FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NUIIT Unveils New Features for Northwestern’s Course Management System

Offering a range of new enhancements, including plagiarism detection and easier course creation for instructors, Northwestern University Information Technology (NUIIT) has unveiled an updated version of Northwestern’s Course Management System (CMS), Blackboard.

“This latest version of Blackboard corrects bugs that were associated with the previous version, and it offers some useful and exciting enhancements to Northwestern faculty and students,” said Bob Taylor, director of NUIIT Academic Technologies.

Some of the new CMS features include:

- A “Quick Edit” tool that allows instructors to easily toggle between the instructor’s editing view of a course site and the student’s display view. With this new tool, instructors can quickly make changes and add documents to the content areas of a course site without having to navigate through the control panel.

- A “What You See Is What You Get” (WYSIWYG) text editor for easier content creation. The WYSIWYG Editor allows instructors to format text in text boxes throughout their course site as they would format text in a Microsoft Word document (without using HTML scripts). The tool appears in all standard text boxes, including the content, discussion board, and assessment areas within a course site.

- SafeAssignment™, a new plagiarism detection tool that provides automatic sentence-by-sentence comparison of student work with other texts that are either published on the Web, or within a growing database of Northwestern-originating text. Instructors are provided with scores measuring the degree of similarity in wording for submitted papers, as well as the URL identifying the exact location of similar sentences.

- An Advanced Group Management tool, which allows instructors to more easily organize students into private online environments where members share discussion boards, exchange files and send group e-mail. With this tool, instructors can designate members of a group or the tool can randomly assign members to groups.
"In addition to all the new features, the latest CMS will now allow students enrolled in classes to have immediate access to the corresponding course sites—usually, no later than one business day after the course has been made available," said Mary Schuller, manager of Course Management Services for NUIT Academic Technologies.

For those faculty new to the system or those wanting a refresher workshop, NUIT is offering two-hour introductory workshops. Times, dates, and registration information, along with more details about NU’s Course Management System, are available at: course-management.northwestern.edu/.

Beginning September 22, drop-in sessions will be available for individual consultation at the Crowe Café in Crowe Hall on Wednesdays between 3 and 5 p.m. No appointment is needed.

For additional questions and assistance with using NU’s Course Management System (Blackboard), please contact course-management@northwestern.edu or call the CMS Help Line at (847) 491-4044.

########