Dear [name],

I have some exciting news. There is a new version of Blackboard Collaborate available, which will provide a more user friendly and modern experience for you as a daily user of the product. It’s now easier than ever to lead virtual classes, office hours, tutoring and mentoring sessions, departmental meetings, and more. You should feel confident that the updates to Collaborate were done with you in mind.

Many existing features have been improved and modernized to make your day more efficient. Here is an overview of some of the tools that you can expect:

* Browser-based web conferencing: Browser-based web conferencing means simple star-up and convenient access with nothing to install—and more supported devices, including Chromebooks.
* High-quality audio and video: Engage learners with HD audio, video, and webcam support. You can display up to 5 HD videos at once, with dynamic adjustment for bandwidth/network constraints.
* Simple, fast file sharing:Share content with drag-and-drop ease. PowerPoint and PDF files can be shared without additional software. Supports real-time annotation and text entry.
* Recordings: You can record your sessions in MP4 format and it will include audio, content shared, active speaker video, and one of the caption tracks entered during the live session. Participants can stream shared recordings from any device and can view the recordings as often as they would like.
* Breakout Groups: Choose to randomly assign groups in your class or custom select your groups. You can even let your students create their own groups. Experience a face-to-face collaborative environment while in breakout groups with the ability to share files and whiteboard together.
* Polling: Interact with your students and get real time feedback with polling. You can set up a poll where participants can choose either yes or no as their answer or you can use multiple choice questions offering up to 5 answer choices.
* Attendance Reporting:Track when participants have joined your session and when they left the session. This attendance report gives you an idea of how long participants were present in your session. You can leverage this knowledge to follow up with students who may need extra help or review.

## Resources to Help

To ensure you can familiarize yourself with these new features of Blackboard Collaborate and be ready to integrate them in your instruction. Here are a few valuable resources that you may be interested in reviewing which are offered by Blackboard:

* [Feature Showcase](http://www.blackboard.com/online-collaborative-learning/blackboard-collaborate-features.aspx) – review all of the new features.
* [Help.Blackboard.com](https://en-us.help.blackboard.com/Collaborate/Ultra) – assistance using the new Blackboard Collaborate (tailored specifically for faculty and students.)

I am confident that you will find as much excitement in the new Blackboard Collaborate as I do. If you have questions or concerns about this new version, please let me know.

Regards,

[Signature]