

Online Learning Policy and Procedure Manual

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CALUMET COLLEGE OF ST. JOSEPH ONLINE LEARNING POLICY
AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

Introduction

Calumet College of St. Joseph is a Catholic institution of higher learning dedicated to the academic, spiritual, and ethical development of undergraduate and graduate students. Informed by the values of its founding religious community, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood (C.P.P.S.), the College promotes the inherent dignity of all people, social justice, an ethic of service, student empowerment, opportunity, and lifelong learning. Online learning has the potential to help CCSJ strengthen that mission through distance education and e-learning. Making more courses at CCSJ available in an online format means building more bridges into the community, making the College's coursework more accessible to the student body, and making CCSJ a more viable alternative to prospective students. This manual explains the policies and procedures which will be used in the process of offering and completing online coursework and is written in accord with the Higher Learning Commission's standards and previously existing CCSJ policies.

Purpose

CCSJ plans on growing online course offerings to provide educational opportunities to as many people as possible. With the proper policies and procedures in place the College can offer the same quality experience students receive in the traditional classroom online, to a wider audience that benefits from the flexibility online learning provides.

Definitions

In this manual "online learning" courses are considered Blackboard-based (or other Learning Management System-based) offerings of courses that can also be offered face-to-face. These courses can be offered fully online, with no on-campus meetings, or in a hybrid format with face-to-face meetings combined with online coursework. The mode of instruction should be explicitly noted on the course schedule.

Best Practices

The policies and procedures put forward here stem from research-based best practices. CCSJ is committed to providing the same quality curriculum online as it does face-to-face. Further reading on the research and standards used to develop these policies is available in **Appendix 1**.

CCSJ's Commitment

CCSJ is committed to building and maintaining administrative policies and procedures that allow for online learning with an effective and efficient infrastructure, with resources allocated for the benefit of faculty and students.

General Policies

Whenever possible, the policies and procedures surrounding online learning at CCSJ will reflect the mechanisms of traditional face-to-face coursework. However, there will be areas of operation requiring a unique approach for online vs. traditional formats. This manual attempts to clarify those unique situations and also point out where the same policies/procedures can be upheld for both online and face-to-face courses.

Academic Compliance

All online learning courses are conducted in accordance with the established policies and procedures of CCSJ as outlined in the current editions of the CCSJ College Catalog, the Faculty Handbook, and the Student Handbook. This includes compliance with all relevant Higher Learning Commission (HLC) criteria.

The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), oversees academic review procedures and provides documentation of compliance with various criteria for appropriate accrediting, certifying, and sanctioning bodies. The VPAA's office maintains current copies of criteria and guidelines for these agencies to assist CCSJ's faculty in developing programs that satisfy the relevant standards.

Planning Process

The College carefully reviews the student body's scheduling needs and the appropriateness of course content when selecting courses for an online format. Faculty, in consultation with their department colleagues and the VPAA's office, may propose courses for an online format.

Academic Calendar

Both fully online and hybrid formats will follow the traditional academic calendar dates and can be modified to fit the late-start schedule as well. The refund cut-off dates (as stipulated by the Office of Financial Aid) will remain the same.

Course Integrity

The same standards for admissions, repetition of courses, approving incompletes, grading, earning credits, and degree completion apply to online learning as face-to-face courses. The course goals, learning objectives, skills, and competencies are the same for online courses as they are for the same course face-to-face. Additionally, faculty will apply the same standards to coursework and grading for online courses and face-to-face, and students should expect to put forth a commensurate level of effort online as in face-to-face.

Course Ownership

Ownership of online courses will be in compliance with the College's intellectual property and copyright policy as stipulated by the Faculty Handbook.

Grievance Procedures

Resolution of disputes regarding academic matters originating from an online course will follow the same grievance procedures as those in the face-to-face format.

Financial Aid

Students taking online courses for credit at CCSJ must meet the same eligibility requirements for financial aid as those taking face-to-face courses. Financial Aid recipients must demonstrate the same satisfactory academic progress in online courses as in face-to-face. After having received aid, withdrawing from an online course has the same negative consequences to a student's aid package as withdrawing from a face-to-face course.

Future Online Policy Changes

The Faculty Affairs Committee will review any future online policy changes and share these changes with the College's Faculty Senate.

Roles, Rights and Responsibilities

A successful teaching and learning experience depends on all parties participating and meeting their responsibilities. Administrators, faculty, and students each have a role to play in maintaining a high-quality educational experience, including the unique responsibilities of offering courses in an online setting. The following section establishes what each participant in online learning is responsible for, and their rights in the process.

College Administration

With this manual, CCSJ's administration recognizes the need to continually support its faculty and students in their efforts to teach and learn in an online environment. It is the administration's role to ensure that that potential is reached, and that the College's policies and procedures support the students' efforts to complete their educational goals.

Administration Responsibilities

- College administrators are responsible for canceling or rescheduling courses based on low enrollment in the same manner as with face-to-face courses.
- Program directors, department chairs, and the VPAA will support and collaborate with faculty in evaluating the results of online classes, just as they do with face-to-face classes.
- Administration will provide ongoing financial, technical, and personnel support for the development, administration, and continuation of online learning options subject to budget constraints.
- Administration will ensure reasonable and adequate access to a range of appropriate academic support services and resources.
- Administration will ensure compliance with accrediting agency guidelines.
- Administration will provide a secure digital network that ensures the integrity and privacy of the communications and records exchanged.

- The VPAA, with input for program directors and advising, will assist in the appropriate development and scheduling of online courses.
- Administration will provide academic advisement and technical support to online students.
- The Director of the Academic Resource Center will provide training opportunities for faculty on the use and development of instructional technologies.
- Administration will familiarize all college staff with the relevant online procedures and guidelines.
- Administration will strive to provide adequate online security and fraud prevention systems and practices.
- Program Directors, with VPAA approval, will explicitly note, and share with the Registrar and Academic Advising staff prior to the start of enrollment, the delivery mode of each online class: fully online (with no physical classroom), or hybrid (with a classroom scheduled for face-to-face meeting days).

Faculty

Online instruction requires specific attention to the interactive and technological aspects of online learning. The following sections detail specifics unique to online instruction for faculty to use as guidelines in their online coursework.

Faculty Rights/Responsibilities

- A faculty member assigned an online course has the same freedoms over content and evaluating student progress they would have in a face-to-face course.
- A faculty member may suggest the use of a new technology or online tool to help a course meet its learning objectives and request training from the College on said tools.
- The development and teaching of any online course is part of the faculty member's workload; in the event an overload is created, the approval procedure is the same as for a face-to-face course.
- A faculty member may define what "participation" in an online course means for each section of a class taught by the individual instructor, as long as that definition is clearly spelled out to the enrolled students via the course syllabus.
- Faculty will follow the College's guidelines and established practices for development, scheduling, and conducting online learning courses.
- Faculty will complete at least one formal online instruction training as provided by the College unless they have prior experience with the online format considered acceptable by the program director and VPAA.
- Faculty will design/adapt individual course instruction to meet the same standards and criteria set for traditional face-to-face courses.
- Faculty will ensure online course's syllabus is developed prior to the start of its initial semester and posted on Blackboard prior to the start date of each course.
- Faculty will provide for and maintain substantive and regular interaction with online learning students.
- Faculty will observe copyright laws and guidelines as they pertain to the internet, the World Wide Web, software, and the use and reproduction of materials.
- Faculty will participate in the College's evaluations of online learning.
- Faculty will complete the same mid-term grade reporting and early alert requests for non-

attending students as expected for face-to-face courses.

- Faculty will respond to student contact within 24 hours (unless otherwise specified on the syllabus and excepting weekends, breaks, and holidays) once class has started.
- Faculty will be flexible with regards to technology upgrades and disruptions that might occasionally interfere with assignment deadlines.
- Faculty will keep any records/correspondence resulting from a course for in the same way as required for face-to-face courses.

Students

The student experience in an online course is different from that of a traditional face-to-face environment. The format can make scheduling easier for students but also comes with its own unique challenges to overcome. The following sections set guidelines for students to be successful online.

An online course experience is very different from an experience in a face-to-face course. Although scheduling and participation in an online course can be convenient for a student the participation in an online course offers some unique challenges. The following sections contain guidelines for student success in an online course.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

- Students can expect the same high-quality educational experience in an online environment as in a traditional format.
- Students will complete a course that counts for the same number of credit hours and has the same transferability as its face-to-face equivalent.
- Students will have the same access to CCSJ support services while in an online environment as when taking a face-to-face course.
- Students will self-assess their level of technological skills and secure access to adequate computer facilities required for an online learning course.
- Students will determine, in consultation with their Academic Adviser, that the course meets their degree requirements.
- Students will thoroughly read and understand the course syllabus and the instructor's expectations for the course.
- Students will assume responsibility for contacting assigned the instructor when they have questions or concerns related to a course.
- Students will meet all assigned coursework deadlines.
- Students will participate in end-of-semester course surveys.
- Students will follow all relevant college guidelines, including the code of conduct and academic integrity policy.
- Students will observe copyright laws and guidelines as they pertain to the Internet, any software used, and the use and reproduction of materials under the College's Copyright and Peer-to-Peer File Sharing Policy.
- Students will ensure that once they connect to an online course using their CCSJ ID and password, that information should not be shared with anyone. An enrolled student should not allow any other person, including family members, to log into their online course for any reason.

Assessment and Evaluation

Evaluating and assessing both individual courses and the entirety of CCSJ's online offerings is an important part of ensuring a high-quality educational experience for all parties. The delivery and collection methods for conducting online course assessments will mirror face-to-face assessment as much as possible.

Need for On-line course/development

Online course development and scheduling is a collaborative effort between the VPAA and Program Directors and will be based on projected enrollment numbers, focusing on maintaining enrollments capable of sustaining repeated course offerings. Enrollments for courses will be monitored over time for planning purposes.

Faculty Evaluation

The results of online classes will be treated on an equal basis with results of traditional face-to-face classes.

Student Feedback

Online students will complete end-of-semester surveys. Instructors will report on survey results from both online and face-to-face classes in their annual self-evaluations.

Credit Hour Policy

The Federal Credit Hour definition is as follows: One hour (50 minutes qualifies as an hour) of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or a trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

CCSJ accepts the federal credit hours definition and awards credit hours according to commonly accepted practices in higher education. The College awards credit consistently across all delivery formats. For face-to-face courses, one semester hour of credit is awarded for one 50-minute period for 15 weeks and at least 30 hours of additional, outside of class time, homework. Online or hybrid courses will cover the same material in the same depth (i.e., the same "total effort") as a face-to-face version of the same course, as evaluated by the department and college.

Specifically, the College requires that students in an asynchronous online or hybrid courses perform the same amount of work as they would in a face-to-face course. Where no face-to-face equivalent of online or hybrid course exists, a student's "total effort" will equate to the "total effort" he or she would exert if he or she were in enrolled in a face-to-face course.

That is to say, a student enrolled in a three-credit, asynchronous online course is required to complete 135 hours of coursework (i.e., the equivalent of 45 hours of face-to-face instruction, and 90 hours of

out-of-class, face-to-face homework).

Credit Hour Compliance Planning

To aid in the proper course development planning for online and blended courses, CCSJ has adopted the use of the Credit Hour Compliance Planning form, which can be downloaded here:

[Access the form](#)

(form is view only—users should open the form and save a copy to their personal machines)

Users will input course identifiers, planned instructional time as referenced against the College catalog and schedule of courses and direct/indirect planned instructional activities. The spreadsheet will calculate hours and activities to determine if minimum instruction time compliance is met as indicated in field F13. Department Chairs and Program Directors will use the planning tool as a guide to assist in the planning and improvement of online and blended instruction. A copy of each completed form will remain on file for all active online and blended courses and will be updated as necessary when curriculum for said courses changes.

Instructional Design and Online Course Development

CCSJ is committed to assuring that students get the best possible on-line learning experience. To that end the Academic Resources Center Director is available to assist faculty with strengthening online course offerings by assisting with the online course development process.

The Academic Resources Center Director is available to conduct training workshops, and one-on-one consultations with faculty seeking to incorporate instructional technology in their curriculum.

The Academic Resources Center Director is also available to assist faculty in detecting and eliminating plagiarism, using technology to prevent cheating in an online delivery, and incorporating information literacy resources into instruction.

Academic Resources Center Director

The Director of the Academic Resources Center is available to support faculty in the effective use of technology in teaching and learning. This includes conducting training workshops for faculty and providing group or one-on-one consultations with faculty seeking to incorporate new or different educational technology into the course. The Director is also available to assist faculty in detecting and eliminating plagiarism, using technology to prevent cheating in an online delivery, and incorporating information literacy resources into instruction.

The Academic Resources Center Director can assist in developing course materials, assist with the transition of materials to an online delivery, to troubleshoot any issues during development or delivery, and as directed by the assigned faculty member make updates to the final product for as long as the course is offered online.

Course Development Agreement

Faculty preparing to develop an online course are reminded of the services available from the Academic Resources Center. Requirements for assistance from the Academic Resource Center are as follows.

- The course in question will be listed as online or hybrid in the course catalog.
- Faculty must offer the course through Blackboard.
- Faculty may participate in customized training/consultation by the Director, Academic Resources Center as necessary.
- Faculty must agree to deliver their course content on schedule to the Director, Academic Resources Center to facilitate a development process capable of course delivery for the semester as planned.
- The development team for the course under development (consisting of the faculty member and, if applicable, Director, Academic Resources Center) will report on progress to the VPAA's office.
- Faculty should encourage student feedback about the course design itself at the end of the semester in addition to the typical assessment of content and instructor.

Once the course is developed, the course must be approved by the Program Director, Department Chair, and VPAA (see form in **APPENDIX 4**).

Online Course Framework and Quality Standards

In the interest of supporting continuity, consistency, and ease of use for students, new online courses will start from a framework template used to populate the faculty-provided content in Blackboard. Once the design team agrees on the framework, the Director, Academic Resources Center will facilitate the faculty member implementing this framework in their course. Each individual framework can be modified according to the needs of a course but the suggested format with a minimum of the following subsections is below (5.3.1) with the individual lesson framework (5.3.2) as well.

This framework is intended to leverage instructional technology into an online course with regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor. CCSJ's face-to-face coursework has set a high standard for courses that engage students in active learning and the online coursework will be held to the same quality standards using this framework and other evaluative criteria.

Dashboard Tools

- Announcements
- Bookstore & Digital Bookshelf
- Calendar- My Blackboard
- Calendar- CCSJ Institutional
- CCSJ Email Login
- Grades
- Schedule Tutoring Appointment
- Settings & Password
- Specker Library
- Student Success Center
- Writing Center Paper Drop Off

- Zoom

Individual Module/Lesson Structure

- Introduction/Overview
- Stated Learning Objectives
- Standards
- Content (multiple formats: recorded lecture, readings, etc)
- Interactive Activities
- Assignments
- Due Dates
- Point Values in Module

Materials needed in the initial development to be submitted

- Course learning outcomes
- Course syllabus, digital and paper
- Major assessments and other assignments currently used
- List of standards addressed in the course
- Tentative spreadsheet listing each class meeting's lesson plan, and the preferred delivery strategy for each

Faculty and Staff Training/Support

The Director, Academic Resources Center will support and train faculty in the implementation of the best practices and standards adopted by the College for online teaching. Training, workshops, consultations, and other forms of professional development will be developed to assist the online faculty. The Director, Academic Resources Center may invite experts in the field or recommend trainings, workshops, and other forms of professional development to enhance faculty and staff competencies in the implementation of online teaching and learning.

Learning Management Systems

Presently, CCSJ uses Blackboard Learn SaaS as the institution-wide Learning Management System. All new development of online courses at CCSJ will be done using the Blackboard LMS.

College Hours and Technical Support

Although online coursework lets faculty and students approach course content and assignments outside of the traditional college schedule, the College's Computer Services office and technical support staff are not available when the college is not open. The Help Desk staff will respond to assistance requests in the order they are processed through phone or email.

Getting Started with Blackboard

The College offers Blackboard support for both faculty and students. All currently enrolled students and teaching faculty have access to the Blackboard system whether they are taking online courses or not. **Appendix 2** provides the "New Semester Checklist" for faculty new to teaching with CCSJ's Blackboard system.

Expected Blackboard Usage: Interaction and Time on Task

Successful teaching and learning in an online environment depends on a strong sense of community built through interaction between instructors, students, and course content. Blackboard offers tools designed to enhance this sense of community through participation over the length of an online course. Although defining class participation is up to each course's instructor (in accordance with guidelines from the Department of Education), when appropriate that participation should be funneled through one of the many discussion tools at their disposal through Blackboard.

Student Services

CCSJ College provides a comprehensive program of student services, including educational planning, career advising, job placement assistance, financial assistance, veteran services, assistance for students with special needs and disabilities, student activities, and intercollegiate athletics. A full summary of these services can be found in the CCSJ Student Handbook. Online students will have reasonable and adequate access to the services CCSJ provides to support their learning and matriculation; however, not all services are available through fully online options. The following is a summary of services specifically tailored to the needs of online students.

Orientation/Advising

CCSJ recognizes the importance of a thorough program of academic advising. While it is ultimately the responsibility of the student to select and follow a program of study that meets their objectives, the College's advising staff are there to assist students navigate their path to matriculation.

Blackboard Support

In online courses, students are provided with files and other digital content as opposed to in-person instruction. Submitting assignments and taking tests involve downloading and uploading files via Blackboard, and the College's Computer Services staff is available to provide support. The Blackboard environment provides a number of tools that allow students and instructors to share information, knowledge, and understanding. These may include:

- E-mail / course messaging (via the LMS)
- Announcements
- Course Calendar
- Syllabus
- Discussion Boards

Written and video guides are available to assist students on topics like submitting assignments, taking tests online, creating or replying to discussion board posts, and creating new discussion board threads. The written Help Desk student guides are included in **Appendix 3**.

Registration for Online Courses

All students are strongly encouraged to meet with an Academic Advisor before registering to ensure appropriate courses are taken. Students planning on taking online courses can meet digitally or over the phone with an advisor.

Withdrawal from Online Courses

The withdrawal procedure for online courses mirrors that of face-to-face courses. Drop forms are available from the Academic Advising Center and must be filled out in-person. Students receiving financial aid must check with the Financial Aid Office before submitting any drop requests. Students who have not participated by the 10th day may be dropped from the course.

**Courses shorter than the full 15-week semester may have different deadlines to withdraw.*

Textbooks and Supplemental Materials

Online instructors are encouraged to use e-books but not all instructors use the same book for the same class. The syllabus for each course will list what texts required and where to obtain them.

ADA and Disability Services

Post-secondary students with disabilities are guaranteed access to college programs and services by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

CCSJ will provide reasonable accommodations for students diagnosed with learning, physical, and/or medical disabilities. Students wishing to obtain accommodations must provide acceptable documentation of a need and complete a Disability Services Intake Form. Students are to strive to adhere to set deadlines so that accommodations can be in place in time for the start of the semester. Questions about the process or how to complete a request can be directed to CCSJ's Academic Disability Services office.

Academic Integrity

CCSJ College treats ethical violations affecting course work with the utmost seriousness. Cheating of any kind will result in an Academic Penalty and may result in further disciplinary action. This is especially important for online courses; that is why CCSJ uses an online plagiarism prevention service called SafeAssign. This proprietary database identifies papers containing unoriginal material and acts as a powerful deterrent to stop student plagiarism before it starts and identify it when it does occur.

Online courses will follow the same Academic Integrity and Plagiarism policies governing student work as presented in CCSJ's Student Code of Conduct, with one addendum: For online courses an enrolled student allowing another person to sign into an online course under their log in and password with the intention of participating as the enrolled student or submitting work not completed by the enrolled student will also be grounds for an instructor to cite the enrolled student for academic dishonesty.

Strategies to Prevent Online Cheating

Despite the perception an online format makes it easier for students to cheat, actual research on whether or not this is actually the case has been unclear. Evidence for less cheating, more cheating, and equivalent amounts of cheating across formats are all available. Regardless of its frequency, the ways to cheat in an online course can change just as quickly as the technology being used to deliver a course.

There are some general strategies that can be used to make it more difficult to cheat successfully, however:

- Build assignments with specific components and use references that are not easily copied.
- Require proof of process: students need to show how their work on an assignment evolved over time through drafts or communication with group members.
- Require copies of sources, regardless of assignment length or format.
- Make it clear through the syllabus that academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated and share any instances where you think it may have happened with the VPAA and Student Services offices.

It's an older reference, but more on specific resources that are available to instructors can be found in a great article by Rosemary Talab, "A Student Online Plagiarism Guide: Detection and Prevention Resources."

[Talab, R. \(2004\). A Student Online Plagiarism Guide: Detection And Prevention Resources. *Techtrends: Linking Research & Practice To Improve Learning*, 48\(6\), 15-18.](#)

Finally, a paper submitted to the 2007 “Technology, Colleges & Community Worldwide Online Conference” by Anita M. Krask of Lakeland Community College has an impressive list of resources that can be used to help prevent academic dishonesty, as well as an interesting exploration of the topic: <http://etec.hawaii.edu/proceedings/2007/krsak.pdf> (retrieved 9.11.15).

APPENDIX 1: Best Practices Resources

Abel, R. (2005). Implementing Best Practices in Online Learning. *EDUCAUSE Quarterly*, 28(3), 75-77

Fish, W. W., & Wickersham, L. E. (2009). BEST PRACTICES FOR ONLINE INSTRUCTORS: Reminders. *Quarterly Review Of Distance Education*, 10(3), 279-284.

Illinois Community Colleges Online (ILCCO): <http://www.ilcco.net/ILCCO/>

Illinois Online Network (ION) pedagogy resources:

<http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/tutorials/pedagogy/instructorProfile.asp>

Irlbeck, S. A. (2008). Implementation of Best Practices for Online Teaching and Learning in an Online Institution. *Performance Improvement*, 47(10-), 25-29.

Network of IL Learning Resources in Community Colleges (NILRCC): <http://www.thencat.org/PCR.htm>

PEW Grant program: <http://www.thencat.org/PCR.htm>

Powers, J. D., Bowen, N. K., & Bowen, G. L. (2011). Supporting Evidence-Based Practice in Schools with an Online Database of Best Practices. *Children & Schools*, 33(2), 119-128.

Rizopoulos, L. A., & McCarthy, P. (2009). Using Online Threaded Discussions: Best Practices for the Digital Learner. *Journal Of Educational Technology Systems*, 37(4), 373-383.

Talab, R. (2004). A Student Online Plagiarism Guide: Detection And Prevention Resources. *Techtrends: Linking Research & Practice To Improve Learning*, 48(6), 15-18.

Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications. "Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs." In L. Foster, B.L. Bower, and L.W. Watson (eds.), *ASHE Reader: Distance Education: Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*. Boston: Pearson, 2002.

Wolf, P. D. (2006). Best Practices in the Training of Faculty to Teach Online. *Journal Of Computing In Higher Education*, 17(2), 47-78.

APPENDIX 2: Blackboard New Semester Checklist

New Semester Checklist

- obtain a CCSJ College network account
- try to log into the Wave Portal
- reach out to the Computer Services Helpdesk to get account created for Blackboard if step two failed
- log into Blackboard and check for listed courses
- contact your academic advisor for issues with missing courses
- contact the Director, Academic Resources Center for merging multiple course sections of a course
- import course cartridge or copy course content from previous courses you taught in Blackboard
- consult with the Director, Academic Resources Center for course development or Blackboard course design features.
- take Blackboard training tutorials and workshops
- when the new semester is approaching, check course properties to make sure your course has been made available to view by your students.
- compare your MyCCSJ class roster with enrolled student users in your Blackboard classes, contact Computer Services Helpdesk for any missing students
- contact the Director, Academic Resources Center to add additional access for teaching assistant, department chairs, etc.
- notify your students the availability of your course in the Blackboard.

APPENDIX 3: Blackboard Student Guide

Communicative Tools

Communication is essential to student success and understanding and Blackboard has a number of tools to help you communicate with your professors. Below are listed a few of the most common communicative tools used by teachers and how you can utilize them to get assistance or ask questions. *Please note, a teacher may not use every single one of these tools.*

Messages and Email

Perhaps the most fundamental communicative tools would be the Messages or Email functions of Blackboard. These options allow you to send and receive emails and messages securely to either your teacher, individual students, or groups of students.

These two tools are very similar in many ways with one major difference. Messages are an internal to your Blackboard course, and to check your messages you must log into Blackboard. On the other hand Email is partially external to Blackboard and while you can send emails from your Blackboard course, you must log into your external email (your CCSJ.edu email account by default) to check for messages.

Announcements

The announcements tool is a great place to check for class-wide announcements, alerting you of new lessons, assignments, or educational tasks to be completed.

Course Calendar

Another tool that has been used effectively by a number of faculty at CCSJ is the course calendar tool. Through this tool you can view a calendar visible to all members of the class which announces important lectures, class assignments, due dates, and events. This tool is great for helping understand how the course is arranged and can help you to plan their time accordingly to meet the deadlines and obligations of the course.

Syllabus

Whenever entering a fully online Blackboard course, it is vital to find an entry point where you can get an overview of both the requirements and expectations of the course. A syllabus is a great place tool to achieve this end, and oftentimes is the first source where students can begin to understand what is expected of them at the outset of a course.

The Discussion Board

In traditional classroom courses, much of the learning that takes place is done through in-class discussions between students and their teacher. In Blackboard, this still happens to be the case, except these discussions are done online through the *Discussion Board* tool rather than in the classroom. For this reason, the *Discussion Board* is heavily used in nearly every class and provides an area in which students and their teachers can discuss lessons, ask questions, and share their thoughts and opinions with others.

The *Discussion Board* essentially works like a standard online forum. To access this resource, simply click on the *Discussion Board* option in the *Course Menu*. After doing so, you will come to a screen that lists all the *Forums* available in the *Discussion Board*. *Forums* are places in which discussions on a topic or assignment are taking place. To access a *Forum*, simply click on it. After doing so, you will see a listing of the *Threads* of discussion in the *Forum* you have selected. *Threads* are the actual discussions and conversations that are taking place. To enter a thread to see what other students have posted, simply click on the title of the thread. Or to create a new thread of discussion, simply click *Create Thread*. After doing so, you will see a list of all the students who have posted their thoughts in the thread. To read what each student wrote, click on their name to display their actual words. If you would like to reply to their thoughts, click on reply. Then type in your message in the text box and click submit.

APPENDIX 4: Course Development Agreement Form

As described in the Online Policy Document, online courses must be offered through blackboard and follow the steps outlined on pages 10 – 11 of the Online Policy.

Upon completion of course development, please complete the following:

The course, _____, is approved to run in the following formats
(Please check all that apply):

Face to face

Hybrid

Online

Approvals:

Program Director _____ Date _____

Department Chair _____ Date _____

VPAA _____ Date _____