End-of-Semester "Housekeeping" (Faculty)

The end of any semester can present a daunting array of tasks that faculty need to accomplish by a fixed deadline. In order to relieve last-minute Blackboard-related worries, we suggest that faculty use the following checklist, beginning approximately one month before the end of each term:

☐ **Clean Up/Update Your Blackboard Grade Center.** This is especially important if you rely, either in part or in whole, on the Blackboard Grade Center to computer your final course grades and communicate those to students. Specific actions that we recommend include:
   o Removing columns for any assignments, tests, etc. that you may have removed from the course.
   o Using the Manage>Column Organization option to ensure that the correct columns are hidden and/or visible.
   o Creating categories and assigning columns to categories, as appropriate.
   o Verifying/modifying settings on any calculated/weighted columns.

   We recommend that this be done approximately one month before classes end, as the Grade Center can be cumbersome to manipulate/edit. <u>Whether doing this yourself or requesting assistance from a member of the course support staff, this should not be a task that is undertaken during the last week of classes, or immediately before final grades are due.</u>

☐ **Export a Copy of Your Blackboard Grade Center to Excel.** This is always a good practice and is even more important following each Fall semester, when Blackboard is removed from service for annual upgrades. During the upgrade period, you will not be able to access your Blackboard courses to check on grades for student inquiries or other issues; therefore, having access to the Grade Center data offline (in Excel) can be very helpful.

☐ **Archive a Copy of Each Blackboard Course.** Although extremely rare, catastrophic data losses are always a technological possibility. By archiving a copy of your course at the end of each term, you will always have a backup copy of the latest version of your course. In the event of an emergency, you can work with the course support staff to have your archive restored into a new blank master course, if necessary.

☐ **Provision and/or Request New Blackboard Courses (face-to-face or partially online) in OPALS for the next semester.** Course requests may be submitted at any time, although there are firm deadlines (set well in advance) for any requests for new FULLY ONLINE courses. You may provision for the next semester as soon as the course schedule for that term has been publically released to students.

Please feel free to utilize either or both of the options below for information about or assistance with any of these recommended actions:

1. Contact a member of our course support staff, either by contacting your assigned Instructional Designer (ID) directly or by contacting the Support Center and requesting assistance. The Support Center will enter your request into the help ticket system and you will be contacted by a member of our team shortly thereafter. You may contact the Support Center at 281-283-2828 or by email at SupportCenter@uhcl.edu.

2. From the Blackboard login page, use the More Blackboard Support link within the For Faculty field to access UHCL's Faculty Blackboard Support page. The support page contains handouts on how to provision and request new courses using UHCL's OPALS application. The page also contains a link to the Official Blackboard Support Site, where you can locate instructions on working with the Grade Center, exporting Grade Center data to Excel, and archiving your Blackboard course(s).