

# Transition to Blackboard 8 - Spring 2009 : What's New?

## GRADE CENTER

The Grade Center, formerly the Grade Book, has been completely redesigned:

- Create grading “schemas” that allow you to display students’ grades and information using customized criteria.
- Add comments to grades and email students directly from the grade center.
- Receive notifications if students have not been on Blackboard for a specific duration of time.
- Keep a history of all grades and grade changes that have been inputted for the life of the course.
- Ability to drop a student's lowest grade using “Exempt Grade.”
- Option to hide class average statistics in students’ “My Grades” view.

## DISCUSSION BOARD

The Discussion Board has been redesigned with a new look and feel:

- Users can request email notifications for new discussion board posts using the “Subscribe” feature.
- Discussion posts can be saved as drafts before publishing for public view.
- Optional peer-review rating system for student discussion board posts.
- Improved search capability.
- Ability to control when discussion forums are made available.
- New options for grading discussion board posts.

## SAFE ASSIGN

An alternative to Turnitin, Safe Assign is a feature built into Blackboard to deter student plagiarism by identifying derivative content in student papers.

## SELF AND PEER ASSESSEMENT

Create specific criteria that students use to review and evaluate their own work or work submitted by peers.

## SCHOLAR

A social bookmarking site that allows students and instructors to collect and organize links to their favorite web sites from within Blackboard. Bookmarks can be shared with other users within the college and at other institutions. Instructors can also automatically update course sites with new content through dynamic feeds.

## ADDITIONAL BB8 FEATURES

- **Visual Text-box Editor** (input area for discussion boards, content areas, and announcements): Can now be used with a variety of browsers (Internet Explorer 5.x, Firefox 1.0, Safari 2.0, Netscape 8.0) and operating systems (Mac and Windows).
- **Early Warning System:** Allows instructors to monitor student progress and create specific learning paths for students who may need extra help.
- **Email Announcements:** Option to automatically email students when new announcements are posted.
- **Performance Dashboard:** Gives the instructor a quick glance at the activity and progress of students, displaying items such as: last time course was accessed, number of discussion board posts, and grades.

Blackboard help documents are available on the ICIT website at:

<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/icit/help-docs/blackboard/faculty-docs/faculty-docs>