10-24-14 - 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM

Instructure Canvas Demos - Bondurant Hall Auditorium

After reviewing the Requests for Information (RFI) that were received as part to the Learning Management System Evaluation, the Instructional Technology Standing Committee selected two vendors to come to campus and present demonstrations of their LMS software. Instructure Canvas was the first vendor to present. All UM faculty and staff were invited to these demos. The first demo was held at 9:00 a.m. a second demo was held at 2:00 p.m. Both demos covered the same information. Twenty-three people were in attendance including several members of the Instructional Technology Standing Committee. Highlights from the demo sessions are included in this report.

- Canvas is a cloud based solution. Upgrades are automatically applied to the system. All web browsers are supported, and there is no client side java required.

- Canvas opens to a Dashboard showing date relevant course content.

- It includes a dynamic learning repository which was recently announced at the Educause conference.

- Users control account settings for:

  - Adding an alternate email address

  - Adding a cell phone number

  - Notification preferences, which can go to phone, Facebook, Twitter, or email.

- Canvas includes ePortfolios, which can be shared with an external URL. Upon graduation, students can export their ePortfolio content to take with them.

- The Canvas Calendar is populated by due dates. It can be color coded by course, and supports drag and drop calendar entries to update due dates.

- Canvas also includes web conferencing.

- A course, which has been exported from Blackboard as a .zip file, can be imported into Canvas. Not all features and content will migrate over though because not all features in Blackboard will match up to features in Canvas.

- Canvas, like Blackboard, includes a date migration tool that can be used to update copied course content for a new semester.

- Canvas recommends rebuilding all courses from scratch.

- Canvas has a Syllabus tool/builder which pulls due dates from Canvas assignments into the syllabus.

- Microsoft Office and Adobe PDF documents open inline in the web browser. Instructors can add images directly from Flickr. They can add video to a course using a webcam. Canvas encodes videos upon upload so that they will be in a format that works on all platforms.

- Course content is built around modules. Assignments can be created and based on grading rubrics. It has the ability to set outcomes that can be added to rubrics.

- Folders in Blackboard become Modules in Canvas.

- Canvas also provides a Speed Grader app which can be used to grade assignments.

- Students can estimate grades using a "What If" feature which allows them to say "what if I make a 90 on this test" and see how that would affect their final grade.

- Quizzes support accommodation by allowing the provision of extra time for select students.

- Can an instructor or chair populate 100 courses without IT being involved? The given answer was Yes, but only for one course import at a time.

- Peer review can be enabled for any assignment.

- Closed captioning services are not provided by Canvas.

- The Canvas upgrade cycle is every three weeks. They release a video of upcoming changes before they are rolled out. Documentation is rolled out simultaneously with the new release. The system administrator can opt-out of new features by postponing them up to a certain extent.

- Canvas includes a Commons area for content sharing, similar to BbXplor.