

Hello and welcome to this week's episode of The Blackboard Update. I'm Sandy Gambill for the Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence. In this episode I'll talk about the announcement tool, which is new to Blackboard CE and offer a few tips for how you might find this tool useful in your class.

In WebCT the only way to post a class announcement was by adding a header to a page. Blackboard CE has a built-in tool specifically for announcements. To add it to your course, click on Manage Course, and then Tools. Announcements is the first selection under the Communication Tools list. Just click the box in front of it, and then click save. An announcements link will then appear in your left hand side navigation bar. After you've added the tool, to add an announcement, click on that announcement link in your navigation bar, and then click Create an Announcement.

There are several ways to customize your announcements. First you have the option of using the HTML editor. This would be useful if you want to do something like including the link to a website in the announcement. If you have teaching assistants in your course you can choose to have the announcement go only to them or you can send it only to students or to both TAs and students. You can also determine

when an announcement will first display for students and how long it will be available. Lastly, you can set an option to display the announcements as a pop up message when students log into the class. If you do that, the announcement will pop up, but will also be available in the main archive accessible through the Announcements link. However remember, by date settings you control how long announcements will appear in the archive.

Announcements are useful in your course for several reasons. For example, you might use them as reminders of the work students are supposed to be doing at any given time. Or if you have two or more students asking the same question, you might save yourself time by creating an announcement on the topic. Announcements are also a good way to focus attention to a particularly interesting discussion exchange. For example, you can post an announcement directing student attention to a particular exchange or point someone has made on the discussion board. This allows you to guide discussion without posting yourself, which sometimes can change the nature of interaction you want to occur among students.

Before we close today, another point I want to mention in this podcast is that when you are in the Administration tab in Blackboard, you may

notice you can see the names of other instructors teaching other sections of a course you teach. This is just a quirk that appears because of Banner integration. Although you can delete the other instructor's name, please do not do so.

We hope you've found this episode of the Blackboard Update useful.

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