



Blue Mountain Community College Success Spurs System-wide Deployment of Blackboard Collaborate

18,000 square miles, so we have to be able to reach students.

BRUCE KAUSS
E-learning Coordinator
Blue Mountain Community College

Over the past three years, a grass roots project at Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC) has grown to deliver online classroom instruction, tutoring, and advising via Blackboard Collaborate for thousands of students across Oregon. For many, distance learning was the only option.

Now the significant cost savings and impressive growth rate of Blackboard Collaborate at BMCC has resulted in the platform being implemented at all 17 of Oregon's community colleges.

Expanding Reach and Opportunities for Learning

"Our college covers 18,000 square miles, so we have to be able to reach students," says Bruce Kauss, eLearning coordinator and project leader at BMCC. For 2012 alone, the Blackboard Collaborate usage statistics are astounding. Kauss reports that the college held 6,000 live web conferencing sessions for 20,000 attendees. What's more, the session recordings were downloaded an incredible 23,000 times.

According to BMCC Marketing Director Anne Livingston, evidence of faculty adoption at the college is anecdotal. "We look at the fact that more and more online classes are available than ever before," she explains. "This speaks to faculty appreciation for the tool and their acknowledgement that it's very valuable."

S Blackboard Collaborate has proven to be a very valuable, easy-to-use tool for my area. It has saved the college in staff time and travel and has allowed us to reach students in a way that was previously not possible. I like being able to record lectures because it gives students who miss class the ability to watch the lectures. Many of my students who attend class still watch the lectures to improve their understanding of difficult topics. **Blackboard Collaborate** also allows students to attend class live from remote locations."

JIM WHITTAKER
Instructor/Director of Institutional
Research Math/Operations
Blue Mountain Community College

Innovating for Excellence

The first college in the state to do so, BMCC offered a 16-week Intermediate EMT online lecture course. In 2012, of the 22 students who took the course, 92% passed the state certification exam. In fact, one EMT graduate taught at the Fire Academy of Eastern Oregon using Blackboard Collaborate.

"With his travel schedule, he would never have been able to get his certification without the distance learning opportunity provided by BMCC," says Kauss. Other innovative instructional uses of Blackboard Collaborate at BMCC include a diagnostic imaging class and live/recorded classes for students in two correctional facilities in Eastern Oregon.

Demonstrating ROI

"Faculty from our business department and from our Math,
Education, and Writing departments, as well as the Early Childhood
Education program and Civil Engineering programs, have all told me
that for their classes using Collaborate, both online and in a blended
version on campus, there's a lower attrition rate compared to classes
that don't," Kauss says. "That's a powerful way to look at Collaborate
in terms of return on investment and what it can do for you. We can
show our administration these results."

As co-chair of the Oregon Distance Learning Association, Kauss uses Blackboard Collaborate for meetings with all 17 community colleges several times a year. "We save hundreds of thousands of dollars in travel costs for the 100+ people who attend," he says. "And with Voice over the Internet with echo cancellation, we don't need a conference bridge."

Multiple Classes. Multiple Learning Tools.

BMCC faculty and Students deserve a big credit in making Blackboard Collaborate successful. Depending on the class, instructors use different Blackboard Collaborate tools, including:

- **Recordings** for lecture capture of face-to-face classes for remote students and those who missed class or want to review for exams
- Whiteboard in Math classes, which grew from a single instructor to eight
- **Desktop sharing** to move easily between multiple applications in civil engineering classes
- **Engagement tools**, like emoticons, polling, and hand raising in nutrition classes
- **Communication tools**, such as microphone, chat and application sharing, to allow business students to peer review their papers

Meeting Student Needs

"We use Blackboard Collaborate in multiple ways in our Advising/
Testing and Student Disability Services area," says Director Wade
Muller. "Currently, our major use is to deliver New Student Orientation
to our satellite centers and to students at a distance who are unable
to attend an on-campus orientation. This has greatly reduced travel
expenses for staff and added a much needed convenience for
at-distance students."

Advising/Testing and Disability Services also uses Blackboard Collaborate for advisor training at its satellite centers. "The ability to share desktops greatly enhances the usefulness of the sessions," adds Muller. "This reduces travel costs and allows us to share important information in a much more timely and understandable fashion."

According to Muller, he uses Blackboard Collaborate as a virtual office in the advising of students as well. "This allows me to show the student, in a much more understandable fashion, how to navigate their way through our information system," he says.

Vision for Expansion

Thanks to the innovative work at BMCC and the evangelism of Kauss, the Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) selected Blackboard Collaborate for all 17 of its colleges to improve education interaction and access, including from mobile devices.



WHAT BMCC STUDENTS ARE SAYING

"I was able to learn more and do better academically because my instructor provided an exciting and challenging learning environment."

"I believe this technology is the future of education, especially in small areas where we don't have the resources available."

"I love Collaborate. It allows me to feel like a part of the class, even though I am a distance education student."

effective, saving money for various services at individual colleges to improve student and institution success.

BRUCE KAUSS
E-learning Coordinator
Blue Mountain Community College

WHY BLACKBOARD COLLABORATE AT BMCC?

- Increased access, interaction, and adoption
- Expanded reach, especially for nontradtional students in rural areas
- · Wide spectrum of collaboration
- Improved student outcomes
- Full integration with multiple LMS
- · Reduced travel costs
- Enhanced student and institution success

With Blackboard Collaborate, the schools will reach more students, gain cost efficiencies, fully integrate multiple LMS, and make courses available to remote, non-traditional, and other students in rural areas who may not be able to come to campus.

"While I led the charge, I needed support from BMCC faculty, other colleges and from Blackboard Collaborate," concludes Bruce. "System-wide use is cost-effective, saving money for various services at individual colleges to improve student and institution success."

