satisfied, with another 24.71% and 17.50% expressing slightly or moderately satisfied respectively. Dissatisfaction levels were relatively low, with 26 (21.67%) faculty members indicating being not at all satisfied.
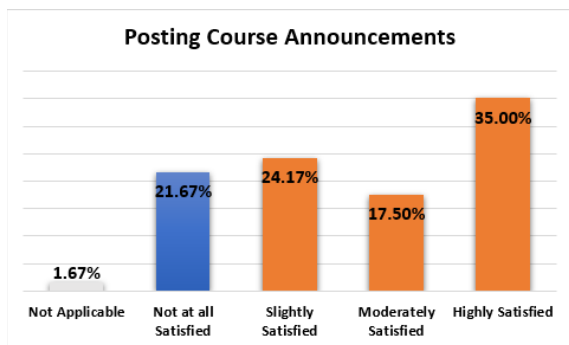
Uploading and Organizing Course Files: Moderately satisfied faculty members were the most common (4.58%), followed by slightly satisfied (22.03%) and highly satisfied (21.19%). However, dissatisfaction levels were relatively high, with 37 (31.36%) faculty members reporting not being at all satisfied.

Uploading and Organizing Course Files
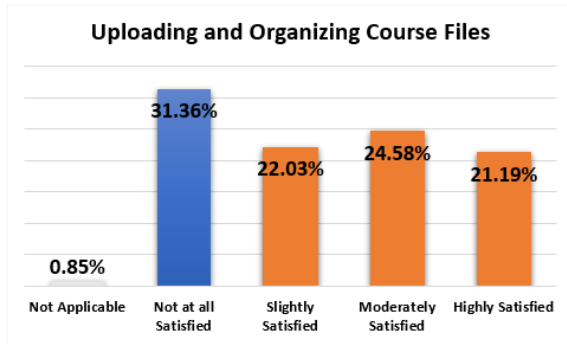
Posting Audio/Video Lectures or Other Multimedia: Faculty members were evenly distributed across satisfaction levels, with the highest percentage of faculty expressing not at all satisfied or not applicable (43.53%), and all levels of satisfied (54.46%).

Posting Audio/Video Lectures or Other Multimedia
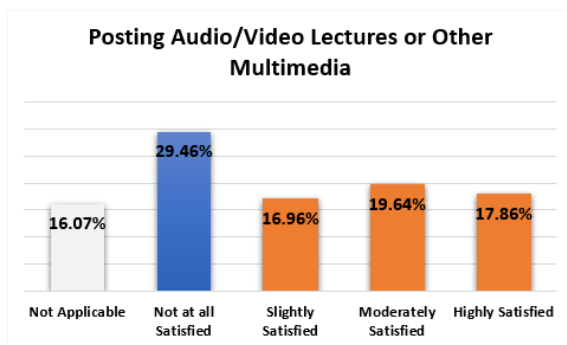
Organizing Course Content, Activities, and Assessments into Modules or Lessons: Not at all satisfied responses (31.36%) were the most common. However, in general, all levels of satisfied was 61.87%.

Organizing Course Content, Activities, and Assessments into a Series of Modules
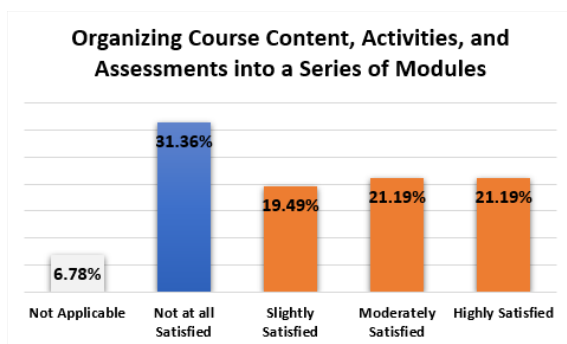
Posting Assignments: Even though not at all satisfied responses were the most common (34.75%), all levels of satisfied showed 64.40%. Only 1 (0.85%) respondent reported being not applicable.
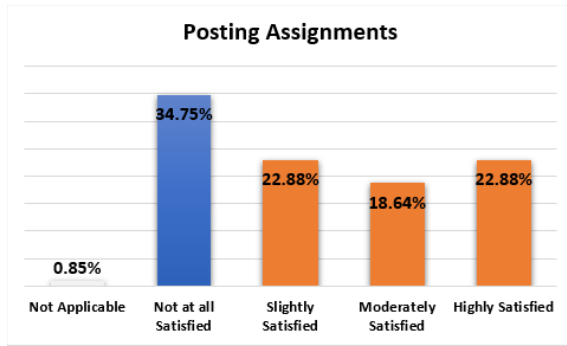
Creating Journals: The majority of faculty members (70.27%) indicated that this feature was not applicable to them, likely contributing to the low response count for this question.
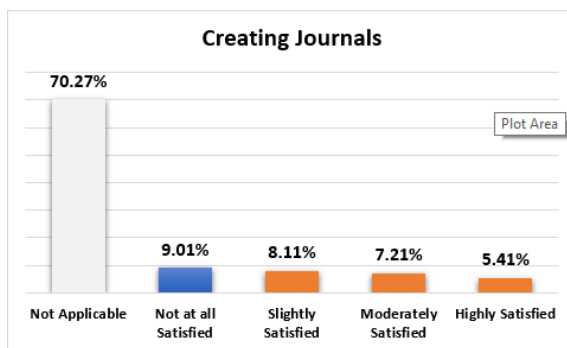
Using SafeAssign Originality Checking on Assignments: Responses were evenly distributed across satisfaction levels, with not at all satisfied being the most common (20.00%). However, the majority of the faculty members reported that this feature was not applicable (33.64%).
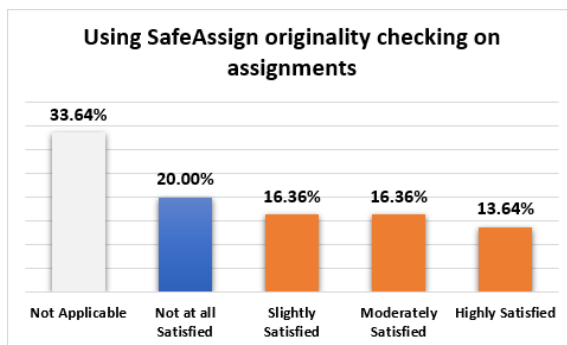
Creating and Administering Online Quizzes or Tests: A significant portion of faculty members (35.96%) reported being not at all satisfied, while another 48 (42.11%) respondents expressed being satisfied.

Creating and administering online quizzes or tests
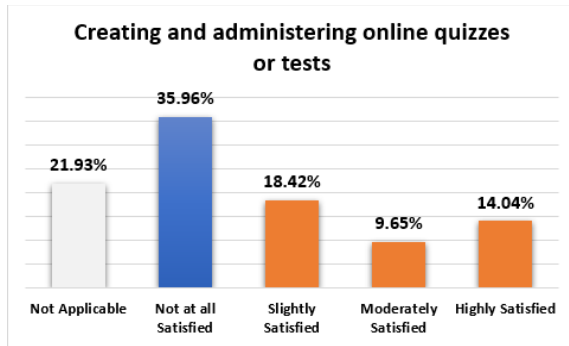
Facilitating Discussions: Responses varied across satisfaction levels, with slightly satisfied (24.78%) being the most common, followed by highly satisfied (20.35%) and moderately satisfied (19.47%). However, only 21 (18.58%) respondents reported not at all satisfied.

Facilitating Discussions
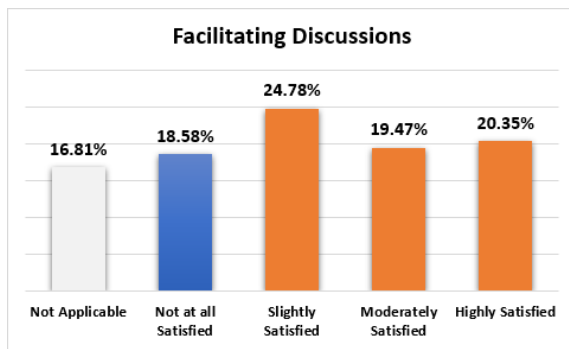
Giving Feedback on and/or Grading Student Submissions: Faulty members indicated that the most frequently selected response was not at all satisfied, with 30.70%, followed by highly satisfied chosen by 27.19%.

Giving Feedback on and/or Grading Student Submissions
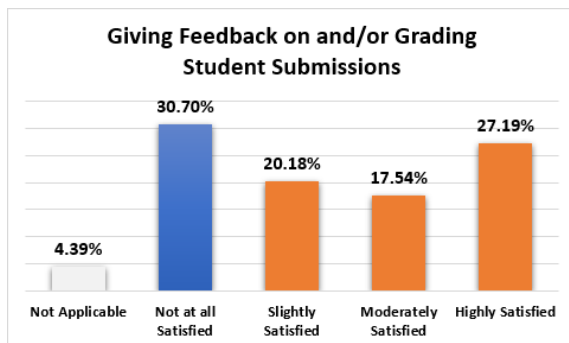
Creating and Using Rubrics to Grade Student Work: Moderately satisfied responses were not applicable (35.40%), followed by moderately satisfied (20.35%).

Creating and Using Rubrics to Grade Student Work

- Not Applicable: 35.40%
- Not at all Satisfied: 16.81%
- Slightly Satisfied: 13.27%
- Moderately Satisfied: 20.35%
- Highly Satisfied: 14.16%
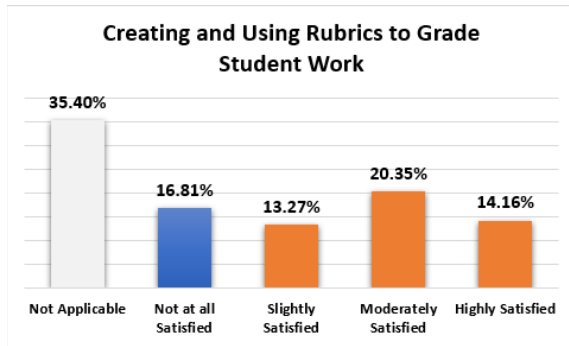
Setting up and using the gradebook to enter student grades: Not at all satisfied responses were the most common (42.24%), followed by slightly satisfied (20.69%) and highly satisfied (18.97%).

Setting Up and Using the Gradebook to Enter Student Grades

- Not Applicable: 3.45%
- Not at all Satisfied: 42.24%
- Slightly Satisfied: 20.69%
- Moderately Satisfied: 14.66%
- Highly Satisfied: 18.97%
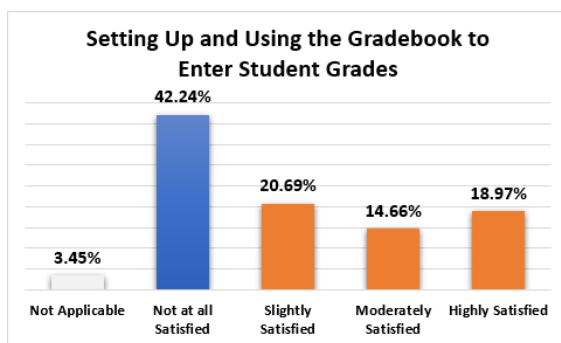
Monitoring course activity and student progress: In general, faculty responses varied across satisfaction levels, with moderately satisfied being the most common (26.09%), followed by highly satisfied (22.61%) and not at all satisfied (22.61%).

Monitoring Course Activity and Student Progress

- Not Applicable: 9.57%
- Not at all Satisfied: 22.61%
- Slightly Satisfied: 26.09%
- Moderately Satisfied: 19.13%
- Highly Satisfied: 22.61%
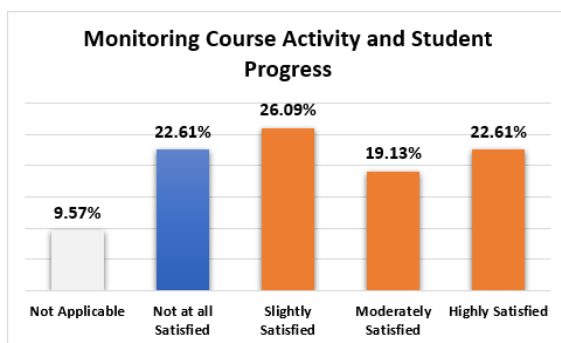
Setting up groups, managing groups, and managing group assignments: The majority of faculty members (50.44%) indicated that this feature was not utilized often to them.

Setting up Groups, Managing Groups, and Managing Group Assignments

50.44%

14.16% 15.04%

9.73% 10.62%

Not Applicable | Not at all Satisfied | Slightly Satisfied | Moderately Satisfied | Highly Satisfied
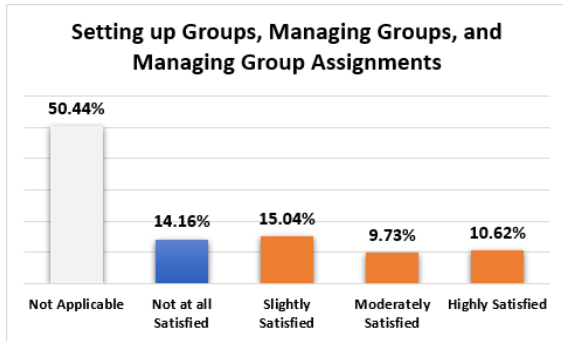
Reusing course content: Not at all satisfied responses were the most common (34.78%), however, faculty reported that they were satisfied in general (54.78%).

Reusing Course Content

34.78%

17.39% 18.26% 19.13%

10.43%

Not Applicable | Not at all Satisfied | Slightly Satisfied | Moderately Satisfied | Highly Satisfied
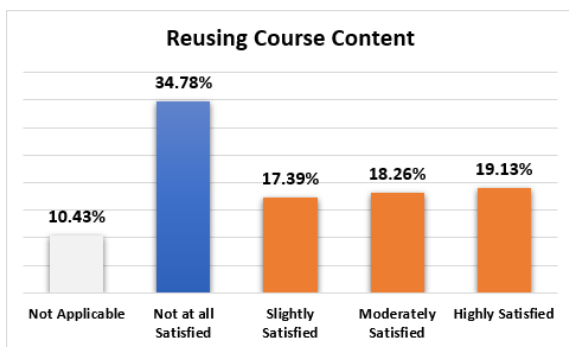
Integrating an external learning tool or platform with the course: The majority of faculty members (48.72%) indicated that this feature was not utilized yet to them.

Integrating an External Learning Tool or Platform with the Course

48.72%

22.22%

11.11% 8.55% 9.40%

Not Applicable | Not at all Satisfied | Slightly Satisfied | Moderately Satisfied | Highly Satisfied

Please rate your feeling about the Blackboard Ultra tools and features designed to support the following teaching and course management tasks	Not Applicable 1	Not at all Satisfied 2	Slightly Satisfied 3	Moderately Satisfied 4	Highly Satisfied 5	Mean
Creating and publishing the course syllabus	8 (6.72%)	18 (15.13%)	30 (25.21%)	34 (28.57%)	29 (24.37%)	3.49
Posting course announcements	2 (1.67%)	26 (21.67%)	29 (24.17%)	21 (17.50%)	42 (35.00%)	3.63
Uploading and organizing course files	1 (0.85%)	37 (31.36%)	26 (22.03%)	29 (24.58%)	25 (21.19%)	3.34
Posting audio/video lectures or other multimedia	19 (16.24%)	35 (29.91%)	21 (17.95%)	22 (18.80%)	20 (17.09%)	2.91
Organizing course content, activities, and assessments into a series of modules or lessons	8 (6.78%)	37 (31.36%)	23 (19.49%)	25 (21.19%)	25 (21.19%)	3.19
Posting Assignments	1 (0.85%)	41 (34.75%)	27 (22.88%)	22 (18.64%)	27 (22.88%)	3.28
Creating Journals	78 (70.27%)	10 (9.01%)	9 (8.11%)	8 (7.21%)	6 (5.41%)	1.68
Using SafeAssign originality checking on assignments	37 (33.64%)	22 (20.00%)	18 (16.36%)	18 (16.36%)	15 (13.64%)	2.56
Creating and administering online quizzes or tests	25 (21.93%)	41 (35.96%)	21 (18.42%)	11 (9.65%)	16 (14.04%)	2.58
Facilitating discussions	19 (6.81%)	21 (18.58%)	28 (24.78%)	22 (19.47%)	23 (21.35%)	3.08
Giving feedback on and/or grading student submissions	5 (4.39%)	35 (30.70%)	23 (20.18%)	20 (17.54%)	31 (27.19%)	3.32
Creating and using rubrics to grade student work	40 (35.40%)	19 (16.81%)	15 (13.27%)	23 (20.35%)	16 (14.16%)	2.61
Setting up and using the gradebook to enter student grades	4 (3.45%)	49 (42.24%)	24 (20.69%)	17 (14.56%)	22 (18.97%)	3.03
Monitoring course activity and student progress	11 (9.57%)	26 (22.61%)	30 (26.09%)	22 (19.13%)	26 (22.61%)	3.23
Setting up groups, managing groups, and managing group assignments	57 (50.44%)	16 (14.16%)	17 (15.04%)	11 (9.73%)	12 (10.62%)	2.16
Reusing course content	12 (10.43%)	40 (34.78%)	20 (17.39%)	21 (18.26%)	22 (19.13%)	3.01
Integrating an external learning tool or platform with the course	57 (48.72%)	26 (22.22%)	13 (11.11%)	10 (8.55%)	11 (9.40%)	2.08

LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ABOUT BLACKBOARD ULTRA

The faculty respondents were asked to rate the level of agreement with a variety of statements about Blackboard Ultra (see the Table on page 17). All of the statements were rated by faculty members with a mean of 2.86 or above on a scale of 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree) with not applicable.

The results suggested that there was a mixed perception among faculty regarding Blackboard Ultra. While some faculty members found it beneficial and effective for their teaching and course management, others expressed dissatisfaction and challenges, particularly in terms of ease of use for both faculty and their students.

Course Management: While about 39% of faculty members felt that Blackboard Ultra enabled them to achieve what they wanted for their courses, about 44% of them expressed disagreement, indicating that there were limitations or difficulties in using the platform to meet their course objectives.

Blackboard Ultra enables me to do what I wanted for my course(s)

Category	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	22.81%
Disagree	21.05%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	14.91%
Agree	25.44%
Strongly Agree	13.16%
Not Applicable	2.63%
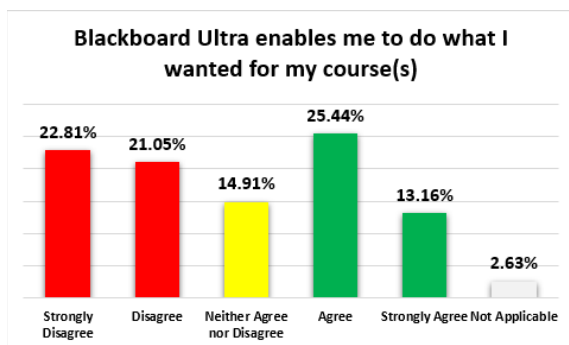
Ease of Use: There was a divide in opinions regarding the ease of use of Blackboard Ultra for their students. While some faculty believed that it was easy for students to learn, others disagreed, suggesting that there may be complexities or barriers to student engagement and interaction within the platform.

Blackboard Ultra seems easy for my students to learn how to use

Category	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	22.32%
Disagree	20.54%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	18.75%
Agree	25.00%
Strongly Agree	8.93%
Not Applicable	4.46%
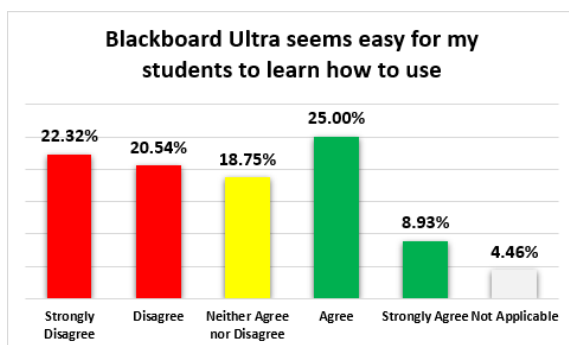
Faculty Efficiency and Effectiveness: A slight majority of respondents perceived Blackboard Ultra as increasing their efficiency and effectiveness as faculty. However, a significant portion of them disagreed, indicating that for some faculty members, the platform may not fully support

their teaching practices or enhance their effectiveness.

Blackboard Ultra seems to increase my efficiency and effectiveness as a teacher

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
28.32%	27.43%	20.35%	13.27%	7.96%	2.65%
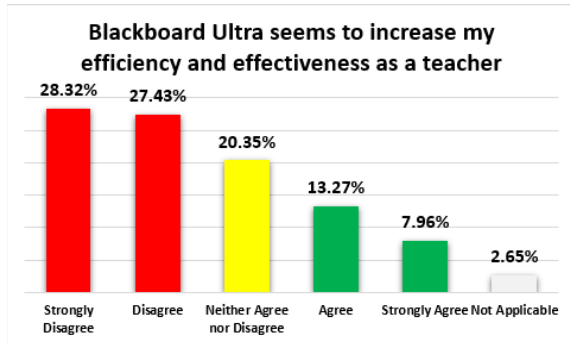
Student Learning Benefits: Views on the benefits of Blackboard Ultra for student learning were divided. This suggested that while some faculty members believed the platform positively impacts student learning, others did not see significant benefits.

Using Blackboard Ultra is beneficial to my student's overall learning

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
20.54%	21.43%	21.43%	22.32%	8.93%	5.36%
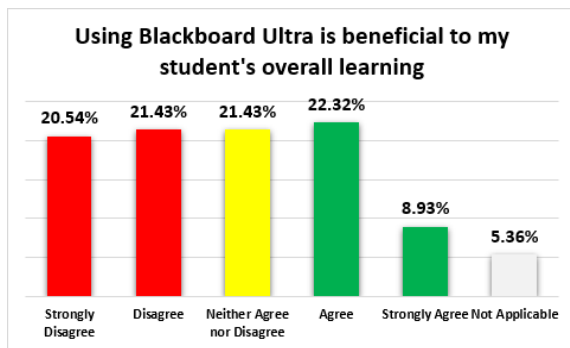
Usefulness for Teaching: Similar to previous questions, the responses were varied regarding the usefulness of Blackboard Ultra for teaching. While a substantial proportion of respondents found it useful, a significant number also disagreed, indicating that the platform may not fully meet their teaching needs or preferences.

Blackboard Ultra seems useful for my teaching

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
21.43%	17.86%	24.11%	19.64%	12.50%	4.46%
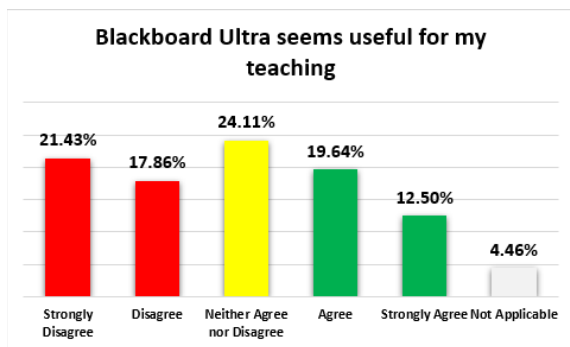
The interpretation of these results highlighted the importance of considering the diverse experiences and perspectives of faculty members when assessing the effectiveness and suitability of Blackboard Ultra. There were both strengths and areas for improvement that should be addressed to better support faculty in their teaching practices and enhance student learning experiences.

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements about Blackboard.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable	Mean
	1	2	3	4	5		
Blackboard enabled me to do what I wanted for my course(s).	26 (23.81%)	24 (21.05%)	17 (15.60%)	28 (25.69%)	14 (12.84%)	3 (2.75%)	2.93
Blackboard was easy for my students to learn how to use.	25 (22.32%)	23 (20.54%)	21 (18.75%)	28 (25.00%)	10 (8.93%)	5 (4.46%)	2.91
Blackboard increased my efficiency as a teacher.	32 (28.32%)	31 (27.43%)	23 (20.35%)	15 (13.27%)	9 (9.76%)	3 (2.65%)	2.53
Blackboard increased my effectiveness as a teacher.	23 (20.54%)	24 (21.43%)	24 (21.43%)	25 (22.32%)	10 (8.93%)	6 (5.36%)	2.94
Using Blackboard has been beneficial to my students' overall learning.	24 (21.43%)	20 (17.86%)	27 (24.11%)	22 (19.64%)	14 (12.50%)	5 (4.46%)	2.97

LIKE MOST ABOUT BLACKBOARD ULTRA

Blackboard Ultra elicited a range of responses from faculty members, reflecting both positive experiences and areas for improvement. Among the noted benefits, faculty appreciated the discussion board grading format, which conveniently displayed student posts alongside the original posts they responded to, facilitating a clearer understanding of interactions within the course. Additionally, the announcements functionality was lauded for its utility in disseminating important information to students efficiently.

One particularly praised feature was the Gradebook reminders, which served as valuable prompts for their students who had yet to submit their work. However, some faculty expressed a desire for more flexibility in customizing the accompanying email notifications, suggesting that the ability to edit or schedule these reminders would enhance their usefulness further. Moreover, the suggestion of an auto-send feature for reminders to students who did not submit the work within a specified timeframe reflects a desire for increased automation and efficiency in course management.

Another highlight was the improved calendar functionality, which faculty found to be a significant enhancement compared to previous iterations of Blackboard. The inclusion of analytics tools was also welcomed, as they provided valuable insights into student engagement and progress, allowing instructors to tailor their teaching accordingly.

Despite these positive aspects, some faculty note a learning curve associated with transitioning to Blackboard Ultra from the Original. While many adapted to the new interface of Blackboard Ultra, others still expressed challenges in navigating its features effectively. Nevertheless, there was recognition of the platform's strides in organization and user-friendliness, particularly in tasks such as course content management and grading.

However, concerns were raised regarding the Blaboard's flexibility and integration with other tools, with some users expressing a preference for alternative learning management systems like Canvas. Suggestions for improvement included better integration of plagiarism detection tools and synchronization of attendance tracking systems to streamline administrative tasks further.

While Blackboard Ultra brought several enhancements and improvements to the table, there were some areas where further refinement and customization were needed. The evolution of Blackboard was met with both appreciation for its advancements and constructive feedback aimed at optimizing its functionality and user experience. Appendix B listed the detailed responses from the faculty participants.

LIKE LEAST ABOUT BLACKBOARD ULTRA

The transition to Blackboard Ultra prompted a diverse range of feedback from faculty with many expressing frustrations alongside a few positive observations. Faculty members articulated several key areas where they believed improvements were necessary. One common request was for enhanced functionality regarding content visibility within folders, with many desiring an option to make all content in a folder visible to students simultaneously, rather than having to adjust each item individually. Additionally, there had been calls for features such as an "expand all" option for subfolders, which would streamline navigation within the course interface.

Faculty members also highlighted challenges related to Gradebook management. Specifically, they cited limitations on grading flexibility and the organization of assignments. Some found the Gradebook's pre-set categories restrictive and expressed frustration over the inability to create new grading categories tailored to their specific needs, such as participation or attendance. Issues with the display of grade items, including misleading indicators for incomplete grades, had further compounded these challenges.

Beyond Gradebook concerns, faculty members noted difficulties with other aspects of Blackboard Ultra, such as the messaging system and course organization. The messaging system was criticized for its unintuitive design and dispersion of communication channels, making it challenging for faculty to keep track of student inquiries and needs effectively. Faculty members also expressed frustration over the lack of customization options for course pages and announcements, which limited their ability to create visually appealing and engaging content for students.

While Blackboard Ultra did offer some benefits, such as improved folder organization and user-friendly elements, its implementation faced significant criticism for its complexity, lack of intuitive design, and various technical glitches. Despite these challenges, some faculty members acknowledged a learning curve and express optimism about the platform's potential once fully mastered. However, the consensus among many faculty members was that Blackboard Ultra requires substantial improvements to meet the diverse needs of instructors and students effectively. Appendix C listed the faculty members responses.

ISSUES USING BLACKBOARD ULTRA

91 (83%) faculty respondents reported that they never faced any issues when using Blackboard Ultra from different devices or browsers. However, there were 19 (17%) of them replied they had issues.
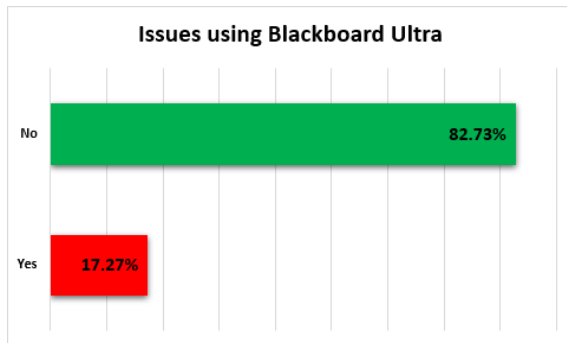
The faculty members' reported the issues were as follows:

- *Home and campus computers.*
- *ipads and iphones are often limited or get stuck in a loop.*
- *It varies.*
- *firefox*
- *Chrome, pc*
- *I use a mac at home a safari. It never works quite right.*
- *work computer, home computer---also a Dell*
- *It is not user friendly from an Android phone*
- *Why is everything the school used against Safari and Google docs?*
- *many already listed. It kicks me out while composing announcements or feedback and all is lost, etc.*
- *When using my iPad, I had great difficulty accessing the place in the gradebook needed to enter grades. It would frequently take many attempts to access this, which slowed down the posting of grades considerably.*
- *I can't access it from my phone.*

**FACULTY COMMENTS AND
REQUESTS FOR TRAINING ON SPECIFIC TOOLS FROM CTT**

When asked any specific features or tools in Blackboard Ultra that faculty would like to learn from CTT, faculty respondents requested the following tools to be included in the training sessions:

- *Gradebook (6)*
- *Assessments - Quizzes, tests, and Exams (7) -share*
- *Incorporate Video (YouTube and Yuja) (3)*
- *Groups - setting up (1)*
- *Messaging and announcements*

- *Redesign Course (2)*
- *Perusall (2)*
- *Respondus (1)*
- *Discussion (2)*
- *Assignments and grading (1)*
- *Rubrics (1) – creating and sharing*

Faculty members responded mixed feedback regarding their training experiences with Blackboard Ultra through the Center for Teaching with Technology (CTT). While some found the training sessions beneficial and planned to attend workshops focused on Gradebook and Exams, others expressed dissatisfaction with the training they've received. For those who found the training useful, they commended the responsiveness of CTT staff and the assistance provided during the transition, particularly with setting up the gradebook. CTT staff was applauded as especially helpful in navigating the intricacies of Blackboard Ultra.

However, there was a notable segment of faculty members who felt the training sessions were inadequate. Some described the training as overly complicated, lacking in relevance to their specific needs, or delivered in a manner that wasn't conducive to learning. For instance, one faculty member mentioned that a colleague had to step in and teach the group due to the technical complexity of the training. Others expressed frustration with the lack of clear (step-by-step) documentation and responsiveness to questions, noting that the training failed to address their specific concerns and preferences.

There were challenges related to the format and accessibility of the training. Some faculty members mentioned difficulties in finding time to attend workshops due to competing demands, while others struggled with the online format, finding it confusing or insufficient for their learning needs. Additionally, there were requests for more hands-on, in-person workshops, which have been valuable in the past for learning from colleagues and receiving real-time support.

In terms of specific training needs, faculty members highlighted a range of areas where they sought further guidance. These included incorporating video lectures, setting up quizzes and exams, utilizing tools like Perusall and Respondus, and optimizing the Gradebook for efficiency and accuracy.

While some faculty members found the training helpful, others felt it fell short of addressing their needs in navigating the complexities of Blackboard Ultra. There was a need for more tailored, accessible, and hands-on training experiences that catered to the diverse needs and preferences of faculty members. Appendix D. listed the detailed comments and requests from faculty members.

REQUESTS FOR SPECIFIC FEATURES, FUNCTIONS, OR TOOLS IN BLACKBOARD ULTRA

Faculty were asked their opinions on any specific features, functions, or tools in Blackboard Ultra that they would like to have.

Faculty provided extensive feedback on their experience with Bb Ultra by highlighting several areas of desired improvements. Key requests included bulk visibility settings, with users desiring the ability to make all content within a folder visible to students at once, rather than adjusting each item individually. Additionally, faculty expressed missing functionality of the previous gradebook in the Original, particularly the ability to view a spreadsheet of all students, assignments, and grades simultaneously. They also sought more customization options and better organization.

Another area of concern was the discussion board, where faculty wanted better organization and tracking of posts. They wanted the ability to see who posted and responded to whom in a tree structure and requested options to prevent students from posting on certain threads. Faculty encountered issues when copying content between courses, experiencing broken links and inaccessible documents for students. They asked a more streamlined process for transferring content.

Many faculty members expressed a desire to revert to the Blackboard Original, citing missing features and difficulties in navigating Ultra. They also requested clearer communication regarding updates and features, as well as more control over email notifications and reminders sent to students. Furthermore, faculty found the current layout and navigation of Ultra less intuitive than the Original, desiring options for customization to improve organization and accessibility.

Additionally, faculty expressed interest in additional features such as AI detection tools, better integration with third-party applications like ExamSoft, and more options for customization and personalization. Overall, faculty sought a return to the functionality and ease of use provided by the original Blackboard, along with enhancements to streamline workflows and improve communication with students.

Most of these requests were already incorporated in Blackboard Ultra. However, faculty were having a hard time finding them. The list of the requested items in details and the workarounds information can be found in Appendix E.

EXPERIENCES WITH BLACKBOARD ULTRA

When asked if there was anything else they would like to talk about their experience using Blackboard, faculty expressed mixed opinions on their experiences with Blackboard Ultra.

Opinions on Bb Ultra varied widely among faculty members, with some expressing satisfaction while others encountering significant challenges. For those who found it favorable, the improved interface, reminiscent of Canvas, was a highlight. They appreciated its user-friendly design and noted

that the transition was facilitated by helpful support from the CTT team. Prompt responses to submitted help tickets by CTT also contributed to a positive experience.

However, the transition to Bb Ultra had been accompanied by frustrations and setbacks. Faculty members lamented the increased workload resulting from the need to re-upload numerous documents, compounded by the ineffective copy feature. This inefficiency disrupted workflows and necessitated sending documents separately to students via email, undermining the platform's purpose. Additionally, the absence of features available in the Blackboard Original, along with the difficulty in making necessary changed to the grade book, exacerbated the challenges faced by faculty.

Faculty also reported that their students appeared to be struggling with the new Blackboard Ultra, citing confusion and technical difficulties. This showed an additional burden for faculty who must address their concerns while navigating the LMS themselves. Despite efforts to adapt and find workarounds, many of them expressed a preference for the Original, citing its familiarity and functionality.

Communication regarding updates and features was deemed insufficient, leaving users unaware of changes and lacking guidance on implementation. This compounded the frustration experienced during the transition. Faculty requested for more comprehensive support and training sessions tailored to address their specific needs.

While some faculty members had successfully adjusted to Blackboard Ultra and appreciated its improvements, many encountered significant obstacles that hindered their productivity and satisfaction. Addressing these issues, along with providing better support and communication, would be essential to improving the overall faculty experience on Blackboard Ultra. Appendix F listed the detailed responses from the faculty members.

KEY FINDINGS

Faculty satisfaction with Blackboard Ultra was generally low, according to the survey results. Overall satisfaction was not great, with 50% of faculty reporting being dissatisfied or extremely dissatisfied. Areas that received particularly high levels of dissatisfaction included the gradebook feature (42% not at all satisfied), online assessments such as tests and quizzes (36% not at all satisfied), and organizing content into modules (32% not at all satisfied). The survey results highlighted the mixed opinions, with an example quote stating "Some faculty found it better than the Original, particularly noting its resemblance to Canvas. However, others struggled with the transition, citing issues such as increased workload due to re-uploading documents and difficulties in navigating the system."

Regarding the use of Blackboard Ultra's features from the faculty perspective, highly utilized tools like posting announcements (3.63 mean satisfaction) and uploading files (3.34 mean satisfaction) received relatively higher satisfaction ratings. However, features such as online tests/quizzes, facilitating discussions, and using external tools had lower satisfaction levels. The survey results indicated that not all features were equally used across the courses; none of the faculty respondents used journals, and group features at the moment of their teaching.

The impact of Blackboard Ultra on teaching efficiency, student learning benefits, and overall usefulness for teaching was also divided among faculty perspectives. As an example, the survey results found that a slight majority of respondents perceived Blackboard Ultra as increasing their efficiency and effectiveness as teachers while a significant portion disagreed.

In terms of support needed, 17% of faculty faced technical issues when accessing Blackboard Ultra across different devices and browsers. Additionally, there were extensive training requests from faculty on areas such as using the gradebook, administering assessments, integrating video content, and incorporating third-party tools. The survey results highlighted this need with the quote, "Faculty requested more comprehensive support and training sessions tailored to address their specific needs."

While some faculty members adapted well to Blackboard Ultra, many struggled due to dissatisfaction with key features, usability issues impacting their teaching, and a perceived lack of sufficient training and support compared to the previous learning management system used at the university.

NEXT STEPS

Center for Teaching with Technology (CTT) will continue to communicate the survey findings with Faculty Senate Technology Committee and Technology Across the Curriculum committee members in order to embrace the needs and challenges from faculty based on the information provided in the survey results. The following will be the efforts to enhance and improve the faculty experience with Blackboard Ultra:

1. **Providing comprehensive training and documentation to address faculty concerns**. CTT will offer extensive training sessions tailored to faculty needs on using the gradebook, assessments, video integration, and third-party tool integration within Blackboard Ultra. Clear, step-by-step documentation and video tutorials will be developed for common tasks and features that faculty reported issues with. Additionally, exploring different training formats like in-person workshops, online tutorials, and one-on-one sessions can accommodate diverse learning preferences.

2. **Enhancing the gradebook functionality**. Since Blackboard Ultra does not provide any options for this, CTT will provide training and support to maximize the gradebook's capability, allowing faculty to create custom grading categories and organizational structures. The training will extend to provide the specific topics on gradebook setup, management, and best practices for allowing faculty better utilize this feature.

3. **Improving content organization and visibility**. CTT will provide support on detailed features such as bulk visibility settings for folder content and an "expand all" option for subfolders. CTT will also provide support on streamlining the process of copying/migrating content between courses to prevent broken links and missing documents.

4. **Increasing customization options**. CTT will provide ways to customize for course pages, announcements, layout, and navigation to accommodate with faculty preferences and improve the overall experience.

5. **Addressing technical issues**. CTT will investigate and resolve any compatibility issues faced by faculty when accessing Blackboard Ultra across different devices and browsers. CTT will provide guidance on recommended devices/browsers for optimal performance.

6. **Enhancing communication and user feedback for continuous improvement**. CTT will improve communication channels to inform faculty about system updates, new features, and changes well in advance. Additionally, CTT will implement a feedback mechanism to continuously gather input from faculty on areas for improvement and desired enhancements to help identify and address concerns promptly.

By addressing training needs, enhancing functionality, improving communication, and considering faculty feedback, CTT will work towards optimizing the Blackboard Ultra experience for faculty to ensure a seamless and effective learning management system for them.

Appendix A. Faculty Survey on Blackboard Ultra in Fall 2023

Q36 Blackboard Ultra Survey

Thank you for taking this Faculty Senate Technology Council & Instruction & Research Technology survey on Blackboard Ultra.

ULTRA
Blackboard | Learn

Q1

Are you a student or faculty? (Choose one)

○ Faculty

○ Student

Faculty

Q2

Adopting Blackboard Ultra in Your Teaching

ULTRA
Blackboard | Learn

Q3

Thank you for adopting and using Blackboard Ultra to teach in the fall 2023 semester. You have been invited to participate in this survey to express your perceptions and experiences with 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, Assistant Director of Center for Teaching with Technology, at kimj@wpunj.edu.

This survey should take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Q4

Adopting Blackboard Ultra In Your Teaching

Q5

Now that you have used Blackboard Ultra in your course, how satisfied are you with Blackboard Ultra for adopting it in your course?

○ Extremely dissatisfied

○ Somewhat dissatisfied

○ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

○ Somewhat satisfied

○ Extremely satisfied

Q6

Please rate your feeling about the Blackboard Ultra tools and features designed to support the following teaching and course management tasks:

	Not Applicable	Not at all Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfield	Highly Satisfied
Creating and publishing the course syllabus (Consent)	○	○	○	○	○
Posting course announcements (Announcements)	○	○	○	○	○
Uploading and organizing course files	○	○	○	○	○
Posting audio/video lectures or other multimedia	○	○	○	○	○
Organizing course content, activities, and assessments into a series of modules or lessons (Content Area, Learning Modules)	○	○	○	○	○
Posting Assignments	○	○	○	○	○
Creating Journals	○	○	○	○	○
Using SafeAssign originality checking on assignments	○	○	○	○	○
Creating and administering online quizzes or tests	○	○	○	○	○
Facilitating discussions	○	○	○	○	○
Giving feedback on and/or grading student submissions	○	○	○	○	○
Creating and using rubrics to grade student work	○	○	○	○	○
Setting up and using the gradebook to enter student grades	○	○	○	○	○
Monitoring course activity and student progress	○	○	○	○	○
Monitoring course activity and student progress	○	○	○	○	○
Setting up groups, managing groups, and managing group assignments	○	○	○	○	○
Reusing course content	○	○	○	○	○
Integrating an external learning tool or platform with the course	○	○	○	○	○

Q7

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)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Blackboard Ultra seems easy for my students to learn how to use	○	○	○	○	○	○
Blackboard Ultra seems to increase my efficiency and effectiveness as a teacher	○	○	○	○	○	○
Using Blackboard Ultra is beneficial to my student's overall learning	○	○	○	○	○	○
Blackboard Ultra seems useful for my teaching	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q8

What do you like MOST about Blackboard Ultra?

Q9

What do you like LEAST about Blackboard Ultra? Why?

Q10

Have you faced any issues using Blackboard Ultra from different devices or browsers?

○ Yes
○ No

Q11

▾ 🔀 Display this question

If Have you faced any issues using Blackboard Ultra from different devices or browsers?   Yes   Is Selected

If yes, please specify the device/browser.

Q12

Are there any specific features or tools in Blackboard Ultra that you would have liked to learn from the Center for Teaching with Technology (CTT) and the available training?

Q13

What specific features, functions or tools would you like added to Blackboard Ultra and are there any items from Blackboard Original or other learning management systems that you would like?

Q14

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience using Blackboard this semester?

End of Survey

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.

Your response has been recorded.

Appendix B. Liked Most about Blackboard Ultra

- *The discussion board grading format, showing student's posts and the original posts to which they responded. Announcements functionality is helpful. Gradebook reminders are extremely beneficial for students who haven't submitted work yet, however I would like to see the email that is sent and be able to alter it if needed. An auto send would be a nice feature, to students who haven't submit before a time frame that can be determined by the instructor. Calendar is much improved from previous Bb release.*
- *I like how it can easily integrate with McGraw-Hill's Connect. I also felt like it was easier to see each student's gradebook.*
- *Nothing!*
- *Convenience*
- *It does allow me to offer my course content online. The setup and grading of tests is very good. A frustration is if I forget to scroll to reply on the discussion it seems to get lost but then it doesn't. Students seem to have trouble accessing the comments. My biggest request is to integrate a better tool for checking for copied content either from the web or AI.*
- *The fact that everything is organized in one place (course materials, student work, grades, etc).*
- *was somewhat easy to post syllabus and some course content.*
- *It is overall better than classic in flow and appearance. Certain functions are much easier: copying content and creating assignments.*
- *Ultra BB is like using Moodle and that is not a compliment. The original Bb was wonderful - Ultra is like going backwards in development.*
- *It is usually available.*
- *Gradebook is well organized..overall organization is good.*
- *The set up is much easier. I can move about in the course shell without any problems.*
- *it is free for faculty and student.*
- *Analytics for students are easy to see and confirm my suspicions about student engagement.*
- *Honestly, I miss the old Blackboard system. Still adjusting to Ultra.*
- *It's easier to navigate once you get used to it.*
- *The visual setup of the gradebook*
- *I like some features- copying course content is easy*
- *Nothing! I am serious.*
- *The grading rubric and analytics are useful and easy to use.*
- *details such as word count on student posts.*
- *I really can't say.*
- *I like being able to easily check on student progress.*
- *the syllabus was easy to post.*
- *nothing*
- *The things that carried over from the last version of Blackboard. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."*
- *It is intuitive and relatively easy to figure out. The tutorials are very helpful.*
- *It is largely intuitive to use.*
- *Personally, I am very satisfied with BlackBoard Ultra, I find it to be a very intuitive and effective version from the user experience side.*
- *The variety of tools included is fairly comprehensive.*
- *Navigation is efficient and intuitive. Multiple clicks are minimized, and online "bureaucracy" is decreased*

a great deal in comparison to other LMS platforms. Though tasks are completed in a user-friendly fashion, Blackboard is nonetheless quite robust. Highly recommended and far, far better than competitors like Canvas.

- *Other than Gradebook, which we had previously, absolutely nothing...*
- *No comment. Students have a very hard time learning it.*
- *Most of the Ultra features are more user-friendly than those in the original Blackboard.*
- *The Announcement feature works well.*
- *Nothing at this time. We need to go back to old way of formatting the individual course.*
- *Ability to organize material; grading support and efficiency; user friendly*
- *It is somewhat similar to the original Blackboard*
- *Really, this is NOT an upgrade as it has removed some of the best features of Bb. I used Bb for many years and have also used Canvas at Rutgers. Nn Ultra is not user friendly! Kudos to the IRT folk, they are fabulous!*
- *Easier for students to use.*
- *Contains the course content*
- *a bit of a learning curve from previous BB but got used to it now; – about the same or slightly better features compared to previous BB – progress grade is a good new feature although I did that on my own with previous BB – has new receipts and acknowledgements to students when they post assignments*
- *Some things are excellent: adding modules; incorporating files and folders that students can use.*
- *the ability to reuse questions in tests and move them around & the release conditions, even if they are a bit obscure*
- *Go back to the old Blackboard*
- *Our Helpdesk*
- *I am not a fan of Blackboard Ultra.*
- *I like that I can grade work without posting it for students to see. Then I can post their grades all at once.*
- *I do not like Blackboard Ultra. It is not flexible. I prefer CANVAS*
- *It's much easier to import content from previous courses, to move thing around, to add links. The gradebook is also much easier and (once I learned how to use it, which was a bit of a challenge) much more intuitive.*
- *Creating assignments with easy grading*
- *Students seem to like the Learning Module organization.*
- *It's easier to copy course content.*
- *The user-friendly interface and the ease of use of the Gradebook*
- *It's a cleaner look, and it's easier to move files between folders in content.*
- *course copy*
- *I like the features that allow me to look at an individual student or a course assignment for grading. I like how I can post grades one at a time or all at once. The features to upload or edit information for the assignments are easy to find. I like how the interface allows changes in one place (i.e. content folder or Gradebook) and it changes the rest of the places where the assignment lives, such as in a discussion or assignment download.*
- *The ability to copy. content is very easy. I also like the ability to organized into weekly folders*
- *Being able to see my students' progress in regard to grades in gradebook. Seeing how many submissions I need to grade per assignment.*
- *It seems more streamlined and it is easy to move content around.*

- *I can't think of anything good or helpful*
- *Nothing. Nearly all of my students have complained about it. Quite a step down from the older version. Makes my teaching LESS responsive, LESS effective and LESS efficient.*
- *The discussion board features, the ability to use accommodations for students across tests more easily.*
- *Not much.*
- *Organizing contents-the interface is fairly easy.*
- *It's marginally better than nothing, although there is free software available that is better than Blackboard Ultra.*
- *Almost nothing*
- *N/A*
- *The learning module function looks nice.*
- *Editing course content (dates etc.) is easier than before. Fewer clicks to do something. Setting up grading is easier. I like the new stats about discussion posts. Tracking attendance is also easier but it is ridiculous to have attendance in 2 places (WPConnect & Navigate). They should sync.*
- *I can choose when to post grades for students.*
- *nothing that wasn't already there in blackboard*
- *The grade book to view my students total cumulative grade at any point in the semester.*
- *online multiple choice test grading*
- *It is easy to access the course roster.*
- *The modules option*
- *Nothing*
- *The interface is clear and once you get the hang of it it flows pretty well.*
- *Creating modules to make it more user-friendly for students.*
- *Can't think of anything.*
- *It's much easier to use than the previous*
- *Great platform* for interacting with students and posting information.

Appendix C. Liked Least about Blackboard Ultra

- *I would like to see an option for make all content in a folder "Visible to student" rather then having to adjust each object.   It might just me adjusting to the new format, but I am still trying to make the content folders work. An "expand all" for the subfolders would be an nice addition.   Gradebook reminders are extremely beneficial for students who haven't submitted work yet, however I would like to see the email that is sent and be able to alter it if needed. An auto send would be a nice feature, to students who haven't submit before a time frame that can be determined by the instructor.*
- *It's been a bit confusing when I look at the main page of what needs to be graded...sometimes it looks like I have graded everything but then when I open a module there are a few things that I can grade. I think it has to do with the due dates....*
- *Everything!*
- *Some functions are still hard to intuit. Once they get used it gets easier.*
- *When students submit late homework, I am not notified by BB, so if the student doesn't say "Please go back and grade my work so that you can replace the F with a new grade" (and often they don't tell me when they've submitted late work), then I have to go back to check each assignment myself at the end of the semester.*
- *grading---to many steps email----unfunctional*
- *The gradebook and grading functions are sorely lacking (classic does more and is more reliable). limited ability to organize grading schemes, keep top grades, omit categories, display to students is awful and confusing to them -- we have to work too hard just so students aren't confused. 2. Too many steps to do something that used to be done in 1 step. Like: 2-step process to post announcement, 2-step process to create/copy any document/assignment because it's all hidden, the annoying release date/date change loop when copying assignment from another shell. I could go on. Students can't seem to find anything. I feel like every new student should be required to take a training course. (and, many of my students love how organized my courses are -- but they still get confused if I haven't explained how ultra works). There is more.... FYI. I joined the anthology forum a long time ago and have been helping them to address some of this. :)*
- *The worse is posting something and adding student view. Overall it has too many extra steps and is not as user friendly as the original BB. Ultra is very time consuming.*
- *Too m as ny additional steps.*
- *Respondus generated quizzes did NOT copy over. I spent additional time redoing the quizzes...it would have been nice to know this. Did you not run a simulation and anticipate this...if not...your preparation and piloting of the app was inadequate. Worse still...did you knew this and you were not transparent about it. So....you are either incompetent or disingenuous...or both.*
- *so far nothing*
- *email function does not give a title to the email. so hard to see overall class grades at once.*
- *Course copy removes my conditions. Discussions and notifications do not work as well as in regular blackboard Batch edit does not contain enough options, so I have to spend 3-4 hours at the beginning of each semester changing conditions, dates, and times for assignments. Gradebook does not have options that I want and is challenging to use. Many of the changes from Blackboard to Ultra required me to unnecessarily revamp the way I presented content. The removal of the configurable Menu bar results in a large and harder to navigate workspace. The calendar is too large and clunky. Need to be able to see more items in the window. Need to leave assignments visible in the content window in order for students*

to see their grades. this makes for a lot of clutter .

- *Limited levels of Folders 2. Organization and display of Announcements is almost ridiculous. Display of text has numerous instances of loosing its formatting. Editor is primitive (the earlier version was far superior) 3. Setup for Exam release and due dates is illogical etc. etc.*
- *Still adjusting to Blackboard Ultra. Layout and setup is different.*
- *Learning the new platform*
- *continual need for posting things...so easy to forget the last step.*
- *The extra steps added to tasks that were once simple and straightforward! For example, announcements do not post automatically after they are created; they go into a draft state and require an extra step for me to post them, which was not evident, and resulted in announcements going unposted when I started using the platform, In addition, having to post the grades after I have grade them is also an extra step. Last, the fact that items created in the "Content" section are automatically invisible has resulted in assignments being posted, but not being visible to students. The extra layers and steps are really annoying.*
- *I cannot hide a discussion after it is completed by students bec the grade that corresponds to that disappears/hidden from the gradebook. Students commented that it shows as not graded even though the grade was posted originally for the students to view.*
- *Announcements, grade columns, feedback, messaging system, copying course content, posting materials. Everything is a pain in you know what. As a matter of principle, new versions retain functionality of old version and add new functionality and ease of use. This has gone in the reverse direction. Taking away functionality and making it difficult to use. Looks like the developers of new software never asked students or faculty about what they want. The new version is a disaster.*
- *Exam Soft and BB do not align,*
- *It is not user-friendly. The assignment prompts are not accessible to students until after they hit the submit button. The course page is not visually appealing.*
- *so ,,any steps compared to original bb*
- *Setting up group pages was difficult, not intuitive for faculty or students, could not easily share files with individual groups, and modifying individual group member grades could not be done through the group portal.*
- *The visibility/invisibility of assignments being slightly different shades of gray. It makes it very easy to miss things. - Gradebook - General bugginess*
- *Clunky. I really do not like how my own emails show up as messages in bb. Difficult to create movies or to edit docs (unlike in google classroom).*
- *having to do so many clicks to upload something...such as to post grades. it is very, very user unfriendly*
- *Not as good as original Blackboard. Poor documentation. Wastes a lot of time figuring things out. Defaults not to my liking. Workshops useless. Seems like it can do a lot but only if you want to spend your life figuring out the rules. And no sooner do we learn a system then the university changes it.*
- *I cannot send out images on my announcements—they don't show up in the emails, students have to log in to see them. As an art instructor images are crucial to my teaching. The original version of blackboard allowed for images to be viewed in announcement emails, so the inability to do this in Ultra is very unhelpful.*
- *It has made EVERYTHING take longer. At a time when the demands of my job have risen substantially bb has a whole new system. I went to training for several hours and STILL spend much more time than I have doing really stupid things. It eats away at any time it should have saved me and has made my*

semester a miserable mess. Part of the problem is the need to sign in and do all the security stuff multiple times and then it can't do half of the things i want it to do (like handle assignments that can be used as course assignments or extra credit depending on if the student missed earlier assignments).

- *To start, I have tried to embrace Ultra and keep an open mind. I'm getting used to it, but things that are TERRIBLE include: 1. Setting up a time for a test to be taken and having that test be taken within a certain period of time. (The online materials do NOT help. Not at all. They don't cover this topic, or it can't be found. Even when I've used the Help Desk to learn how to do this, they agreed it was a paradox in terms of how the setup works.) 2. Gradebook. In the past, we could just carry over the gradebook from a previous semester. This time, we had to completely rewrite assignments (copy and paste, yes, but a time-suck regardless). Then getting the final grading (of all assignments) to equal 100% is poorly explained in the Ultra Help materials (they're online Help materials are pretty bad). It's trial and error and anything but intuitive. this was a program created by very smart people who wanted to sell a new version to universities. The last one got the job done. I am all about change and embracing change. But when it's not needed, it because a largely negative experience.*
- *Having to keep logging in on the same computer. But I realize security is important.*
- *I would like to take this opportunity to point out the lack of a feature - unlike the previous version - that is important to me. I live abroad, so my time zone is 6 hours ahead of NJ local time. Blackboard Ultra does not allow to define the reference time, this implies that whenever I have to define the day and time setting, I always have to consider this time difference" Thank you*
- *Not nearly as functional or intuitive as the previous version of Bb.*
- *Very difficult to use- hard to copy course information. Hard to find explanations on "how to." Video on how to use Ultra BB- you couldn't understand her (accent difficult to understand) and it didn't answer any questions I needed. I went online to find written explanations- why weren't these given WITH the learning videos?*
- *The visual interface and appearance of material typed into text boxes is absolute garbage. I put text into my unit descriptions, and it DELETES MY FORMATTING. There is nothing allowed but pure text, say in the description for a unit or a test. Alignment, formatting, etc are all erased. I had beautifully formatted units for online classes in Blackboard Learn, all of which is lost in Ultra. Many of my students are poor readers and have learning disabilities, good formatting is key for them understanding the assignments. Ultra interferes with that.*
- *The Gradebook is a bit complex, and its display and navigation could be more efficient and streamlined.*
- *Creating Message groups.*
- *Students have a hard time learning. For faculty, difficult to learn as well and too many clicks to get to where we want to go. Took a several hour seminar, a refresher and yet I still have to go to YouTube to figure out how to do things. Faculty help each other where in other academic environments, an assigned teacher assistant does this functions for faculty.*
- *I prefer the folder system but overall Ultra is superior to the original Blackboard.*
- *messages are useless-- you cannot email students and have a title to the email. Needing to click "post" for so many things. It seems to convert attachments into links that are hard to open.*
- *Grading Rubrics*
- *Just the look of overall course format. Exam question not seen in its entirety, after few questions need to click on question to look at the stem and the distractors.*
- *It was difficult for me to get the swing of it initially. Had several tutorials, in groups and one-on-one. Had to have my millennial daughter help me with it. Spent at least 30 unpaid hours learning the program,*

which I anticipated since the Blackboard material started it would take that many hours.

- *It is very glitchy. When items are copied over, some things change that are inexplicable. The faculty student preview screen and what the student actually sees are two different things. The course copy process leaves a lot to be desired. The toggle default for posting grades now is turned on in some pages and not in others and makes it confusing...*
- *Oh please....who has the time to answer this fully?*
- *It is more complicated to set up a grade and turn off assignments but still let students see the grades and integrate some third-party tools.*
- *I am unable to easily post assignments via email announcements or add links to upcoming assignments It does not allow us to customize our course pages Adding videos etc is difficult, more difficult than it should be. That the course pages are absolutely sterile while teaching a population hooked on social media. Students don't seem to be able to get to feedback in discussions easily, and miss all feedback in the online environment. We should be able to add an electronic sticky not to the pages as reminders that catch the eye etc.*
- *it doesn't look as nice and attractive as previous BB; a bit ugly – when you "hide" assignments in Content area it also hides the grade item in gradebook so you end up keeping a long list of old assignments appearing in the Assignments folder – overall, it works very well just a few glitches here and there*
- *some things take a longer time to grade than in previous versions of balckboard. (2) Making exceptions, etc, is not as user friendly in ultra. For example, if a student missed posting for a discussion question due to illness, it's harder to program that exception than in other course management tools such as "canvas."*
- *It is not intuitive; seems to have many options that take a long time to learn. I use it as a tool, but I need several courses to learn the tool, which is counter-productive. The previous version was fine. Why are we spending untold hours learning new software stuff? It takes time away from teaching.*
- *Too complicated--not intuitive.*
- *Everything. It is extremely difficult to navigate.*
- *There are many bugs. We should have waited longer before switching until Bb worked out the bugs. For example, sometimes assignment cannot be deleted or replaced, I can't see when a student submits work late unless I go into the assignment directly and look, course shells sometimes don't transfer correctly, students sometimes can't see their grades, and more.*
- *It is not flexible.*
- *I really don't like that students are limited in their text formatting when they respond in the Discussion area. That's actually something that's worse than the classic version. They can't use blockquotes, and since I'm trying to teach them MLA formatting, that's a big drawback. I also think the Discussion area has limitations. The students can't be in the same document at the same time. They can only respond to a thread. I've tried to solve this by creating documents for them to share in Google Docs--which is easy and intuitive--and then linking those documents to Blackboard. I'm glad that Blackboard has made that easy. I understand that Perusal is a feature that can be linked to Blackboard, but when I tried to watch the video tutorial, I found it confusing and gave up. Actually, that's another thing I don't love about Ultra-- some of the video tutorials are fine, but others aren't. It's like you don't have teachers making the videos, and so the person explaining the features doesn't think like a teacher.*
- *Using rubrics to grade - it would be better to have on everything on one page*
- *Discussions are terrible. It is no longer possible to group multiple topics in a discussion forum, which makes discussion management and grading a nightmare.*

- *I am unable to delay the posting of the discussion boards in 2 of my classes, yet I can do it in the other 2 classes. I have had a couple meetings with IT and no one can figure out why. It's very frustrating and adds to the time it takes me to grade the discusson boards because I am unable to get started until the students have completed all their posts. In the past I could get started by Thursday or Friday and put in my notes and savve the draft until they has completed their final post. There was never an issue with this in the other BB. Also, students cannot see the assignment requirements when they log into the modules. They have to click on start attempt 1 which is very confusing to them as they are not posting anything at that time.*
- *When copying courses, changing the due dates becomes a hassle. If there is a feature that allow us to change the dates for everything at once, it would save a lot of time*
- *2 areas that are frustrating: feedback and gradebook. Feedback for students is extremely cumbersome. Every single step has to be saved over and over again. Students also have a hard time figuring out how to find feedback and open any files attached. The gradebook is not easy to set up. In the older version, it was possible to click on a grade and see the submission. That's not possible now. I also miss the ability to use colors. It's all black and white.*
- *Grade center is less intuitive than last version*
- *The discussion board is set up very different than the Blackboard before. I cannot just see a tree or list view, I cannot see just the new discussions easily, and grading a multiple posting discussion board is a nightmare. I have to keep notes to follow the number and dates of postings, scroll through an ungraded discussion that I provide to see the 'new' postings,' sometimes days and weeks old. There is not way to quickly refresh to not see the 'new' symbol even after I have read the post (we had a 'mark as read' feature before). Also, the list of students next to the discussion is helpful for finding a particular student's post, but there is no method to why they are there and if they posted new postings, so I am constantly digging to see new posts.*
- *Im still figuring a few things out..overall I think it is more user friendly than the old platform*
- *Difficult to upload from other semesters. Does not entirely copy what I want. Creating tests from other sources (Blackboard tests from textbook ancillaries) only allows you to put up all of the questions and not pick and choose which questions you want to upload. Test did not employ when I set it to do so. Too difficult to navigate. Too many "settings" controls embedded. Regular Blackboard was so much better and user friendly.*
- *I dislike not having the ability to customize announcements and folder descriptions. For example, being able to change font and font colors is helpful when organizing work. I also like to make announcements appealing and personal which increases connection to the students whether it's adding a gif or selecting a font and color that is more appealing or having a background that distinguishes it from other classes. Ultra is basic/standard issue. There is no opportunity to make it your own.*
- *Everything. You took a marginally workable platform (blackboard original) and switched to an absolute nightmare. Makes everything more difficult. Wastes time, unnecessarily burdensome, and illogically constructed. Horrible. Just horrible. And talking to other faculty, this is not a minority opinion,.*
- *Everything. A gigantic step backwards. I'm not the only faculty that feels this way. Nearly universal dislike from 90% of all my students too. The other 10% did not say they liked it, but just have not been vocal. Never met anyone, staff or student who appreciates the burdensome, unnecessary "advancements" in Ultra.*
- *I find it more difficult to organize and scan than previous editions of blackboard with the side tool bar. This has also been a comment from students who find it more confusing to navigate than the other*

version of blackboard. The other version of blackboard also let you easily download discussion board content which is not as easy to find in this version, however I do like that it gives feedback for student participation levels.

- *Gradebook, because the students had a hard time submitting material and the posting of grades seemed to have too many options. It would be great if a default for an assignment could be generated within a course shell so that one doesn't have to repeat the numerous setting for an assignment/quiz.*

– *Gradebook: a) Not flexible. For example, I cannot give a text grade. The grade categories are pre-set and I have no ability to create a new category such as participation or attendance. b) Misleading. For example, the complete/incomplete grade display a check mark even if a student receive "0" for incomplete. c) When automatic zero grade option is chosen, I cannot created an extension for a student who needs one time accommodation for one assignment. 2) Creating Assignment: Students do not see the assignment instruction when they click on the assignment menu. They have to click on the "Start Attempt 1" button just to see the instructions. Students were scared of clicking this button because they simply wanted to see the instructions and not ready to submit their assignment. In Fall 2023, I received multiple emails about where the instructions were. 3) Announcement: When "send an email" option is chosen, I cannot schedule the posting of the announcement. Likewise, when I choose the schedule announcement option, I cannot send a email copy to students. 4) Discussions: Discussion posts do not immediately show the replies to that particular posts. Students need to click on the "replies" button to see the replies. This additional clicks may discourage students from seeing all the replies.*

- *Instead of posting, it "saves" your post. The designers should be fired for putting this option in the same location that "post" or "send" was before. I "sent" posts and announcements that my classes never got, because it saved first. A "are you sure?" screen could appear if people were posting prematurely, or two buttons side-by-side with "save" and "post/send" would be appropriate. This is simply sloppy software design.*

- *I don't find it user friendly.*

- *Even less user-friendly than before overall. Having all the content on the front/first page is overwhelming. Not always clear when you have actually "posted" grades.*

- *Many of the files I used in the original Blackboard, which I uploaded to Blackboard Ultra, are not available to my students.*

- *Their design philosophy of maximizing the clicks and scrolls to do anything is annoying. They have blocked the instructors' ability to manage discussions or download the results. Groups is poorly implemented. The instructor cannot enter groups to see the work.*

- *I really hate Blackboard Ultra and have had a thousand problems with it. - The multiple places that need to be checked to make things visible in combination with the slightly different grays indicating visible/not visible makes it extremely easy to mistake whether something is actually able to be accessed by students. - The gradebook interface makes it difficult to see all assignments and student status at once, meaning multiple clickthroughs to do something that was one screen on the old Blackboard. - The attendance module is wonky-- sometimes it comes up when I click on it, sometimes it doesn't. I haven't figured out what the difference is, but I know it's not me because I literally refresh the page and click the same thing and get a different screen sometimes. - The messaging system is obnoxious. First, having just one more, dispersed place makes it much more difficult to keep track of student needs/inquiries (than just consolidating to email), second, using the messaging system is totally unintuitive.*

- *Not being able to provide feedback on individual exam questions is a HUGE problem. All I can do is give points on a short answer or essay question, not tell the student why they lost points or include a*

question rubric. This is a major step backward! Not everyone gives exclusively multiple-choice exams! Another big problem is that students cannot see an assignment prompt until they go to submit it. So if I assign a paper, I have to have 2 items for it in a folder-- the prompt so they can complete the assignment, and then the submission link separately. Before, the prompt was viewable before they submitted. This is so clunky. Getting email within Blackboard is a problem. We should be able to opt to have all Bb emails go to our email inbox. Yes, we get Bb summary emails but those are often long lists of discussion posts etc., and not useful to read through daily. Yes, we can tell our students to tick the box to send the email to us, but they usually don't do that. If a student emails me through Blackboard and I have nothing to grade on Blackboard, I might not see it for 2-3 days. That's not ok.

- *Didn't import content from the previous version right, announcements are not on the start page any longer, harder to set up weighted grading, grading assignments was confusing at first because there are two places to input grades, overall it's not intuitive to use and buggy*

- *setting release dates doesn't work properly it is very inefficient - lot of clicks needed for things that worked smoothly in blackboard Batch edit requires current date. This is different for each item and is irrelevant. Can't enter new date unless old date is exactly correct. Doesn't make any sense.*

- *I don't like how the students' messages to faculty go through blackboard and it does not go to our email. So unless we have any instantaneous notifications in blackboard ultra, we may not get the message. That can and needs to be turned off at our discretion, so student messages automatically goes to our faculty email. Many faculty have complained about this and have been cited by the WP Administration for not answering messages promptly (when the faculty are not aware messages were submitted).*

- *The system is terrible. For starters, it is far less intuitive than the old blackboard. Putting that aside, i has far too many settings without instructions. Too many things happen automatically with indications about how to disable. I only need about 5% of if features. A pain in the neck and a waste of money.*

- *I have many frustrations with Blackboard Ultra. Some of the most significant: There is no way to enter letter grades directly. The program generates too many automatic grades and posts an overall course grade that in my case was totally meaningless and alarmed the students. Messages from students are not sent by email or adequately flagged to faculty attention. Students often reported that they could not see things that I had posted and that were visible to other students. I could not directly reuse assignments and discussion prompts because these needed to be entered in a different way in Blackboard Ultra.*

- *The inability to subscribe to specific discussion forums, such as the "Questions" forum, where students post questions and require prompt answers. That was a feature of the traditional BB.*

- *Difficult to use*

- *I had issues with exams losing their autograded answers when transferred from original(I'll submit a ticket about them, it happened with the finals, but not the midterms), also there are some features in the gradebook that I still don't manage to set up as I would like.*

- *The grade book, commenting on assignments (students can't find them), transferring the shell from an older shell (way too many errors and have to sift through everything), and hate the messaging--that I can't turn it off. I already have email, Navigate, Microsoft Messenger, and Signal Vine that students reach out to me--we do not need five methods to contact faculty!*

- *Discussions are a mess. No way to create discussion forum containing multiple independent threads with their own headers.*

- *I can't figure out how to access the attractive icons for the overview pages, and I don't like the all-or-nothing zero setting for incomplete assignments.*

- *Sometimes I forget and try to apply what I had learned using the earlier version of Blackboard.*

Appendix D. Faculty Comments and Requests for Training on Specific Tools

The following are the detailed requests from the faculty members:

- *I just have to make time to go and view these videos. I will see if you still have in-person (class) workshops and trainings. Those in the past helped because I learned from my colleagues in real-time and in a lab and on a computer to get hands-on help in-person with others experiencing the same with the same questions, frustrations, and insights.*
- *The training was very complicated - a colleague in my department is very technically inclined and taught all of us.*
- *Seeing if there is a way to create averages with drop categories and implement extra credit scores into the grade book. Determine if there are ways to make semester to semester changes less time consuming.*
- *Does CTT have open office hours for faculty? If so, where can I find this information?*
- *how to override what we don't like.*
- *very disappointed in training.*
- *Better documentation. Better responsiveness to questions.*
- *I have found the training relatively useless. i have very specific things I want from bb and it is never what is covered in the training. I know CTT is doing their best, but this is the worst software experience I have ever had.*
- *The training was terrible too. I did an online session last summer and the guy started with advanced materials and a bunch of us had to ask him to start at the beginning. He seemed like a sweet man who didn't know how to properly teach.*
- *Where to locate hand written step-by-step guides on how to use Ultra BB. I had to search and ask to find them. Send a link in email perhaps? Also, how to help the students find certain things.*
- *Need substantially more help with interfaces with various tools from online publishers (like Pearson).*
- *Providing faculty with a report so we can see which students of ours in fact, took the training.*
- *It is such a User-unfriendly program, The BB team assumes so much when they try to help.*
- *can't think of any; CTT is doing an excellent job with training*
- *I post from youtube embedded in a doc. Is there a way to directly record a video with blackboard that does not require embedding the video from youtube?*
- *I ask CTT as issues arise. I can't anticipate everything. The colleagues at CTT are wonderful.*
- *Not really. The software just needs to be debugged.*
- *When I asked for specific training, I was told to go watch the video and come back if I had any questions. I did watch the video and found it confusing, but by that time, I'd become swamped with coursework and didn't have time to go back and ask for more help.*
- *Not really, since BB Ultra removed the features I liked and used in BB Classic.*
- *I would just like for someone to figure out why I can't delay the posting for discussion boards in my class.*
- *A session that gives us tips/ shortcuts on how to use Ultra more efficiently could be helpful.*
- *If there is particular information to address the discussion forum issues I have presented, I would like to know about available training.*
- *I'd like to learn more about modules and how to make moving to the next one contingent upon completing the current one. Also - if there are badges or ways to reward completing each module. I'd really love to be able to personalize my classes and yet there doesn't seem as though there's much I can do. I'd appreciate ideas.*

- *No. The fault, dear Brutus, lies not in our understanding, but in the platform. Or as a vice presidential candidate once said, "You can't put lipstick on a pig" ... no knowledge or tools will fix this mess.*
- *No. Bring back the older version.*
- *In the future, I'd like to learn some advanced/specialized features we did not learn from the basic training. (I recently saw a workshop announcement on batch editing; something like this but other functions might be helpful. For example, is there a best way to use the Discussion functions to facilitate maximum interaction between different students (regardless of the contents and nature of the prompts).*
- *I usually cannot make the workshops, I would prefer simple, clear documentation on common tasks that could be available, with screenshots that actually match what appears on the screen for such tasks (creating graded assignments/examinations, creating shared content across sections, etc.)*
- *A comparison of where features are now in ultra would have helped. Something like a cheat sheet explaining "to give time accommodations in BB regular you had to... now in ultra you have to go here..."*
- *Training was great. i really appreciate CTT's efforts with round the clock availability. It is Bb Ultra that has many inefficiencies.*
- *No more long-winded seminars. More videos and FAQs answering questions.*
- *To deactivate some of the functions I do not need or use. (messaging, changing the menu across the top and left side)--most are unnecessary.*
- *Yes. To make everything more accessible, many of the tools for making pages attractive and engaging seem to have gone away. I would like to know how to use the available tools with engagement in mind.*

Appendix E. Requests For Specific Features, Functions, Or Tools In Blackboard Ultra

Requests	Workaround
I would like to see an option for make all content in a folder "Visible to student" rather than having to adjust each object. An "expand all" for the subfolders would be a nice	Using Batch Edit feature, faculty can make all content visible to students or reverse.
Gradebook reminders are extremely beneficial for students who haven't submitted work yet, however I would like to see the email that is sent and be able to alter it if needed.	From Gradebook, faculty can send email (Message) to students by checking the check-box right next to the student's name.
An auto send would be a nice feature, to students who haven't submit before a time frame that can be determined by the instructor.	Using Active Stream, students get the notification automatically.
I did like the gradebook where I could see a spreadsheet of all the students and all the assignments and all the grades. I haven't figured out how to view the grades like that-it was easier for me to see the overall class.	The webinar covers the topic.
when copying content from within a course or from another course -- and not the whole course shell -- just sections copied from one shell to the other, when copied over, students can't see the documents, the links get broken, etc. I can see it fine and some in IRT too, but the students can't see documents, can't download it, can't access it, it appears blank to them while I can see them all copied over fine.	After copy is done, using student preview mode to make sure the files and links are working fine.
be able to turn off what doesn't work.	Not available as of now.
I would like to see everything from BB incorporated into Ultra.	Anthology development team is working on it.
How to undo features	Undo is not available. However, faculty can request restore the older version of the course shell.
Clearing quizzes...so that students can retake them (based on a variety of causes) was clearer and more accessible previously.	Faculty can delete attempt in Gradebook by clicking the "…" for the student's grade.
please bring back the old bb. (6)	
Configurable menu bar from the Original made navigation better and easier.(5)	Not available as of now.
Allow posts to the discussion board to trigger notification emails. (2)	Not available as of now.
More Grade book column calculation options that were available in the original More robust batch edit options. (4)	There are three options in Gradebook for calculated columns
Ability to hide assignments but still allow students to be able to see grades.	Not available as of now.
better emailing and messaging (Like the Original).(3)	
I provide a number of resources to students to complete assignments and to be successful, and it has ended up clunky because I often have folders within folders, which can make things hard to find. The previous setup allowed for the sections to be a bit more straightforward.	Anthology development team is working on it.

Requests	Workaround
I cannot use Examsoft with BB ultra courses (2)	Examsoft is working on the LTI app
the older courses compiled a library of old papers for comparison using plagiarism detection software and these are no longer accessible in the BB Ultra version. I've had a couple of instances where it seems that students may have stolen/purchased/"borrowed" paper content from prior students but I cannot demonstrate this because of the break between the new/old system archives.	SafeAssign can be used to detect any plagiarism attempts.
I'd like to move to google classroom, Google Docs, or something like it. (2)	Each faculty can use their own Google Classroom set up.
Allow for images put in emailed announcements to be visible in the emails, not only visible when students sign into blackboard	Images can be added in an announcement
I have been using the modules to keep my online students moving through the course appropriately, but I would like it to allow two items to be accessible at once.	Using visible/hidden option to control the content accessibility.
Decent formatting of text descriptions.	Current version of Blackboard follows the accessibility standard set by the Federal Government and we need to stick with it.
Generative AI detection service (2)	Not available as of now
For my classes I would like to be able to add some visual interest, and not have to rely solely on students dedication to reading notifications or class email, because they don't. I would like to be able to add a box prominent on the top of the page like a sticky note, that I can add and change regularly-easily- to give reminders, warning, notes, with color choices and images if desired. I did make a course title/image but it took me a long time to figure out and is not very flexible. Why not provide a template or instructions in that space?	Course templates are available and instructions are placed already.
I wish I could see the overall average of the students' test scores, as they appear.	This topic is covered in Webinar. https://www.wpunj.edu/irt/ctt/webinar
Also putting a banner on the course, suddenly the images I try are too small (not a problem with the previous version) and when courses are copied the images did not transfer from the old to the new version.	The Banner maker is available at https://wpunj.edu/bb/CourseBannerMaker/index.html
Bring back Discussion Forums with multiple independent threads that can be graded as one.	This feature is already in place.
The ability to adjust course dates when copying courses from one semester to another.	Using Batch Edit, the new starting date can be adjusted.
Marking the discussion posts as read. Providing for a tree or list view of the discussions. Once read, if there was a way to just see the new ones at the top of the list.	Not available as of now.
Allow faculty to have automatic email sent to faculty when a student submits a message through BB Ultra. (2)	Blackboard automatically sends email message as soon as student post a message in Blackboard.
adding the option of selecting fonts, colors/sizes, adding pictures/gifs to announcements and also to content folder descriptions makes it so much more personal and appealing.	Not available as of now. Blackboard is following Universal Design Principles for providing accessibility to all students.

Requests	Workaround
A way to see late assignments: sometimes I input a 0 for a missing assignment, but then the student submits it late, but I don't see that submission unless I click and look at each individual student's submission.	In gradebook, all late submissions are marked as "Late" when past due. If selecting automatic zero in the gradebook settings page, all past due will put 0.
release dates need to be fixed batch edit needs to be modified / fixed gradebook shouldn't show overall grade by default. it does its own calculations and causes stress to students. pearson mylab could not be integrated with bb ultra	No control on these items. Pearson MyLab has been already integrated.
I don't understand how we can't see a test "with student view" unless we go to student view and set up the exceptions so our preview user can see the exam. It used to be so simple in Original. Also, I can't prepare in Ultra an exam to send to another instructor in a zip file, which I was possible in Original.	Using Student Preview, test can be viewable without any issues.
Making feedback easier for students to see and read.	It is already in place.
I want to be able to create a discussion forum for the week, with different threads for several questions posted on different days, which can be graded on a weekly basis. At present, BB Ultra only allows me to post one gradble "Discussion" (now I have to post separate discussions MWF) and doesn't allow independent threads with their own subject headers. To make discussions manageable, I have to do three times as much grading for a MWF class.	The faculty can choose to go with the discussion for not gradable option.

Appendix F. Experiences with Blackboard Ultra

- *Bb Ultra is better than previous release in many ways. It seems to be more like Canvas by Instructure than it previously was, which I like.*
- *I am not good with change (!) but the team helped me to transfer things over get settled into Ultra. Any tickets I have submitted have been addressed right away.*
- *It has created double the work for me by me having to re-upload many documents. The copy feature doesn't work. I shouldn't have to send students documents via email separately because they can't see them in Blackboard. In addition, I shouldn't have to rebuild -- or build sections entire over and reupload one document at a time. It should be made that transferring or copying documents, folders, etc. is more efficient and works correctly. I shouldn't have to go into one course, download link and document one at a time and then have to upload each one in the course that I want, one item at a time.*
- *It's not blackboard's fault but teaching 30 students in an async online class is a lot. There need to be many touchpoints in an online class and maintaining feedback on all those multiple touchpoints 30 times each week is a lot! I could teach with fewer touchpoints but then why not just send a pamphlet and have them take a quiz...college becomes a checklist rather than an opportunity for growth and discovery. And the perceived shortcut for students to turn to AI is a complication--very hard to work around and gauge student learning.*
- *Overall, a good system.*
- *why on earth did they change it?*
- *I hope we go back to BB.*
- *More insight into various functions would have been useful.....so that planning for implementation was more efficient.*
- *nothing*
- *students are more confused and challenged than ever.*
- *I have come to terms with using it this semester and have figured out enough workarounds to make it work for me. But I still prefer the original to Ultra.   I was extremely unhappy with it the first semester, as Ultra seems to have many fewer features than the original. Many things I used and did in the original are not available in Ultra.*
- *It was a transition point. Had to spend time playing around in the system to figure out its quirks.*
- *It's been frustrating to think that I did something, only to find out that I was the only one who could see it or that it hadn't been done completely.*
- *I asked students about the new version and got an earfull. Maybe they should be consulted also before rolling out new version.*
- *I continue to find it a useless 'upgrade.' I thought I'd get used to it, and to a certain degree, I have, but it's certainly not *better* for having gotten used to it.*
- *I used to use the modules in blackboard but then realized that it makes everything more difficult. Students can't see the course layout, and I can't make changes as easily, so I now use a googledoc for the syllabus.*
- *sending emails is difficult, particularly titling emails.*
- *I feel like it is poorly organized and confusing. I have spent more time on the support website than I ever have in the past. It seems like a badly planned update.*
- *It has been relatively easy to learn on my own. I like that it is intuitive. I jumped in with no training, so the ease of use is very helpful.*
- *Positive so far.*
- *Thank you*

- *Just very frustrating.... still learning how to use after 5 months. There are some positives, it's more organized now, but it took me more hours to set-up than to teach!*
- *I have yet to find a single thing I can do in Ultra that I couldn't do in the old Blackboard, and much of it is harder to set up, harder to make visually organized.*
- *It has been a pleasure to use. Having used multiple learning management systems, this is by far the best I've come across. I don't see a reason to use any other.*
- *It was a terrible experience.*
- *I wish we had never switched from Original Bb...*
- *No thank you*
- *Despite initial misgivings, I am very happy with Ultra. Overall, it is easier to use than the original Blackboard. Access to settings for assignments, quizzes, etc., is much improved.*
- *Students more confused with the technology than ever. Constant contact from students with technical questions---and very valid ones!*
- *N/A*
- *No, at this time.*
- *Overall, positive experience.*
- *Survey is way too long.*
- *Better organization of the gradebook.*
- *I am not able to make changes in the grade book that I would like. For example, if I wish to create a sum and want to add extra credit, it should be the total number over the original denominator, not the denominator plus the extra credit amount possible. (e.g., if an exam is worth 100 points and I have 6 points of extra credit available, I should be able to add all of those and choice 100 as the denominator, not 106. Extra credit is intended to raise the grade, not lower everyone else's. I will have to hand calculate all my grades. I should be able to set the denominator in summed calculations. This also renders the "Student Grade" column useless to me. I have to create my own and hide the course option. It would also be great to have an option that will allow us to drop the lowest grade, which is a common grading tool, and clear information on how to use to use. it. Thanks for reaching out to us for feedback.*
- *learning curve was quite steep in the beginning but got used to it now; one problem was configuring how to extend a deadline for one student on a quiz but IT helped me on this;*
- *Overall it has been a positive experience for me.*
- *It's frustrating - it is not obvious or intuitive, and some of the terms they use are odd.*
- *Helpdesk works well.*
- *BB Ultra has made more work for me with grading, since I now have to grade three weekly discussions (MWF), instead of just one discussion forum that contains all of week's discussion threads.*
- *Not at this time*
- *I suggest periodic emails to the faculty informing us of any newly added BB Ultra updates or features.*
- *No. Thanks.*
- *IT has been very helpful*
- *It is horrible. I wish we could use the original Blackboard again. And I forgot that students tell me that they dislike how in order to see an assignment directions, they have to go into the assignment itself.*
- *It's been fine but too bland and generic in appearance.*
- *I think I've said it all.*
- *Other than it's the worst piece of "software" most of us have ever used? I think I've covered it in prior responses.*

- *Students have already learned how to change elements in their grade book web page (using inspect element in Chrome to change a color or a number) and then take a screen shot. They then send the image back to the professor and say that they had a 90 on that test and show you their picture of the modified screen.*
- *It is difficult for me to imagine that there isn't a better option for a similar cost. I don't look forward to the difficulties I will have with it, and hearing all of the student complaints regarding the difficulties they will be having with it. The user interface is significantly inferior to its predecessor, and that interface wasn't exactly perfect, to say the least.*
- *It was terrible.*
- *It was really challenging and made the semester much more difficult. I think one thing is that it was much *more* different from Blackboard Original than I expected based on the trainings/videos I had watched. I'm hoping having one semester under my belt will make this term easier. Fingers crossed.*
- *Faculty have really helped each other out with a lot of this-- informally helping one another find things and figuring out workarounds. It's been a lot of extra work for us. Overall it's an improvement, but hasn't been easy.*
- *It's been frustrating switching to Bb Ultra and Microsoft 360. Both seem buggy and not intuitive. It would be better to space out software changes so we're not learning multiple new systems at once.*
- *Blackboard had features that Ultra doesn't have. Usually using newer technology is more efficient or has more enhanced features. It didn't seem that way with Ultra. It seemed like going a step backwards.*
- *I can only hope this semester (spring) is better than the last (fall).*
- *How do we know when new features are added to BB ultra?*
- *No*
- *Overall, it was a good experience.*
- *More support for those of us who need to be tech-savvy. The sessions I attended went too fast and did not address my issues. Tickets told me to read the instructions.*
- *BB Ultra seems like a lot of pointless effort to make my life more difficult.*
- *Thank you for making this available to us, and thank you for providing many training session options!*