



BLACKBOARD LEARN ULTRA

FALL 2022 REVIEW

Abstract

This report details survey findings and other data collected from faculty, students, and university support staff about their first semester using Blackboard Ultra

David Marshall Walker

Office of Distance Education, Auburn University at Montgomery

Contents

	Page
Summary	2
Introduction	2
About Blackboard	2
AUM and Blackboard Learn Ultra	3
Student and Faculty Surveys	3
Faculty Survey	3
Student Survey	3
Results	3
Faculty Data	4
Overall satisfaction	4
Likert-style questions	5
Faculty support	6
Tools and Features	6
Faculty perceptions of student experience	6
Open-ended questions	6
Student Data	7
Overall satisfaction	7
Likert-style questions	8
Open-ended questions	8
ODE Customer service experience with Blackboard	9
Case 1 - High stakes exam	9
Case 2 – Lost rubric feedback	9
Case 3 – Test availability	10
Case 4 – Peer review	10
Case 5 – Student course access	10
Discussion	11
Recommendations	12
Appendices	14
Appendix 1: Faculty survey	14
Appendix 2: Student survey	18
Appendix 3: Faculty comments about their overall Ultra experience	21
Appendix 4: Faculty comments about tools that performed as expected	27
Appendix 5: Faculty comments about tools that did not perform as expected	29
Appendix 6: Student comments about their overall Ultra experience	40

Summary

At the end of the first semester of Auburn University at Montgomery's (AUM) use of Blackboard Learn Ultra (Ultra), surveys of faculty reveal significant dissatisfaction with the Learning Management System (LMS). Survey responses from students show a more mixed range of satisfaction. Customer support experiences reported by the Office of Distance Education (ODE) indicate significant and ongoing concerns for the overall stability of Ultra, combined with chronically slow and ineffective customer support. For these reasons, ODE recommends the urgent establishment of a representative task force to review and recommend next steps to Academic leadership.

Introduction

In the fall of 2022, AUM began using Blackboard Learn Ultra to host all learning system (LMS) managed courses. Prior to this, AUM used Blackboard Learn Original (Original). While the LMS is the primary access point for online courses, traditional (face-to-face) courses frequently use it as well, for gradebook, class discussions, assignments, assessments, etc. Of the 1,008 courses offered at AUM in fall 2022, 675 were traditional (face-to-face), 48 were hybrid courses, and 285 were online. Much of the content from hybrid and online courses were wholly or partially migrated from Original.

About Blackboard

Blackboard has its roots in *Course Info LLC*, a software provider founded by former Cornell University students in 1996. *Blackboard LLC* was founded in 1997, and began developing a prototype online learning system. It later became *Blackboard Inc.* Through the years, Blackboard expanded its market reach through the purchase of new services, and the acquisition of its competitors, including *WebCT* (2005), *Angel* (2009), and *Moodlerooms* (2012). In spite of these acquisitions, Blackboard continues to lose its place in the market. From a market high of 65% in 2006, Blackboard's market share has fallen to 19% in 2021. In 2021, Blackboard was acquired by *Anthology*.

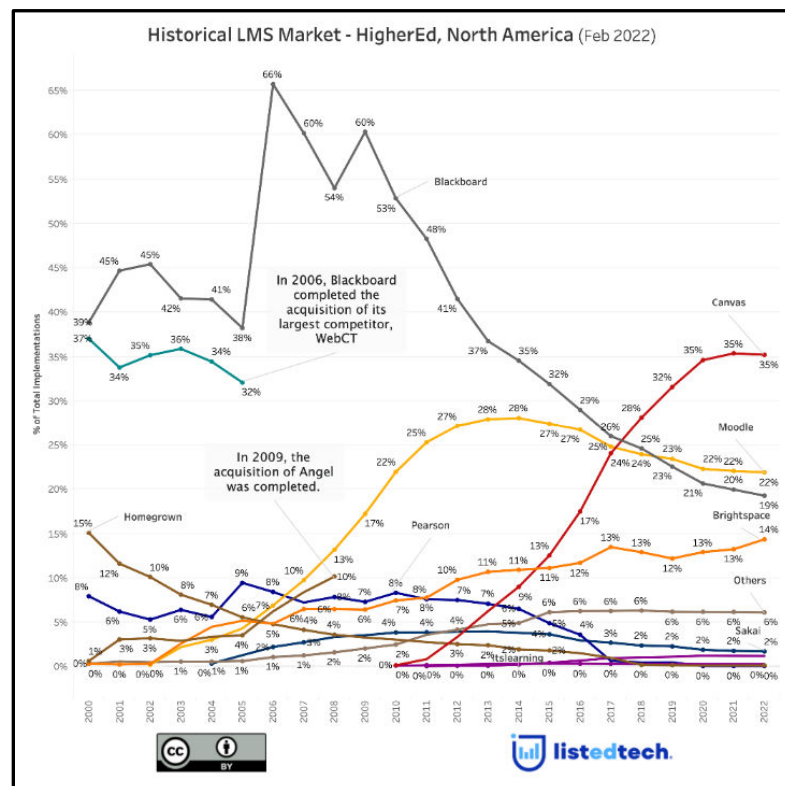


Figure 1: U.S. LMS Market History - from "A Brief History of Blackboard," March 20, 2022. Listedtech.com

AUM and Blackboard Learn Ultra

Blackboard Learn Ultra (Ultra) was launched in 2015. Its user interface is built on the existing Blackboard Learn 9.1 architecture. Only available through *SaaS* (Blackboard's cloud hosted service) Ultra's new features include:

- A simpler, more intuitive navigational experience
- Responsive interface that fits any computer, tablet, or smartphone
- Greater compliance with Accessibility standards (WCAG 2.1 Level AA and Section 508)

In 2017, AUM migrated from self-hosting Blackboard to Blackboard's SaaS hosting service. That same year, it was announced that the University would migrate to Ultra. This migration was initially delayed, due to the Pandemic. Nevertheless, in beginning of the fall 2022 term, all LMS course content was hosted on Ultra. ODE's Instructional Designers, along with the Learning System Administrator, were charged with the task of supporting instructors in this transition. ODE and Information Technology Services (ITS) worked together, monitoring and ensuring system stability and function. Training in Ultra was provided to faculty through courses such as *FDI-1000*, *FDI-F*, and *FDI-O*, offered by the Faculty Development Institute.

Student and Faculty Surveys

During the fall of 2022, ODE gathered data relating to system function and user support issues. They also gathered data from faculty and students regarding their experiences in Ultra. At the end of the semester, emails were sent to both faculty and students soliciting their feedback on these experiences. Links in these emails navigated respondents to online surveys. Responses were collected anonymously. Both surveys collected data through Likert-style questions and open-ended questions. Multiple select questions were also included, and were combined with open-ended fields providing respondents the opportunity to explain their choices.

Faculty Survey

The faculty survey consisted of 26 questions: 2 general information questions, 20 Likert-style questions, 2 multiple-select, and 2 open-ended questions. Additional open-ended questions could be triggered in response to choices made on multiple-select for a total possible 29 questions. Likert-style answer options were: 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree. The survey collected information about the faculty member's College, and whether they were teaching online this term. It also collected information about their overall satisfaction with Ultra, and ability to use the various tools and features in Ultra. The survey also asked faculty to characterize their students' experiences with Ultra. While responses were anonymous, the faculty survey allowed respondents to indicate whether they wished members of ODE to follow up on any technical matters they had encountered. In this case, the survey asked for the respondent's name and contact information. Only 1 faculty member chose this option. No such option was provided in the student survey. A copy of the faculty survey is included in the Appendix 1.

Student Survey

The student survey consisted of 16 questions: 3 general information questions, 8 Likert-style questions, 2 multiple-select, 1 single-choice, and 2 open-ended questions. Likert-style answer options were: 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree. Additional Likert-style an could be triggered in response to choices made on multiple-select for a total possible 20 questions. The survey collected information about whether they were taking an online course in the current term, the College(s) they were taking courses, and their academic status. It also asked students about their overall satisfaction with Ultra, and ability to use the various tools in Ultra. Many questions focused on the same tools and features that were presented to faculty (i.e. Faculty survey: *I can easily create Assignments*; Student survey: *I can easily submit Assignments*). A copy of the student survey is included in Appendix 2.

Results

One hundred faculty and 150 students participated in their respective surveys.

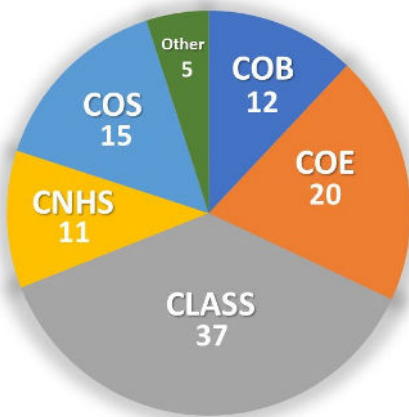


Figure 2: Faculty survey participation

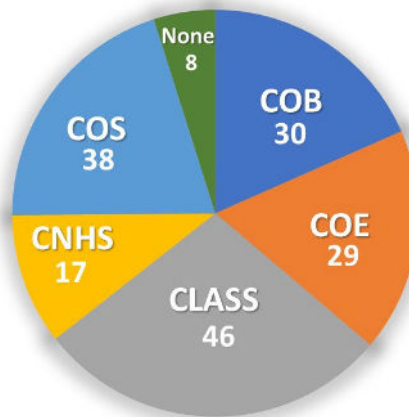
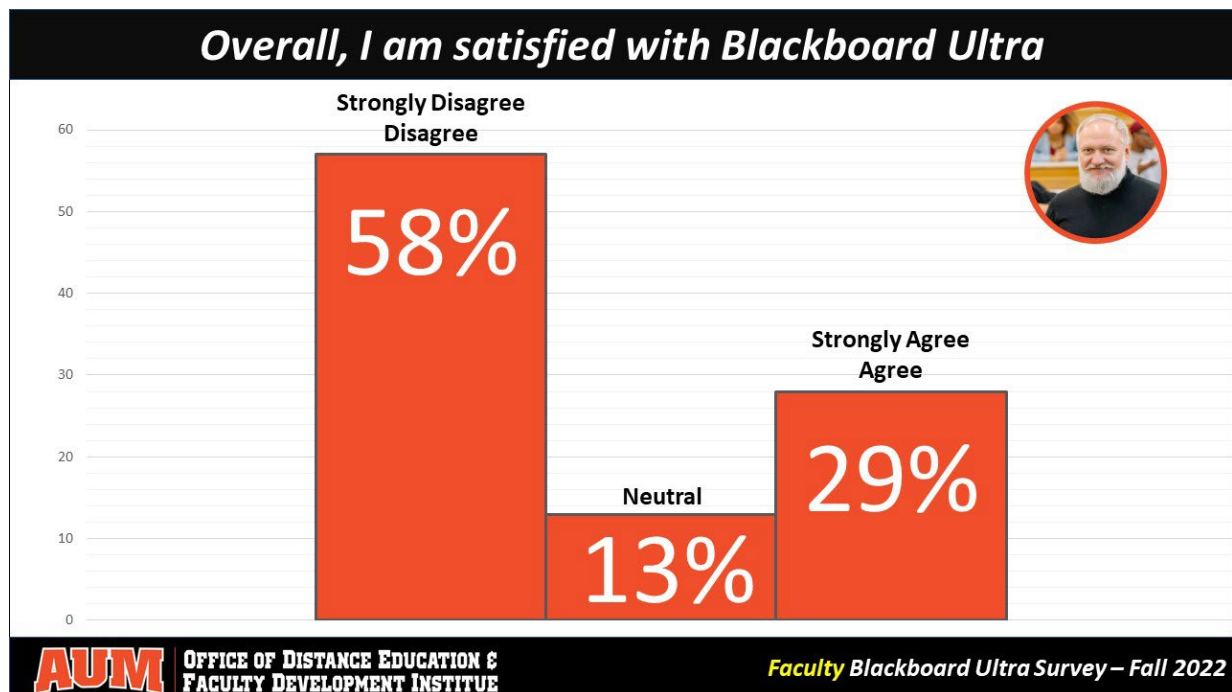


Figure 3: Student survey participation



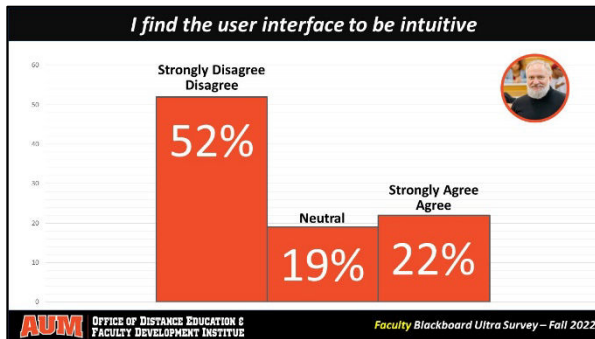
Faculty Data

Faculty responses were distributed among the following Colleges and units: College of Business-12, College of Education-20, College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences-37, College of Nursing & Health Sciences-11, College of Science-15, Other-5.



Fifty-eight percent of faculty indicated they strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement: *Overall, I am satisfied with Ultra*. Approximately one-third indicated some level of satisfaction, with 13% reporting neutral.

Likert-style Questions

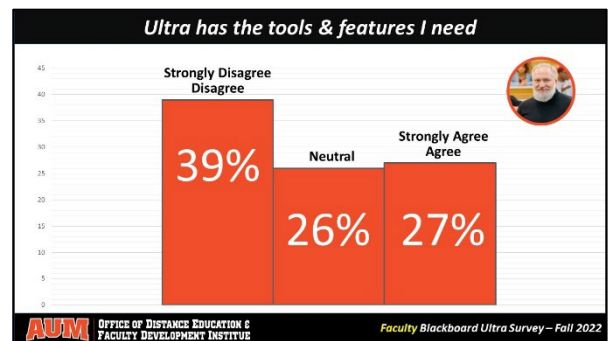


I find the user interface to be intuitive

Fifty-two percent of faculty respondents indicated that they felt the user interface was not intuitive, while 22% found it to be intuitive. Nineteen percent responded as neutral.

Ultra has the tools & features I need

Nearly 40% of faculty respondents felt that Ultra lacked the tools and features they needed. Twenty-seven percent found that it had the necessary tools and features, while 26% responded as neutral.



Other Likert-Style Questions

Faculty data on other Likert-type questions indicated relatively strong confidence in ability to post *Announcements* (69%). Nearly half of respondents indicated confidence in their abilities in the following tools/features: *Due Dates* (46%), *Discussions* (43%), *Course Content* (42%), and *Email* (39%). Areas of concern were: *Gradebook* (53%), *Grading Student work* (46%), and *Changing the order of items in the course* (46%).

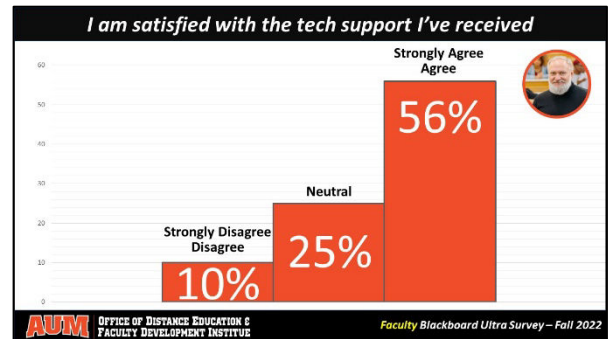
Other Questions

Statement	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	Agree/Strongly Agree	Neutral
I can easily create Course Content	33	42	19
I can easily create Assignments	23	10	24
I can easily create Discussions	19	43	12
I can easily copy content from other courses	33	27	17
I can easily set up my gradebook	53	21	18
I can easily grade student work	46	27	14
I can easily post Announcements	13	69	9
I can easily email my students from Ultra	26	39	13
I can easily set & change due dates	28	46	12
I can easily change the order of items in a course	46	32	16

Faculty Support

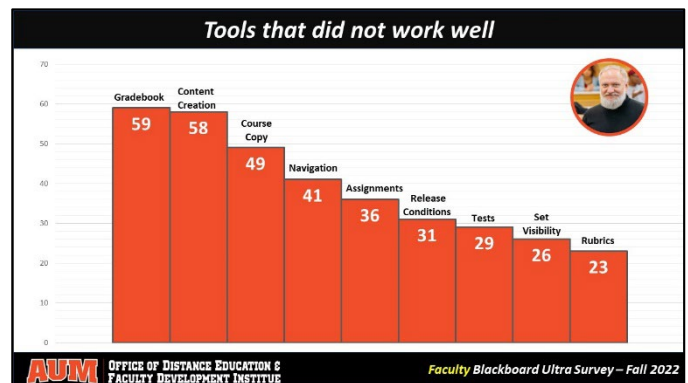
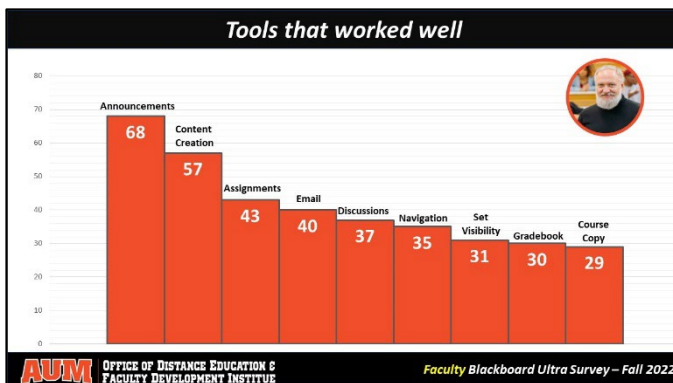
I am satisfied with the support I've received

ODE is the primary point for Blackboard technical support. This question gave faculty an opportunity to provide feedback about that support. Almost 60% of respondents indicated satisfaction with support that they had received. Only 10% were dissatisfied, and 25% were neutral.



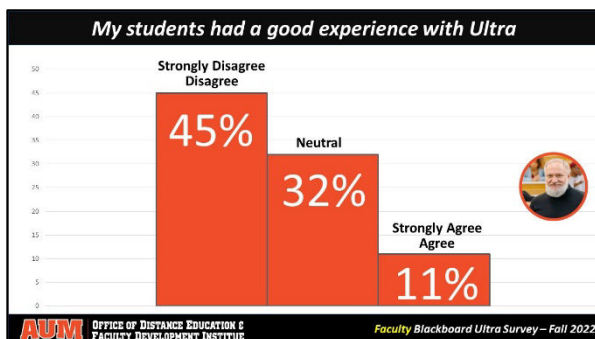
Tools and Features

Faculty were asked to select tools and features that worked well for them in Ultra. They were also given the opportunity to select the tools and features that did not work well for them. Among the tools that faculty indicated had worked relatively well, the top four were: *Announcements* (68%), *Content Creation* (57%), *Assignments* (43%), and *Email* (40%). Among the tools that faculty indicated that did not work well, the top four were: *Gradebook* (59%), *Content Creation* (58%), *Course Copy* (49%), and *Navigation* (41%). It is noteworthy that *Content Creation* was considered by the majority of faculty both as a tool that both worked well, and did not work well.



Faculty perceptions of student experience

Faculty are on the front line of providing technical support for students, and frequently are the first to learn about technical issues they encounter. This question solicited their perception of their students' overall experience.



My Students had a good experience with Ultra

Forty-five percent of faculty felt that their students had not had a good experience with Ultra, while just 11% felt that they had. Thirty-two percent remained neutral.

Open-Ended Questions

Faculty were given several opportunities to provide answers to open-ended questions. Faculty were invited to comment about their overall experience with Ultra, as well as about Ultra tools that worked well and didn't work well. They were also given the chance to provide additional comments at the end of the survey. There were 72 total comments by faculty about tools that did not work well, and 36 total comments by faculty about tools that worked well. Ninety-six

comments were provided by faculty respondents about their overall Ultra experience. Faculty responses to open-ended questions can be found in Appendices 3, 4, and 5.

Very easy to drill down into previous content to copy exactly what is needed for the new course.

I am still learning.

Overall I am extremely happy using Bb Ultra!

The basics (e.g., assignments, discussions, announcements) seem to work ok. Still a lot of clicking around and unnecessary complication, but they work as expected most of the time.

Figure 4: Sample Responses-Tools that worked well

I had a couple of assignments that would not let me modify instructions that had rolled forward.

Glitchy, hard to use, not user friendly

This version of Blackboard is much less user friendly and much more difficult to navigate and use.

It was very difficult to rearrange learning activities...

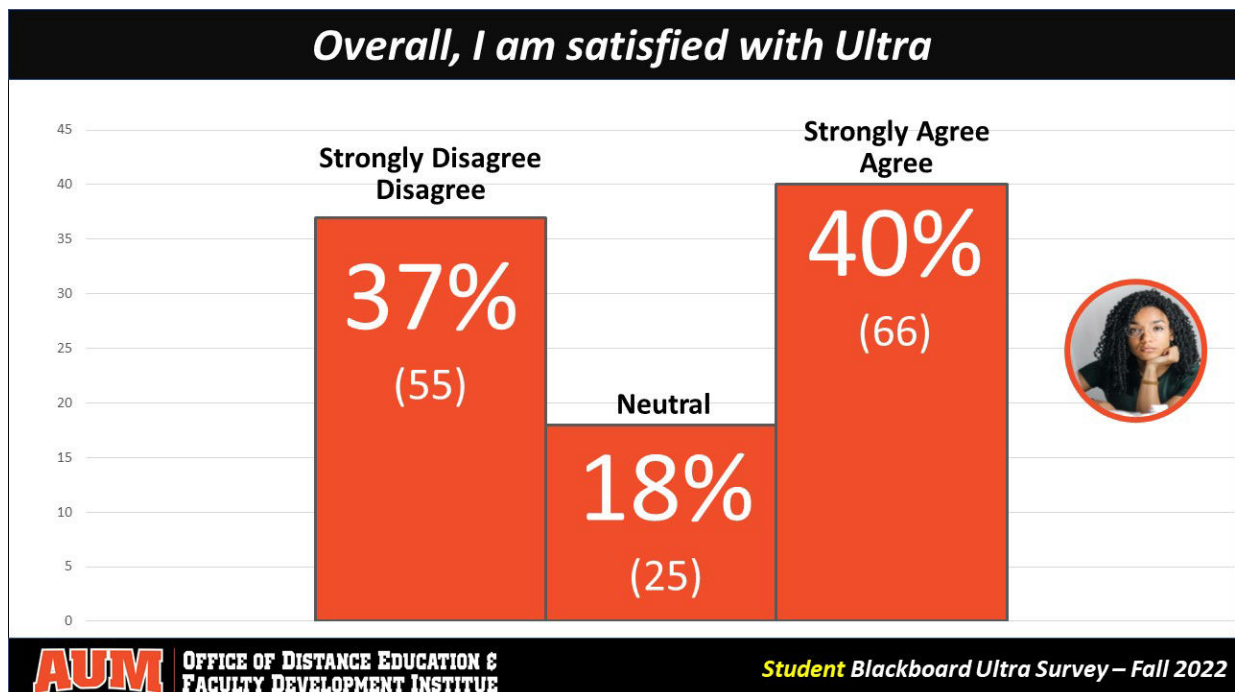
Overall navigation: It's not intuitive.

Figure 5: Sample Responses-Tools that did not work well



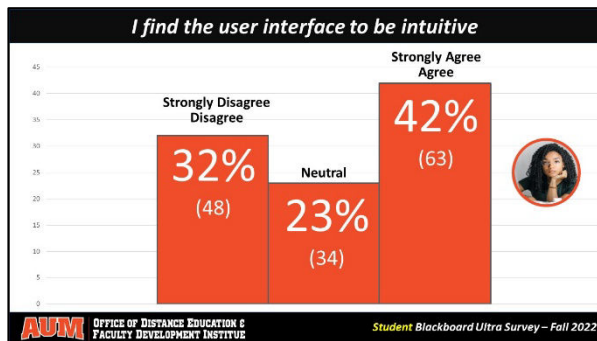
Student Data

A total of 150 students responded to the survey. They were distributed among the following Colleges and units: College of Business-30, College of Education-29, College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences-46, College of Nursing & Health Sciences-17, College of Science-38, None-8.



Student respondents were nearly equally divided on their satisfaction with Ultra. Forty-percent were satisfied with their experience, while 37% were not. Eighteen percent were neutral.

Likert-style Questions



I find the user interface to be intuitive

Forty-two percent of student respondents found the user interface to be intuitive, while 32% did not. Twenty-three percent were neutral.

Other Likert-Style Questions

Student respondents expressed ease at accessing and using Ultra tools and features, especially *Grades* (59%), *Discussions* (58%), *Assignments* (54%), and *Content* (51%).

Other Questions



Statement	Disagree/Strongly Disagree (%)	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)	Neutral (%)
I can easily access Course Content	29	51	15
I can easily submit Assignments	21	54	21
I can easily post in Discussions	15	58	14
I can easily access my grades	21	59	10
I can easily use the email tool	26	35	21
I can easily take tests	13	44	24

Open-ended questions

Students also provided answers to open-ended questions about their Ultra experience. Of the total of 84 comments, 32 were positive and 46 were negative. Student comments can be found in Appendix 6.



Figure 6: Sample positive comments from students

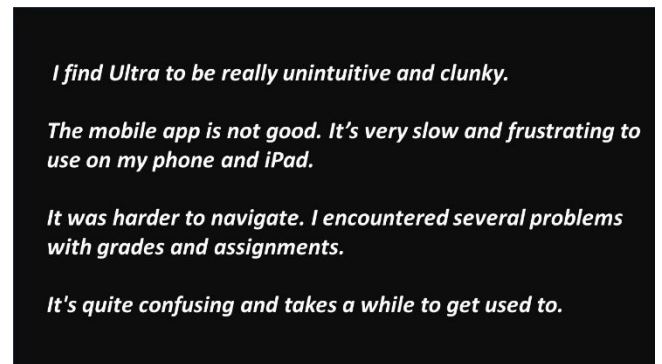


Figure 7: Sample negative comments from students

ODE Customer Service Experience with Blackboard (Case Studies)

Throughout the fall 2022 term, the Office of Distance Education provided technical support to faculty and students for Ultra. The following 5 case studies are representative of their issues and experiences.

Case 1 – High Stakes Exam



On August 31, 2022, students in a Nursing course were given a high-stakes exam in their classroom, via Ultra. The exam featured several multiple-choice items that accepted only numeric answers (*calculated numeric field*). Students took the exam, entering their answers to these and other questions. After the exam, every student received a failing grade. Upon review, it was discovered that Ultra had failed to record any answers provided by students in the multiple-choice questions requiring numeric answers, assigning each of these questions a score of zero.

This issue was immediately reported to Blackboard. Approximately 1 week later, Blackboard identified the issue and provided a temporary fix (*disable students' ability to navigate backwards to earlier test questions*). Within a month, Blackboard issued a new release with a fix for this bug. The new test was created by the instructor, and students were brought in to take the exam again.

Case 2 – Lost Rubric Feedback

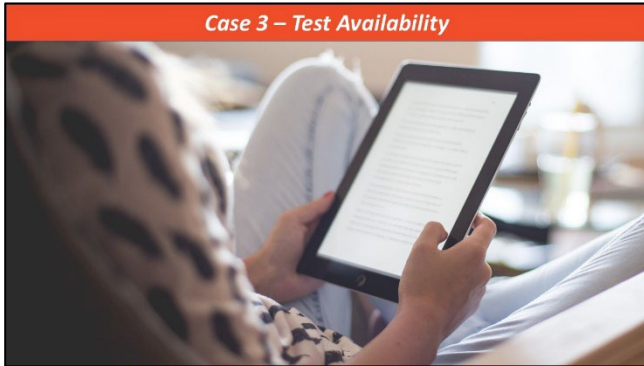
On October 5th, an instructor in a Biology course contacted ODE about comments she had left in the rubric section of her students' writing assignments. When a rubric is applied to an assignment, instructors have the ability to embed comments in the criteria sections. The instructor had spent most of the prior weekend providing detailed, criterion-specific feedback for 18 students in the course. A few days later, she discovered that the comments were missing. Blackboard had recently introduced a new feature that enabled the restoration of any course to its status at a specific date/time.



With that knowledge, ODE staff submitted an urgent request to Blackboard Technical Support to restore the course (in a separate development shell) to the date/time the instructor had last seen her rubric comments. After several days of unsuccessful communications with Blackboard Technical Support (during which, ODE representatives had to repeat the same details and answer irrelevant questions), ODE was informed that they had to issue a **new** ticket, requesting restoration of the course. On 10/13, the ODE Director reached out directly to AUM's customer service representative, requesting immediate intervention in the matter. The course was finally restored on 10/13, however, the rubric

comments were still missing. Subsequent course restorations were requested, each to an earlier date/time instance in the course. However, the data was never recovered. Blackboard acknowledged this as a system “bug.” On October 18th, Blackboard closed the case, promising further investigation of the issue.

Case 3 – Test Settings Availability



On October 7th, ODE reached out to Blackboard Technical Support on behalf of an Instructor in a Counseling course. The instructor had imported weekly exams (and several other items) from an Original course into an Ultra course. When she went in to change the availability dates and visibility settings, she was unable to do so, receiving multiple error messages. In the ensuing weeks, Blackboard Technical Support followed a familiar pattern of miscommunication, asking questions that had already been answered, and suggesting solutions that were irrelevant, or had already

been tried. On October 20th, they acknowledged there was a known “bug.” All the weekly exams had to be re-created from scratch, including the restoration of the question pools that were used in the exams. To date, there remains no fix or resolution to this matter.

Case 4 – Peer Review

During the fall term of 2022, it was discovered that when the *Storyboards & Peer Review* option is selected for an assignment, students and instructors receive the error message “Sorry! Your name isn’t on the list.” The issue was first reported to Blackboard Technical Support on September 8th, and was not resolved until 11/24. Throughout this period the Peer Review feature remained unavailable. Interactions with Blackboard Technical Support followed a familiar pattern where support personnel were consistently to read and/or understanding information provided by the ODE team. This resulted in significant delays to identification of the issue, and its resolution. While Blackboard acknowledged the issue was caused by a “bug,” which they fixed in software release they applied in December 2022. The Peer Review feature is now available.



Case 5 – Student Course Access



In the spring of 2023, ODE began receiving reports from several students that they were suddenly unable to access Blackboard. Upon further investigation, it was discovered that their status had been changed to “unavailable.” These were seemingly random occurrences that could only be resolved by manually restoring their access using the Administrator Panel. At the height of this issue, ODE was receiving reports from approximately 10 students per day. On 1/10/2023, ODE staff reached out to Blackboard Technical Support, seeking to identify the causes and possible solutions

to the issue. As in many other cases, Blackboard Support did not thoroughly read the issue description, and sent instructions about how to turn on and off a user’s access in the Administrator Panel. Throughout the interactions with Blackboard Support, several details had to be repeated by ODE staff. While no cause or solution was identified, the intermittent problems gradually subsided. The concern is that, without an identified cause and solution, this issue could spontaneously return and prevent student access at critical moments in a course (i.e. during an exam).

Discussion

It is clear from their responses that a significant majority of faculty respondents did not have a good overall experience with Ultra (58%). In particular, they identified *Navigation, Gradebook, Grading Assignments, Course copying, and Changing the order of items* to be areas of concern. While most faculty were happy with the technical support they received (56%), they still remained unhappy about Ultra overall. By contrast, a slim majority of student respondents (40% versus 37%), reported being satisfied with Ultra. They were largely confident in their ability to successfully access and navigate Course Content, Assignments, Discussions, Grades, Tests, and Email. While faculty overestimated their students' level of dissatisfaction with Ultra (45% versus 37%), this is perhaps understandable, since they are the point of contact in a course, and therefore the first to be made aware of problems or issues students may encounter. It is certainly more likely that students with concerns or problems would report those issues to their instructor as compared to those with no concerns or problems. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that faculty would have received a disproportionate number of complaints about Ultra from their students, which would have shaped their perception of students' overall experiences.

Sample-size is also a relevant consideration. One hundred faculty participated in the survey. With a total of 333 faculty (224 full-time, 109 part-time), the faculty data represents a relatively large sample from which more valid inferences are possible. On the other hand, the 150 student responses came from a total student population of 3,969. It is reasonable to consider the possibility that inferences drawn from the student data may not be entirely valid, and therefore do not accurately reflect the larger population. A larger sample of the student population could confirm existing inferences, or result in significant modifications.

Another interpretation of the differences between faculty and student responses about their Ultra experience relates to differences between their respective tasks in Ultra. By comparison, student tasks are much simpler and easy to perform than faculty tasks, requiring far fewer steps and much less expertise. Furthermore, many of the tasks required of faculty in Ultra are entirely novel, with processes that have little similarity to the processes they followed in Blackboard Original. In other words, both the learning curve and the performance tasks were significantly higher for faculty. This means that students would be much more likely to learn and master the new task requirements in Ultra than faculty. This most certainly would have shaped students' overall perceptions of their experiences.

It is also possible that faculty responses were shaped by expectations and assumptions about their experience. Ultra is a learning management system that is built on the same core data framework as Blackboard Original. It is often characterized by Blackboard as more of an upgrade from Original, rather than an entirely new learning management system. This leads to the reasonable assumption that existing knowledge and skills required to conduct tasks in Blackboard Original will transfer to Ultra. Unfortunately, this is largely not the case, and faculty have had to develop an entirely new set of knowledge and skills in order to function in Ultra.

Another reasonable assumption drawn from characterizations by Blackboard is that Original's close relationship to Ultra would result in greater simplicity and reliability of course migration tasks. Again, this has not been confirmed by experience. Many of the frustrations experienced by faculty in the fall of 2022 centered on difficulties encountered when migrating course content from Original into Ultra.

The cases offered by ODE are illustrative of widespread and significant problems being experienced by faculty in all colleges. These cases have common characteristics:

1. They occur spontaneously, and frequently cannot be replicated by Blackboard Technical Support.
2. They center on course content that has been migrated to Ultra from Original.
3. They generally represent *core* functions of the Learning Management System (i.e. *Assessments, Enrollment, Data integrity*, etc.), which are fundamental to the overall stability of the system.

4. They are aggravated by chronic failures by Blackboard Technical Support representatives to understand, diagnose, and resolve matters in a timely fashion.

The frequency and severity of issues leaves users with the impression that Ultra is a brand-new product that was rushed into the marketplace before all the bugs were worked out. However, this is not the case. Ultra was released by Blackboard in 2015, and has been in production for nearly 8 years. It is reasonable to expect that during that time, most problem issues (especially ones relating to system stability and migration of content from Original), would have been identified and resolved. The fact that so many fundamental issues remain casts doubt on Blackboard's will and/or ability to address them in a timely fashion. Blackboard's performance in the past is the most reliable predictor for its performance in the future.

Recommendations

The combined experiences of stakeholders found in this report indicate an urgent need to further investigate and evaluate AUM's relationship with Ultra. It is the recommendation of the Office of Distance Education to AUM Academic Leadership that a representative task force be created to study and provide recommendations to stakeholders regarding this relationship. Suggested issues for this task force include:

1. Larger data sampling of students, in order to produce more statistically reliable inferences about student experiences.
2. Exploration of other LMS options, with particular focus on training, technical support, system stability, and course migration.
3. Widened investigation to include data and experiences from other Institutions.
4. More specific identification of tools and features wanted/needed by stakeholders, with a particular focus on tools and features that promote interaction and active learning.

The purpose of the task force is to provide a thorough, transparent, representative process, that results in a recommendation that the AUM community can embrace with confidence. The task force should endeavor to do its work swiftly and but also thoroughly, presenting its findings no later than late Spring 2023. The following is a recommended composition for the task force:

# of Members	Unit
1	College of Business
1	College of Education
1	College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences
1	College of Nursing & Health Sciences
1	College of Science
1	OLAT (Online Teaching Advisory Team)
1	Teaching Effectiveness Committee
5	Student representatives
2	Information Technology Services
3	Office of Distance Education
1	Financial Services
1	Registrar
1	Student Services
1	Library
1	Continuing Education
1	Institutional Effectiveness
23	TOTAL

It is hoped that this report, while imperfect and incomplete, would nonetheless initiate a more comprehensive study. The learning management system is a core platform for the delivery of technology-enhanced educational experiences. The decisions we make in this matter can enhance or impede the University's ability to achieve its mission of providing quality educational experiences to our constituents.

Appendix 1: Faculty Survey (p1)

Instructions

Please take a moment to carefully complete this survey. Your feedback is an essential part of our review of Blackboard Ultra! Please submit this form only once! For questions or concerns about this survey, contact ode@aum.edu. Thanks for your time and participation!

I am teaching an online course this term (please enter "yes" or "no")

Please indicate your College or Unit

For each statement in this section, please select the option on the scale that best reflects your experience with Blackboard Ultra. For any question, if you have not used a particular tool or feature, or if it is otherwise not relevant to your experience, just select N/A.

Overall, I am satisfied with Blackboard Ultra

Ultra has the tools & features I need

I find the user interface to be intuitive

I can easily create content

I can easily create Assignments

I can easily create Discussions

Appendix 1: Faculty Survey (p2)

I can easily copy content from other courses
<input type="text" value="Select or enter value"/>
I can easily set up my Gradebook
<input type="text" value="Select or enter value"/>
I can easily grade student work
<input type="text" value="Select or enter value"/>
I can easily post Announcements
<input type="text" value="Select or enter value"/>
I can easily email my students from Ultra
<input type="text" value="Select or enter value"/>
I can easily set and change due dates
<input type="text" value="Select or enter value"/>
I can easily change the order of items in a course
<input type="text" value="Select or enter value"/>
I am confident in my skills in using Ultra
<input type="text" value="Select or enter value"/>
I am satisfied with the tech support I've received
<input type="text" value="Select or enter value"/>
I've had the Ultra training I've needed
<input type="text" value="Select or enter value"/>
I've had the how-to guides I've needed
<input type="text" value="Select or enter value"/>
My students have had a good experience with Ultra
<input type="text" value="Select or enter value"/>

Appendix 1: Faculty Survey (p3)

<p>My students can easily navigate their course</p> <p>Select or enter value ▼</p>
<p>My students can easily submit Assignments</p> <p>Select or enter value ▼</p>
<p>My students can easily check their grades</p> <p>Select or enter value ▼</p>
<p>Please select each item you used that performed as expected, without problems</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Course copy/Copy content</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Content Creation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Overall Navigation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Release Conditions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Set Visibility</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gradebook</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tests</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assignments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Discussions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Announcements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Email</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Feedback</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Rubrics</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Groups</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Accommodations/Exceptions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>
<p>Please select each item that DID NOT perform as expected, or had problems</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Course copy/Copy content</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Content Creation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Overall Navigation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Release Conditions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Set Visibility</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gradebook</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tests</p>

Appendix 1: Faculty Survey (p4)

- ☐ Assignments
- ☐ Discussions
- ☐ Announcements
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Feedback
- ☐ Rubrics
- ☐ Groups
- ☐ Accommodations/Exceptions
- ☐ Other

Please describe your overall experience with Ultra this semester

Please provide any additional Comments

☐ Send me a copy of my responses

Appendix 2: Student Survey (p1)

Instructions

Your feedback is an essential part of our review of Blackboard Ultra!

Please submit this form only once!

For questions or concerns about this survey, contact ode@aum.edu.

Thanks for your time and participation!

I am taking an online course this term (please enter "yes" or "no") *

Please indicate the College(s) where you are taking courses this term or Unit

Please indicate your academic status

For each statement in this section, please select the option on the scale that best reflects your experience with Blackboard Ultra.

Please limit your responses to only those experiences with the Blackboard Ultra interface, not your general experience with the course or course content.

For any question, if you have not used a particular tool or feature, or if it is otherwise not relevant to your experience, just select N/A.

Overall, I am satisfied with Blackboard Ultra

I find the user interface to be intuitive

I can easily access course content

Appendix 2: Student Survey (p2)

I can easily submit Assignments
Select or enter value ▼
I can easily take tests in Ultra
Select or enter value ▼
I can easily post Discussions
Select or enter value ▼
I can easily access my Grades
Select or enter value ▼
I can easily use the email tool in Ultra
Select or enter value ▼
I PREFER to access my course(s) through:
<input type="checkbox"/> Desktop computer
<input type="checkbox"/> Laptop computer
<input type="checkbox"/> Smartphone
<input type="checkbox"/> Tablet
I USUALLY access my course(s) through
<input type="checkbox"/> Desktop computer
<input type="checkbox"/> Laptop computer
<input type="checkbox"/> Smartphone
<input type="checkbox"/> Tablet
I sought technical support for Ultra this semester
Select or enter value ▼
Please describe your overall experience with Ultra this semester

Appendix 2: Student Survey (p3)

Please provide any additional Comments

☐ Send me a copy of my responses

Appendix 3: Faculty Comments About Their Overall Ultra Experience

1. AUM and Blackboard has taken a simple system with outstanding flexibility and made it difficult for faculty members to efficiently manage their classes. While I understand the desire for a standard experience. All courses are not set up to be delivered in the format selected by our Blackboard Administrator. Historically, I was told by students I was one of the few faculty members who modified Blackboard's interface. Thus, in my opinion, we solved a problem that wasn't a problem.
2. I have been using ultra for over a year, so I know how to do everything that I need for my courses; however, I think ultra is a step backwards from original view.
3. a big "thumbs down"
4. Just ok..a learning experience.
5. I prefer the Original view. This is easier to work with. Ultra view has some nicer features but overall, the Original view requires less clicks for students and is easier to work with.
6. Very benign as I have only been an observer within another faculty member's course.
7. "Coming on board late and learning a new system simultaneously made teaching this semester very challenging. The previous version of Blackboard was much more intuitive in locating items and easier to manage content. Having multiple layers of folders with each having to be made visible to students (as the default) often resulted in missed release windows as I would often forget to make a folder visible, then having to make each file in the folder accessible. Having to opt out of hiding a file/folder makes it more difficult for instructors to add content during the course and ensure it is available to students. Being able to opt into hiding a file/folder was easier to manage under the old system as instructors knew they had to open a file, or knew it was available immediately upon adding during the course.
8. The ability to pull in content from third-party publishers did improve the course. The class roster was also useful, but became less so when the individual photos were removed. Having these student photos included made attendance tracking much easier.
9. Overall there were some beneficial features, but I feel the overall ease of use was decreased in Ultra from the earlier version. Having not yet transferred a course from semester to semester, I don't know how efficient this process will be. If it proves easier than the old method, that may make up for some of the other issues."
10. I had trouble moving content around. I wanted to move modules to the top of the list so that students could find them easier without having to scroll to the bottom, but I routinely would find that it was not in the correct place when I let go of the mouse button. This, however, may be operator related.
11. Though workable, Ultra is too often frustrating. I would argue for instructors Ultra is inferior to both Canvas and original BB.
12. I feel bad for our students whose tuition is now paying for the worst MLR I've experienced. Why do we not piggyback off of Auburn's Canvas? We only have 6k more students and faculty use AUaccess.
13. Frustrating
14. Not good, it is hard to navigate and is not a nice layout for students to follow
15. "I did not like it. Sometimes the due date wouldn't save. Grading things has been a pain, I have to open each student's individual grade book to grade assignments since it does not always say 'Need to Grade.' Also, it takes forever to copy course content."

16. Not pleasant. A lot more work than regular Blackboard.
17. "I am new to AUM and new to Ultra. I created my course by copy course content from an older course. Mostly, it has worked, however, there have been intermittent problems with tests that have ""hide by "" dates. I am unable to change the date, so cannot set a new due date.
18. I find the navigation to be a little tricky. The student preview does help me know that students see assignments, etc."
19. Ultra does not allow for faculty to be creative in their online teaching. It is merely a depository for information. You cannot scaffold and show/highlight information. It is all tucked in folders. The gradebook is missing useful features such as due dates/revised comments in attempts. Too many clicks to get to one feature. It seems as though if you hide something in content, it becomes hidden in the gradebook also. Still way too much clicking to get to what and where you need. The content area is drab. I can place all course information free on google classroom with more options.
20. Many features are the same but there are a few features (such as course copy and gradebook) that have been quite frustrating.
21. It was pretty good.
22. Once you get used to it it's fine.
23. I am getting better as I use the tools. I think I'm competent using ULTRA. It was a learning curve.
24. A rough start because I completed my training so early. I had a big "lag time" between my training and setting up my courses. I know this was my choice, but it was tricky getting started. At this point, no issues. We (students and I) worked our way through any issues, and we have had the support we have needed.
25. I love Bb Ultra's interface and how easy it is to create a course.
26. My experience was fine, overall.
27. Overall, I don't trust ultra to do anything more complex than tests, quizzes, and discussions. Those work, but as a whole, ultra has not improved over the original blackboard. Both are overcomplicated and require a lot of patience/time.
28. It has been a frustrating semester with Ultra. Everything is always hidden, whether I create it or copy it. My students struggled submitting their assignments and seeing their feedback (too many clicks). It is not intuitive at all for the students and that makes me feel terrible as a teacher. My students have enough to deal with than to worry if Blackboard is going to work for them.
29. Ultra is a disaster and makes me want to never teach online again.
30. Ultra has been a significant disappointment. Students have a difficult time navigating it, it is no longer intuitive.
31. There is a loss of some functionality, thus less useful to me. Overall, I am forced to use BB less than in previous courses. That means more time in class prep for me and the university is spending money to support an application that is used less by both faculty and students. I'm curious if some of the functionality was not purchased by AUM, this was not my experience at another institution.
32. Frustrating.
33. Highly unsatisfactory, especially considering this was supposed to be a post-Beta, bug free system. I spent far too many hours building, re-building, and correcting content in the Ultra system -- without compensation. This is NOT how LMS platforms should work, and when students tell me that they cannot see their work showing up in the

Gradebook, or I am unable to tell what entries are actually real drafts or just a sign the student 'opened' the link without submitting anything (it shows up as a submission either way), or I am unable easily see what needs to be graded (the new system is far less effective and intuitive), this is clearly a failed roll out.

34. "Overall, Ultra does what it needs to do, which is to provide students and faculty access to course content, assignments, and exams.

35. But, it has become more time-consuming to click through so many screens to get to where you need and during the clicking, the screen download time is delayed.

36. Also, on the students' end, the submit button on the lower bottom right many times is not seen (their laptop screens are too small, so they cannot see that they also need to click submit) and therefore they have saved content but not submitted, so I am unable to see or grade their saved content.

37. Many students have had the issue of opening an assignment and saving it, but not submitting it. Therefore, on my end, I was unable to view it.

38. Students have also been submitting 0 MB. This is because they did not click save within the assignment questions. So, I am having to go back and email each of these students to say they submitted blank content."

39. Ultra has made me appreciate the original version of Blackboard. I can see some of the benefits for classes that don't have a lot writing, but it lacks a lot of the benefits for writing intensive/ recursive learning courses. It really is not intuitive and students are missing out on key information that they cannot find and, in the case of announcements, may be pre-conditioned to close out of automatically.

40. This is cumbersome. I have to click several boxes to get it to do what I used to do in one!

41. I am not loving my Ultra experience this semester. The new version of Blackboard seems to have fewer benefits than the original version. In some ways, Ultra seems to be a beta version that still is not quite ready for prime time.

42. It is not easy to navigate. I am not please with using Ultra, I understand it is good for students to use their cellphones, but it is not a good tool in my opinion.

43. I hate to say but to compare with Canvas, I like Canvas much more. More video-user friendly for my sign language courses.

44. "Overall, I am about to end the semester feeling very frustrated. I felt there was a learning curve that went beyond any kind of normal adaptation to a new program that I will have to continue to adapt to next semester. As someone who enjoyed using technology for assignments, communication and grading in a face-to-face class, I am planning to use less technology, coordinate assignments into a single PDF and reduce the amount of interaction with ULTRA in my coursework over the Spring semester.

45. I am so glad that I told students on the first day that we were transitioning to a new platform and there would be a learning curve. I stated that I would be patient with them in the first few weeks as they learned to navigate ULTRA and asked for THEIR patience as I learned to utilize the new tools as well. Unfortunately, that period of adjustment has lasted far beyond the first few weeks."

46. Initially, it was okay and as positive as it could be expected since we were having to completely rebuild our courses. However, I am not sure if some features updated and changed or if I am growing weary of the constant changes, but I am growing increasingly frustrated. Also, I have tried to convey to the students that we may have issues this semester due to the new interface, but honestly, it makes me appear ill-prepared and incompetent because most of my students are transient. The transient students use different platforms at their university, so they are not aware of the AUM campus wide issue with Blackboard.

47. Frustrating. I've had to change a lot about how I grade, and I spend way too much time trying to retro-engineer functionalities that were easy to access in Learn. I also find it's functions uncaring to the students, especially the students who struggle to meet deadlines or achieve higher grades. I spend a lot of time working on student anxiety with students who have had bad experiences with the educational system, and I have a hard time building their confidence when the LMS seems dead set on tearing that confidence down.
48. Inefficient--online teaching is always more work, however Ultra increases this unnecessarily as detailed in the comments above. I read recently that worker productivity in the US has went down a good deal this year, and my first thought was that many people must be using Ultra or similar software.
49. "It was a bigger learning curve than I would have liked. I do not like that you can't show graphics in the same way as in regular blackboard.
50. I like images and use them a lot in my course. That has been a problem all semester."
51. Less frustrating than when I was using it in the previous semester for the first time, but there's little love lost. I'll have to convert an old class again next term, when I had an already built class and could start from scratch this term, so Ultra will definitely be back in the dog house with me then. The only improvement here is my own increasing familiarity with it. But, in this case, as in so many others, familiarity breeds contempt! I wish I could remember every little thing that bothers me, but they tend to be such basic oversights that I tend to forget them later until they decide to slap me in the face again. I've done my best here.
52. It was fine. I'm not sure of the value of the Ultra as our LMS, but that decision was made many years ago. I will never copy from BB original to Ultra; that's a recipe for disaster.
53. In general, the platform is usable but not perfect. It is still missing several features I liked to use in the original Blackboard course including the option of adding extra credit to exams. Students have generally appreciated the navigation and found it more intuitive, but it seems to have more frequent bugs than Blackboard original did which sometimes makes it difficult to work with.
54. It's buggy and in every way inferior to the old Blackboard.
55. I do not like Ultra. hard to navigate, unstable.
56. It was very stressful.
57. It was fine, but I wouldn't call it an "ultra" good experience.
58. What many professors may not be aware of, is that students go only to their assignment page to engage with Blackboard and never go to the CONTENT tab to see the folders set up for the course modules. Because of this behavior, many students are unaware of any Content actually being posted to the Module folders. We, as faculty, might want to examine the option of blocking the assignment view and forcing students to use the Module/Content view. This idea may need to be examined as there may be better options.
59. Thanks to the ODE for helping us.
60. Satisfied
61. Better than I expected. Now that my students and I are accustomed to the new configuration, I prefer Blackboard Ultra over original Blackboard.
62. "1st semester using BB Ultra.
63. I felt like the FDI training was good until I tried to implement.

64. Very dissatisfied with the slowness and frustrated that I have to go back several windows to get to an email address in order to communicate with the student.
65. I would like to better track student's accessing the various components, but I get lost in the sauce with what feels like additional steps that are not intuitive at all to me."
66. I need to preface my comments with I am open-minded and receptive to change. I have never disliked a product as much as I have Blackboard Ultra. Items go missing, the gradebook does not function, or items disappear, and the overall embedding of content is not user friendly at all.
67. "I cannot identify one person who is satisfied with this product this semester. Faculty do not trust it at all, students are blaming BB Ultra problems on the faculty which is inappropriate. Gradebook issues continue as grades are lost, not correct, etc.
68. At a time when we are looking to grow programs, gain reputation in the area, and increase transfer students/dual enrollment students--this LMS is now and will be a huge barrier for AUM to keep and gain enrollment and keeping faculty is a critical need. Without faculty we can't offer more classes. I have adjuncts refusing to teach for AUM because of BB Ultra."
69. Overall experience with Ultra has been horrible. Issues with items missing and having to spend more time in re uploading information has been frustrating. The system is not user friendly and the Gradebook is a major concern. Having to create multiple files to save information in case Ultra loses it is disheartening and as nursing faculty, we have enough to do without spending more time recreating. Additionally, faulting faculty when concerns are voiced about specific issues is counter productive.
70. Terrible
71. "Took a while to set up. Having to re-arrange items so that the content is in a folder in a manner that should facilitate learning.
72. The student is not on campus, so it can be a challenge for the student to figure out what is where and when it an item is due. Students in another time zone will actually see the incorrect date displayed. This can then result in a late submission."
73. I have created work arounds or learned how to avoid the problems that I know exist in Ultra. For example, I know that tests cannot be adjusted once created because it creates other issues when the test is given, so if I need to make a change, I just have to create another test. The main issues are that it takes much longer to create and revise courses in Ultra compared to previous versions and that it can create confusion for the students due to poor navigation and encountering technical issues.
74. Unhappy
75. It is a huge learning curb, and the online resources just aren't really efficient. There is always a need for a work around.
76. Overall good experience. Very good tech support. I had some issues with assigning weight to assignments. I also don't know how to copy rubric used into current course. Thanks.
77. "I do NOT like Blackboard Ultra. It is overall much more difficult to use than the original Blackboard.
78. I despise the way the Gradebook works. It took me forever to get part of it set up and I'm still not finished. Too many of the ""tools"" are hidden.

79. Also, I do NOT like the way that email works in Blackboard Ultra. I'd rather students be able to send email directly to my AUM email address instead of going through the message Center on Ultra."
80. I am not a fan of ultra and my studnets don't seem to like it either. It really doesn't seem ready for prime time. I have contact ODE about many of the issues and the answer is "Ultra needs to fix that".
81. I do not like using Ultra. I would like to go back to the other format. Ultra is missing so many tools and options that I relied on. I am teaching in the dark with Ultra and it's frustrating.
82. "Frustrating. Not good. There is not as much ability for the course instructor to tailor their blackboard page in Ultra. the gradebook is very difficult to work with, and some of the features are difficult to use unless all assignments are designed and ready to go at the beginning of the semester. This is very difficult to do in a dynamic teaching environment.
83. Sometimes we make mistakes - it is not possible to go back and correct, for example, points an assignment is worth, after the due date if the instructor has made an error."
84. Mediocre
85. It has been a huge headache. The students hate it. I hate it because on top of everything else I have to do, I have had to rebuild answer keys that won't copy over for some reason. If we were changing software platforms I could see it. But this is a product that should be optimally compatible with its predecessor. It did not help that the course developer for our college "left" in mid-semester. We have pretty much been left to figure things out among ourselves.
86. I would give it a 4 out of 10. With 10 being exceptional and 1 being not useable.
87. Overall, it was ok. It is frustrating when the next version of a product does away with really good features that previous version of the product possessed. Yes, the system may take a step forward in one area, but it takes a step back in another area.
88. Other than the mathematical function creator, I have had no difficulties with Ultra.
89. Ultra is okay at best. Canvas is better. Outside of Blackboard, I have no idea what we even offer besides Kultura.
90. Mostly frustrating. I do not have time to 'get trained' about a new system every two years. Why are we not using canvas? Canvas has been around for a while longer. I've use canvas before with no training and it was great!
91. Performed satisfactorily
92. Most things worked fine but when it did not work it was catastrophic.
93. It's been rocky, but ok.
94. Confusing
95. Not good.
96. It is bad and another platform should be chosen!

Appendix 4: Faculty Comments About Tools That Performed As Expected

1. "As opposed to other LMSs I've used the ability to enter a blanket accommodation is welcome."
2. "While these features work, they require more work and time to create that in original view. Many more mouse clicks are required to perform the same tasks."
3. "The Announcement feature is easy to use. Everything works, just not great from my end. Setting up activities and items takes a lot of clicks."
4. "Once I found the Discussions icon, all easy."
5. "I have experienced problems with most of the tools I have used in Ultra. I only clicked these boxes because I have not used these functions and cannot speak to whether they work or not."
6. "For the most part adequate."
7. "I would like more training if possible in the form of on line modules for content creation, discussions, etc. I may not use all of the tools each semester but it would be great to have a library of tutorials handy for the times I forget how to use something."
8. "Very easy to drill down into previous content to copy exactly what is needed for the new course."
9. "I am still learning."
10. "Overall I am extremely happy using Bb Ultra!"
11. "Email works fine."
12. "The basics (e.g., assignments, discussions, announcements) seem to work ok. Still a lot of clicking around and unnecessary complication, but they work as expected most of the time."
13. "They work, but they take too many clicks to set up and the way to set things up is not intuitive. I'm somewhat more used to it now, but the unintuitive design is terrible, and it means that I'm relearning some simple task that these are meant to do all of the time. Using Rubrics is especially more complicate than either or Blackboard or Turnitin--they simply are more difficult to copy and alter within the course. It's hard to remember that you need to click "view" to then make a copy of one that you intend to work with and change for a different assignment. It always wants you to start things from scratch, and I don't have the time for that. How Tests and Assignments are meant to be different from one another is also not always apparent."
14. "I like the simplicity of creating assignments, including adding text, and questions, and reusing questions. And it is simple to add the due date, points category, and Respondus to exams and SafeAssign requirements to docs and pdfs."
15. "The announcements and email elements are intuitive and easy to use. I like how you have the added element of 'post' before the announcement is sent. Therefore you can have your announcements cued up. I did notice that emailed announcements do not embed videos like they used to. It is now just a link. And any image you upload to an announcement doesn't show in the emailed version of the announcement."
16. "I like the message system in that it is easy to use. One drawback is if I message several students, it becomes a chat, and when they reply it goes to reply all. I'd like an option here to reply to all or just to one student."
17. "Exams are easy to create with the ""add questions"" or ""reuse questions"" feature. But I used to be able to ""select ""all"" questions and change the points to 1 and then all the questions would be all worth 1 point. But now I have to manually go through every question and enter how much it is worth. You have to manually enter the point for each question, click the screen and then click save. I'm not sure if you can change the order of questions in an exam, but this is a nice feature, if so."
18. "Overall, the course layout it is recommended that we follow now makes navigation easy for the students. I think the gradebook is easy for them to understand."
19. "One thing that worked very well was the ability to alter an individual's due date for assignments based on personal circumstances."
20. "I wish announcements had headlines but they worked as expected."

21. "Email is the only functionality that worked as expected."
22. "The announcement function seemed to work well. I like how they are located in Ultra. They look better than they did in the previous version of Bb."
23. "I also like that once you set an exception for a student due to his/her accommodation, it continues throughout the term."
24. "Creating the content seems to be less cumbersome."
25. "I had no problems with these tools. They worked as I expected them to, but I try to keep things basic so that they are less likely to fail."
26. "Accommodations and exceptions are much easier to apply compared to the previous version of Blackboard."
27. "Journals worked as expected, but some some reason it wouldn't let me set them as graded assignments with a due date on the first attempt. I always had to do it twice."
28. "I found it easier to copy content from another Blackboard Ultra course than from original Blackboard."
29. "I have had no feedback from students regarding their understanding of their grade via Blackboard. At midterms I emailed each student individually about their midterm grades."
30. "One possible problem is that Blackboard shows students the points they earned on the assignments they completed and then color codes those points. It does NOT show them the points they are missing from INCOMPLETE assignments--this situation may be giving students a false sense that their grade is alright (green, light-green, lime-green) because they performed well on completed assignments, but in fact they are doing poorly in the class because they are missing a lot of work. Please revisit this situation as well."
31. "All tools worked well. I have a little concern about re-opening of missed discussions."
32. "None"
33. "I do not teach online, but use Blackboard Ultra for my face-to-face classes. For the items that I use consistently I am satisfied with the usage. The tech support I receive when I am in need of help is very good. As I use and incorporate new areas of Blackboard Ultra into my classes, I will become more skillful and confident."
34. "I really only like the accommodations."
35. "Well, the email and announcements worked as expected."
36. "The tools work in very strict fashion. Flexibility can be bad but the pendulum has swung too far into the rigidity domain."
37. "It is very easy to copy course content from one semester to the next."
38. "I remember that copying my courses was not difficult before Fall semester, but I cannot tell you now how I did that at the beginning of the semester. I will have to look up how to do it again next semester."
39. "I would have to admit that adding content and posting announcements are the only two easy tasks for me to do using Blackboard Ultra."
40. "I can easily create content and post announcements. I am pretty displeased with gradbooks, rububrics, organizing content and more."
41. "The answers to the questions you asked may be misleading. For example let's take announcements. It is easy to create the announcement and set to email it or release at a certain time but it is not easy to put the assignments in a certain order. I like to set reminders for students to complete things before the term starts and then set them to show up at certain times then go away. It was easy to do this in traditional Bb but Ultra is annoying to use for this."
42. "Uploading course content was easy and fast"
43. "Overall navigation was overall simple once used a few times"

Appendix 5: Faculty Comments About Tools That Did Not Perform As Expected

1. "Insofar as content, I simply despise the week-by-week requirement -- I would much rather organize my content by topic/module/exam than by time.
2. Navigation on a phone might be nice for students (I've never accessed the system by phone), but I need to use a keyboard and mouse and expect that my students will have access to desktop software to complete assignments.
3. Setting visibility is tedious and requires that I set due dates and release conditions in two different areas of the LMS."
4. "Students have had trouble with these items and find them confusing or harder to use than original view.
5. It takes more effort and time to do everything in ultra view as compared to original view."
6. CC: Process is overly complicated and once you post adding or changing the structure is next to impossible.
7. GB: The setting for posting grades once the due date arrives needs to be changed. Students are distressed when zeros are posted in the gradebook once the deadline passes. I am not going to go in and manually override the score between the time it was posted and the time I grade the assignment. I also do not like how I have to click multiple times to post grades. This statement also goes for announcements.
8. AS: The option to collect assignments off-line needs to be changed. I didn't discover this feature until too late. During training this feature should be emphasized.
9. AN: I do not like having to click post twice to post an announcement. Too many times, I forgot and discovered my announcement was waiting for me to click post again.
10. EM: Outlook is the official channel for communicating with students. I do not want another channel that I have to check. I do not go into Blackboard on a daily basis and several times messages went unanswered for days because I was not looking for messages in Blackboard.
11. RU: The fact you cannot import from the old Blackboard is a pain in the rear. I wasted hours reentering my rubric into Blackboard.
12. GR: The group function is useless. The old system allowed students to exchange files, communicate, etc. I could never find how to change the parameters for groups."
13. Setup was not intuitive and often difficult to navigate. Release settings being layers deep for making visible for students often resulted in items not opening on time as expected. Students struggled to find items that were easy to access under standard Blackboard.
14. Much of the issues with Assignments and other functions is if I could find where that process is buried within Ultra. If I had never used other LMSs, I likely would not find so out of line with my intuition.
15. The gradebook is a mess. I have to go in and move around things, a challenge in itself since the move up/down arrow feature is not available in this version of Blackboard.
16. Messages is a pain! Would be so much better if there was a way to set up folders. It seems that all we can do is have a LONG list of messages in chronological order.
17. "When grading inline, the left side (where the assignment being graded is visible) refreshes every few seconds and typing comments to embed in the assignment, the overall text box, or into a rubric are constantly disrupted.
18. Ultra often freezes if a class window is open for more than a few minutes at a time. This happens on both my home and office computers.
19. The gradebook overall grade computation options are not flexible enough to fit my grading scheme."
20. I had a couple of assignments that would not let me modify instructions that had rolled forward. It would show it correctly when you clicked into the assignment but the preview would not update.
21. Glitchy, hard to use, not user friendly
22. "This version of Blackboard is much less user friendly and much more difficult to navigate and use.

23. Ultra means beyond, in a positive way. This Blackboard is in no way positively compared to the previous version. A more precise label would be Blackboard Dull. By intentionally falsely marketing this version is an exemplar example of gaslighting.
24. At AUM we are constantly asked to increase our responsibilities, including learning a new MLR system, without compensation of either time and effort or pay."
25. "It was very difficult to rearrange learning activities...
26. I wish that I could generate a product that lets me know the engagement that my students have with the courses; it was possible with the previous Blackboard platform."
27. I have attended the trainings however, It is very hard to navigate through BB Ultra. It is hard for me to find things and my students cannot find assignments and discussion boards easily. It is hard to find things and it does not have a nice layout
28. "set visibility needs to have an option where I can schedule when it becomes available visibility
29. I cannot go back into an assignment to add documents
30. It would be nice to have an option where ungraded assignments were not so hidden, I miss a lot of assignments and have to search for them
31. Needs to have an extra credit option"
32. "It would be nice to be able to manually submit a students grade if they hand it in. In the old blackboard there was a way to upload and make a note of this. I miss this one.
33. Thanks for you support. You guys have been great!"
34. Nothing performed as expected! Content, rubrics and tests did not copy over right. There is no way to connect announcements with assignments or content.
35. When copying over content, it Carrie's over the folder and the material within that folder but the folder will be empty with all of the content listed below it
36. Grading - I can't find a way to exempt grades in the gradebook.
37. "It looks like I can create an announcement and ADD a requirement to include an e mail. Would like a separate e mail option.
38. Students used the message option thinking I'd get an immediate e mail. This resulted in many messages from my students getting responses later than I would have preferred. This wasn't clear. Most of us (as instructors) don't check Blackboard messages NEARLY as frequently as we check e mail."
39. I will get once I keep doing it.
40. It is really complicated. I know how to use it but it is time consuming.
41. "One of my biggest complaint is that my students had a hard time submitting their assignments. It is not as intuitive. Students have lost their submissions, or thought they have submitted an assignment and it is a draft that I cannot see or grade.
42. I like to give my students a little bit of extra time to submit their work after the due date. However, at some point, I want the assignment to stop accepting submissions. The only way I can do that is restrict access through the release conditions. However, students cannot see their feedback at all when I do that.
43. Students have to go through too many steps to get their feedback. The grades are confusing to them if I decide to give or take points from the rubric score.
44. I always get an error message when I copy things, but it supposedly copies just fine. When I copy content, it is automatically hidden and I have to go change the visibility on individual items. That is time consuming and frustrating.
45. I had a weird thing happened with groups. I was trying to rearrange groups after I had assigned the groups to a discussion board. It showed up right on my end, but my student was still in the wrong group on her end. It kept resetting itself to original group settings.
46. When I have graded every student on an assignment, it still shows ""red"" because some students have not submitted an assignment and received a zero. It's not a problem, but an annoyance.

47. If I need to add a grade (like for in-class activity), it automatically picks a date and time. It alerts the students that something is missing.
48. My gradebook is not organized by the due date as it should be.
49. Navigation is just terrible. It is just a list of weekly folders, whereas I used to have access"
50. My courses did not copy over to Ultra well. I lost several videos. They disappeared. My course materials were scrambled during the copying to Ultra. I had to start over and do the courses over. I am afraid to copy over more courses in case they get scrambled and the videos disappear. I got an email that my courses copied successfully, but that clearly was not the case. I can't do the Grade Book, and I can't change the order, such as putting one video on top of the other. My students have complained several times that they have received zeros. I have not given them zeros and don't know why Blackboard Ultra is putting in failing grades when the students are doing well and submitting their work. I think that making materials visible to students should be the default. I put materials on Blackboard, but my students say they can't see them. I have no need to hide materials from my students.
51. Some tools I liked from the old blackboard are still not available with Ultra. Also, I have had problems creating, grading, and providing feedback using add-on tools like voicethread. Not with voicethread itself, but their integrations with ultra.
52. Copying portions from old courses to reuse is more complicated as is adapting older courses to Ultra. You can't add a rubric to an assignment that you've created a column for in the gradebook--you always have to have an attached assignment. What if it is an assignment that is completed entirely in class like a presentation!? I had to resort back to creating my own rubrics and emailing them to students for presentation assignments--I have had to do that in more than a decade! This is also a problem if you are running an online course and you have an assignment, like presentations scattered through out the term, that do not have the same deadline. It is a common type of assignment that the designers do not seem to have anticipated. Also, the VoiceThread integration has gotten worse than it was last semester--it could work with the gradebook much better than it does. Although we can still grade with points the gradebook often adds up the points that are available inaccurately and its color scheme scares students unnecessarily.
53. "Course copy was limited. Things that take a lot of time to redo, quizzes, didn't copy. Things that took little time, discussions, did.
54. Video lectures are time consuming as one cannot edit video in Ultra and must download it, edit it in another program, then upload it. Exhausting. We should be encouraging faculty to create video content when they deem it pedagogically effective. Ultra hinders this.
55. Tests/quizzes take a lot of time to redo. Cannot easily import questions but must retype each.
56. Grades require you to post them after you enter them; why?
57. Announcements require you to post them; why?
58. These posting requirements have caused me to think I've finished my work, only to realize later that I haven't. This is akin to requiring one to post an email or a text after one has hit send or enter. We're not dealing with nuclear missiles! Why such fail safes?
59. Email isn't available as an option. Messaging is OK but should be opt-out to email given that email is the official means of communication at AUM.
60. Students don't seem to see feedback--they must go find it and aren't aware it's there unless they ask the instructor. Why isn't it shown to them when they first look at the graded assessment in question? Feedback is a key form of interaction, assessment, and learning in courses. This is a big problem."
61. Navigation is more complicated than it used to be because everything is cluttered on one page. This overwhelms everyone's devices and causes lag. It was better when we could put content on separate pages. The old Blackboard was customizable and organized. Release conditions frequently love to change the date or time of release arbitrarily from what I input. The gradebook is a nightmare with almost no customization options or weighted columns or single student exemptions. Announcements take too long to send corresponding emails to

students when needed, sometimes days after the item is relevant. Moving items around where I want them is unnecessarily frustrating.

62. Ultra is clearly still in Beta test mode, as these elements that worked just fine in previous version of Blackboard were -- at best -- only marginally bug-free. I cannot copy rubrics from one Ultra course to the other, and cannot cleanly copy materials from older versions of Blackboard into Ultra without having to do hours of work to reorganize and restructure and revise. The gradebook is not intuitive, and in fact on numerous occasions during the semester changed my settings, created new settings (in the grading scheme) and created general and unnecessary anxiety among students as a result. The messaging and Announcement features were also unreliable. On any number of occasions, students informed me they did not receive a time-sensitive message or announcement right away, and on a number of occasions students told me it took more than 24 hours for them to receive the message through Blackboard. (This was not isolated to my courses; other instructors have reported the same experience.) Rubrics are impossibly difficult to construct and maintain, leading to many additional hours of instructor's time devoted to simply making sure the content was accurate or -- often -- rebuilt.
63. "Grading- it is time-consuming having to click through numerous popup sliding screens to finally get to the screen you need to grade a submitted assignment. And then do this again in reverse to get back to the grade book.
64. From the grade book, you have to click the assignment, wait, scroll through names (it is delayed), and wait, click on a name, wait, then the attempts are shown in a right popup screen, and then click the attempt, delay, and then finally you are brought to the screen where you can grade.
65. I could just set my assignment parameters to one attempt, but given the numerous student attempts with zero content submitted, I would have to go in again to each assignment and add attempts.
66. It would be nice to click directly from the grade book to the specific content you need to grade.
67. Will bonus points for an assignment that has zero points and is marked as undefined be added to the overall points? I have to go back and manually add up the points to make sure.
68. I do like the option to download submitted docs and pdfs so you can then print them out and grade them. Printing out and grading papers is much faster now than using the editor within Ultra to grade uploaded docs and pdfs.
69. The old Blackboard editor of docs seemed to be faster and easier to use.
70. The grade book column used to have a feature where you could mass message those students who have an assignment missing, or those below a certain grade. This option is gone. You could filter students' names based on name, grade, and from high to low, completed, and no submission. Now you can only filter the assignment column in the grade book as completed or no submission.
71. The rubrics are limiting given that they have a preset number of columns and rows (unless you import an old rubric).
72. When I grade using the rubric, it is time-consuming given each element is collapsible and it is delayed in viewing and clicking the points they earned. And it is a lot of scrolling through the rubric and clicking, then you have to go back to the previous screen to provide feedback. Not sure of the solution here. The older version's rubric was also cumbersome like this rubric.
73. Assignments, discussions, and exams used to have the option of a date parameter, such as when an assignment opens and closes. Now it's just the release conditions, which seem to not have as many options for showing and closing an assignment.
74. The old grade book main column would list both the assignment name along with the points or percentages. Now it just lists the assignment name. You have to click on the assignment to see the points.
75. I wish I could reorder the grade book item list within the grade book main page like in the old Blackboard menu setup. Not sure if you can do this.
76. Navigation and look of the website:

77. The profile image cannot be edited by the faculty.
78. I understand continuity with all AUM courses, but the syllabus and contact information should be in the top left menu ""front and center"" in addition to being in the Course Content scrolling column.
79. On the old Blackboard home page, I liked how we could edit the left menu and have a quick link to the syllabus, calendar, assignments, exams, and learning material. This could be done in addition to the course material scrolling column on the right.
80. Students complain of having to scroll a lot.
81. I think the course homepage aesthetic is not appealing to students, given it is just columns of text. I wish it looked more like a welcoming website, while still adhering to an AUM standard for ease of navigation for students."
82. "- Announcements appear as pop ups with limited information. Students have been conditioned to close out of pop ups automatically from years of internet use and do not read them fully. Students have a hard time finding the announcements again once closed and emailed announcements are not always timely.
83. - Feedback on essays is tricky to find and you CANNOT use an override grade with a rubric or it deletes the rubric feedback. It is difficult to navigate to this for my students.
84. - Grade center is not good with weighted grades. This has led to issues with overall grade posting and confusion.
85. - Rubrics must have point values (rubrics that only provide feedback were used for drafts, but I have had a hard time with Blackboard taking out the feedback/ clearing the rubric when I do overrides).
86. - Navigation/ lack of a menu is killing me and my students have to scroll for ages to find anything and will often miss the folder or module.
87. - Course copy does not really keep rubric formatting and will change names/ move items out of folders
88. - Submitting essay assignments is trickier as attaching the file has to go through the submission/ text box now over an add a file button
89. - Students must click and scroll to the point of frustration to find information.
90. - You cannot course link assignments from one folder to another (I used to add links to assignments that were due into weekly folders for ease of use).
91. - Grade center does not show new submissions/ have a needs grading column. When the automatic 0 is in place and you click post all it does not show new submissions."
92. I had many problems this semester with students not being able to view their test and discussions after I graded them because they were marked as no longer available. I make discussions and tests not visible after the due date because I want to encourage timely participation. However, when these elements are not visible, for some reason they disappear from the students' view in the gradebook, so not only do they not see their grade, but also cannot see my comments. I also had similar troubles when trying to make exceptions for students, to give them access to a test after the due date. The students could not see the test that I thought I had re-opened for them. I am still not completely clear why this happened, but the exception process is not intuitive at all. I also want spell check for all material that I post (content, posts, feedback, etc.)
93. "Copy content: The lag time in copying content is much greater than BB Learn, and rather than the course copy being from the class I'm copying (so I can send to multiple classes), I have to navigate to each class, which takes more time. Likewise, there are some glitches with assignments in course copy that are sometimes impossible to catch until students actually start using it.
94. Overall navigation: It's not intuitive. Some of the tools are at the top and some are at the side, and some of the links are in the folders. I much preferred BB Learn where everything was in the left-hand navigation. Also, when I try to reorder items (assignments in the gradebook, items in a folder), they jump around. That function is way too sensitive and makes me a bit seasick.
95. Set Visibility: I don't like that everything is set to hidden and I have to manually change it. That includes when I copy content and have to unhide everything. I'd rather make the decision to hide rather than unhide.

96. Gradebook: We have much less control over the gradebook. I finally figured out that I needed to uncheck the function to assign 0s automatically because otherwise it became impossible to exempt students from assignments. Literally the only way to truly exempt a grade is to delete the 0 (when BB Learn had an exempt function), but there are assignments where that's literally impossible. We also have much less control over creating columns. I used to create weighted columns where I could calculate another weighted column (like some writing process assignments) and an assignment (like a final draft), and then I could put all those columns in the weighted grade. Now I have to assign each assignment a category, and the grade calculation is much clunkier than BB Learn's. I could add a calculation to the gradebook, but that function is also much clunkier and complicated (like, creating actual math problems), and they don't work if I include a grade that hasn't been graded (like I have to do when a student is exempt).
97. I also absolutely hate the color-coding and how the system aggressively the system tells students that they're late on assignments. This goes beyond just assigning a 0: it asks the student if they want to submit late, which already makes them feel bad when it's a good thing that they're submitting an assignment at all. I can turn off the automatic 0s, but I can't turn that off. The grades are also color-coded in a very aggressive way, so that a B or a C can look worse than it actually is. If we can't turn that off on the teacher side, can students at least turn that off? I would feel terrible if I were treated that way by a system that's supposed to support my learning.
98. Email: Is there an email function? I can see their email addresses, and I can message them and have that message sent to their emails, but I cannot directly email them. I also hate messages, because the students use them instead of email, and I check my email more frequently.
99. Rubrics: I can't copy them from course to course, so I have to do everything manually. Again, more time-consuming than Learn.
100. Accommodations/Exceptions: It would be great if I could use this to exempt grades, or if I could give an exception on a single assignment. Instead, it looks like it's all student-specific, and it seems to just prevent some students from getting an automatic 0.
101. Assignments: The basic functionality is all right, the peer-review function in an assignment is just busted. It might work for one class, but not another, and I can't tell it's not working until it's too late, after which it makes it impossible for me to access the papers at all."
102. "The gradebook is BY FAR the most frustrating for me AND my students. Learning a new platform is one thing but the course total is not a real time running total so everyone has been failing the course according to that column. Finally I gave up and told students to tally assignments themselves and if they had questions we could get together over office hours and figure their current course grade. Student feedback said this inability to check on course grades was consistent from the majority of their professors, which validated my sense of frustration, but did not help to solve the issue. I did speak to my ODE rep about the challenge (who has always been available and as helpful as possible but so much of this I feel is simply the product challenges) but the tutorial video did not address how to tabulate the grade DURING the semester. All grades were calculated into the percentage before some assignments were due or even released. Admittedly I did not follow through after the videos due to aggravation and opted for the solution above.
103. Navigation is very challenging and neither intuitive nor easy to move content inside of the modules. Next semester I will reorganize based on past teaching experience rather than the suggested organization during the training sessions. Taking feedback from students I will return to the content organization that I used in old Blackboard.
104. Assignments were inconsistent whether uploading or creating and there were separate locations from release date and due date. Also early in the process there would be a loop from imported assignments with last semester's dates where I couldn't update the due date on an exam because it conflicts with the show date but then I couldn't update the show date in the other location because it conflicted with the due date. And then suddenly it would work but then get in the same loop with the next assignment. Or I'd just recreate the assignment from scratch.

105. Another frustration is that some grades immediately posted as a zero on due date when students had submitted material but there was not any time to grade them while other assignments required additional steps before they would post. The inconsistencies were extremely frustrating."
106. The visibility and release conditions are causing issues with my students not being able to access them in a timely manner and I have had to remove the conditions for several items in my course to ensure students could use it.
107. Very few tools worked as expected. It is not a matter of a different interface, some of the functionality has changed between Ultra and the original version. I do not have access to some of the functionality I used to use. Even with in-person classes, I am accustomed to using BB more, but with reduced functionality I have taken most of the course out of BB and in person. For example, in tests I used to be able to input line item feedback, now it is just feedback in general, not associated with any item. For this reason I have taken my quizzes and tests out of BB. Additionally, assignments submitted by students as Word documents are converted to PDFs, So I am not able to download, do track changes in word and send back to the student. This is a significant problem in teaching students how to improve their writing.
108. "Peer Review is a major component in my courses. The problems were never resolved by Blackboard, despite Rachel's efforts. This is NOT a critique of Rachel--it is a problem with Blackboard.
109. Additionally, the grade book was a continual source of frustration. Student grades were often not displaying correctly or posting to the students."
110. "The course copy is useless because the menu structure in Ultra is different than what we had in original. I have heard from so many colleagues who agreed with me that it was easier to just recreate the course than to try to ""fix"" the problems of a course copy.
111. The test pools were not importing correctly and we had to work through that.
112. Folks have had trouble adding columns to the gradebook."
113. There are so many features that do not provide detail as to what exactly they modify. Specifically, the visibility features for grades and exam. It is difficult to distinguish if the release conditions for exams is to be set from the content menu, from within the exam link itself, or from the gradebook. The gradebook shows that a grade has been posted from the professors side yet the student cannot access it, and I cannot identify the issue because all of the settings appear to not be restricting the students view. When you set the release conditions for an exam, you set a due date and an open and close date; however, you cannot change these once they are set due to some sort of program restriction. You have to remove the conditions completely and start all over. This feature did not seem to be an issue during the first half of the semester; however, I am having issues with the release of an exam to a student for a makeup and releasing the grades with this exam in particular. I have performed the same steps as previous exams. When I check the gradebook from the "student view", I cannot identify the issue with the exams posting. I cannot create activity logs for students like the previous Blackboard platform. The analysis feature only grossly identifies the students activity time. As an online only course, the detailed students activity reports was integral in assessing a student's activity within the course since we are not in a face-to-face interaction.
114. I found that copying content from Blackboard to Blackboard Ultra caused some things to not copy properly, but I was able to fix them with some editing.
115. My FDI 1000 training focused on developing an online course syllabus instead of giving me opportunities to use the tools in practice. This caused a lot of problems with grading because the gradebook functions very differently than before. I had to learn how the gradebook worked in the middle of the semester which was not ideal. I still don't know the extent to which grading an assignment changes the overall grade before the grades are posted. There were many unexpected problems with grading even though I made a diligent effort in FDI 1000. Discussions also appear and function very differently and I've received conflicting information about whether or not students can post first in a discussion. We also need students' pictures to appear on Blackboard. This allows instructors to make a more personal connection with students (online students you see on campus,

and students you have in-classroom). This is especially important at the beginning of the semester, which happens to be a crucial time for things like student motivation and retention. Things need to work at the beginning of the semester because first impressions are important.

116. "My assignments allows multiple uploads for students. I grade the last attempt, but anytime I check to see if all the students have been graded. It keeps saying that a lot of attempts need to be graded as it looks at the previous attempts.
117. This causes apprehension in me as I am never know if every student has been graded or I missed anyone. This was not an issue in the previous version of BB."
118. It's just a "clunky" system. I know it's supposed to be an improved version of Blackboard but it takes longer to grade (several steps to go through and don't forget to post!). I have used numerous LMS's over the years and this is by far the worst one I have used. It's not visually appealing, either!
119. It is difficult to determine in which level the new content is being created. It would be helpful if the different levels were color coded in some fashion. That way I can tell if I am creating an overarching folder, a subfolder, or an assignment or test within a folder. On a few occasions, objects ended up in the wrong place because the lines and Plus signs were all stacked on top of each other.
120. I am fac difficulty in re-opening discussions missed by some students.
121. I wish I could release my feedback right after my students submit assignments without having me grade them first. Older Blackboard could do this but Ultra Blackboard doesn't.
122. Course copy content from BB Ultra to BB Ultra did not always work as intended, resulting in having to recreate some of the assignments that got copied over because the ability to add content (add text, questions, etc) disappeared. Now this is because I was copying empty assignments over but in true original course I still had the option to add content but in the copied course I did not.
123. Grades automatically post before faculty are ready for grades to be seen by students. No confidence or trust in the the system . Unable to set up weighted columns for exams and other items used in course with total reliance on someone else setting up the gradebook, yet we are held accountable for the grade book. Items created in the content folders go missing. Students have complained information goes way, (PPTs, instructions) etc. Faculty have to spend more time re uploading information. Exam questions have been duplicated within exams even though original exam was correct. Multiple steps have to be utilized for voiceover PPTS to be accepted and multiple steps have to be used to load. During testing, not able to see students activity within the exam and when the exam is submitted without multiple clicks within the grade book. Ultra does not provide necessary question formatting for meeting the needs of the students in the nursing program in preparing for the NEXT GEN licensure certification exam, thus not meeting accreditation requirements. Work arounds are not acceptable in health care because they lead to patient safety concerns and poor outcomes.
124. "BB Ultra has been difficult to use from copying a course to setting up folders, modules, assignments, and grades. This product should not have been selected for AUM, there was no faculty input to move to BB Ultra.
125. ODE has gone above and beyond to help faculty but the issues are in the LMS. Issues that BB Ultra has had for some time and have not been fixed and the issues continue to hinder the teaching-learning enterprise at AUM."
126. Trying to administer tests was a nightmare! There were major malfunctions with Ultra during every exam.
127. "Students have to click multiple times to easily see feedback for a discussion. Sometimes the discussion comments do not execute to be visible.
128. You place an item in Ultra, then it is gone, then it reappears. This can create panic with the student who is submitting an item on the weekend or at night. This then means the student is calling my home (and they will find your number somehow) at a late hour, panicking over Ultra.

129. When items come and go and are ""ghosted,"" the grade book is confusing. You have half the class submitting work in one folder, and then the ghost folder appears (which they see and I don't see). Ultra is labor-intensive work. I use this extra time when I need to be researching new guidelines and revise the lectures."
130. In general, I have encountered numerous problems with the platform. I have experienced problems with course copy bringing over items I do not want it to, but also not bringing over items I have requested. Tests are extremely tedious to create, and once created if you make a change there will be technical issues when they are given. There is little differentiation of color or ordering systems in BB Ultra as in previous BB versions, which helped teachers and students navigate the courses. Ultra requires numerous clicks to navigate the course and items can get missed as a result of the increased clicking. Rubrics are difficult to work. There are times when items you have created disappear and cannot be found, and then sometimes reappear, or do not reappear at all.
131. "You all are aware of the issues we have had with the gradebook.
132. I feel the course copy with content is not effective. It seems to be an all or nothing feature. Meaning I cannot copy just one section."
133. "One of the worst issues is the navigation tool. This has been commented on repeatedly and does not seem to be something that is ever going to be addressed. Moving items in a course is a nightmare!! Things get put into areas or even worse never move to the new area.
134. Course copy is also horrible, the poor ODE designer has to constantly find tweaks to make it work. I spend more time on this than on upgrading my course!"
135. "So much here...
136. The course copy was a mess. I followed the how-to and it didn't copy things over the way I wanted them at all. My ODE rep had to fix it using a backway.
137. Content creation is so limited and boring. I want to include images and the files are not intuitive for students to know how to download them. I get a lot of questions about that.
138. Students complain about navigation. Not everything is in a list format! Sometimes we have things that come up every week and the list of folders gets too long.
139. Why do the grades disappear for students in the grade book when you make something not visible?! Why do I have to spend time creating extra columns in the grade book just so students can see their test score but not have access to take the exam after the deadline?
140. The grade book is overly complicated with multiple views and you can only do certain tasks in certain views. This is annoying and frustrating.
141. I don't want students messaging me on Blackboard. I should have a way to turn that off. I am not checking Blackboard all day every day. So, these messages are not addressed until I log in to Blackboard. I want my students to email me directly so I can address their issues right away.
142. Also, why can't I exempt grades in the grade book now? That's important for the organization of my grade book.
143. I can't run reports like I used to run for my online course. I want to see if students are accessing the course information without being forced to use Kaltura."
144. My exams and homework assignments were developed on Blackboard and copied over to BB Ultra. I used the fill-in-the-blank function in creating these tests. Students work statistics problems on their papers and then insert the correct answers into the test blanks. The biggest pain in the ass was that the course copy just randomly deletes the answer keys from certain test items. The answer keys then have to be rebuilt. As I type this, I am giving an exam in 8 minutes that has half of the answer key missing. For more complex problems, the rebuild takes a lot of time and effort. I have to look back at the answer key from a previous semester. With test, lab and homework assignments for two courses all built this way, I have been dealing with this all semester.
145. "Clunky" and "unfinished" or "not polished" is how I would describe virtually every tool in Blackboard. Blackboard has their own system and it does not necessarily align with how
146. "Email -> I don't know how to send email to my students

147. Content -> don't know how to create subfolders
148. Visibility-> Everything has to be visible. this is an extra step that I usually forget to do.
149. Gradebook-> can not sort by grade, or sort by assignments; can not 'excuse a grade'. All the labels that appear in the gradebook is distracting! and also I have to 'post' the grades.
150. Announcements-> can not put images in my announcement. I have to 'post' my announcement. extra unnecessary steps.
151. Email -> i can not sort and email students directly.
152. I am using mastering biology and the integration takes so many extra steps"
153. A default seems to be that the program enters automatic zero grades for certain things. A zero is a significant grade and should only be entered by an instructor. Also, there does not seem to be an easy way to exempt a grade from the overall grade calculation except to enter nothing. It would be more helpful to be able to record a grade (so the record is there) but then exempt it from final grade calculations. It is possible that these capabilities exist but I just do not know how to use them.
154. "*Not sure how to email individual students or small groups of students.
155. *I could not figure out how to make every single item in my course visible with one set of clicks. I had to go into each folder and make those items visible.
156. *I really, really wish I could set statistics data collection to videos that I drag and drop into my course. In other words, I can easily drag and drop videos into my course for students to watch, but I have to go through a much more lengthy and convoluted process (i.e. through Kaltura) to add those videos to my course in such a way that I can collect data (such as which students have watched them). In the previous version of Blackboard, Kaltura was necessary because it archived our videos, but we didn't need it to collect data. Now we have to use it for data collection."
157. The mathematical formula creator at times has not functioned as expected. This is a crucial need for science courses. Several times this semester, the mathematical function was working, then there was an upgrade and I had to re-do items on assignments or tests. I ended up creating mathematical formulas in Word and importing as images into the test platform. Since I use the mathematical formula creator in both assignments and tests, I have spent many hours fixing and re-fixing formula after upgrades.
158. Assignments are automatic graded as zero for all future assignments. 'Emails are not sent to students like Blackboard.
159. "Organizing the content material is extremely frustrating! Items ""jump around"" so fast that it makes repositioning them almost impossible.
160. Also, I use both MyMathLab and WebAssign for my math classes. It is not easy at all to get these websites to sync grades in Blackboard Ultra. I asked for help for the Gradebook, but had trouble getting help from ODE. My Pearson rep and Cengage rep were finally the people who were able to help me figure some of it out.
161. I went through the FDI course to ""learn"" the basics of Ultra, but that was not as helpful as I expected when it came down to actually using Ultra during the semester."
162. "Moving objects in BB is almost impossible.
163. There is no way to exempt a student from a grade
164. The colored grade pills are demoralizing
165. Setting up total and calculated grade columns is not intuitive, at all
166. Grading assignments when multiple submissions is confusing, why do I have to enter a grade for each submission in order for the assignment to be marked complete
167. Students can't see what group they are in
168. If I had an assignment, it disappears from the student's grade book.
169. When I copied material over, it automatically put due dates and 0's in for all students

170. Some of the assignments I copied over I have not be able to delete the plug in for turn it in doesn't function well and students can't figure out how to resubmit
171. Peer reviews don't seem to work correctly
172. Grading is clunky and takes way too many clicks
173. Course links don't exist
174. If a student messages me in BB, I don't get notified.
175. When grading, if you have a second page of names, you are not automatically sent to the next name, you have exit, page forward, then begin grading again.
176. I can't easily tell how many things I need to grade.
177. In grade book, you can't view a spreadsheet of student grades
178. BB assigns an A+, which we do not award"
179. "I had difficulty copying information and content from one course to another
180. The gradebook is extremely difficult to set up and I am not able to find a way to get a total for each individual student. I also dislike intensely the red/yellow/green color scheme"
181. "Many of these items require you to change things in multiple places to allow students to make up missed content and so forth. The gradebook shows some things as needing to be graded when I've graded and posted the grades. Group set up is a night mare and not flexible. Groups do NOT have good communication tools for the students.
182. For the ""Would you like someone from ODE to contact you about this issue"" - most of the time there isn't a good solution as Ultra requires ""work arounds"" or outside products. It is getting better but it sure wasn't ready for release. It is more of a Beta version of a software program than a release version."
183. Email to students did not work
184. I use rubrics and give written feedback in the comment boxes on all of my assignments. In one course, I spent many hours providing detailed feedback and rubric scores to students on an assignment. Within a few days, all of the rubric scores and feedback were all gone for that assignment, as well as several older assignments. I worked with ODE on this issue but Blackboard was unable to recover any of the data for my course. It was unclear to me if Blackboard even acknowledged that there was an issue that needs to be fixed.
185. Moving content around takes very fine motor skills.
186. Uploading a file
187. Gradebook was difficult to navigate. Difficult and confusing in creating new columns and categories.
188. Trouble syncing with the text publisher's ancillaries and Lab.
189. This platform is very difficult to use! It takes away time that could be used helping students
190. Mostly all! The old version was much more user friendly. The version changes things that I have changed and is a pain in the rear end. The students I have spoken to do not like it. Main campus, other local universities and some high schools use Canvas. Why did we switch??? Were focus groups used, both faculty and students? I waste more time with this blackboard then I should.

Appendix 6 – Student Comments About Their Overall Ultra Experience

1. BB Ultra has taken theory work off of the class before students can access it. Exams would freeze and not submit. It was frustrating but I liked the look of it.
2. Biggest issue was professors lack of understanding of the system. Many homeworks, assignments, exams, and discussions were oddly placed and sometime missed. Often, grades were not linked to blackboard, one would have to access every individual course program to see the grade. Syllabi were sometimes not written by the professor teaching the course, leading to further confusion about the grade. Overall, intuitive to me but not so with my professors.
3. Blackboard ultra was good but it crashed a lot and took forever to come back up
4. "I enjoy it overall. Really nothing change between the old blackboard and blackboard ultra however though.
5. The one thing I find disheartening and is one of my pet peeves is knowing what your grade is. Everyone in your all technician department needs to get their brains out of their technology geek butts. And think realistically and average human living. When I go to grades I want to see what my legit grades is and A or D but also the score as well; not a blank page.
6. Again other than this blackboard ultra is great and alright to me."
7. It was ok. There needed to be more training provided for both professors and students.
8. Before Ultra, there were no problems with blackboard. Now I've had a test freeze on me and not let me submit along with my entire class, at least 4 times.
9. Blackboard Ultra was hard for my professors to use this semester. I have several zeros for assignments that I have already turned in because my professors don't know how to properly submit grades. My first semester we used Blackboard and it was great for me but now it's a different version and I would like to go back to the original.
10. For some reason, one of my professors had a hard time posting my grades on BB where I could see them, and I think another professor complained about how things were set up in BB. When I searched the BB Ultra app into my phone through the google play store, the app was called BB learn, not BB Ultra.
11. I like the old blackboard better. several of my teachers have many issues with ultra not posting the assignments they put out for us so we have many delays in class because of this. When using lockdown browser i have to go in through blackboard first instead of just opening lockdown. I can never see my messages in blackboard when using a tablet/mobile device.
12. I miss blackboard
13. I prefer the original over the new
14. It was difficult learning how to use the new blackboard while also starting a new semester. We should have been able to learn how to use it before classes started.
15. It was laggy on mobile devices and was a bit difficult to navigate.
16. It was too much clicking and having to open the folders individually to get to the work. Also the automatic 0 makes you think that your grade has dropped in the class
17. I've had many issues with Ultra this semester. It has taken me a lot more steps to access everything than it usually does. I have a difficult time accessing the courses that I am currently taking, because it always opens up to next semesters courses. I also have trouble downloading assignments on the app. I've also had issues seeing my grades on

Ultra. It won't show my course grade for many of my courses, and it sometimes forgets to acknowledge some of the assignment grades.

18. Not a fan :/
19. not great, in my last school we used canvas, it was far easier to navigate.
20. Should be improved in terms of grades calculations
21. Slow and confusing. Teachers seemed to struggle on their end which added to the confusion on the student end.
22. THIS IS THE WORST THING IVE EVER USED IN MY LIFE.
23. Ultra had a lot of issues that made taking my courses and staying updated on my grades very difficult.
24. Ultra is just meh in my opinion. To be honest I like the old version of Blackboard best.
25. good
26. Good platform easy to use.
27. I have had a great experience with Ultra. Everything was easy to find and I was able to easily submit assignments. I also liked how announcements were also emailed, in case I am unaware of them being posted.
28. I haven't had any major problems other than getting used to the new format.
29. I liked it I had no problems all semester
30. I liked the old version on BB better but after adjusting to Ultra this was fine.
31. It was fine but more difficult for the professors
32. It was good the only problem was getting the lockdown browser to work through blackboard.
33. My experience was very smooth.
34. Seemed to work well. It served all my academic purposes
35. Very simple navigation and organization.
36. "Blackboard Ultra was not intuitive for my students. They had to perform too many clicks to get to my feedback on their assignments and to submit their assignments. Students thought they had submitted an assignment but it only save a draft.
37. Personally, I did not like that I could not organize my gradebook like the previous versions of Blackboard. I also did not like that I had to constantly change the visibility of every item that I created. It would have been better if it was defaulted to being available and have the option to hide it as I needed. The other way around was frustrating.
38. However, I did like the new group feature. I could randomly assign students to groups or do it manually. I like that I could assign groups to discussion boards and other activities within Blackboard. That was a huge help for peer review groups.
39. Another plus was that I was able to copy the content AND assignments between all of the courses. In the previous Blackboard, I was not able to copy assignments, which meant extra work for me."
40. NA

41. Honestly, I preferred the older blackboard much better. This was a lot harder to navigate and a lot harder to look at.
42. It was okay. Took me awhile to get use to it.
43. Good, app logs out and is not great though. Only useful for quick checks
44. Blackboard has given me a lot of issues with it crashing and not loading sometimes and it's is very complicated even for my teacher to submit work
45. Blackboard ultra is the worst thing I've ever used. It's deleted my assignments, prevented me from taking tests, and does not allow me to view my grades on anything other than a laptop. It has an awful interface (I can only open one thing at a time instead of multiple with the old blackboard) and has made this semester much more difficult.
46. Didn't like it
47. Dislike it the older version was much better than this one. Do not like it at all.
48. Doesn't allow me to see my grades and keep up with my progress.
49. For the amount of times that I have had to ask professors to fix something in blackboard just so it can be found, I am not incredibly happy with it. I feel as if the interface is difficult to edit, and our professors did not have adequate time to take this into consideration.
50. Horrible
51. I did not have a good experience , the new blackboard was very confusing and frustrating and hard to navigate through
52. I don't like it, I can't see my grades and late assignments are automatically f's
53. I feel as students when having to go through many steps to submit one assignment has many of our AUM students under a lot of stress.
54. "I find Ultra to be really unintuitive and clunky. Most professors are really struggling with it, which means there's usually a lot of confusion throughout the semester.
55. Blackboard Ultra generally doesn't work on mobile at all, which is frustrating when I need to check a discussion board reply or check my grade. It takes forever."
56. I have not used Blackboard in years (possibly 10 years). I found it to lack features that would be helpful such as a link to the university library without the professor having to post a link in the content portion. The calendar feature should be used for all assignments for the student to save time knowing when assignments are due.
57. I like the old blackboard, i cant even see all my grades in this new ultra version. Even most teachers do not like it
58. I think the interface is very cluttered. It is inefficient and takes longer than necessary to find things. The mobile app is not good. It's very slow and frustrating to use on my phone and iPad.
59. It has been a transition. I have had to learn the new format. I have had an instance where I submitted assignments, but the website did not register that I submitted them. My assignment was late as a result of this. Test UI is also clunky because I can't see the whole test simultaneously. I also almost accidentally submitted my test before completion several times.
60. It is hard to maneuver. There are a lot of different places assignments are posted and sometimes the information varies between those places.

61. It was harder to navigate. I encountered several problems with grades and assignments. I prefer the other blackboard over ultra.
62. It was horrible. Go back to what you were using before
63. It was okay but blackboard last year was way better and easier.
64. It's quite confusing and takes a while to get used to. Some professors have issues updating grades, receiving notifications if we've submitted them in the first place, and giving us assignment. I've also had issues finding coursework and the tab layout within the classes are odd and excessive at times, so it's been a task some days making sure I've accessed everything needed for the course. Some days I will have missed assignments because I had to go through hoops to find them. It's not absolutely awful, but it's definitely more complicated than the original BB that we've been using for the last few years. I'm not a huge fan of the change, but there are some features that are nice and it looks much smoother. It's definitely an adjustment though.
65. "List of issues with Ultra this semester (as a fully online undergrad student, taking a variety of courses including major courses, lab, and foreign language):
66. We need to be able to print documents without having to download them. It's stupid and wastes desktop space
67. Teachers need to have a way to stop the auto zero for courses where there is no submission. Sometimes we submit assignments as a group (where one person sends it and the others don't), or they've offered a submission extension, or Blackboard is having an aneurysm about the due date (as with what happened on my ASL final: the due date was clearly listed in Blackboard's assignment link as 12/05/22 @ 1:59 AM CST, and yet it put in a zero for me before the day was over and it looks like I'm failing the course). I submitted a screenshot to the prof. showing the due date/time to prove I wasn't late, but the heart attack of seeing an ""F"" on your grade book constantly is unnerving and should have a workaround.
68. Blackboard absolutely sucks on a phone. Most of us check our grades pretty constantly, and if we don't have access to a desktop or laptop then good luck trying to get in. The site crashes and does not load the content or Turnitin properly if you're trying to view an essay, and is overall just a bad interface for 2022.
69. The new subsections are not user friendly. I dislike having to search through tabs for content when it used to all be open under the week. Some may find it more organized to have it sorted, but I think having the material sorted logically under the header tab rather than tucking it into folders was better."
70. Mobile is garbage, it doesn't load, it doesn't notify & I can't walk around with my laptop open all day
71. My experience with ultra this semester was not only bad for me but also bad for the professors. Blackboard is very difficult for the professors to use because it won't let them change anything especially grades. I like it how it was before it was changed to Ultra because it made things more easier for everybody
72. Some formatting of the quizzes on my iPad limited my view of tools compared to when I view things on my laptop.
73. Terrible switch to canvas
74. Ultra has been challenging for me and my fellow students and my professors who have struggled to upload and retrieve things from it. It appears that every time we get used to anything with the school's website or blackboard, it changes.
75. When I am looking at pdfs that my teachers have uploaded it only lets me scroll down the page as far before it takes me all the way back to the top and have to start over again

76. "Whenever I zoom in on assignment the page always refresh, so I can't zoom in.
77. Sometimes submitting assignments the pages closes out and never submits, caused me to miss a couple assignments."
78. An overall good experience.
79. Blackboard is a lot easier to use than last year. I have had no problems or issues at all.
80. Blackboard Ultra was very easy to manage and get around on. It was easy to find things such as discussions, grades, courses, etc. I enjoyed using Blackboard Ultra and have not had any issues.
81. Good
82. Good
83. Havent had any as far as i know
84. I honestly think that blackboard ultra is a good source for schooling it was very easy for me to maneuver and access everything i needed for my classes.
85. I really enjoyed being able to use Ultra. It was easy to use, easy to navigate, and made my final semester at AUM enjoyable.
86. I think it's mostly the same as regular blackboard, my experience has been mostly satisfactory.
87. I thought it was easy to navigate through
88. It has been pretty easy to work my way around. The only issue I have had is when I submit ny assignments, it says they are late when they are not. But overall it has been a good experience
89. It was about the same as the other type of blackboard. The only difference was how the lectures printed in a pdf file. I prefer the way lectures printed before, because it made the print bigger and easier to read.
90. It was ok but other students and i can agree that switching to canvas would be so much better.
91. its an awesome new upgradwe grom the last blackboard.
92. Its been great it much easier with submitting assignments.
93. No issues with the program itself, I think professors struggled more than students did.
94. Overall experience was really good
95. Overall on my laptop it was great. My smart phone not as great as the layout is not user friendly. However, it is great for checking my grade status.
96. That was cool using ultra and its very reliable and we can access very easily.
97. Ultra was a good program to use. I had no problems with it.