Using the Discussion Board

The Discussion Board helps to build a community among students that is crucial to providing a successful online learning experience. Discussion Boards allow course members to hold robust discussions that would otherwise occur in the traditional classroom environment. The following handout will assist you in how to:

- Create a Forum within the Course Discussion Board;
- Manage the Settings of a Discussion Forum;
- Facilitate a Discussion Board as an Instructor;

How to Create a Forum within the Course Discussion Board

**Step 1:** Once logged in to Blackboard, navigate to your course and select Discussion Board area from the course menu on the left.

Advantages of using the Discussion Board

- Creates a collection of student opinions and provides a forum for student interactions
- Provides Measurable and Gradable student participation of course content
**Note:** If you do not see Discussion Board on your course menu you can add it by clicking the “+” on the top left of the course menu.

**Step 2:** On the action bar, click Create Forum. A Forum, like the name suggests, is an area that promotes discussions via posts or **Threads**.

**How to Set the Settings of a Forum**

**Step 1:** On the Create Forum page you will need to provide a name for the Forum such as “Course Q&A” or “Chapter 1 Discussion” followed by a short description of what you would like the students to discuss and the regulations to be observed while posting such as “post a unique topic once before Friday and reply to another’s student post once before Sunday.”

**Step 2:** You can also set the following settings:

a) **Availability/Date and Time Restrictions:** This will control the visibility of the forum for students.

b) **The view of the Forum:** This will determine how the students interact inside the forum.

   **Note:** We recommend using the Standard View for the Forum to operate as a traditional forum.

c) **Grading:** This will automatically create a grade center column that is linked to the activity in the Discussion Board. The common setting for grading in the Discussion Board is Grade Discussion Forum. If you use this setting you must enter the points possible and determine how many posts it will take before the **Needs Grading** icon appears for the students. For instance if you would like a student to post once and respond to another student once, you would set the **Needs Grading** icon to appear after 2 posts. The next option for Grading is the Due Date which will automatically appear on the calendar and flag late submissions for your review. The last setting allows you to associate a rubric to assist in your grading.

d) **Subscribe:** This will allow you and your students to subscribe to a forum and receive email notifications as threads are created and replied to. You can also select what information is sent in the subscription email.
e) Create and Edit: This will allow you to customize the options for student participation such as the anonymous posts and edit rights.

Note: Force Moderation allows you to screen posts before they are visible to all your students by placing them in a moderation queue accessible by clicking the Chevron next to the forum.

f) Additional Options: This will allow you to customize additional interaction options. Tagging assists users in searching the Discussion Board while rating is a social tool.

Step 3: After confirming your settings are set correctly, click Submit.

How to Manage a Discussion Board as an Instructor

Step 1: Once the forum has been created you can manage the Forum by click the blue link with the name you provided when you created it.

Step 2: Inside the forum you should be able to Create Thread, Grade Discussion Forum [see option c above], Moderate Forum [see option e above], and Subscribe [see option d above]. In most cases, students will create threads and subscribe to forums. To review posts click the blue link with the Thread name. To Grade the posts you can click Grade Discussion Forum or access the activity from the Grade Center. To Moderate and approve posts that are queued, click Moderate Forum. You may also as the Instructor Subscribe to receive updates to the forum.

Note: More information on the usage and best practices of Discussion Boards can be found on the Blackboard Help site at: help.blackboard.com.