10-29-14 - 2:00 PM and 3:30 PM

Blackboard Demo - 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. Blackboard was the second vendor to present. All UM faculty and staff were invited to these demos. The first demo was held at 2:00 p.m. A second demo was held at 3:30 p.m. Both demos covered the same information. Fifteen people were in attendance including several members of the Instructional Technology Standing Committee. Highlights from the demo sessions are included in this report.

- Blackboard began by pointing out that Blackboard provides features that we do not currently license at UM.

- One of those features is the Student Profile and ePortfolios. Students can create ePortfolios to showcase their work. Students have the option to export their portfolio as html and take it with them.

- Another feature, which we don't currently have, is Bb Drive. With Bb Drive, instructors can mount a folder on their computer's desktop, and any files saved to this folder will be automatically added to their Blackboard account.

- A third feature, the Content system, which UM does not currently license, will allow instructors to manage their content more easily. For example, an instructor can upload a single file that can be shared among many courses. When that file is updated, it is automatically updated across all courses.

- Bb xPlor is another feature that we don't currently license. It is a cloud based learning repository that can be used to share modules and content across institutions.

- Student preview mode will be added to our Blackboard system during the upcoming December upgrade. This will allow instructors to view their course exactly as a student would see it.

- The December upgrade to our Blackboard will also include a change to SafeAssign. SafeAssign will now be integrated directly into regular Bb assignments, and instructors will be able to use Inline Grading to markup and grade SafeAssignments.

- The December upgrade will also allow for anonymous and delegated grading, as well as providing calculated question types with variables.

- A Bb Grader app will be released soon that will give instructors the ability to grade assignments directly on the iPad using a combination of annotation and audio/video based feedback which can be recorded directly through the iPad.

- Blackboard also demoed their current date management feature which facilitates the course copy process by allowing the instructor to easily update assignment due dates.

Blackboard then demoed their newly redesigned user interface which should be available to UM by the end of 2015. Highlights from the new user interfaces are included below.

- The newly redesigned interface looks very clean and modern.
- A student profile view includes relevant content from all courses including: calendar, course schedule, messages, grades, tools, and recent activity.
- The student assignment upload feature now shows a preview of the file contents before they submit it. This should help students not to accidentally submit the wrong file to an assignment.
- Students can add comments to any assignment.
- The new interface provides the ability to perform a search within a course.
- Announcements pop up on entrance into a course.
- Instructions stay with a test as students take the test. The instructions are visible while the test is in progress.
- Faculty also have a profile view in which they can view settings, publisher connections, grades, messages, calendar, tools, xPlor, content, and goals.
- Content can be added anywhere in a course with a click of a + icon. New content no longer goes to the bottom of the page.
- Instructors can also preview an upload before it is added.
- Instructors can connect to google drive and publisher content.
- Course copy is no longer all or nothing. Now instructors can choose exactly which content items they would like to copy into a new course.
- The new user interface will be optional on roll-out. Instructors will have the option to choose to use the new interface on a course by course basis.