

MiraCosta College

Course Management System Evaluation Task Force
Recommendation

May 2016

Executive Summary

In spring 2016, a task force of MiraCosta College faculty, staff, students, and administrators systematically considered input from faculty, students, and course management system vendors, and is recommending Canvas as the best system for the future needs of MiraCosta College. The task force recommends a 2-year transition period with extensive support for faculty and students throughout the process. This support will be articulated in a number of ways.

CMS Evaluation Background

At MiraCosta College, Blackboard has been in use since Feb. 2004; Moodle has been another course management system (CMS) option since Aug. 2007. Etudes was also available for MiraCosta faculty from July 2008 until June 2011. At present, a CMS is used by nearly every student and the vast majority of faculty at MiraCosta College. It's a critical tool for communication, collaboration, assignment and grade management, and course material distribution in not only 100% online and hybrid classes, but most on-ground classes as well. In fall 2015, nearly 89% of all MiraCosta credit classes used Blackboard or Moodle. Of all 1,589 credit and non-credit classes, 1,295 used Blackboard and 58 used Moodle.

The MiraCosta Online Educators (MOE) committee has been discussing for some time the possibility of re-evaluating the College's course management system(s). Most colleges and universities do this periodically to assess whether their current system remains the best choice as products emerge and change, and institutional priorities and goals for online education evolve. Further, in spring 2015, the CCC Online Education Initiative announced the selection of Canvas as the Common Course Management System and that it would be available at no charge to all CCCs through 2018-19 at minimum (if used as the sole institutionally supported CMS by the college). The 2015-18 Online Education Plan therefore included an action item to re-evaluate MiraCosta's course management system.

Early in the fall 2015 semester, MOE recommended initiating a CMS evaluation in the 2015-16 academic year, and in November 2015, college leadership and MOE representatives agreed on the composition and charge for a CMS evaluation task force, as well as the inclusion of Blackboard, Moodle, and Canvas as the "contenders."

In Dec. 2015, the Steering Committee routed responsibility for the task force's decision through the Academic Affairs Committee; from there, the decision is to be reviewed by the four governance councils: Academic Senate, Classified Senate Council, Associated Student Government Council, and Administrative Council.

CMS Evaluation Task Force

The task force's charge: *Develop a recommendation regarding course management system selection to meet MiraCosta's strategic online learning needs for the next five years.*

The task force was made up of full- and part-time faculty, classified, student, and administrative representatives. Faculty represent a range of disciplines, online teaching experience, and course management system preference. Each task force member was a member of either the Decision Analysis (DA), Input Gathering (IG), or Public Relations (PR) subcommittee.

Faculty: Sam Arenivar (DA), Adrean Askerneese (PR), Joanne Carrubba (DA), Mike Deschamps (PR), Billy Gunn (IG), Julie Harland (IG), Jeff Ihara (DA), Jim Julius (PR), Robert Kelley (DA), Richard Ma (IG), Angela Senigaglia (PR)

Classified: Robert Erichsen (IG), Karen Korstad (PR), Charlie Medina (IG), Steve Schultz (DA)

Administrator: Mike Fino (DA), Mario Valente (DA)

Student: Perla Davis (IG), Omar Jimenez (DA), Margo Newkirk (PR)

The task force selected Jim Julius as its chair during its initial meeting. Mike Fino chaired the DA subcommittee with support from Sam Arenivar as the DA facilitator. Billy Gunn chaired the IG subcommittee. Mike Deschamps and Karen Korstad co-chaired the PR subcommittee.

CMS Evaluation Process/Timeline

All activities occurred during spring 2016 (see the first section above for work prior to 2016):

- January 19 - Vendor representatives from Blackboard, Moodle, and Canvas presented live at the Oceanside campus for one hour each during a Flex workshop.
- February 1 - CMS evaluation task force met to begin the process and divide into subcommittees to complete most work.
- Throughout February - CMS evaluation subcommittees worked to:
 - develop the rating criteria and weights based on the Decision Analysis methodology;
 - develop corresponding survey instruments;
 - and begin public relations and communication efforts.
- Late February - The <http://miracosta.edu/cms-eval> website went live to provide information about the evaluation process.
- March 4 and 11 - Press releases about the process went out via the MiraCostan newsletter.
- March 15 and 18 - Open labs enabled faculty and students to try Blackboard, Moodle, and Canvas in a hands-on, supportive environment. Online demos were also available.
- March 15-31 - Surveys were open for faculty and students to provide feedback on Blackboard, Moodle, and Canvas in conjunction with online access to each system.

- March 28 - Vendors made final half-hour online presentations to the task force based on the DA criteria being used for the decision.
- March 28-31 - Survey was open for task force members to rate the CMSs on all DA criteria.
- March 31 - April 4 - Feedback from faculty, students, and the task force was compiled and provided back to the task force to enable task force members to do final DA criteria ratings, taking into account all input.
- April 4 - Final DA ratings from task force members were weighted and compiled to inform the final task force decision. Task force met and agreed upon Canvas as the recommended CMS, along with a number of recommendations for supporting the process of adopting Canvas (see below).
- April 8 - Task force recommendation approved by the Academic Affairs Committee.
- April & May - Recommendation from AAC approved by each of the four governance councils.
- May 20 - Final recommendation as approved by AS and ASG accepted by College Council.

CMS Recommendation

The CMS evaluation task force recommends that Canvas be adopted as MiraCosta’s course management system. The [overall Decision Analysis](#) score for Canvas was 4043, compared to 3260 for Moodle and 3230 for Blackboard. Canvas had the highest score on 62 out of the 71 criteria identified. This preference for Canvas was also reflected on the faculty and student surveys, where Canvas received the highest score for all 9 criteria on the [faculty survey](#), and all 10 criteria on the [student survey](#).

The task force affirms that Canvas is the best CMS “to meet MiraCosta’s strategic online learning needs for the next five years.” The task force also recognizes that transitioning to Canvas from Blackboard and Moodle will not be straightforward and must be well supported. The remainder of this document outlines recommendations that the task force believes must be considered in order for this transition to be successful.

Timeline

The task force recommends a 2-year transition to Canvas as follows:

	Canvas	Blackboard	Moodle
Fall 2016	Available via limited pilot for 10-15 classes/faculty	Available	Available
Spring 2017	First semester of	Available	Available

	general availability via OEI adoption		
Summer 2017	Available	Available	Available
Fall 2017	Available	Available	Available
Spring 2018	Available	Last semester of availability for teaching	Last semester of availability for teaching
Summer 2018 and beyond	Sole institutionally-supported CMS	Archival access only through spring 2019	Archival access only through spring 2019

Faculty Support

The task force recommends that the Office of Online Education and Office of Instruction consider the following ideas for supporting faculty during the transition to Canvas:

- Provide many Flex workshops throughout Flex weeks and during each semester, in person and online.
- Provide extensive online resources in support of faculty using Canvas.
- Integrate the 24x7 Canvas support provided through OEI with existing faculty support so faculty seamlessly get phone support as quickly as possible.
- Provide personal support for the export of courses from existing systems and import into Canvas.
- Hire an instructional designer to provide individual support for course redesign for faculty, especially for faculty with extensively developed courses.
- Equip the fall 2016 Canvas pilot faculty for success through training and support. Provide opportunities for the pilot faculty to share examples and experiences in support of other faculty as they make the transition to Canvas.
- Create a team of work-study students who are available to assist both faculty and students with Canvas questions during spring 2017 and throughout 2017-18.
- Conduct communication campaigns to fully inform faculty of the transition, including major benefits and potential challenges associated with Canvas, and how to obtain support.

The faculty survey clearly indicates concern that workload issues cannot be fully addressed through the support services described in this section. Therefore we recommend that the district enter into negotiations with the FA and AF to address working conditions concerns related to the transition to Canvas.

Student Support

The task force recommends that the Office of Online Education, AIS, and Office of Instruction consider the following ideas for supporting students during the transition to Canvas:

- Integrate the 24x7 Canvas support provided through OEI with existing student support so students seamlessly get phone support as quickly as possible.
- Provide extensive online resources in support of students using Canvas.
- Consider how to most effectively support students who are using multiple CMSs simultaneously during the transition period, including modifications to the Student Orientation to Online Learning.
- Conduct communication campaigns to fully inform students of the transition, including major benefits and potential challenges associated with Canvas, and how to obtain support.
- Provide many in-person Canvas training/orientation opportunities.
- Create a team of work-study students who are available to assist both faculty and students with Canvas questions during spring 2017 and throughout 2017-18, and can also help to design and carry out workshops and communications to students.

Additional Considerations

The task force recommends consulting with the Office of Online Education and AIS about issues associated with the technological transition to the new system:

- Integration of MiraCosta technologies with the new system.
- Exporting courses and materials from the old systems and importing them into the new system.
- Archiving courses and materials from the old system in a format enabling maximal reuse.

The task force recommends that the AS, Office of Instruction, Office of Online Education, and AIS fully explore the budgetary implications of this move, including:

- Determining what to do with any cost savings.
- Determining how to fund new costs that may arise during the transition period.
- Planning appropriately for potential changes to the costs in the future.