Announcements Module
Functional Requirements

Summary
This document outlines the functional requirements for enhancements to the Announcement module for myMiami. This module will incorporate all announcements (university-wide, organizational, course, etc.) into one module with the ability to delegate creation of those announcements.

Current
The announcement facility within Blackboard already incorporates all announcement types. However, it has some drawbacks that make its use undesirable. The drawbacks include:

• System-wide announcements cannot be targeted based on role.
• System-wide announcements appear in all courses and organizations.
• No facility to propose new announcements

New Announcement Module
The new Announcement Module should have the ability to coordinate all announcements for a user in a single module. A mockup is provided to the right.

This module should have the following features:

• The module should have the ability to aggregate announcements from all sources including university-wide, organization, and course announcements.
• Announcements should appear in categories based on their audience as shown in the mockup above. For example, Chess Club announcements should be grouped together under a Chess Club heading.
• Each instance of the module should be configurable as to what categories to display. For example, one instance of the module might display all announcements while another might only show course announcements while a third might only show Chess

Propose a new announcement
Club announcements. The order in which categories appear should also be configurable.

• Users should have the ability to subscribe/unsubscribe to announcement channels. System administrators should also have the ability to remove this option for a particular instance of the module or to lock certain categories into an instance. (This feature can be delayed until a later revision if necessary.)

• Users should have the ability to hide announcements in a category. This is facilitated with the rotatable triangles in the example above. Critical announcements should never be hidden.

• Each category of announcements may have their own administrator(s). Administrators should have the ability to create, modify, and delete announcements. It is assumed that course and organization announcements will use the built-in announcement functionality to create announcements. A separate facility may be needed for university-wide announcements. The system should allow for multiple categories of university-wide announcements (University, Library, Performing Arts Series, etc.) each with its own set of administrators.

• A link should be provided to allow non-administrators to propose new announcements for a category. These proposals should be emailed to the administrator of that announcement category.

• University-wide announcements should have the following attributes:

  • Subject - This should be a short description of the announcement. This text will appear in the aggregated list of announcements. It should allow for most common HTML display attributes (bold, italics, etc.)

  • Body - This is the full text of the announcement. It should allow for most common HTML capabilities (bold, italics, links, etc.)

  • Start Date - this is the date the announcement should appear. This date should also appear with the Subject in the aggregated list of announcements.

  • End Date - this is the date the announcement should removed

  • Role criteria - this criteria determines who should see the announcement. It should allow for roles and course/organization membership. In addition, it should allow for boolean expressions. For example, ‘employee’ AND ‘campus_oxford’.

  • Priority - priority categories should include at least critical and normal. Critical announcements should be displayed at the top of a category and should be very prominent (highlighted in yellow and bold in the example above). If possible, configuration of priorities and how they’re displayed should be generalized so they can be altered in the future.
• Clicking on the subject of an announcement in the aggregated list should open a new window that displays the body of the announcement.

• Unread announcements should be indicated within the aggregated list (shown as green in the mockup above). Read and unread announcements should be displayed differently. A better mechanism than what is shown in the mockup should be employed. The mechanism used in the mockup is not ADA compliant. (This feature can be delayed until a later revision if necessary.)

• For categories that contain no announcements for a particular user, the system should allow the option of showing the category with an indication that there are no messages or the option of not displaying the category at all. (This feature can be delayed until a later revision if necessary.)

Revisions
4/11/2005
• Initial version

4/20/2005
• Initial version should not have implied that there was only one category of university-wide announcements. Modified to remove this implication.
• Added subscribe/unsubscribe requirement with locking by system admin
• Added option for empty categories to be hidden
• Added allowance for multiple instances

6/10/2005
• Revised based on feedback, including:
  • introduced priority system for announcements
  • allow announcement categories to be hidden by the user
  • designated some items as option for the initial implementation.