Faculty Senate Information Technology and Media Services (ITMS) Subcommittee

Learning Management System Exploration Project Final Report Summary
2023

Report Prepared by Dr. Helen Wei
Proposed and Approved by all members of ITMS subcommittee
Reviewed by Dr. Claudine Keenan
Stockton Information Technology Services (ITS) and
Stockton Center for Teaching and Learning Design (CTLD)
Submitted May 2023 to the Faculty Senate

Stockton Faculty Senate ITMS Subcommittee Members 2022 - 2023

Faculty Members

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Peter Gallagher	Associate Director of IT Help Desk Services

Motivation of the Project

In December 2020, the Senate charged the ITMS to explore Learning Management Systems (LMS) alternatives. The motivation behind this exploration project on the learning management system (LMS) is discovering faculty and student needs related to Stockton's LMS, which is currently Blackboard. After exploring LMSs, a potential transition from Blackboard to Canvas was driven by reported issues with Blackboard. One of the most significant complaints about Blackboard is the outdated user interface that many find challenging to navigate. Additionally, the mobile accessibility of the platform is often criticized. As a result, the ITMS subcommittee requested a brief faculty product demonstration from Blackboard and Canvas and conducted a survey in October-December 2021 based on the demonstrations. Of the 82 survey responses received, 59.8% of the respondents reported wanting to explore replacing Blackboard with Canvas. 25.6% of the respondents did not want to explore replacing Blackboard with Canvas, and 14.6% were unsure. Faculty reported a higher rate of familiarity with Blackboard (96%) compared to Canvas (41.5%). Based on these findings and to determine actual interest in using Blackboard or Canvas, the ITMS committee recommended that eligible faculty participate in a faculty-wide vote from **April 27th to May 6th, 2023**, to select a preferred LMS. The selection of an LMS impacts all faculty and students, so a high participation rate in the faculty-wide vote was desired. The following report explains the vote results and ITMS subcommittee recommendations.

The Faculty-Wide Vote

a. *Vote Design*

The following three questions vetted by the ITMS committee members were asked using a Qualtrics survey:
1. Do you want Stockton University to officially switch from Blackboard to Canvas?
2. Do you want to teach using Canvas instead of Blackboard?
3. Please add any additional comments below:
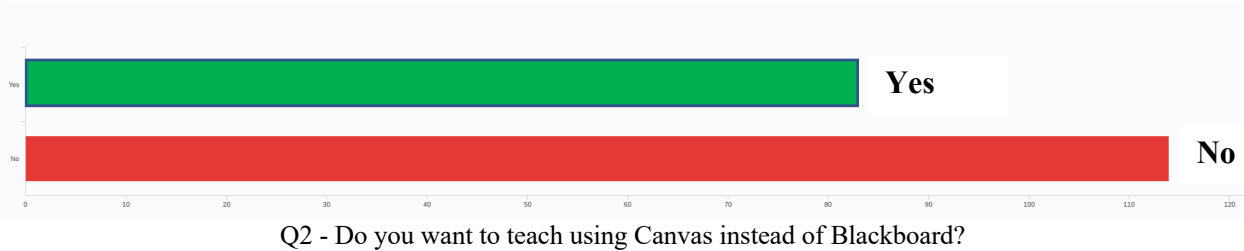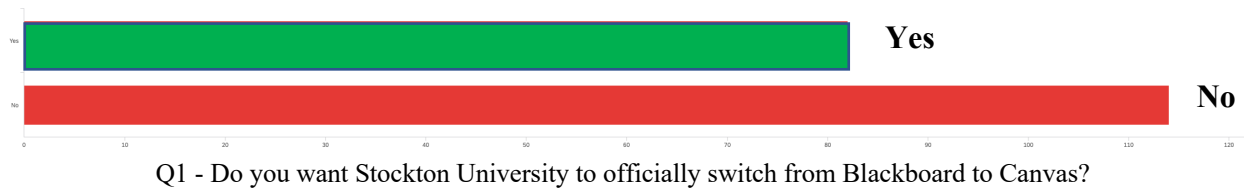
b. *Vote Dissemination*

The Qualtrics survey was distributed via individual links to all eligible faculty members at Stockton University, including tenured, non-tenured, and part-time staff who teach (n= 898). The voting period was from April 27th to May 6th, 2023. Participants were required to use their Stockton credentials to access the survey. Each faculty member was limited to one vote. A reminder was sent on May 3rd to encourage participation.

c. *Quantitative Analysis of Vote Results for Questions 1 and 2*

Out of 898 eligible faculty members at Stockton University, 209 responded to the vote, with 197 valid votes (**Figure** below). Question 1, "Do you want Stockton University to officially switch from Blackboard to Canvas?" received 114 (58.16%) "NO" responses and 82 (41.84%) "YES" responses. Question 2, "Do you want to teach using Canvas instead of Blackboard?" had a response consistent with the first question.

Statistically, approximately 22% (= 197/898) of those eligible to vote did so. While we cannot know for certain how the remaining 78% might have responded, the simple quantitative majority was opposed to making the switch. However, a textual analysis of

the qualitative comments reveals more favorable opinions of Canvas when compared to Blackboard (see section **d**).

Q1 - Do you want Stockton University to officially switch from Blackboard to Canvas?

Q2 - Do you want to teach using Canvas instead of Blackboard?

d. ***Qualitative Analysis of Vote Results for Question 3*** –
Of the 197 eligible faculty votes, 103 (52.3%) provided comments. There were 39 supporting Blackboard, 44 supporting Canvas, and 20 mixed (criticizing Blackboard, Canvas or mixed comments or unknown are all considered as "mixed"). Qualitative analysis highlights a discrepancy between the text comments and the quantitative results regarding the transition from Blackboard to Canvas. While the text comments exhibit a slight inclination towards Canvas, the objective question responses indicate opposition to the switch. One major concern expressed is the perceived time-consuming nature of the transition and the steep learning curve associated with adopting a new system. The need for substantial support and compensation for faculty members to facilitate the learning of a new system is also emphasized. By utilizing ChatGPT to summarize the text comments, further analysis was conducted to gain insights from the qualitative feedback.

In reviewing the comments with ChatGPT, the following summary was created: Stockton University is considering changing from Blackboard to Canvas as its learning management system. This decision is not easy, as both systems have advantages and disadvantages. In this report, we will review the comments made by faculty to determine if Stockton University should switch from Blackboard to Canvas.

The most commonly mentioned advantage of Canvas is its user-friendliness. Some faculty members (15 relevant comments (15% = 15/103)) find Canvas easier to navigate and use compared to Blackboard. For instance, one faculty member commented that Canvas has a more intuitive interface, with features such as a to-do list and a calendar that make it easier to keep track of assignments. Additionally, two faculty members mentioned that Canvas has a more modern and sleek design, which makes it more visually appealing.

In contrast, Blackboard was criticized in two comments for being outdated and difficult to use. One faculty member mentioned that Blackboard's interface is cluttered, making it challenging to find the necessary resources. Another faculty member complained about the slow loading times of Blackboard, which made it frustrating to access course

materials. Furthermore, one faculty members mentioned that Blackboard's mobile app was unreliable and often crashed, making accessing course materials from mobile devices challenging.

Overall, in reviewing faculty comments aligned to quantifiable survey responses, some faculty report compelling reasons to consider switching from Blackboard to Canvas. From this point of view, the advantages of Canvas, such as its user-friendliness, collaborative tools, and integration with external tools, appear to outweigh the disadvantages of Blackboard, such as its outdated interface and lack of effective collaboration and integration tools.

Our Recommendation

Based on a voting process that captured the opinions of 22% (=197/898) of all Stockton faculty, the majority of faculty (57%) did not want Stockton University to switch from Blackboard to Canvas Faculty comments indicate specific benefits of Canvas compared to Blackboard.

Due to the low participation rate (22%), there are concerns about the accuracy and generalizability of the findings. Low response rates can lead to non-response bias. The discrepancy observed in comments may be explained by the characteristics of non-respondents differing significantly from those who responded. The survey participants may have different characteristics or motivations related to an LMS change than non-participants. These potential biases may distort the results and compromise the validity of the findings, as this small faculty sample may not accurately represent the views of a majority of the Stockton faculty population. To ensure the validity and reliability of survey results, it is generally recommended to strive for higher response rates, such as 60% or higher, to minimize these limitations.

Based on limited findings, the ITMS members recommend continued evaluation of Blackboard. Faculty who prefer Canvas may consider increased use of Blackboard Ultra, which offers a style and appearance like Canvas. It was recommended that student opinions regarding using Canvas compared to Blackboard be considered in future efforts to evaluate the best LMS for Stockton.

Appendix

To help faculty better respond to the vote, the ITMS subcommittee offers the following resources (See Appendix for details)

A. Stockton faculty survey results from demonstrations by Blackboard and Canvas representatives in Fall 2021.

B. A panel discussion to learn more about the major differences between Blackboard/Ultra and Canvas, including the challenges and advantages of transitioning from one to the other (March 2023). A text summary of the major points addressed in the panel discussion.

Panel Discussion Information:
Panel Moderator: Dr. Nusret M. Sahin, *Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice & Members of Faculty Senate ITMS subcommittee*
Panelist #1: Blake Haggerty, Associate CIO, Digital Learning & Campus Support, New Jersey Institute of Technology
Panelist #2: Justine Krawiec, Assistant Director, Learning Technologies Office of Digital Learning
Panelist #3: Molly K. Hare, Director, Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence, Associate Professor, Kinesiology, Recreation & Sport, Indiana State University
Panelist #4: Csilla Stewart, Instructional Designer at Bradley University, and part-time lecturer, at Indiana State University
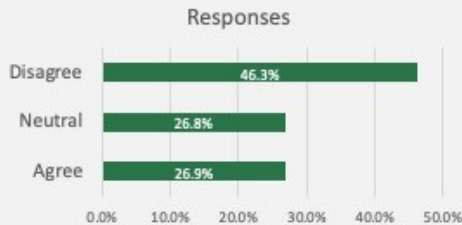

C. An infographic summarizes information collected by the ITMS subcommittee over the last two years:

Infographic Editting Team:
Lead: Melanie Schroer
Members: Quynh Nguyen, Rui Ge, Ronald Caro

A Survey of Stockton Faculty

Survey Prompt: "I am very comfortable with Blackboard, so I prefer to not have to learn to use a new system like Canvas."

Responses

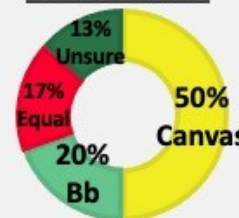|	
Disagree	46.3%
Neutral	26.8%
Agree	26.9%

0.0% 10.0% 20.0% 30.0% 40.0% 50.0%

- 150 faculty (of 711 total at Stockton) attended a demonstration on Blackboard, Canvas, or both LMSs in fall 2021
- 82 faculty completed a survey, 59 of whom watched at least one demonstration
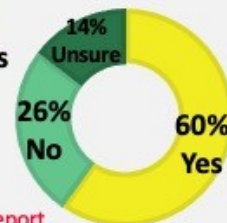
Based on the demonstrations, faculty indicated:

Best for students

- 13% Unsure
- 17% Equal
- 20% Bb
- 50% Canvas

Should Stockton explore replacing Bb with Canvas?

- 14% Unsure
- 26% No
- 60% Yes

[Link to the full survey report](#)

Should Stockton Switch from Blackboard to Canvas?

Learning Management System Infographic

Check them out:

Bb Blackboard — [Website](#)

CANVAS — [Website](#)

Stockton Faculty Said...

Themes in the qualitative survey data:

👍 **Bb Blackboard**
- No need to reformat courses or learn new system
- Content already designed over many years (easy to copy)

👎
- Clunky, tedious
- Labor-intensive grading
- Difficulty uploading bulk content

👍 **CANVAS**
- Intuitive, user-friendly
- Functional app
- Available features: What-If Grades, To Do List, Translator, Speedgrader

👎
- Learning curve and time to transition
- Concerns over integration and organization

"The time it will take to recreate my Blackboard content in Canvas is time that I don't have."
"Blackboard is an awkward system with a non-user-friendly interface."

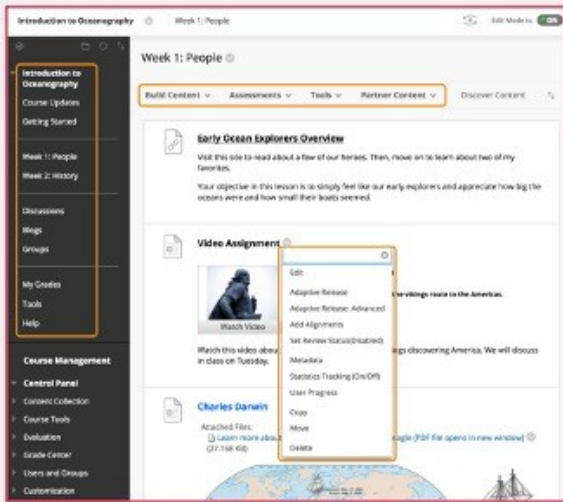## If approved, what does a transition to Canvas mean for me?*

Initially, faculty may use Canvas or Blackboard. On a specified date, Blackboard would no longer be available. Faculty would teach with Canvas.

Blackboard courses will upload to Canvas, but some content will need modification (2 to 20-hour time commitment).

Canvas is "easy to learn". It takes faculty a few hours to several semesters to be comfortable using Canvas.
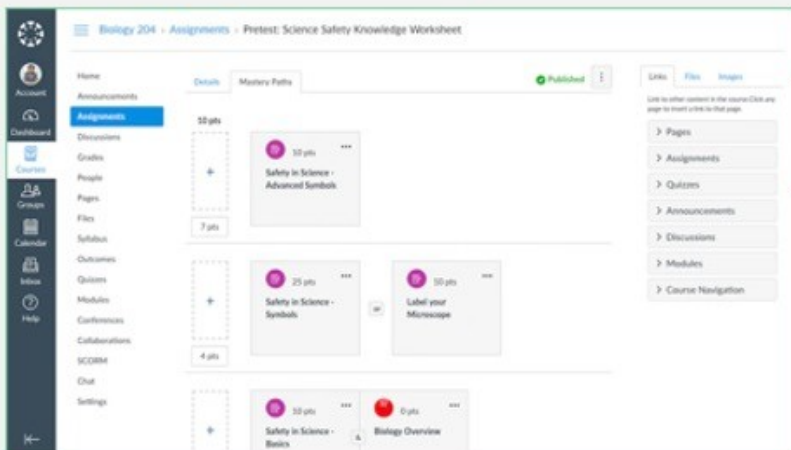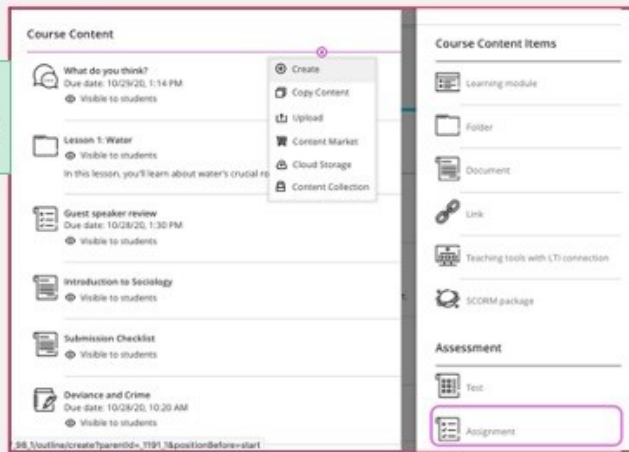
Canvas training opportunities will be provided.

*Based on March 2023 Panel Presentation on "Challenges and opportunities for the transitions to new LMS:"
Links to Recording and Text Summary of Panelists' Reflections on the Process of Transitioning to Canvas

Blackboard Original Course View

Blackboard Ultra Course View

Canvas Course View