Back in June, we talked about revising our courses (https://iteachu.uaf.edu/2015/06/30/course-revisions/). Now, here we are at the beginning of the new semester. How time flies! In expectation of this new semester, this week's Teaching Tip includes a handful of items to check off your list as you prepare your courses for the first day of class.

**SYLLABUS**
Have you updated your syllabus for the new semester? Do relevant details reflect changes you’ve made for the new semester? Are all items required by the Faculty Senate incorporated into your syllabus? Curious what the Faculty Senate requirements encompass? You can read about them here: https://www.uaf.edu/uafgov/faculty-senate/curriculum/course-degree-procedures-/uaf-syllabus-requirements/.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**
Have you updated the dates in your course schedule to reflect the date for the new semester? Are assignment due dates easy for students to find, and consistent throughout your course materials?

**WELCOME MESSAGE**
If you are teaching online, have you welcomed your class to the new semester by sending an announcement in Blackboard or similar notification where students can easily find it. A Welcome announcement is an effective way to tell students how and where to get started in your course. Learning more about creating an announcement in Blackboard (http://ondemand.blackboard.com/r91/movies/bb91_tools_creating_announcements.htm).

**GRADE CENTER DUE DATES**
If you are teaching online, or using the Blackboard Grade Center in your face-to-face course, have you updated the due dates in the Grade Center to match the dates in your Course Schedule? Did you know there is a place in Blackboard where you can change all of your assignment due dates at once? Look under the Control Panel links in your Blackboard course, Course Tools, Set Grade Center Due Dates. You can change all the dates configured for assignments and quizzes on this page.

**COURSE AVAILABILITY**
If you are using your Blackboard course shell, remember to make it available to your students. Making your course available is as simple as looking under the Control Panel links in your Blackboard course, clicking Customization, then Properties, then look at #2 on the Properties page. Set Availability to Yes, then click Submit.

The list above isn’t inclusive of all of the preparations you have likely planned for your course. This short checklist is meant to be a tool to help you cross the most common new semester tasks off your list so that you are free to focus on the more interesting challenges of learning and exploration.

If you are interested in learning more about Blackboard, the UAF Office of Information Technology (OIT) has resources available to help you (http://www.alaska.edu/oit/services/lms/bbtraining/), and they offer regularly scheduled training (http://www.alaska.edu/oit/services/faculty-staff-training/class-descriptions/).