

# Blackboard®

News Release

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## **Blackboard Launches New Cloud Center of Excellence Supporting Institutions Worldwide With Their Transition to the Cloud**

*New program helps clients leverage the cloud for fast, flexible and secure access to Blackboard's leading solutions*

WASHINGTON, 8 May 2017 - [Blackboard Inc.](#) today announced the launch of a new Cloud Center of Excellence (CCoE), leveraging Amazon Web Services (AWS) best practices, to further enable a smooth, fast and successful transition to the cloud for its institutional partners worldwide. Blackboard's Cloud Center of Excellence will use the AWS Well-Architected Framework and AWS recommended best practices for secure and scalable infrastructure to realize the full potential of cloud-based services.

"AWS is excited to support Blackboard's Cloud Center of Excellence, which will enable the company to build a secure, high-performing, resilient, and efficient infrastructure," said Mark Ryland, Chief Solutions Architect, Worldwide Public Sector, AWS. "With more and more educational institutions worldwide taking advantage of cloud technology, we are pleased that Blackboard is focused on ensuring that applications meet a high bar for security and reliability."

Staffed by a cross-functional, global team of cloud specialists from Blackboard, the CCoE will help Blackboard deliver more robust cloud solutions and provide learners with the best learning experience possible, anytime and anywhere. Through the program, specialists working in the CCoE will support the entire transition process. This will allow clients to rapidly realize the benefits of SaaS (Software as a Service), while simultaneously enabling Blackboard to more rapidly develop and deliver world-class products.

A Blackboard partner for a decade, the University of Arkansas at Monticello made the decision to move to Blackboard's Learn SaaS platform in 2016, as part of its goal to increase efficiency and capacity system-wide.

"Moving to SaaS is like gaining headcount. Now, my team is free to invest time in more meaningful tasks such as faculty development," said Bryan Fendley, Director of Instructional Technology and Web Services at the University of Arkansas at Monticello. "By refocusing our time, we were able to train all faculty on Blackboard Learn, growing the number of courses on the platform by almost 300% in one semester."

Last year, Blackboard selected AWS as its strategic cloud services provider and began working with many of its Blackboard Learn clients to transition them to the public cloud, while simultaneously remaining committed to its self-hosted and managed-hosting deployment options. In addition, several other Blackboard products, including its community engagement and web conferencing solutions, have been moved to the public cloud. The company is currently focusing its future development on the AWS platform, giving Blackboard the increased agility to develop and deliver new products and innovative features more quickly. The company is taking advantage of several key AWS services, including Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (Amazon EC2) and Amazon Relational Database Service (Amazon RDS). Currently, more than 150 clients are running live on the Blackboard Learn SaaS platform with an additional 100 running tests and evaluations. Clients utilizing a Learn SaaS environment have access to significant benefits such as zero-downtime upgrades, continuous delivery of regular updates, new services innovation, and increased scalability.

"With AWS, Blackboard can focus even more time and effort on our core mission - delivering innovative products that address some of the most pressing challenges in education," said Tim Atkin, Chief Client Officer at Blackboard. "This Cloud Center of Excellence will strengthen our use of best practices to optimize SaaS adoption paths for our clients, ultimately benefiting our institutional partners and better enabling learners around the world to be successful."

To learn more about Blackboard Learn SaaS, visit <http://www.blackboard.com/learning-management-system/saas-deployment.aspx>.

#### **About Blackboard Inc.**

Our mission is to partner with the global education community to enable learner and institutional success, leveraging innovative technologies and services. With an unmatched understanding of the world of the learner, the most comprehensive student-success solutions, and the greatest capacity for innovation, Blackboard is education's partner in change.