Update on system navigation changes in Blackboard.

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UPDATE ON SYSTEM NAVIGATION CHANGES IN BLACKBOARD. 1

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Introduction

These enhancements are designed to help you find what you need faster, reduce clicks, and make every interaction—whether managing courses, grading, or configuring settings—simpler and more efficient. With the first wave of these changes planned to be released as part of the December Test/Stage and then subsequent January release, this article outlines what to expect, why these changes are being made, and how Anthology will support institutions with this change

Why the Change?

After gathering feedback from faculty, administrators, and students, we have implemented several focused improvements to address common usability challenges:

- **Better use of screen space**: The new layout avoids stacked panels that previously reduced content visibility.
- **Fewer navigation errors**: The “Exit (X)” button was prone to accidental clicks—removing the prominent X to leave a course, means users will need to action an exit, rather than accidentally clicking this.
- **Improved performance**: The work to change from panels to pages aims to give a quicker page load for content as we will no longer be layering panels over the top of each other.

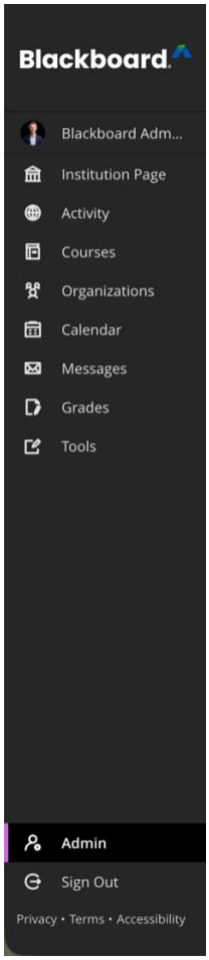
- **Clearer context**: Simplified URLs and layout help users stay oriented to where they are in the course.
- **Reduced motion issues**: Removing panels and going to a full-page view will mean less jarring panel loading over the top of each other with a more seamless navigation experience.

What do these changes look like?

Modernized Base Navigation

Minimal but meaningful updates:

- A cleaner layout - Allowing clear access to the main tabs on the navigation with less clutter.
- User profile now sits at the top of the navigation tabs, complete with profile image. This allows you to see and customize your identity more clearly in Blackboard.
- Admin access and Sign Out have moved to the bottom of the panel - Separating this from the other tab actions to make it clearer to access.
- Admins can now access base navigation directly from the admin panel—streamlining workflow transitions from the backend to the front end.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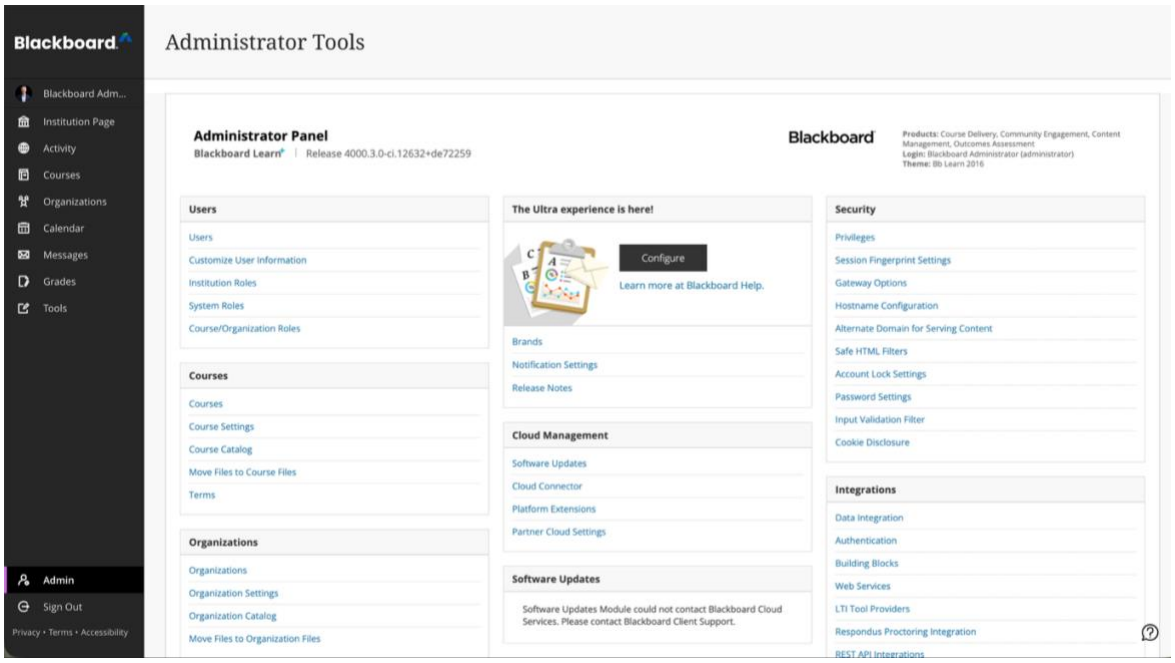
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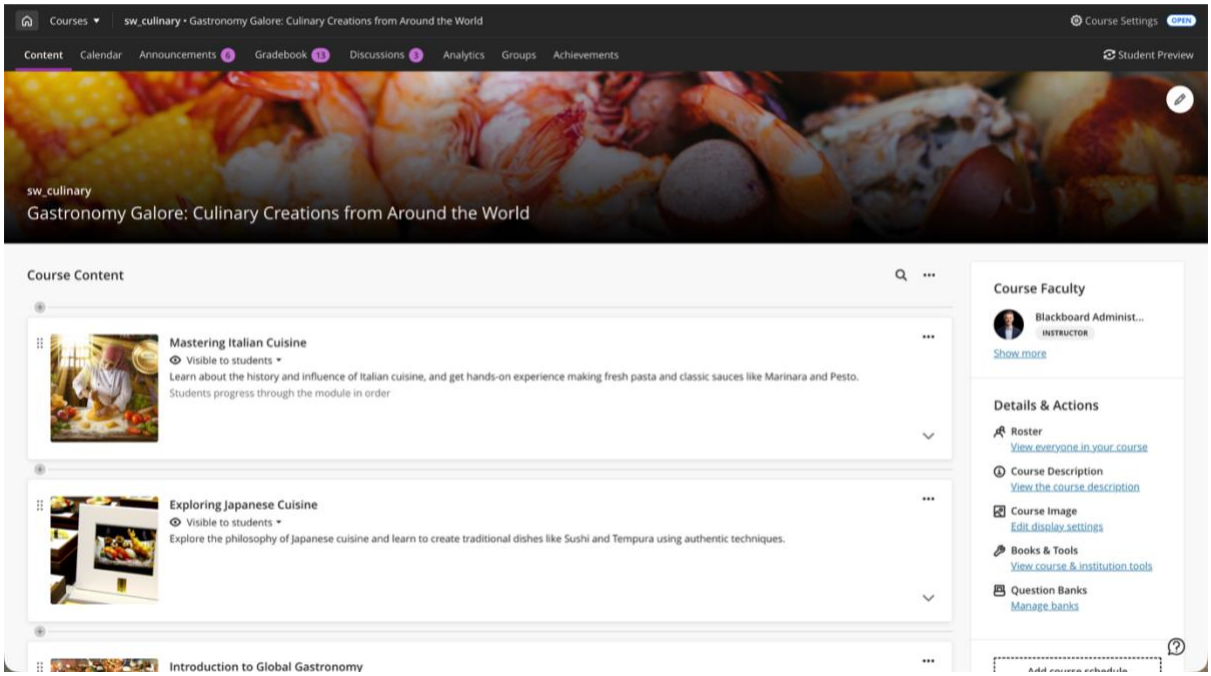
Password Settings
Input Validation Filter
Cookie Disclosure
Integrations
Data Integration
Authentication
Building Blocks
Web Services
LTI Tool Providers
Respondus Proctoring Integration
REST API Integrations

Full screen pages for top level panels

Courses now open in full-screen mode, maximizing horizontal space and reducing visual clutter. For this first wave of UX improvements to the System Navigation, this applies to top-level panels only (Course Content Homepage, Calendar, Announcements, Discussions, Gradebook, Analytics, Groups, and Achievements), with secondary panels to follow in future updates.

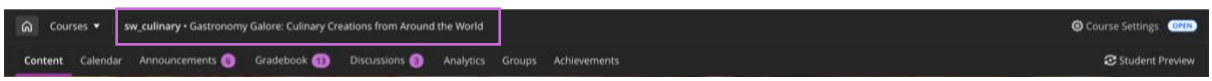


Full width banner

The course banner now spans the full width of the screen, with the course ID and title overlaid—freeing up vertical space and improving contextual clarity. The text sits on top of a darker background, keeping color contrast top of mind.

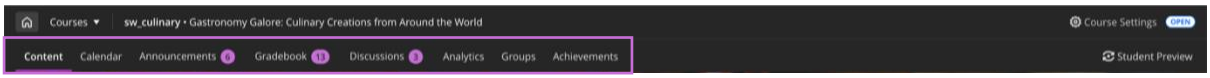
Course ID and Title in the header

The course ID and title will be displayed in the header bar, To improve clarity of the context of the course that users are in.



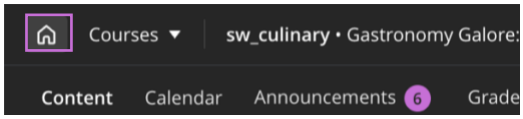
New course menu – with branding colors

The new course menu reflects your institution's branding, pulling highlight colors and notification styles from your theme settings. If you already had your brand colors set today, these would already have been present in the base navigation. These changes will now also be applied to the top-level navigation bar as part of the first release – allowing further brand color prominence in the course.

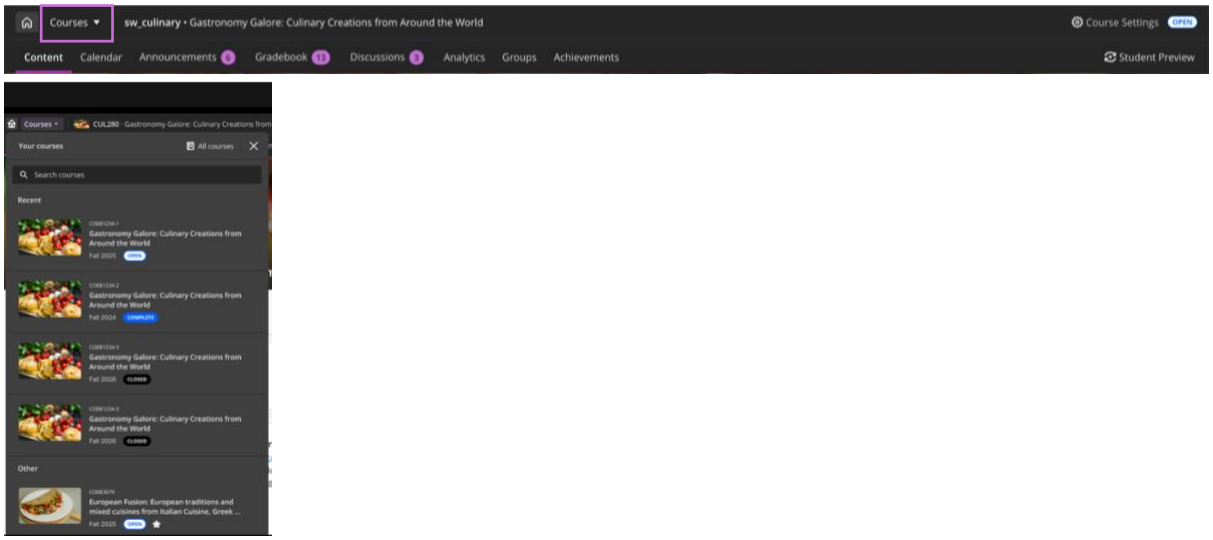


Home button to leave course

The traditional "X" to exit a course has been replaced with a **Home button**, which returns users to the institution-defined landing page (e.g., Activity Stream, Institution page or Courses page). The "X" remains for lower-level panels like learning modules—for now - Moving the lower-level panels to pages is part of the second wave of improvements to system navigation that you'll see later on in 2026.



Course switcher

NOTE - This is still in active development so the finished version may look slightly differently to what you see below.

A new **Course Switcher**! In response to your feedback in wanting to have a more streamlined navigation experience between courses, this will allow users to quickly jump between recent and other courses straight from the course, with search functionality and a direct link to the full Courses page. In line with ongoing feedback and insight from users, more enhancements are planned for future releases.