Questions from the DE Coordinators’ Retreat

June 17, 2015

Q. Canvas offers a variety of course templates. Will the purchase of Canvas through the OEI require the use of a particular course template?

A. There is no particular template required. The OEI has adopted a set of course design standards that exemplify quality course design. The OEI team suggests that colleges/teachers consider adopting it as a guide to developing great courses.

Q. How do you accomplish confidential student evaluations of a course?

A. Canvas does not do this directly, but can integrate with some 3rd-party tools that allow student evaluations to still be conducted inside Canvas.

Q. Are messages internal to Canvas, or are these sent to students?

A. Similar to email, “Conversations” is also sometimes called “Messages” or the “Inbox”. With this communication tool, students can send direct messages to individuals or a custom group of people.

Q. What kind of support will faculty/colleges get from Canvas? Will it ever be outsourced?

A. Colleges that maintain Tier 1 help desk support currently should expect to continue offering that level of support. The OEI will fund help desk support for evenings and weekends.

Q. Does the contract allow for non-instructional uses, such as committee work or groups?
A. Yes. Take a look at the Canvas Resource Site located at https://ccconlineed.instructure.com/courses/90. This is a course shell and an example of one of the ways, outside of an actual course, that the system can be used.

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Q. Are there any quotas on course sizes, etc.?

A. No. There are no restrictions on the number of students, number of faculty, etc., in Canvas itself. There are currently no class size mandates within the Course Exchange courses at this time either, although that could change as success data is collected.

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Q. Archiving courses between semesters or quarters – does this affect storage capacity?

A. Representatives of colleges that already have Canvas, reported having no issues with storage. The available storage is 500MB allocation per student, which should be sufficient college wide.

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Q. Is there a provision to pilot Canvas prior to the 15-month adoption cycle?

A. Canvas provides two options for evaluation: 1) A 2-week trial to a sample course for purposes of evaluation, and 2) Access to a free course shell to create and teach a course to students. Materials/courses created can later be migrated to the CCC Canvas instance for your college as part of full implementation. These options are found here: http://www.canvaslms.com/try-canvas

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Q. Can we come on board with Canvas before our existing LMS contract runs out?

A. Yes, you’ve already paid for that contract. You still need to identify the timeline for your Canvas implementation that coincides with an Implementation Cohort. Actual implementation may take longer or shorter than the recommended 15-month cycle the OEI suggests, depending on specific college needs. The OEI expectation would be that at the end of your current LMS contract, Canvas would become your primary/only LMS going forward.

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Q. Will colleges with the Peoplesoft SIS be supported if colleges want to come on board with Canvas?

A. Yes, Canvas integration will support integration with Peoplesoft and Ellucian (Banner and Datatel/Colleague) systems

Q. Is there support for course migration to Canvas from an existing LMS?

A. OEI is working with @ONE to provide training for course migration support. There are currently also course migration engines within the tool that will move content over (Bb, Moodle, D2L) and by mid-fall there will be a migration tool for Etudes. In addition, we are identifying best practices for faculty to organize course content in a way that makes the migration more seamless.

Q. Will there be on-ground course migration training support to help colleges train faculty in course migration?

A. The migration tools and functions are introduced as part of the faculty and administrator training that Canvas provides. We are also working with @ONE to develop training for course migration, and resources will be made available to colleges. There are also additional course migration services including bulk migration and “white glove” support that can be purchased directly from Instrucure for migration support. Given our research into colleges migrating courses to Canvas and the experiences of the current Canvas-using colleges, colleges report minimal to no workload issues with course migration.

Q. If my college is going to save a lot of money by adopting Canvas, what should my college do with the cost savings?

A. The ASCCC has taken a position that any potential or actual cost savings from adopting a statewide learning management system should be directed back into support for faculty teaching distance education courses. The OEI supports this position and will continue to advocate that funds saved through adoption of Canvas should be directed back into local DE programs. In addition, while the intent is to fully fund Canvas through 2019, we understand that the state’s fiscal condition is subject to change. While it is unlikely that colleges will again be asked to fund the full cost of Canvas, it is possible that colleges could, at some point, be asked to fund a portion of the licensing costs. Therefore, we recommend that colleges save 20% of the cost savings in case of future obligations to fund Canvas at the local college.
Q. Where are the Canvas host servers located?

A. Instructure uses Amazon Cloud Services for hosting with primary centers in Virginia and the San Francisco Bay Area.

Q. What if I am contacted by Canvas sales representatives?

A. The OEI has been working with the Canvas sales team to reduce the “direct sales” approach, though they may contact colleges to provide demos.