

LMS implementation closing message, September 2023

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THE PROVOST

NAU
NORTHERN
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Dear colleagues,

With the fall term and our use of Canvas well underway, we wanted to offer one last message to mark the closing of our work in selecting and implementing Instructure's Canvas as our next Learning Management System (LMS) and the transition of our use of Canvas into regular operations.

Reflecting on our collaboration

Knowing that the choice of an LMS is central to our mission, we launched into our work in August 2021 with a fundamental commitment to transparent communication and collaboration with students, faculty, and staff.

Led by a diverse team, including representation from our undergraduate and graduate student governments and Faculty Senate, we spent a full academic year considering the functional and non-functional requirements that support learning and shape the student and faculty experience. This work culminated in our institutional community identifying Canvas as the clear choice of platform for our needs.

With our decision in place in March 2022, we then launched into the implementation phase that so successfully culminated in Canvas's broad launch this fall 2023 term: Continuing our engagement in consultative decision-making, our work was guided by the LMS Advisory Council as we configured Canvas for our use and supported the complex work of offering faculty learning opportunities and incentives to prepare for using Canvas and in offering multiple paths for migrating course content.

Of course, this is entirely too short a message to fully capture the work of two years by so many contributors across the institution—we hope that the more extensive archive of our planning and communications available on our [LMS transition site](#) is useful as a deeper retrospective of our collective work.

Gratitude and thanks

We could not have reached this outcome without the active and engaged participation of individual students, faculty, and staff—thank you to all who engaged in this work through townhall and stakeholder meetings, test-driving candidate systems, participating in demo sessions, completing guided activities, sharing feedback through questionnaires, surveys, and email, participating in Canvas trainings, and attending open lab sessions.

Many organizations and groups had extensive roles in this work: The leadership of the LMS Selection Leadership and LMS Advisory Council teams was instrumental, as was support from the Finance, Institutional Planning, and Analysis team. Consultation and engagement in our work was grounded through groups such as Associated Students of Northern Arizona University, NAU's Graduate Student Government, Faculty Senate and the Faculty Senate Executive Council, academic unit chairs and directors, NAU Online,

Continuing Education, Cline Library, Academic Technology Advisory and Coordinating Council, Student Affairs, Institutional Research and Analysis, Office of the Registrar, and the Teaching Academy.

And, of course, the hard work of implementing Canvas and helping prepare faculty for the transition rested on the critical behind-the-scenes work of our Information Technology Services, NAU Online instructional design, Teaching and Learning Center, Academic Affairs Business Analysts, Enterprise Business Analysts, Disability Resources, Career Development, and Risk Management teams.

Finally, I would be remiss in not offering special thanks to key individuals: Don Carter, Dan Stoffel, Bjorn Flugstad, Steve Burrell, and Kathleen Tanner, who have helped steer and support this work from its very inception.

Next steps

As we transition our work with Canvas into our regular operations, please stay tuned for important updates and learning opportunity information from Information Technology Services, the Teaching and Learning Center, and our instructional design teams. As we uncover additional points where we must make configuration decisions, we will remain informed by the needs of the campus community, in particular through the Academic Technology Advisory and Coordinating and LMS Advisory councils.

We hope that everyone is as excited as we are to now be using Canvas in our everyday work with students, and we hope you join us in taking pride for all of our work that got us here—this truly was an institution-wide labor!

All the best,

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