For Instructors
Using the Messages tool in a Blackboard course at Heartland Community College.

One of the tools you will use to communicate with your online students is Messages. Messages are the internal email specific to the students enrolled in your course. Think of it as your specific Blackboard courses internal email system. After logging into your course in Blackboard you will be taken to your courses landing page. To utilize Messages in your Blackboard course you first have to create a Messages link to this tool in your course navigation. To create a Messages tool link you need to make sure you are in the Edit Mode On. This mode allows you to make changes to your course. If the Edit Mode in the upper right shows Off simply click on it and the edit mode will change to On. With Edit Mode On click on the Create Item (plus button) in your course navigation menu and drop down to and click Create Tool link. This will open up more options allowing you to Type in a Name and choose the type of tool you’d like to add. Messages is one of many tools you have available in Blackboard. In this case I am just going to call this section Messages and drop down the “type” option and choose Messages. If you want this area available to users immediately you will checkmark the box to make it available. You can make this area available at a later date after you’ve set your messages area up if you wish. You do this by leaving the checkmark box unchecked and then at a later date click the down pointing chevron symbol to the right for more options next to the name Messages from the course navigation. Then choose Show Link.

Links can easily be shown or hidden using the chevron symbol next to any course navigation link. If a link is hidden from students it will not show up in the students’ view of your Blackboard course and you as the instructor will see a white box with a small diagonal line through it symbolizing that this link is hidden from students view. After clicking show or hide link Blackboard will automatically refresh itself (so wait just a few seconds) and the screen will display your change. To set up a Message in your newly created message area click on the link to Messages that you just created from the course navigation. Here you will see buttons to Create Message, Create Folder, and your Inbox and Sent Folders. You can also see the number of unread and total number of messages from this screen. To create a new message click Create Message. This will load up the Create Message screen allowing you to compose a new message. You’ll be presented with the familiar TO:, CC: (Carbon Copy) and BCC: (Blind Carbon Copy) options similar to most email systems. To select a recipient click on the TO: button and choose a student or group of students from this list. You can choose all students by left mouse clicking on the first name in the list and holding the shift key down on the keyboard choose the last name on the list. Or you can choose a few students by left clicking with the mouse while holding down the control key. Once you have your recipient(s) chosen you need to add them by clicking on the greater than (right pointing) symbol. This same method can be repeated for choosing carbon copy and blind carbon copy. From there you can scroll down and type in a subject and a message for the email. You can also add an attachment by clicking browse and locating a file to attach off of your computer. This system only allows you to add one attachment to each email. When you are ready to send the email click Submit and you will be taken back to the main messages screen. You will see that you have one item in your sent email total count. If you sent the email to yourself it will also show up in your inbox. From the inbox you can mark messages as read or unread using the down pointing chevron symbol or simply click on the subject link and open the message to read it. From here you can Reply, Forward, Delete or Print a message. Back in the main Messages screen you can also create folders by clicking Create Folder. Here you simply type in a name of a new folder and click Submit. I will create a new folder and call it Introductions and click submit. Back out on the main messages screen you will see your new folder. Next to the folders name you are given options to open the folder, edit (rename the folder) or delete the folder. Once a folder is created you can move inbox items to that folder by navigating back into your inbox, checkmark the message you’d like to move, and clicking Move. You will be shown what message you are moving and given the options
to choose a folder to move the message to. In this case since I only have one folder I can only move it to the Introductions folder I just created. If you’ve decided against moving the message your can click cancel or to commit to the move click Submit and your message will be moved to the folder you’ve chosen. In Blackboard the Messages tool allows you a simple way to communicating with your students via internal course email. In the next tutorial I’ll be showing another communications tool, the Discussion Board, which allows even more advanced communication options.