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BLACKBOARD COLLABORATE TO BENEFIT ONLINE STUDENTS

November 4, 2013

Lindenwood University has purchased a new online learning platform known as Blackboard Collaborate, which will soon make it easier for students and staff to engage in a state-of-the-art virtual learning environment. It will allow educators and learners in different locations to communicate with one another as if both parties were in the same classroom.

The tool is an additional component of Blackboard Inc., a learning management system already used by Lindenwood that features web-based syllabus and course details, test administration capabilities, assignment and paper grading software, textbook listings, and mobile access to related course information.

Blackboard Collaborate takes things to the next level by adding additional capabilities, such as web and phone conferencing, voice podcasting, interactive whiteboards, application sharing, virtual breakout discussion rooms, universal accessibility, and more.

"The system is a very powerful building block inside of Blackboard that has unlimited possibilities for synchronous collaboration among faculty and students within their own environments," said Chris Tobnick, Lindenwood Blackboard trainer and course designer.

"To name just a few of its capabilities, the system allows for seamless chat, the hosting of guest speakers from anywhere in the world, access to real-time and recorded lectures, and inclusive one-on-one or group presentations and discussions. It removes most limitations to online learning and promotes a stronger sense of personal connectedness among our students and educators."

Tobnick has already trained several of the University's online instructors in the Collaborate system and plans to conduct larger group training sessions in the coming weeks. It's expected that the majority of the school's online instructors will be using the system by the 2014 spring semester.

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