

February 16, 2021

**Student Success Initiative – Transition to Canvas Advisory Committee**

Amy Woods, College of Applied Health Sciences, *chair*

Anna Ball, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

Amanda Ciafone, College of Media

Sangeetha Gopalakrishnan, College of Education

Adam King, Gies College of Business

Holly Fuson, College of Veterinary Medicine

Billy Huff, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Randy McCarthy, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Eugene Moore, Division of General Studies

Dave Mussulman, Grainger College of Engineering

Lori Raetzman, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Senate Educational Policy Committee

Yuri Ramirez, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Brian Siemann, Disability Resources and Educational Services

Marci Uihlein, College of Fine and Applied Sciences

Graduate Student, TBD

Undergrad Student, TBD

Kelly Birky, Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning, *ex officio*

Michel Bellini, Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning, *ex officio*

Isaac Galvan, Technology Services, *ex officio*

Drew MacGregor, Technology Services, *ex officio*

Laura Hendley, Provost's Office, *ex officio*

Kristi Kuntz, Provost's Office, *ex officio*

Dear Colleagues,

Launched in fall 2019, the campus' Student Success Initiative has taken a wide view in defining student success, establishing goals, and collecting feedback. Last year's principled look assessed student responsibility, participation, and performance, and it analyzed structural and systemic barriers that impede student progress.

With collaboration from Academic and Student Affairs and relying heavily on the expertise of colleagues from across campus, the initial phase in 2019-2020 invited faculty, staff, and student voices to recognize and advance the good work already being done, identifying current opportunities for effective future outcomes. In spite of – and, in many ways, informed by the COVID-19 pandemic – four implementation teams submitted final reports with recommendations that are thorough, aspirational, broad, and relevant.

In the second phase, the Student Success Initiative continues by assembling teams to implement some of the key recommendations that came from the task forces' final reports. One of the main findings from multiple working groups was that the proliferation of LMS and LMS-like systems was a major barrier to student success. Those working groups recommended that campus adopt a single LMS system. Although we are unlikely to fully achieve a single campus LMS, wider adoption of an excellent learning tool would clearly be of significant benefit to our students.

For a number of years, our campus learning management system (LMS) has been Compass, a Blackboard product. As mentioned above, many other LMS systems are in use on campus. Our

contract with Blackboard will expire soon, forcing a transition to different campus LMS during the 2021-22 academic year. (Remaining with Blackboard would also require transition to a new system, as the existing Compass product sunsets in 2022.) While the pandemic makes a transition at this time a challenge, we do not have a choice.

Canvas has been identified as the state-of-the-art in LMS systems, currently in use by 11 of 14 institutions in the Big 10 Academic Alliance. A campus migration to Canvas will allow us to better use educational tools and, hopefully, help to consolidate more campus usage into a single LMS system. The campus will not mandate that all instructors utilize Canvas, but we hope that individuals and units will recognize the benefit to students and quality of the product, as well as operational efficiency and cost-savings associated with Canvas.

A number of offices and experts are already working on this transition, including Technology Services and CITL. We will have working groups that ensure all of the technical aspects of this transition are under control.

We also realize that a well-organized transition to a new LMS, including strong communications, easy of transition, instructor training, and outstanding customer service, is crucial to the success of this project.

To that end, I ask that this Advisory Committee advise and consult on all major aspects of the transition to Canvas as the campus LMS:

- Review and advise on Canvas implementation and migration, receiving reports from the project manager and working groups.
- Provide advice on the overall priorities and directions for the project.
- Review, monitor and advise on the timeline for the project and progress towards milestones.
- Ensure that units involved in the project are communicating and making progress.
- Provide input on communication with instructors, training, and specific needs.
- Gather input and feedback from instructors and users across campus and advise on responsive actions.

Overall, your role will be crucial in guiding a successful transition over the next 18 months.

This committee is not responsible for recruiting instructors to migrate to Canvas, nor is it being asked to “evangelize” on behalf of Canvas or the transition. We are asking for your honest, unfiltered perspective and advice on this process.

Thank you for agreeing to serve. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Kevin T. Pitts

Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

