

# LMS refresh selection: Instructure's Canvas

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To: STAFF-L@LISTS.NAU.EDU <STAFF-L@LISTS.NAU.EDU>;



Dear colleagues,

I'm very happy to report that we are selecting Instructure's Canvas as the institution's next Learning Management System (LMS). This outcome follows the Provost's endorsement of the leadership and coordinating group's unanimous recommendation in favor of this platform being the best choice with which to support student learning and success.

## **Process and decision overview**

Starting in August 2021, we engaged in an open selection process that prioritized the broadest possible degree of collaboration and consultation with the institutional community and key stakeholder groups to select from among D2L's Brightspace, Instructure's Canvas, or Blackboard's Ultra Course View.

These efforts were coordinated by a diverse team from across the institution: Maylee Acosta, Associated Students of Northern Arizona University; Kara Attrep, Faculty Senate and Honors College; Don Carter, Academic Technology Advisory and Coordinating Council; Grace Ditsworth, Project Manager; John Georgas (chair), Vice Provost for Academic Operations; Rebecca Seeger, Graduate Student Government; Dan Stoffel, Information Technology Services; Gayla Stoner, Vice Provost and Dean for Online and Innovative Educational Initiatives; and Kathleen Tanner, Project Manager.

The centerpiece of our selection process was the collaborative development of general functional and non-functional selection criteria that highlight contemporary student, faculty, and staff needs—which then served as the structured foundation for collecting the institutional community's input through an assessment questionnaire. The results of this summative assessment were clearer than we could have hoped for: With hundreds of responses, Canvas emerged as both the overall highest-rated platform as well as the leading system across all selection criteria.

We additionally assessed our candidate systems across multiple other dimensions—including technical implementation considerations, our students' relative familiarity with each system, and a comparative review assessing the ease of transition and quality of each candidate system's mobile support—and Canvas emerged as the leading platform across these dimensions as well.

## **Next steps**

While this selection is a critical milestone, it is only the first step toward our adoption of this new platform. With our current Blackboard Original LMS remaining in place through spring 2023, we will continue collaborating and openly sharing information on our implementation and migration efforts until the transition is complete. Our information portal ([in.nau.edu/academic-affairs/lms-transition](https://in.nau.edu/academic-affairs/lms-transition)) will continue to be regularly updated throughout major planned activities ([in.nau.edu/academic-affairs/implementation-timeline](https://in.nau.edu/academic-affairs/implementation-timeline)).

## **Gratitude and thanks**

The collaborative path toward this outcome would not have been possible without the active participation of students, faculty, and staff—thank you to all who engaged in this work through college townhall and stakeholder group meetings, trialing candidate systems in demonstration and open sandbox courses, participating in open labs and demo sessions, completing guided activities, and sharing feedback through our assessment questionnaire and other communications.

We look forward to building on this new foundation and are grateful for everyone's time, passion, commitment, and thoughtful feedback!

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