

# News Release

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## **Blackboard Announces Winners of 2017 Catalyst Awards**

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 13, 2017 – [Blackboard Inc.](#), a leading education technology company for teaching, learning and student engagement, today announced the winners of the 2017 Blackboard Catalyst Awards.

Founded in 2005, the annual Catalyst Awards recognize and honor innovation and excellence in the Blackboard global community of practice, where millions of educators and learners work every day to redefine what is possible when leveraging technology. Winners are selected by a cross-functional team of Blackboard experts. The honorees from around the world will be recognized during [BbWorld 2017](#), Blackboard’s annual user conference to be held July 25-27 in New Orleans.

“Blackboard is proud to recognize this year’s Catalyst Award winners for their commitment to leveraging technology to improve the education experience,” said Bill Ballhaus, Chairman, CEO and President of Blackboard. “We look forward to continuing to work with these educators and institutions to support learner success, and to share best practices widely for the benefit of the education community.”

Below are the winners, listed by category:

**Leading Change:** This award recognizes institutions that have developed practices and/or technologies that have had a measurable effect on learning outcomes, student performance, or academic progression. The winners are:

- *University of Maryland, Baltimore County:* Dr. John Fritz, Jack Suess, and Kevin Joseph
- *Northern Illinois University:* Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center
- *Inter American University of Puerto Rico - Ponce Campus:* Dr. Omayra Caraballo-Pagán and Dr. Vilma Colón-Acosta
- *Auditoria Superior del Estado de Coahuila, Coahuila, Mexico:* Alberto De Leon Gonzalez and Ludivina Leija Rodriguez
- *St. Regis School Board, Montana:* Charlee Thompson

**Community Engagement:** This award recognizes clients who are dedicated to improving student achievement by fostering a connection between school districts, institutions, educators, students, and their communities. The winners are:

- *Collier County Public Schools, Florida:* Greg Turchetta

- *Michigan City Area Schools, Indiana:* Betsy Kohn and Steve Koontz
- *University of Manchester Library, Manchester, United Kingdom:* Chris Millson, Carlene Barton, Dave Hirst, Kate Reed

**Teaching & Learning:** This award recognizes those who have adopted flexible, distance and online delivery, including using mobile technologies to positively impact the educational experience. The winners are:

- *Calcasieu Parish School Board, Louisiana:* Dr. Sheryl Abshire, Pam Nicholson, and Kim Leblanc
- *Regent's University London, United Kingdom:* Chris Rowell
- *Boston University, Massachusetts:* Alane Bearder, Elena Garofoli, Leigh Curtin-Wilding, Domenic Screnci, and Stephen Quigley
- *Wichita State University, Kansas:* Dr. John Perry

**Inclusive Education:** This award honors those institutions whose methods have ensured their pedagogy, content, technology, and educational services are fully inclusive and supportive of all learners with disabilities. The winners are:

- *Tarrant County College District, Texas:* Dr. Kelvin Bentley, Scott January, Brandy Kelly, Alicia Prather, Kenya Wilson and Cherie Johnson
- *The University of Toledo, Ohio:* Dr. Claire Stuve

**Optimizing Student Experience:** This award honors those institutions whose educational and administrative innovations have markedly improved the total learner experience. The winners are:

- *Hostos Community College, New York:* Carlos Guevara, George Rosa, David Dos Santos, and Aaron Davis
- *Elon University, North Carolina:* Rodney Parks, Terrance Copling, DonnaLynn Hall, Heather Hutchings, Laura Kappert, and Gregory McDaniel
- *Norfolk State University, Virginia:* Xuemei Li
- *Keele University, Staffordshire, United Kingdom:* Tim Smale and Sandra Gillham

**Professional Development:** This award recognizes those who use Blackboard programs to support and enhance their faculty and staff's professional development. The winners are:

- *Norfolk State University, Virginia:* Dr. Dorothy L. R. Jones and the NSU Online Team
- *The University of Texas at El Paso:* Cira Montoya, Jesus Presa, Adrian Enriquez, Julio Batiz, Christine Endlich and Hector Gonzales
- *Palliser Beyond Borders, Alberta, Canada:* All staff members

**Student Success:** This award recognizes individuals and/or institutions whose creative program application has led to increased retention, increased completion, and/or improved outcomes. The winners are:

- *Coppin State University, Maryland:* Dr. Ahmed El-Haggan, Dr. Maria Thompson, Prasad Dodonna and Dr. Dionne Curbeam

- *Wichita State University, Kansas*: Lisa Hansen
- *Palliser Beyond Borders, Alberta, Canada*: All staff members
- *Buffalo State College, New York*: Dr. John Thompson

**Exemplary Course:** This award recognizes faculty and course designers who develop exciting and innovative courses that represent the very best in technology and learning.

- *Hawaii Pacific University*: Dr. Han Nee Chong
- *Algonquin College, Ontario, Canada*: Dr. Albert Dudley
- *Grand Valley State University, Michigan*: Cheryl Kautz
- *Grand Valley State University, Michigan*: Szymon Machajewski
- *Columbia Southern University, Alabama*: Jacqueline Pica and Dr. Christine Whitaker
- *Ohio University*: Kyle Rosenberger
- *Kent State University, Ohio*: Dr. John Staley

For more information on the Blackboard Catalyst Awards and this year's winners, please visit <https://community.blackboard.com/groups/catalystawards>.

### **About Blackboard**

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.