Faculty Colleagues,

Over spring break, 60 faculty participated in two-day Brightspace Course Design Labs focused on building their courses in the new LMS. Participants worked on their own courses with short demonstrations, guided activities, and support from VITAL and UTS colleagues throughout the day. Based on feedback, faculty experienced the program as most helpful. Additional two-day Course Design Labs are scheduled for June 8–9 and June 10–11 (register). UTS and VITAL will be offering Brightspace workshops throughout the spring and summer. If your department or program would like to schedule a customized session, please contact Ankit Desai.

Important reminders regarding our move to Brightspace (all courses starting in May 2026 and beyond will be taught in Brightspace):

Blackboard Ends

On June 18, 2026 Blackboard will no longer be accessible and any data in it will be erased. All Spring 2026 Blackboard courses will be imported into Brightspace in early June. Prior imports are courses offered from summer 2023 to fall 2025. You can log into Brightspace now to see your imports. If you desire any courses prior to summer 2023 or organizations to be imported, please make the request prior to May 31, 2026 here. Since student data does not transfer you should download any gradebooks or other student items you desire to keep prior to June 18. Directions for downloading student information from Blackboard is here. Note: An imported Blackboard course will not be ready to use as is for Brightspace.

Foundational Use of the LMS Requirement

Starting with all May 2026 courses and beyond, all faculty must meet the foundational use requirements in Brightspace for all their courses. In short, this policy requires that faculty will post their syllabus, use the gradebook, post all digitally available material, and add due dates (using the "Due Date" setting) for assignments, exams, quizzes, readings, and other course requirements in Brightspace.

Recommended Time

We have found the best practice for preparing courses in Brightspace requires a 3-4 week period where you have time to learn, build, reflect, edit, and improve. Like we tell our students, "Don't leave this until the last minute!" Start now by logging into Brightspace and on the bottom right is a create your sandbox button. Make as many of these empty courses as you want to build your new courses in. Then you can copy everything, or parts, into your actual courses.

Innovative Features in Brightspace

· [Set up your gradebook](#) with your grading scheme and you can click a button to send midterm or final grades directly to Banner from your Brightspace gradebook.

· Choose from [course templates](#) to lay out your Brightspace course and/or select [page templates](#) to lay out content within your course.

· You may use an [intelligent agent](#) to automate emails to students to keep them informed of their progress in the course and/or completion of course work, such as done well on an assignment, completed online quiz, have not submitted assignment, etc.).

· You can [release materials](#) to a student based upon specific criteria, such as watched video and completed quiz questions, completed quiz at 80% minimum, and more. This feature will be most helpful to support students with accommodations as you are able to extend time on exams for example.

· Add one of our many [third party tools](#) directly to your course.

· Grade with a [rubric](#).

· Make [assignments](#) and [quizzes](#).

You will find these instructions plus additional features in the [Faculty Hub](#). Pedagogical support is available through VITAL's [Teaching with Brightspace](#) guide and by [consultation](#). As always reach out with any questions at any time.

Randy Weinstein
Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning
Professor of Chemical and Biological Engineering