## The Blackboard Message Function

Blackboard offers several ways to communicate with your students.

### Send Email

We, at MATC, have been using this feature in Blackboard for a number of years. This feature allows both faculty and students to send email to other members of the class. The send email function transfers the email to MATC’s email server to be sent to the recipient. Blackboard does not have a way to send the email without going through MATC’s server. Email arrives at the recipients regular email account. Students and faculty must check their email accounts to read the email but they only need to check this one spot for email from all their classes. Dealing with this email, though, may be complicated by the SPAM in the person’s mailbox. (To those who asked: No students can not see other student’s email addresses unless that student has gone into their privacy settings in Blackboard an allowed their email address to show on the roster.)

### Blackboard Messages

NEW for MATC, this feature is a message system that is internal to the specific Blackboard class. Faculty and students can send messages to anyone else in the class. Each person in the class has an inbox and a sent folder. To receive these messages, the user must enter that specific Blackboard class and go to the message section. If a faculty member (or student) has 4 classes s/he will have to enter each class to check for new messages. However, since this message system never leaves the class there is no chance for SPAM and the history of messages is saved with the class when it is archived.

### To allow or disallow use of a tool in your class

Use of a tool such as the Send Email or Blackboard Message function can be turned off or on for your specific class.

Go into your class – Control Panel – Manage Tools – Tool Availability – Make sure the check box for messages and/or Email is checked if you want to allow use of the function or unchecked if you don’t want to allow use of the function in your class.

To use the Message Function in your class you’ll need to create a button to allow easy access to the message function. We are suggesting that faculty use the title Course Messages for this button for consistent support with students.

Go into your class – Control Panel – Manage Course Menu – Add Tool Link – from the Type drop-down list choose Messages – In the Name textbox type Course Messages – press Submit – click OK – click OK
To send a message

Go into the specific course in which you want to send the message.

Click the Course Messages button in your course.

Click the New Message icon.

The Compose Message screen comes up.

Click the To button.

Select (highlight) a name on the left and click the right pointing triangle to add that person to the recipients. (I have not found a select all yet.)

When finished adding recipients click Submit.
1. Type a subject for your message.

2. Type the body of the message. Use the build in spell check, math equation editor, and other formatting tools.

3. Scroll down and add an attachment if you want.

4. Then press submit.

If you want to check to make sure your message was sent, click on the sent folder and you will see a screen like this:

If the envelope next for the message is closed you did not read it and if it is open you already opened the message.

To read a message:

Go to the proper class
Click on the Course Messages button
Click on your Inbox
Click on the underlined subject of the message.
You can now start a new message, reply to this one, reply to all recipients of this message, forward this message, remove this message or print it.

If you need to attach a file you MUST start a new message.

As with email you will only be able to see messages sent to and from you.

Once you have finished typing your answer click submit.

Then click OK.

*Use of the Message function like the Send Email function has good and bad points. The choice to use either, both or neither in your class is up to you.*