




January 20, 2015

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** District Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Jim Murdaugh, President 

**SUBJECT:** Procuring Canvas by Instructure as the New Learning Management System

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### Item Description

This item requests the District Board of Trustees approval to procure Canvas by Instructure as the new Learning Management System (LMS) for the College for a 5 year term beginning on July 1, 2015. The yearly cost is not to exceed \$162,000 for year 1 or \$215,000 for each of years 2-5, plus a total of no more than \$10,000 for training costs for a total 5-year cost of \$1,032,000.

### Overview and Background

The College has been using Blackboard Learn as its LMS for many years and the most recent Blackboard contract was renewed for a three-year term starting on July 1, 2013. However, TCC has not examined the competitive landscape for LMS products in quite a number of years. That fact, coupled with a renewal cost that was higher than we felt it should be (despite heavy negotiations with Blackboard at the time of renewal), and numerous service and support problems with Blackboard, led Vice President Ingerman to convene a subcommittee of the Educational Technology Committee to evaluate the LMS landscape. The replacement of the College's LMS is a part of the College's 2014-15 Technology Plan (<https://www.tcc.fl.edu/Current/Helpdesk/Pages/TechnologyPlan.aspx>):

*Replace and/or upgrade the College's LMS system (and other systems that either require change due to LMS conversion or whose change in conjunction with the LMS conversion will benefit the College*

The charge of the LMS subcommittee was to look at the major LMS products to see whether Blackboard would still be the best choice for TCC or whether another LMS might better serve our needs. The 14-member sub-committee, representing a broad cross-section of faculty and administrators, began meeting in the fall of 2013 with an eye towards making a software recommendation by the middle of the spring, 2014 term. The sub-committee conducted numerous focus groups with faculty and students from across the campus to develop a list of the features that faculty found to be required to support their teaching and student learning as well as a list of the features that faculty thought would be desirable. This list was then used to compare a variety of LMS products, from commercial

to open-source, ultimately leading the sub-committee to focus on the two most popular LMS products: Blackboard Learn and Canvas by Instructure. After examining the features of the two products and hearing about the experiences of other schools with both products (from online communities, conferences, and personal conversations) the sub-committee strongly favored Canvas as the best choice for TCC. The sub-committee then scheduled a presentation and demo of Canvas that was open to all TCC faculty, and the responses were overwhelmingly positive in favor of the College adopting Canvas as our new LMS. As a result the sub-committee made a unanimous recommendation, which the Educational Technology committee accepted and endorsed, that the College adopt Canvas as our new LMS. Vice President Ingerman spoke to the Gartner Group, an IT advisory organization, about the LMS landscape and the viability of Canvas as a potential solution for TCC and the Gartner analyst supported our assessment of the products as well as our decision. As a result of the sub-committee recommendation, feedback from TCC faculty (including the Faculty Senate Executive Committee), feedback from the Gartner Group, and feedback from other colleges and universities, Vice President Ingerman accepted the recommendation to change the College's LMS to Canvas by Instructure.

In order to ensure that Canvas really would meet the needs of the faculty and students, a pilot of Canvas was conducted during the fall, 2014 term. A dozen faculty members (in addition to other administrators and staff members) and over 400 students took part in the pilot, representing over 15 different courses. During the term both the faculty and students were surveyed about their opinions regarding Canvas. The responses were overwhelmingly positive in favor of Canvas. This feedback, as well as a timeline for transitioning to Canvas, was shared with the Faculty Senate during an open forum, with the academic Deans and Directors and with the faculty as a whole. Given that this item is being presented to the District Board of Trustees at their January, 2015 meeting, and given the tremendous desire of the faculty to switch to Canvas as soon as possible, we worked with Instructure to extend the use of Canvas through the end of the spring, 2015 term.

Note that the pricing and features of Canvas are far superior to those of Blackboard. Here are just a few of the major differences:

- Canvas pricing is based upon student full-time equivalents (FTE) whereas Blackboard charged us based on the total number of accounts in the system, which led to a very high number for TCC given our volume of part time students (this model also led TCC to not automatically provide accounts in Blackboard for staff). The Canvas model based upon FTE is far more advantageous to the College both in terms of use of the system as well as in pricing.
- Canvas offered 12 times that amount of storage (500GB for Blackboard vs 6TB for Canvas) for educational materials than Blackboard offered.
- Blackboard capped the amount of bandwidth that we could use (potentially limiting the use of the software). Canvas has no such cap.
- The pricing for Canvas included access to the Canvas technical support center, including live telephone support, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for all TCC faculty, students and staff. The same service from Blackboard was at a significant additional cost to what we have already been paying.
- Canvas includes mobile access to course materials for free. Blackboard charges either the students or the College for their mobile app.
- The cost of Canvas will be almost \$80,000 per year less than the current cost of Blackboard.

**Past Actions by the Board**

None

**Funding/Financial Implications**

Funding will come from Fund One College Operating Budget.

**Staff Resource**

Bret Ingerman

**Recommended Action**

Approve the recommendation to procure Canvas by Instructure as the new Learning Management System (LMS) for the College for a 5 year term beginning on July 1, 2015. The yearly cost is not to exceed \$162,000 for year 1 or \$215,000 for each of years 2-5, plus a total of no more than \$10,000 for training costs for training costs for a total 5-year cost of \$1,032,000. The purchase(s) will be made using FDOE Rule 6A-14.0734(2)(g) Exempting IT Purchases from competitive bid: "Information technology resources as defined as all forms of technology used to create, process, store, transmit, exchange and use information in various forms of voice, video and data, and shall also include the personnel costs and contracts that provide direct information technology support consistent with each individual college's information technology plan."