Blackboard Policies for University of Richmond Faculty
April 27, 2005

I. Purpose

This document informs faculty of the Blackboard (BB) policies used by the Center for Teaching, Learning & Technology to administer BB courses and to set standards for the administration of these courses. Blackboard is a course management system that is used by the University of Richmond to help faculty make their course materials available on the Internet. A BB course is defined as all materials, discussions, electronic communications and grades that reside within a single identifiable course within this system.

Blackboard is used for many purposes on campus other than only courses in which students register and receive grades. These other purposes include, but are not limited to, committee work, information repositories, and non-credit courses. The policies within this document apply to those courses as well, with the obvious exception of grades.

II. Server Back-up

The servers on which the BB software and courses reside are backed-up nightly. However, we encourage everyone using BB to keep a separate copy of their materials, including the electronic gradebook, in case of a system failure.

III. Blackboard Versions

Blackboard is a commercial software product with new versions being released on a relatively regular basis. The University of Richmond moves to a different version when the new product features warrant. Faculty need to be aware that courses created using one version may not be able to be opened in a newer version of the software. Notice will be given to faculty regarding the implementation schedule of a new version to allow faculty ample time to migrate their course to the new version and assistance will be provided by Center staff.

IV. Creating or Deleting a Blackboard Course

Faculty create BB courses through the online request system available off the main BB page: http://Blackboard.richmond.edu/. Academic courses will be created within 24 hours of the request. If registrations exist for the course in Banner, students will be automatically enrolled in the Blackboard course. Enrollments are updated daily and are based on registrations in Banner.

Faculty can copy part or all of a course previously taught into a new course. If the previous edition of the course is still in Blackboard, faculty can use the Course Copy option in the Control Panel to copy materials into the new course. If the previous edition of the course is a zipped file of the archived course, faculty can use the Import Course option in the Control Panel to copy materials into the new course.

Faculty may request the deletion of courses they created at any time through the online request system available off the main BB page. These courses will be removed from the system within 24 hours of the request.

Anyone having a problem accessing this system should contact Blackboard@richmond.edu.

V. Archiving

Blackboard offers an archiving feature that will create a zipped copy of the entire course at that moment in time. We recommend that faculty perform this archiving function on a monthly basis by selecting the Archive Course option in their course Control Panel. This will reduce the likelihood of significant losses if there is ever a server failure. At the end of each semester, faculty should archive the entire course so that they have it for future use.

Courses will remain on the system for three semesters after they are taught, excluding summer terms, before they are removed from the system.

VI. Materials with Copyright Restrictions

All materials that are directly loaded into a BB course must either be copyright-free or the faculty member must have permission from the copyright owner. Copyright-free materials include those available in the public domain or the faculty member's own work. Materials in which the faculty member has permission from the owner include materials provided with the textbook used in the course.

Materials that the faculty member is using under the assumption of fair use may not be loaded directly into their BB course. These materials must be made available to the students through the e-reserve system maintained by the Library. The faculty may place a link in their BB course to the location of the materials on the Library system.

Center personnel are required to report any potential copyright infringements to the University Copyright Officer.

VII. File Size

While there are no blanket restrictions on the size of files that may be uploaded into a BB course, it is the responsibility of faculty to ensure that the files are as small as possible to enhance bandwidth performance, without harming the instructional content. Center personnel will work with faculty to accomplish this goal. In addition, Center personnel have the responsibility to monitor the size of files and to contact faculty when files seem to be unreasonably large.

VIII. Roles within a Course

BB has a series of potential roles for individuals, including:

- **Instructor** – Complete course access.

- **Teaching Assistant** – Access to all Control Panel items but cannot change a user's role within the course.
- **Course Builder** – Access to Content Areas and Course Tools only.
- **Grader** – Access to all areas under Assessments only.
- **Student** – No access to any Control Panel items.

Faculty are responsible for assigning status above "student". Center personnel will treat any individual with instructor status as such.

IX. Grades

A gradebook is available within BB and we encourage faculty to use this feature, allowing their students to keep track of all of their grades in the course. However, faculty should also maintain a separate copy of student grades in case of system failure. The gradebook within BB can be exported as an Excel file and saved. Faculty should regularly export updated grades.

One week after the conclusion of the semester, Students who have received grades in Banner will be removed from their associated Blackboard courses. Gradebook information for these students will be removed as a part of this process. Faculty should download a copy of their gradebooks by selecting Gradebook > Download Grades from the course Control Panel at the conclusion of the semester. The Center will not maintain back-up copies of the gradebooks.

X. Incompletes

Students who have received I, Y or X grades for a course will remain enrolled in their associated Blackboard course for up to six weeks (42 calendar days) beyond the end of the semester or term so that students may complete their coursework.

After that date, all students will be removed from their courses, and faculty must make other arrangements for students to complete the work. Center personnel will work with faculty on an individual basis if other arrangements need to be made.