

## **LMS Review Committee Report**

In September 2013 a faculty and student committee was created to examine our current Learning Management System (LMS), Blackboard, and to determine if it was the best fit for our campus. Faculty and student surveys and open forums were held on several dates in the fall. After careful consideration the committee recommended that alternate LMS options be reviewed. In the late fall and early spring semesters several LMS options including Blackboard, Canvas, Desire2Learn, and Sakai were closely examined by the committee and numerous LMS providers were invited to campus to speak, both in open forums and with the committee and IT professionals.

The members of the committee were:

### **Committee Chair:**

Jeff Schramm

### **Committee Members:**

Fiona Nah

Paul Runnion

Abhijit Gosavi

John Seiffertt

Dan Stutts

John Hogan

Kellie Grasman

Dan Oerther

Dan Reardon

Aditya Nahar - student

Altamash Fakki - student

Dakota Eivigman - student

### **Ex-officio Members:**

Angie Hammons

Diane Hagni

Amy Skyles

Jeff Jennings

After careful consideration the committee unanimously decided to recommend that the Missouri S&T campus change from Blackboard to Canvas by Instructure for our LMS. This decision was based on several factors.

- Canvas had more features that faculty and students felt were important.
  - It will allow faculty and students to optimize their time and gain efficiencies

- Features include:
  - Speed grading features
  - Graphic analytics reporting
  - Automated functionality
  - Notification preferences
  - Collaborative spaces for group activity
  - Integrated multimedia for the ability to record quick and easy video and audio recordings
  - Robust mobile apps for both Android and iOS
- Peer institutions (such as Michigan Tech) have embraced Canvas.
  - Canvas has a robust user community that works to make the software better.
- Canvas is much more intuitive and user friendly than Blackboard.
  - Canvas works with the latest browsers.
  - Canvas' user interface is clean, intuitive and easy to use.
  - Blackboard courses will be successfully and easily ported to Canvas.
- Canvas is cloud based which should reduce downtime and congestion issues.
  - Canvas works much like Amazon
- Canvas is open source while Blackboard is not.
  - Canvas has an open API that allows anyone to create connections and customize it for their use.
  - The user community is robust and works together to continually make the product better.
- Support costs with canvas are likely to be much lower.
  - Canvas reacts quickly to any issue that arises and will work with local support staff to provide the help that is needed.
  - Canvas has a wide variety of help information provided on their website.

With all of this, there is also the potential for great cost savings. The committee did spend some time looking into the total cost of ownership for each of the vendors and was pleased that the vendor chosen also afforded the campus savings.

The committee felt strongly that an expeditious switch to Canvas was in the best interest of faculty, students, and the campus as a whole. While financial savings was not the primary consideration of the committee, a switch to canvas could potentially save the campus \$100,000/yr.

Blackboard is an impediment to further eLearning on this campus. It is not fully functional and simply can't or won't do what instructors increasingly need it to do. It is more and more limiting the course design options of innovative instructors. Several courses including Chem 1 have abandoned all or parts of Blackboard in favor of other solutions. An expeditious switch to Canvas would more than likely have a large increase in the number of courses that utilize some sort of eLearning on campus. This is based on data from institutions that have made similar switches. For example, Michigan Tech (a peer

institution) switched from Blackboard to Canvas and experienced a jump in the number of courses using the LMS from less than 45% to over 75%.

The single largest comment we received from students regarding an LMS was their desire to see as many instructors use it as possible. An expeditious switch to Canvas would meet this student need. A switch to Canvas would promote greater eLearning across the campus at all levels.

The timeline for this change is in the process of being completed and must be approved by both officials here on campus and at the system level. A transition plan will be shared widely when all steps have been identified and a timeline for completion established. The campus contract with Blackboard expires in December 2015. Several instructors are piloting Canvas in their courses this semester. We will begin working on getting all of the integrations in place for a smooth transition. EdTech will be conducting sessions introducing Canvas to campus as well as training sessions.

EdTech will be working closely with the support individuals from Canvas in order to make this a smooth transition. Current content in Blackboard **will** successfully and easily be moved into Canvas. We will be scheduling activities over the next few months.

For more information, please contact Jeff Schramm or Angie Hammons. You can also find more information on the project website <https://blackboardreview.mst.edu/>.

### Talking Points:

- The Blackboard Review Committee was comprised of **faculty and students**.
  - The charge included evaluating the Learning Management System on what was best for teaching and learning on this campus.
- EdTech, with the support of Canvas, will work closely with instructors to help them convert their content from Blackboard to Canvas.
  - Blackboard courses **will** successfully and easily port over to Canvas.
  - Opportunities will be available for all campus training, department training and one-on-one sessions.
- Canvas had more features that faculty and students felt were important.
  - It will allow faculty and students to optimize their time and gain efficiencies
  - Features include:
    - Speed grading features
    - Graphic analytics reporting
    - Automated functionality
    - Notification preferences
    - Collaborative spaces for group activity

- Integrated multimedia for the ability to record quick and easy video and audio recordings
  - Robust mobile apps for both Android and iOS
- Peer institutions (such as Michigan Tech) have embraced Canvas.
  - Adoption rate at Michigan Tech went from 50% usage before the switch to Canvas to 75% usage at the present time.
- Canvas is much more intuitive and user friendly than Blackboard.
  - Canvas works with the latest browsers.
  - Canvas' user interface is clean, intuitive and easy to use.
- Canvas is cloud based which should reduce downtime and congestion issues.
  - Canvas works much like Amazon
- Canvas is open source while Blackboard is not.
  - Canvas has an open API that allows anyone to create connections and customize it for their use.
  - The user community is robust and works together to continually make the product better.
- Support costs with Canvas are likely to be much lower.
  - Canvas reacts quickly to any issue that arises and will work with local support staff to provide the help that is needed.
  - Canvas has a wide variety of help information provided on their website.
- **Total Cost of Ownership analysis showed a substantial savings by switching to Canvas.**
  - It is important to know that some of the numbers are based on information obtained at the time and are subject to change as we move through this process.
  - Tools that have to be purchased separately to make Blackboard function as needed for our campus are included as part of the cost for Canvas.