What are Blackboard Communities?
Blackboard Communities are online environments for formal and informal organizations and clubs at the university. When a department or a center wants to use Blackboard for purposes that are not course-related, it can request a Blackboard Community. Communities have the same features for presenting information and communicating with other users that are found in academic courses and they are also managed in a similar way.

Requesting a Blackboard Community
1. Blackboard Communities can be requested through the Forms page of the Division of Information Technology (DoIT) at ssl.niu.edu/app/itsforms/
2. Click Computing Access Resources (CAR)
3. From the drop-down menu on the following page, select Faculty/Staff Account
4. Select Blackboard and click the Continue button
5. On the following page, select Community Request and click the Continue button
6. Then select New Community and click the Continue button
7. On the next page, fill in or select the various options and complete the process as directed

Accessing a Blackboard Community
1. Log in to Blackboard at webcourses.niu.edu
2. Click the Community tab located near the top of the page
3. The Communities that the user is enrolled in appears under My Organizations — to enter a particular Community, click the relevant link

Remember!
1. Blackboard Communities are free
2. Blackboard Communities can include individuals outside of NIU, but you must request affiliate accounts for each person
3. Blackboard Communities should not be used for any external (outside NIU) commercial activities
4. Blackboard Communities can also make use of tools such as Assessments, Discussion Boards, Wikis, Blogs, and Groups

For more information, visit niu.edu/blackboard/communities

Teaching with Blackboard: www.niu.edu/blackboard
Enrolling Users

1. After accessing your Community, from the Control Panel, click Users and Groups
2. Select Users
3. On the adjacent page, click the Find Users to Enroll button
4. On the Add Enrollments page, if the Username of the user is known, enter it in the textbox (Z- or A-ID) and click Submit; otherwise, click Browse
5. If you clicked Browse, search for users by Username, First Name, Last Name, or NIU Email and click Go
6. Click the Submit button if user was located
7. On the Add Enrollments page, select the appropriate Role
8. Click the Submit button

Modifying Status of Users

1. After accessing your Community, from the Control Panel, click Users and Groups
2. Select Users
3. To change the status of a user in the Community, click the action link next to the Username of the user
4. From the drop-down menu, select Change User’s Role in Organization
5. On the following page, for Role select the appropriate choice (see below for more information about Roles)
6. Click the Submit button

User Roles

There are a variety of user roles within a Blackboard Community, including:

- **Organization Builder**— Has access to most areas within a Community, including the Control Panel, however, no access to participant grades or the Grade Center.
- **Grader**— Has limited access the Control Panel, but can assist with the creation, management, delivery, and grading of assessments and surveys within a Community.
- **Leader**— Has access to all areas within the Community. This role is generally given to those developing, teaching or facilitating the Community and is comparable to the role of Instructor.
- **Participant**— Has no access to the Control Panel, and is the default role within a Community. This role can be compared to the role of Student in a Blackboard Course.
- **Assistant**— Has full access to the Control Panel, but is not listed in the Community Catalog as a Leader. Can also manage (add, change, delete) membership of the organization.