April, 2003 - Robert Koch and Kevin Leeds, Accountancy

Several faculty members in the Department of Accountancy are currently using "Blackboard" as a communication tool that has changed the traditional accounting classes. Communication is a vital aspect of teaching, and the Blackboard program is being utilized to maximize the communication. Course syllabi are posted in Blackboard as are homework assignments for entire courses. Announcements of quizzes, current event topics, changes or additions to the planned class contents are instantly posted and available.

Class time can now be spent using problems as models to study in depth the topic at hand. Previously, time was consumed placing problems on the chalkboard. To place a problem on the chalkboard used valuable time, sometimes as long as 15 to 20 minutes; and, of course, students spent their time copying the problem, and half listening to the important details of the problem solution. The alternative was to supply students with handouts and then discuss the problem; however, because the solution was in hand, students' attention spans decreased. These same problems are now projected in class on screen, students must follow the lecture, then after class the problems are available in Blackboard for a limited time (generally 6 days). Using this technique students now have to download the class example, follow through on what was lectured, and then complete the assigned homework.

All homework is prepared on Microsoft Excel, or a general ledger program package. The homework is saved in a file in the student's personal computer or on a portable disk. The file is then sent via a digital drop box in Blackboard to the professor. The exact date and time the homework or project was submitted is attached to the file when received. No longer can the student claim to have submitted the homework previously. Timely submission is a matter of record.

Timely news events and articles are displayed in full or reference to their location is posted in Blackboard. Students are responsible for all items posted and therefore visit Blackboard for new material, as they would log in to their e-mail.