



Blackboard Enterprise System Annual Report 2006/2007

The Blackboard environment and operational changes

The campus completed its third full year of Blackboard utilization and the first year with all three major Enterprise System components installed. The Learning System version 6 was first to be launched in production in the fall of 2003 followed by the Community System in February 2006, and the Content System in August 2006.

A new release of Blackboard, version 7, installed in May 2007 brought significant improvements to its functionality and features. Installation of this upgrade required extensive planning and a reload of the database. Mock upgrades were done in practice mode to work out the procedure and prepare estimates of the time that would be required for reloading the production database. A window of 24 hours was set for the upgrade. The procedure was completed successfully with minor user problems that were resolved quickly. Version 7 enhancements included an improved discussion board, improvements in the assessment and grade book functions, language packs for Chinese and Arabic, a visual text box editor, and expanded spell checking.

At our request, Blackboard evaluated the grade submission customization they developed for us and identified design changes that would speed up loading the grade table. Changes were made to the grade table code that significantly improved the process for instructors entering final grades.

NCS and Administrative Computing Services (ACS) developed and implemented a production control change for the Blackboard final grade submissions. Pickup time of grades during the final grading period was changed from 9:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. to interface with the nightly batch update of the central student information system. This change enabled instructors and students to see the final grades on the web the next day.

Standard practice required that Blackboard was taken off line at midnight to perform the database backup causing users to be bumped off the system at that time. Students completing an on-line Blackboard test at that moment experienced problems completing the test. Upon a request from faculty, database backup was changed to 3:00 a.m. to diminish this problem and allow students to work later into the night without interruption.

The Community System

Prior to implementation of the Community System, Blackboard courses were manually set up for special use situations. These special courses provided advantages to users working as a group on a focused project, but the special courses had limitations. The Blackboard Community System extended the concept of course design to groups of non-students providing additional functionality.

- Designation of user communities or organizations of members having a similar interest or association. Groups of users such as student organizations or campus committees could distribute content, communicate, and collaborate through an easily created and maintained online environment.
- Automatic inclusion of organization membership using the "role" information in student and staff central records. Work is underway with ACS to bring more of this information into the data feeds for Blackboard.

Following implementation of the Community System, organizations were created for uses such as credit courses, non-credit courses, and administrative committees across the spectrum of faculty, staff, students, and administrators. Many groups found it to be a valuable tool for compiling and organizing the documents, resources, ideas, and other aspects of group work. The launch of the Community System eliminated the need to create special courses for collaborative work.

The Content System

Blackboard's Content System was launched in production for the fall semester 2006 and provided important additional features to the Blackboard environment.

- Eased course management effort by enabling course content to be used in multiple courses but managed and updated in one instance.
- Enabled the creation of ePortfolios that document academic outcomes and achievements and can be shared for employment or other purposes.
- Enabled the selection of eReserves prepared by librarians for integration into the course.

Short workshops were arranged by OAT during the summer of 2006 and continued into the fall to assist faculty in making best use of the Content System. The workshops demonstrated the use of the Content System in Blackboard, and the instructor assisted those attending the workshop with practice using the Content System.

Blackboard expansion

The College of Nursing developed two online doctorate programs, a Ph.D. in Nursing and a Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP). The Ph.D. program began in the Fall 2006, and the DNP program began in Spring 2007. The Office of Academic Technology (OAT) worked with the faculty to design their online courses on Blackboard. Additionally, OAT staff serve on the Ph.D. advisory and support committee, assisting with the instructional and technology needs of the program. During the one-week residency program, OAT facilitated a local workshop for the online students.

To increase interactivity in online programs, the OAT integrated additional software applications and offered customized training on the new tools. Camtasia allowed faculty to personalize lectures by incorporating audio into PowerPoint presentations. Collaborative tools providing desktop video-conferencing solutions for faculty and students are under continuous review. First to be piloted will be WIMBA with the College of Nursing in the 2007-2008 academic year.

Many units expanded the extent and nature of their Blackboard use. In Fall 2006, the School of Law-Newark's Minority Student Program (MSP) used Blackboard to assist the MSP dean in communicating to and providing resources for the MSP students. MSP study groups used the Content System to share materials. Administrative functions and internship and facilitator applications were also transitioned to Blackboard.

The Program in American Language Studies (PALS) developed Blackboard sites for each of their courses. Among other advantages for the PALS students, the Blackboard interface allowed them to check their grades online, which they were unable to do previously. Additionally, a pilot evaluated the effectiveness of online course evaluations.

The College of Nursing continued to expand its use of Blackboard by developing a site to provide syllabi for all its students. Additionally, the Nursing Student Senate used Blackboard to facilitate communication and run student elections. Instructors teaching multiple sections of the same course used Blackboard organizations to manage their sections in one Blackboard site.

The Office of Academic Technology continued to work with faculty migrating their courses from eCollege to Blackboard.

The Office of the Provost used Blackboard extensively for executive searches including School of Criminal Justice, Faculty of Arts and Sciences-Newark, and Rutgers Business School dean searches. Blackboard was also used for committee work and communication including: Middle States, Tenure-Track Faculty Travel, Capital Campaign, the Future of Undergraduate Education, GS-LSAMP, and Samuels Fellows.

Support and training

Support for students was provided by the NCS Help Desk, and support for faculty was provided by OAT.

Several training options were made available to those interested in learning about or using Blackboard. OAT provided workshops for departments and scheduled workshops for individuals on a drop in basis. NCS

scheduled Blackboard training for students throughout the year in the Education Series. These sessions were open to students, faculty, or staff. Following is a summary of training provided.

Type of training	Number of sessions
Blackboard development workshops	14
Departmental workshops	11 (Law, Mathematics, Biology, Nursing)
One on one sessions	73
Presentations	4 (Law faculty colloquium, DNP orientation, Ph.D. orientation, TA orientation)
Faculty drop-in sessions	12
Education Series workshops	4

**BLACKBOARD USE BY UNIT
STANDARD ACADEMIC COURSES**

	SUMMER 2006		FALL 2006		WINTER 2007		SPRING 2007		TOTAL	
	Sections	Students	Sections	Students	Sections	Students	Sections	Students	Sections	Students
Faculty of Arts & Sciences – Newark	68	1,942	277	10,377	15	299	304	11,159	664	23,777
Rutgers Business School – Newark	118	4,115	226	9,108	3	79	230	8,869	577	22,171
Rutgers Business School – NB School 33	20	654	70	4,190	1	24	72	3,891	163	8,759
School of Law – Newark	1	10	82	3,535	0	0	93	3,205	176	6,750
College of Nursing	10	113	60	1,029	4	47	49	1,099	123	2,288
School of Criminal Justice	30	461	49	1,949	3	75	48	1,624	130	4,109
School of Public Affairs & Administration	8	114	21	446	1	21	23	440	53	1,021
Division of Global Affairs	0	0	6	89	0	0	2	27	8	116
School of Social Work	3	98	1	39	0	0	2	50	6	187
Industrial Engineering NB	0	0	22	576	0	0	13	394	35	970
TOTAL	258	7,507	814	31,338	27	545	836	30,758	1,935	70,148

**BLACKBOARD USE BY FASN-DEPARTMENT
STANDARD ACADEMIC COURSES**

	SUMMER 2006		FALL 2006		WINTER 2007		SPRING 2007		TOTAL	
	Sections	Students	Sections	Students	Sections	Students	Sections	Students	Sections	Students
African-American Studies	2	40	2	93	0	0	3	124	7	257
American Studies	0	0	1	26	0	0	0	0	1	26
Biological Sciences	1	79	1	22	0	0	15	382	17	483
Chemistry	2	311	2	85	0	0	8	446	12	842
Classical & Modern Lang & Lit	4	70	28	578	0	0	26	591	58	1,239
Earth & Environmental Sciences	0	0	5	561	0	0	5	307	10	868
Economics	7	214	18	1,101	1	13	21	1,431	47	2,759
English	7	308	13	716	0	0	17	688	37	1,712
History	7	163	17	677	0	0	28	1,144	52	1,984
Honors College	0	0	1	19	0	0	5	90	6	109
Liberal Studies	0	0	1	21	0	0	0	0	1	21
Mathematics & Computer Science	4	117	29	937	2	49	18	568	53	1,671
Program in American Lang Studies	0	0	3	58	0	0	0	0	3	58
Philosophy	4	14	4	204	3	78	5	307	16	603
Physics	0	0	1	74	0	0	0	0	1	74
Political Science	3	46	15	613	1	17	12	367	31	1,043
Psychology	6	185	20	1,028	2	32	20	1,129	48	2,374
Social Work	0	36	17	522	0	0	20	620	37	1,178
Sociology & Anthropology	4	115	9	647	3	45	10	626	26	1,433
Urban Education	0	0	9	185	0	0	9	194	18	379
Visual & Performing Arts	1	14	10	315	2	51	11	437	24	817
Women's Studies	0	0	2	81	1	14	1	7	4	102
Writing Program	16	230	69	1,814	0	0	70	1,701	155	3,745
TOTAL	68	1,942	277	10,377	15	299	304	11,159	664	23,777

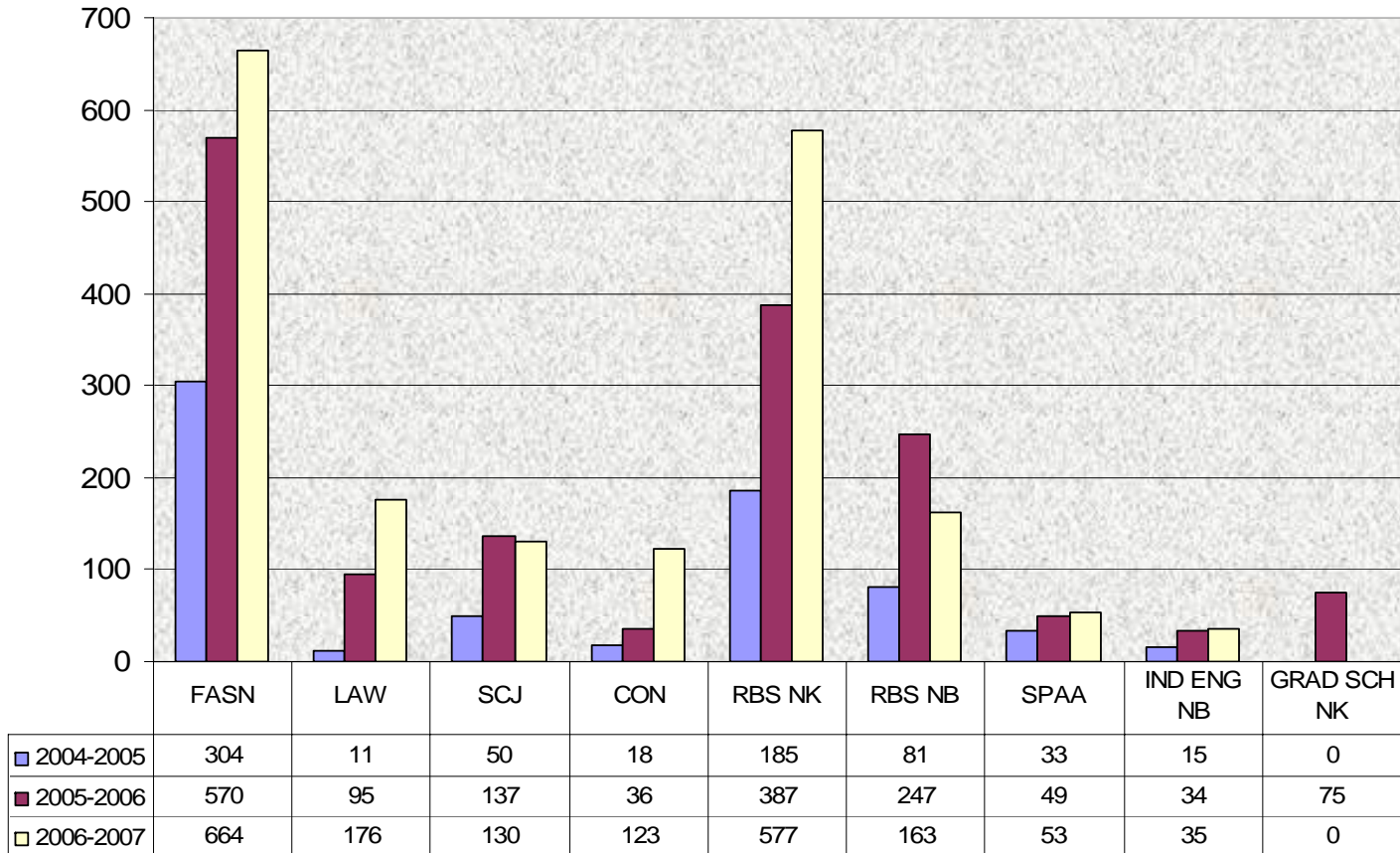
BLACKBOARD USE
ORGANIZATIONS & NON-STANDARD COURSES
2006-2007

UNIT/CATEGORY	ORGANIZATIONS	# OF PARTICIPANTS	NON-STANDARD COURSES	# OF PARTICIPANTS
Faculty of Arts & Sciences-Newark	168	10,246	8	675
Rutgers Business School	4	3,323	104	4,391
School of Law-Newark	111	6,895	2	116
College of Nursing	31	3,386	1	74
School of Criminal Justice	2	2	6	126
School of Public Affairs & Administration	2	36	24	172
Divison of Global Affairs	0	0	0	0
School of Social Work	0	0	0	0
Industrial Engineering (New Brunswick)	0	0	0	0
Provost's Office	16	1,104	8	118
Administrative Offices	4	232	0	0
Student Groups	2	54	0	0
TOTAL	340	25,278	153	5,672

NOTES:

1. Organizations and non-standard courses were created for uses such as credit courses, non-credit courses, and administrative committees, and for groups such as faculty, staff, students, and administrators.
2. Non-standard courses included those such as the mini courses and International EMBA courses in Rutgers Business School and certificate courses in the School of Public Affairs & Administration.

Blackboard Course Use Comparison Year to Year



NOTE: Graduate School courses were included in unit totals for 2004-2005 and 2006-2007.