Memo

To:	Learn@UW Executive Committee
From:	Renee Pfeifer-Luckett, Interim Chair. Learn@UW Executive Committee
CC:	James Henderson, VP Academic & Student Affairs, UW System Administration
Date:	May 9, 2016
Re:	UW System Canvas Pilot II Results

Project Overview

In 2013, the University of Wisconsin System conducted an Instructure Canvas pilot project, as recommended by the 2011 Learning Management System (LMS) Task Force, sponsored by the Learn@UW Executive Committee. The pilot was intended to enhance our understanding of the changing LMS landscape. The 2013 pilot provided us with an opportunity to experiment with and explore the features and functionalities of an alternative learning management system. The pilot also focused on ways to use the LMS to improve student engagement, as well as gauge the adoption effort of instructors and students when using a new LMS. The pilot was not intended to seek an LMS to replace Desire2Learn (D2L). Results of the 2013 pilot can be found at this webpage: http://tinyurl.com/hyqmu6n

The objective of Canvas Pilot II is to explore and learn more about the technical "back end" of the product with particular focus on the integration, interoperability, and ease of content export/import with UWS supported third-party systems (e.g., ePortfolio, Kaltura, Turnitin, Respondus Suite, and others outlined in this memo), as well as Canvas's ability to meet discipline/course specific needs for teaching and learning.

It is important to note that Canvas Pilot II was not conducted as a means to seek an LMS to replace our current LMS provider, Desire2Learn (D2L).

Canvas Pilot II participants included five campuses (UW-Colleges, UW-Eau Claire, UW-Green Bay, UW-Milwaukee, and UW-Whitewater), 9 instructors, and 9 courses. The largest course enrollment was 75 students and the smallest was 8 students. A variety of course formats were represented, including face-to-face, blended/hybrid, online and virtual face-to-face (course delivered via real-time web conferencing). A full outline of pilot participant information can be found *on Attachment A: Pilot Participant Information (by Campus)*.

A survey instrument (see *Attachment B: Student Survey Results* for full data set)) was used to gather student feedback, and 44 out of 276 registered students responded to the survey. All 8 faculty were interviewed regarding their experience using Canvas. Informal and ongoing discussions were had with the campus pilot coordinators and with Learn@UW Utility support staff. Results of the survey and interviews are discussed in this memo. The student survey response rate is as follows:

Response Rate (n=296):

UW-Colleges: 6/78 (8%)	UW-Milwaukee: 5/25 (20%)
UW-Eau Claire: 0/20 (0%)	UW-Whitewater: 27/146 (18%)
UW-Green Bay: 6/27 (22%)	

Third-Party Tool Integration

The primary focus of the pilot was to explore how easily third-party tools, already used by UW System institutions were able to be integrated with the Canvas platform. Third-party tools that were tested and/or used in a pilot course include the following products:

- BigBlueButton (web conferencing tool)
- Blackboard Collaborate (web conferencing tool)
- Blog
- Box (cloud storage tool)
- Canvas Wiki Tool (wiki)
- DropBox (cloud storage tool)
- Kaltura (media management)
- McGraw Hill Tools (publisher developed tools)
- Respondus Monitor (remote proctoring tool)
- RSS News Feeds
- Turnitin Originality Checker (anti-plagiarism tool)
- Twitter
- YouTube (media management tool)

From both the instructor and learning technologist perspectives, there were very few issues with integrating third-party tools with the Canvas platform. Only one instance was reported of an instructor's confusion about how to integrate a particular tool. There was also one instance of an issue in using the Canvas integrated web conferencing tool "BigBlueButton." Through use by an instructor during the pilot, it was discovered that recordings, using this tool, are only retained for 30 days under the "free," "default" license. One instructor lost his recordings because we were not aware of this limitation.

From the student's perspective, integrated tools performed as expected. Most students didn't realize that the tool was not "part of" the learning management system.

Findings on Students and Technology

Instructors who taught using Canvas did so by choice, whereas students may not have expected to use a non-D2L LMS as part of their instruction. To help gauge the students' perception of their technical aptitude, several questions were asked around their comfort with technology in general.

Students recognize the value of having one LMS, and use it primarily to interact with faculty and peers, as well as have ready access to grades. Generally, students did not perceive any significant difference between D2L and Canvas. It is worth noting that a majority of students who responded to the survey were either Junior or Senior status, and have had several years of experience using D2L. Students did respond that Canvas was better than D2L in terms of helping them to interact and collaborate with classmates.

The student survey instrument included questions specifically about the benefits of an LMS, with Question 8 asking the students to specifically rate benefits of the LMS and how D2L and Canvas compare. The majority of students felt there was little difference between the two products. What was interesting about this question was that of those students who saw no difference, there was a fairly even split between those who ranked D2L and Canvas as "better." When asked to comment on specific features of Canvas, most students did not use the particular feature during the pilot. The two most often used Canvas features were not surprisingly 1) "downloading course materials/documents (87%) and 2) "checking grades" (87%). A majority of students (69%) reported that they were able to submit class assignments without problems, 23% report that they did encounter some problems with this process.

Not surprisingly, students did not perceive LMS integration with social media, including Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn to be important. The most important attribute of an LMS is considered by students to be using the same LMS by all courses/instructors. Canvas's grading features, including "what if scores" were called out specifically as favorable by students. Although it was mentioned in varying contexts, students also wish the LMS would have a user friendly mobile application that they could use on their smartphone. File sharing among students was also a LMS feature students requested.

When asked to react to the statement "*I am able to learn and adapt to new technologies without much trouble,*" 81 percent of students reported that they strongly agree or agree with the statement, while 9 percent strongly disagreed or disagreed, and 11 percent stating they had no opinion on the statement. When asked about their agreement/ disagreement on the statement "*Technology is important for what I plan to do after graduation*," 76 percent of students responded that they strongly agree or agree with the statement, while 11 percent strongly disagreed or disagreed, and 14 percent stating they had no opinion on the statement. **The majority of students feel they are generally able to learn to use new technologies, and they also recognize the importance of learning to use technology for their lives after graduation.**

By contrast, students did indicate some level of agreement with the statement "*I get uncomfortable (annoyed, worried, etc.) when an instructor indicates that I need to learn a new technology for a course,*" with 0 percent indicated they strongly agree, but with 42 percent indicating that they agree with the statement, 19 percent feel neutral, and 38 percent indicate that they strongly disagree or disagree. When asked for their level of agreement with the statement "*I spend time experimenting with programs I do not know very well in order to increase my knowledge*," the responses were fairly evenly split between strongly agree or agree (33 percent), neutral (24 percent), and strongly disagree or disagree (44 percent). **The results of these two question do seem to point to a distinction between using technology in general, and engaging with technology used by their instructors to support teaching and learning. The results also point to the range of student perceptions around whether or not experimenting with technology programs (i.e., software or web-based tools) will result in increased knowledge.**

Findings on Faculty Use of Canvas

The instructors that participated in the pilot agreed that the pilot went well and that they did not encounter any major difficulties or problems using Canvas, but rather just minor annoyances and differences from how they assumed things would work. Instructors were impressed with how intuitive and user-friendly Canvas was. A list of minor issues can be found in *"Attachment C: Instructor Feedback."*

The grading process – Canvas's SpeedGrader in particular – was well received by pilot instructors. Instructors noted that there was no need to download a file to be graded and then re-upload it, and she said there was a lot less "pointless clicking" than in D2L. Some difficulty translating rubric scores into gradebook scores was noted. Another feature that was mentioned as working particularly well was the Canvas mobile application.

When asked about the tools they tried to integrate with Canvas, instructors seemed impressed with the catalog of tools that could be integrated with their Canvas course. Instructors had worked on integrating a number of third-party tools with their courses. Overall, integrations went smoothly, with the exception of Turnitin which could be due to the technical manner in which the course is set up due to "pilot phase."

There was a positive response to Canvas over D2L and the majority of instructors mentioned that Canvas was more intuitive and easier to set up and use than D2L. The discussion board, groups, and quizzes were mentioned as being especially easier to create and work with in Canvas over D2L. One respondent said that there were also some "little functionalities" that made Canvas more user friendly, such as the easy ability to add hyperlinks and the way the YouTube video links automatically created an embedded video. One of the respondents noted that Canvas seemed more set up for ADA compliance than D2L, especially given that it was black and white text heavy with a reduced ability to customize things like colors and fonts than in D2L.

Respondents did not receive any negative feedback from students, but found that there were just minor differences from D2L that needed to be explained to their students during the course of the semester. One respondent said that her students overall liked it better and especially liked that they could use it on a mobile device and thought that quizzing was easier. This respondent was also impressed with the documentation provided online by Canvas and said she was able to point her students there when they had questions.

Summary

From a technologist perspective, Canvas integrations functioned as expected, and those tested third party tools integrated well. Demands for support during the pilot were manageable, as the pilot size was small. As detailed in this memo and its attachments, there were few students who felt strongly either way about D2L or Canvas. A desire for a common LMS was also demonstrated, as students and instructors indicated they preferred to be standardized on one product. One student also mentioned that it would be favorable to have all the classes in the LMS look the same to make it easier to navigate. Students did call out deficiencies in Canvas training, but that was to be expected due to the nature of the pilot. It appears that from a student's perspective, using Canvas was a neutral experience. While some deficiencies in functionality were noted by Instructors, they did not have an overall negative impression of Canvas.