



Office of Academic Affairs
Dept. 3302, 1000 E University Avenue
Laramie, WY 82071

Carol D. Frost, Associate Provost
(307) 766-2666 • fax: (307) 766-2606
206 Old Main • Frost@uwyo.edu

To: Academic Deans

From: Carol Frost

Re: UW's new WyoCourses learning management system

Date: August 22, 2103

Copies: Richard McGinity, Myron Allen, Susan Frye, Meg Flanigan-Skinner, Nicole Ballenger, Andy Hansen, Meg Van Baalen-Wood, Christi Boggs, Jen Chavez, Larry Jansen

The purpose of this memo is to provide a short history of the process that led to adoption of a new learning management system (LMS) for UW, WyoCourses by Canvas; to describe the implementation plan; and to propose a change in the fee structure to fund the LMS for the coming 5 years.

Why a new LMS? Wyoming has used a number of different course platform software packages in the past decade. Most recently two have been available: eCollege/eCompanion and Course Studio (part of WyoWeb). eCollege has been funded through the Outreach School at a cost of \$935,000 annually. It is expensive, not very user-friendly and has not evolved to support new, innovative pedagogies. Course Studio is very simple, but does not offer the range of features that our faculty require. For this reason, in July 2012 the Office of Academic Affairs appointed an LMS committee to investigate alternatives.

How was the new LMS selected? The LMS committee issued a request for proposals for a new LMS. Seven vendors responded. Their products were reviewed by multidisciplinary committees of faculty, administrators, and Information Technology personnel; four were selected for on-site demonstrations. Faculty, staff, administrators, and students all evaluated the alternatives, and Canvas by Instructure was the overwhelming choice. A 5-year contract was signed with Canvas in July 2012.

What are the advantages of WyoCourses by Canvas? The most important advantages are:

- Lower cost: UW will save over \$300,000 each year by switching to Canvas, but will have a better product and greatly expanded support for both faculty and students.
- Greater versatility: the platform supports courses, and in addition student portfolios, tenure and promotion packets, and annual faculty updates.

How will the new LMS be implemented? During 2013-14 WyoCourses Canvas is being introduced, but eCollege will continue to be available. All materials on eCollege can be migrated to Canvas, so no materials will be lost. A small group of faculty will pilot Canvas in the fall with a broader adoption in the spring 2014 semester. Training and support by instructional designers to all adopters of WyoCourses will begin mid-semester. Full implementation will take place in summer 2014, when Canvas will become the sole LMS at UW, and all courses will be set up automatically with a Canvas course shell.

How will the new LMS be funded? Currently students taking Outreach on-line courses pay \$40 per student credit hour (SCH) to fund eCollege. Since the new LMS will be available for all courses, the LMS committee proposes that this fee be eliminated and instead a \$2/SCH fee be assessed of all students. Such a change in fee structure needs to take effect on July 1, 2014, so a proposed change in the fee book should be filed for trustee approval this winter. Dean Susan Frye will submit the fee proposal. She would appreciate your support and that of the Executive Council in securing approval.