GrandValley State University

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION
eLearning Technologies

Spring is heating up with exciting updates and opportunities to expand your tech skills. In this issue, discover upcoming Blackboard enhancements scheduled for June, accessibility tips for updating your course content, and reminders to consider submitting a proposal for the GV Technology Summit. Plus, don't miss the free Adobe Education Institute sponsored by Adobe, as well as a full lineup of professional development offerings by eLearning Technologies throughout June and July!

- June Blackboard Enhancements
- 4 Tips for Making Your Blackboard Course More Accessible!
- GV Technology Summit: Presenter Proposal Deadline Extended to September
- Adobe Education Institute
- Professional Development Opportunities for June and July

June Blackboard Enhancements

Blackboard releases new features and improvements on the first Friday of each month. This month, we are highlighting two changes that will improve the functionality of your Blackboard sites beginning June 5, 2026.

Track Announcement Engagement by Student

Instructors can now check which announcements a student has read or not read on the new Announcements tab of the Student Overview page. The Announcements tab complements existing announcement engagement data by adding a student-level view and helps instructors identify students who may have missed important course communications.

Improved Rubric Usability When Adding or Adjusting Grades

In the June monthly release, instructors can override grades without locking the rubric and provide feedback at the criterion level for single or multiple attempts. Grades entered in the rubric grade pill update the attempt grade immediately.

For discussions and journals, grades are now saved at the attempt level. The override workflow has been removed in these areas for a more consistent grading experience.

To improve consistency with the Flexible Grading page, the label of the rubric score box has been updated from "Submission" to "Rubric Score". To improve clarity, Blackboard also removed the sentence "You can only override the final grade for assessments with multiple attempts. Individual submissions are scored with a rubric" from underneath the rubric score box.

* * *

For a complete list of upcoming enhancements, please review the June 2026 release notes.

4 Tips for Making Your Blackboard Course More Accessible!

Summer is an ideal time to review previous fall courses, make accessibility updates, and prepare content for upcoming fall courses. To support this effort, we've outlined simple steps for improving Blackboard accessibility.

1. Delete files from Blackboard courses that are no longer in use. This will improve digital accessibility metrics generated from Blackboard Ally.
2. Review your Blackboard Ally report for red and orange items, and address the most impactful issues first.
3. Focus first on the materials students need to engage in the course or complete graded work. Your syllabus and schedule are most vital; then work through your critical readings and lecture slides. If your syllabus is created in Microsoft Word, use the Microsoft Accessibility Checker to identify and fix common issues such as headings, color contrast, and alternative text. If you distribute your syllabus as a PDF, Adobe Acrobat's Accessibility tools can help you review and remediate accessibility concerns.
4. Replace scanned articles with permanent links available through the University Libraries' databases. Your subject librarian can help you find replacement resources.

In addition to these tips, we encourage faculty to review the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) website, attend an accessibility webinar, participate in self-paced training, and reach out to their eLearning Liaison for individual consultations.

GV Technology Summit: Presenter Proposal Deadline Extended to September

We heard you! Many have expressed interest in presenting at the 2026 GV Technology Summit on November 3, 2026, but need additional time to submit their ideas. To support broader participation, the proposal deadline has been extended to September 15, 2026.

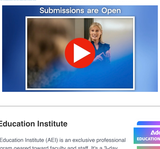
Proposal formats include breakouts, roundtables, and posters.

Interested? Submit a presentation proposal online.

Technology Summit Details

- Date: November 3, 2026, 8:30am — 4:30pm
- Location: Kirkhof Center, Valley (Allendale) Campus

Bookmark the event webpage for ongoing updates about speakers and schedule. You can also watch our video trailer to learn more about the GV Tech Summit.



Adobe Education Institute

The Adobe Education Institute (AEI) is an exclusive professional learning program geared toward faculty and staff. It's a 3-day virtual event where you will gain hands-on experience with Adobe tools and practical strategies you can apply in teaching, student support, communications, and campus initiatives. Pick and choose sessions according to your interests. Participants can earn a badge for every session completed.

This webinar series is sponsored by Adobe, and times vary based on sessions. Most sessions are held late morning or early afternoon.

- June 8, 2026
- June 9, 2026
- June 10, 2026

Interested? Register now for the Adobe Education Institute.

Professional Development Opportunities for June and July

SELF-PACED OPTIONS

- Accessibility and Blackboard Ally Self-Paced Training
- Accessibility Best Practices for Respondus Lockdown Browser
- Adobe Self-Paced Courses
- Getting Started with Blackboard Ultra
- MI ExalOER Learning Modules and Certificate (OER Basics)
- Padlet 101
- 5 STEPS for Course Design

WEBINAR OPTIONS

Unless specified otherwise, these sessions are held via live webinar on Zoom. Select the webinar title to officially register in Workday Learning and receive your meeting link. If you have difficulty registering, please email Kim Kenward (kenwardk@gvsu.edu).

AI Topics

Notebook LM Advantage for Quick Podcasts and More
6/16/26 • 1pm – 2pm

Maximizing Productivity with Free Microsoft Copilot Features
7/29/26 • 1pm – 2pm

Accessibility Topics

PDF Tune-Up in 15 Minutes Using Blackboard Ally
5/4/26 • 10am – 10:15am
6/17/26 • 1pm – 1:15pm
7/8/26 • 12pm – 12:15pm
7/23/26 • 3pm – 3:15pm

Making PDFs Accessible
6/10/26 • 10am – 10:30am
6/19/26 • 11am – 11:30am
7/09/26 • 1pm – 1:30pm
7/20/26 • 3:30pm – 4pm

Fix your Content – Drop-In Services
Reservations are not required. All sessions are 1:30 – 3pm in DCIH260 on Grand Valley's Health Campus.
5/28/26 • Blackboard Ally, PowerPoint, and alt text
6/11/26 • Excel and PDFs
6/25/26 • PDFs and open questions

Blackboard Topics

Blackboard Ultra Essentials
6/25/26 • 10am – 11am

Did You Know Blackboard Could Do That? – Drop-In Sessions
No reservations are required. Sessions are held in DCIH260 on Grand Valley's Health Campus.
6/18/26 • 12pm – 1:30pm

Using Blackboard Analytics to Measure and Boost Student Performance
5/28/26 • 11am – 12pm

Evaluating Student Performance Outcomes with Blackboard and EAC
6/15/26 • 11am – 12pm

Digital Pedagogy and Video Topics

Getting Started with Padlet
This webinar is sponsored by Padlet and provides an overview of Padlet. After attending this webinar, review our GVSU instructions to sign up for a Padlet account.
5/26/26 • 1pm – 2pm

Creating Instructor Presence with Panopto
6/2/26 • 11am – 12pm
8/18/26 • 11am – 12pm

Adobe Education Institute
A 3-day virtual event where participants will gain hands-on experience with Adobe tools and practical strategies you can apply in teaching, student support, communications, and campus initiatives. Pick and choose sessions according to interest. Participants can earn a badge for every session completed. This webinar series is sponsored by Adobe, and times vary based on sessions, but most sessions are held late morning or early afternoon. Pick and choose sessions according to interest. Participants can earn a badge for every session completed.
6/8/26, 6/9/26, 6/10/26

Podcasting 101
This session is held in-person at DCIH260 on Grand Valley's Health Campus.
6/18/26 • 3pm – 3pm

Introduction to Adobe Express
These sessions are offered in person at DCIH260 on Grand Valley's Health Campus and on Zoom.
6/22/26 • 10am – 11am
8/10/26 • 10am – 11am

Video Editing with Adobe Express
6/23/26 • 8/13/26 1pm – 2pm

Microsoft 365 and OneDrive Topics

20 Microsoft 365 Tips To Work Smarter, Not Harder
5/27/26 • 1pm – 2:30pm

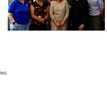
Time-Saving Tips in Outlook
6/3/26 • 1pm – 2pm

Microsoft Excel Formulas & Functions (Part 1)
6/17/26 • 1pm – 2pm

Microsoft Excel Formulas & Functions (Part 2)
6/24/26 • 1pm – 2pm

Maximizing Productivity with Free Microsoft Copilot Features
7/29/26 • 1pm – 2pm

Connect with eLearning!



There are many benefits to working with eLearning. We can assist in optimizing your Blackboard course structure, enhancing online and hybrid learning experiences, and incorporating innovative tools to foster active learning. You're encouraged to contact your eLearning Technologies liaisons or submit a consultation ticket at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Kim Kenward, Director of eLearning Technologies
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GVSU Information Technology

Visit our eLearning Technologies website

podcast by Jamison Wieser from Noun Project | Question by Adrian Coquet from Noun Project | feedback by Nedzlaid from Noun Project | moving by Adrian Coquet from Noun Project | star upon by shadrank angk from Noun Project | wellness by Adrian Coquet from Noun Project | reminder by yunchan from Noun Project | explain by Iconographer from Noun Project | Go by Adrian Coquet from Noun Project | Tour by Coloursvoyage from Noun Project | key by Aaron A. Kim from Noun Project | closed by Gregor Cresnar from Noun Project | meaning by Nubaia Bandar from Noun Project | see by Jakarkid27 from Noun Project | tool by Gaspa from Noun Project | foundation by M. Oki Orlando from Noun Project | working together by Khoirin from Noun Project | Accessibility by mikicon from Noun Project | Toolbox by Dash Polskin from Noun Project | startup by Gregor Cresnar from Noun Project | Training by Adrian Coquet by Noun Project | urgent paper 6410 by lana sugiarta from Noun Project | Suitcase by Arash Kim Noun Project

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