Between December 20 and December 22, 2017, UCT will upgrade the university’s Blackboard Learn system. As was announced to the campus several times, we will be leaving behind 2014 and earlier offerings during the data transfer for this upgrade, which should result in a considerably leaner and cleaner database and application system.

Changes in Blackboard Environments

After the December 2017 upgrade, faculty will have access to two Blackboard environments:

- **PROD (Bb2018):** This new “live” instance will contain all 2018 offerings as they are provisioned, master courses that are available for provisioning, AND all semester offerings from 2015 and later. It will also host any training courses, new fully online courses in development, and non-credit Blackboard “workgroups.”
- **Bb2017:** This is what will become of the existing Blackboard environment (which contains courses from 2014 – 2017). It will remain available to faculty and students (for incompletes, grade challenges, etc.) until it is taken offline June 1, 2018. It will ultimately be removed from service, cleared of all data, and re-purposed on Friday, July 6, 2018.

Impact of the Changes on Faculty

- With the exception of an initial fourteen-hour period (from 12:01AM to 2PM on Wednesday, December 20, 2017), the existing (2014 – 2017 courses) environment will remain online and available for review during the December Blackboard upgrade period. NOTE: Any changes made to FA17 courses during the upgrade period will likely NOT be reflected when those courses are copied into the new Bb2018 environment. The Bb2017 environment will be left up for review ONLY.
- Instructors who want to retain copies of older courses/courses not available for provisioning will have until June 1, 2018 to archive and download copies of those for long-term storage before the contents of the Bb2017 environment are deleted. UCT will NOT be archiving those courses.
- Since we will be migrating all FA17 courses to the new Bb2018 environment, incompletes from FA17 will be completed in a restored archive copy of your FA17 course that our team has transferred to the new Bb2018 environment.
- Everything else (e.g., course requests, provisioning, QA) will continue unchanged.

Timeline (As of 12/15/2016 and Subject to Change)

12/15/17 at 5pm (TODAY) Processing of course requests and provisioning requests in OPALS will be suspended for the duration of the upgrade beginning this evening at 5pm. Instructors will still be able to use OPALS to submit course requests and provision, but the resulting courses will not be generated until automated processes are switched back on at the end of the upgrade. Provisioned SP18 courses are being transferred to the new Bb2018 environment and will be inaccessible Wednesday, 12/20/17 through Friday 12/22/17.
12/19/2017 (Tuesday) – FA17 Regular and 2nd 8 week session grades are due by 5:00PM in e-Services.

12/20/2017 (Wednesday) – Blackboard upgrade period begins at 12:01AM and both the old (Bb2017) and new (Bb2018) environments will be offline until 2pm for initial configuration. Over the course of the next several days, all master courses and semester offerings that are available for provisioning will be gradually copied from current PROD (Bb2017) into new PROD (Bb2018). During that period, students and faculty will still be able to access FA17 courses in current PROD (Bb2017) for review ONLY. Any changes made to those courses in current PROD (Bb2017) are likely to NOT be reflected in the copy that is brought over to new PROD (Bb2018).

12/22/2017 (Friday) – New PROD (Bb2018) will be brought online and made available to faculty, staff and students at the blackboard.uhcl.edu URL. The login page for new PROD (Bb2018) will include a link to old PROD (Bb2017), as well, permitting faculty continuing access to that environment through June 1, 2018.

Instructors who have questions about the pending upgrade are advised to contact either their designated Instructional Designer (ID) or the Support Center (so that their inquiry may be routed to the correct ID). The contact information is provided below.

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