Calculated TOTAL Columns in Blackboard Grade Book

When calculating a TOTAL Column for the Blackboard Grade Book please note the following.

The TOTAL Column generated by Blackboard is defaulted to include ALL assignments and their associated grades. This means that any column that has an associated grade will be included in the total column. This can be changed by clicking the drop down menu, and then the Edit Column Information.

From here you will choose the Selected Columns and Categories option (you will now be able to add any columns you want added to the Total Column).

**SELECT COLUMNS**

Choose All Grade Columns to include all grade columns in the total. If Grading Periods exist include specific columns or categories in the total, choose Selected Columns and Categories.

Include in Total:  
- All Grade Columns
- Selected Columns and Categories

Calculate as Running Total:  
- Yes
- No

A running total only includes items that have grades or attempts.

Once you have clicked the Selected Columns and Categories, it will let you choose which columns to select.
A second issue is that the default is to calculate this Column as a **Running Total**, meaning that it will only include a given column as being a part of the total if an attempt was made for the assignment/quiz/test, etc. This means that a blank attempt by a student will **NOT** be scored as a zero, but will be left out of the total for that student. This can be very misleading and result in an inaccurate perception by the student of their actual grade.

This can be fixed through two methods:

1) Leave the Total Column as it is (with a default of Calculate as a Running Total) and enter zeros for any assignments that are not completed by students by the due date.

2) Change the column so that it does not calculate as a Running Total. This can be easily accomplished by choosing **No** for the **Calculate as a Running Total** option (see above). Please note that “A running total only includes items that have grades or attempts. Selecting No includes all items in the calculations, using a value of 0 for an item if there is no grade.”

The **problem** that this creates is that student grades will not be accurate for most of the semester as it will show them as having a low score due to having zeros on any assignment not yet completed. One solution to this problem is to have both a Running Total and Non-Running Total Column – this will let the student see how they are doing with the work they have completed, and how they are doing in the course overall.

A second solution (which is more management intensive) is to only add assignments to the Total Column only after the assignment is officially due.