

# Learning Management System Product Review

2018-2019

## Committee Members

The Learning Management System (LMS) review is being conducted through the E-Learning Management Action Team (EMAT). The following is list of people from each college make up the faculty-led LMS Review Committee, which is chaired by Jackie Hughes in the eLearning department, who is also adjunct faculty. Each college will have two votes for a LMS system. If there is a tie, eLearning will cast one vote.

### College of Arts and Sciences

- Tina Arduini
- Kimn Carlton-Smith
- Melissa Smith
- Heather Pavletic
- Felix Smith
- Diane Jackson
- Cliff Franklund

### College of Business

- Aaron Madziar
- Dave Marion
- Nicolas Mata
- Jim Furstenberg
- Barbara Barney-McNamara
- Mary Holmes

### College of Education and Human Services

- Jake Pollak
- Vanessa Wyss
- Tim Eklin

### College of Engineering Technology

- Luke Hedman
- Joe Pacella
- Warren Klope
- Jason Kruse

### College of Health Professions

- Brad McCormick
- Rhonda Bishop

### Kendall College of Art and Design

- Anne Norcross
- Nancy Hart
- Rhonda Kessling

### Michigan College of Optometry

- Brian McDowell
- Sara Bush

### Pharmacy

- Jennifer Lamberts
- David Bright

### Library

- Alison Konieczny
- Fran Rosen

### Retention and Student Success

- Dave McCall
- Marie Yowitz

## Historical Summary Before 2010

Written in June 2010 by Meegan Willi, Instructional Technologist

In 1998 Ferris State University adopted WebCT Standard Edition version 1.3. as its first learning management system (LMS) and continued to use versions of the WebCT platform as its primary LMS. In 2006 the University began the migration process from WebCT Campus Edition to WebCT Vista Enterprise, around the same time WebCT was acquired by Blackboard, Inc. When Ferris first began using the Blackboard Vista product there were numerous problems concerning product reliability, customer support, and vendor responsiveness. The current system has had a history of known issues which have prompted Ferris to purchase and maintain additional nodes within our clustered environment, adding to the complexity and the cost administering our Blackboard Vista LMS installation.

Blackboard Vista 8 will no longer be supported in 2013. The emerging Blackboard Learn 9 product is technically an upgrade of Blackboard's Academic Suite. It is an early iteration in Blackboard's "NG" unification strategy of converging all of their LMS products (Academic Suite, Vista/CE and Angel). Migrating to Learn 9 from Vista will require an entire new installation. Our current license with Blackboard expires summer 2011. The decision to renew with Blackboard and will depend on whether we intend to continue using their products beyond 2013. Regardless of which platform we choose to replace Vista, the transition to another system could take up to two years.

## Historical Summary Between 2010 and 2012

After a thorough LMS review that included Blackboard Learn, Moodle, Sakai and Desire2Learn, the subcommittee recommended running limited pilot projects for Blackboard Learn and Moodle. This subcommittee includes Doug Blakemore, MISM Faculty; Kim Hancock, Pharmacy Faculty; Sue Hastings-Bishop, Recreation & Leisure Management Faculty; Mary Holmes, Systems Administrator; Bill Knapp, Coordinator of Instructional Technology; Meegan Willi, Instructional Technologist; and Rebecca Sammel, Languages & Literature Faculty.

After the pilot, Ferris decided to transition to Blackboard Learn 9, which would be hosted by Blackboard. In the summer of 2011, twelve people were trained as Faculty Trainers and 75 early adopters were trained. Faculty had one year to phase out of WebCT before it was turned off in September 2012. In July of 2012, Information Technology decided not to host Blackboard Learn with Blackboard due to space limitations and costs. Servers were purchased and Blackboard Learn was installed. This caused confusion because we had three Learning Management Systems running: WebCT, Blackboard Learn - Hosted, and Blackboard Learn Self-Hosted. Faculty members on WebCT and Blackboard Learn - Hosted had to export their courses and import them into Blackboard Learn Self-Hosted before the other two systems went away. To confuse the matters even more, we called the Blackboard Learn - Hosted system "Old FerrisConnect," the Blackboard Learn Self-Hosted system "New FerrisConnect," and

the old-old system “WebCT Vista.” Eventually, everyone was converted to one system and ultimately, we simply called it Blackboard.

## Current Scenario

Since 2012, we have tried not to overwhelm faculty members with too much change with the LMS system. We have stayed on the current version and when we went back to Blackboard Hosted in 2017, it was a seamless migration. We have held “What’s New in Blackboard” session to keep faculty members informed of changes and new features. Information Technology keeps a website at [ferris.edu/blackboard](http://ferris.edu/blackboard) with frequently asked questions. Faculty members are more comfortable using the technology and are better able to rely on their peers for help.

Because faculty members have not been overwhelmed by change, they have been exploring all the tools and features of Blackboard Learn. Many faculty members have asked for functionality that Blackboard Learn does not have, such as integration with collaborative tools such as Google, the ability to search their entire Blackboard course, and the ability to recall messages. Some have asked for the ability to take attendance in Blackboard, while others have asked for the ability to mute grades in the Grade Center and the ability to use voice recording for feedback. As faculty members continue to evolve in the sophisticated use of technology, the computing world continues to offer more advanced solutions related to artificial intelligence and quantum computing. Students are completing assignments using WordPress Blog and Social Media, which prepare them for their careers. Ferris administrators need data analytics from the LMS to meet compliance regulations, HLC criterion and to positively affect student retention. Support models have also changed in the last 6 years allowing faculty members and students to contact the educational technology vendors directly, which would alleviate support calls to the institutions help desk.

As the needs of faculty, students, administrators, and support changes, Blackboard Learn has struggled to keep up. In the past six years, Blackboard has fixed some known issues only for them to reoccur during the next upgrade. One example of this when the left menu item does not stick to the place that we drag it. Another example is when text in the text editor changes font, font size, or spacing when saved. Often, Blackboard responds to reported problems stating that it is working as designed or that it is a [known issue](#). The most recent issue is the discontinuation of Crocodoc and the implementation of Box, which had inadequate functionality. Every day, the eLearning team asks faculty members or students to clear cache, which resolves the issue.

It is time to review other Learning Management Systems. Blackboard Learn is running on an old infrastructure that is slow, glitchy, and clunky. Our students need to use tools they will be exposed to in their careers. Our administrators need data analytics. Our support people need results. Our faculty members are ready for change.

## LMS Landscape in Michigan

The following is a list of the Learning Management Systems being used by institutions in Michigan. This landscape is constantly changing.

### Blackboard

- Alpena CC
- Bay College
- Grand Rapids CC
- Grand Valley State
- Monroe County CC
- Muskegon CC
- Schoolcraft CC
- Washtenaw CC
- Wayne State

### Canvas

- Kirtland CC
- Glen Oaks CC
- Macomb CC
- West Shore CC

### Desire 2 Learn (D2L)

- Delta CC
- Lansing CC
- Oakland CC
- Michigan State University

### Ed260

- Mott CC

### Moodle

- Gogebic CC
- Henry Ford College
- Kalamazoo Valley CC
- Kellogg CC
- Mid-Michigan CC
- Northwestern College
- Oakland University
- Rochester College

### WebStudy

- St. Clair

## LMS Review Timeline

Below is a general/tentative timeline of events that need to happen for the LMS Review. If we choose to bring in two or four LMS vendors to review, we will adjust this schedule.

### April-June 2018

- EMAT votes to explore a LMS Review
- IT Governance form submitted
- Approvals from Provost and Dean Reifert
- Send the call through the Deans for faculty volunteers for LMS Review Subcommittee
- LMS Review Committee established
- LMS research and market analysis

### July 2018

- Create LMS Comparison Chart
- Attend Blackboard World Conference - Jackie Hughes
- Attend InstructureCarn (Canvas) Conference - Andrew Peterson, Tracy Russo, Vanessa Wyss
- Report back to EMAT what was learned at the conferences

### August 2018

- First LMS Review Committee Meeting
- Create tentative qualitative and quantitative rubric / feedback form.
- Choose 2-4 vendors to come to campus for demonstrations and to pilot

### September 2018

- Contact vendors to schedule informational meetings and product demonstrations.
- LMS Review Committee Finalizes Rubric

### October - November 2018

- Product demonstration and pilot #1
- Interview vendor #1 clients
- Meet with LMS Review Committee to compile and analyze feedback data

### December 2018 - January 2019

- Product demonstration and pilot #2
- Interview vendor #2 clients

- Meet with LMS Review Committee to compile and analyze feedback data

### February - March 2019

- Product demonstration and pilot #3
- Interview vendor #3 client
- Meet with LMS Review Committee to compile and analyze feedback data

### April 2019

- Meet with LMS Review Committee to compile and analyze feedback data. Two subcommittee members from each college will vote for the LMS they believe would strategically serve the University based on the feedback data. Votes are compiled.
- LMS Review Committee votes (two per college) and drafts their recommendation letter with support data for the EMAT committee

### May 2019

- LMS Review subcommittee presents the recommendation to EMAT with support data.
- Amy Greene will present the recommendation to Dean Steve Reifert, Provost Paul Blake, and Chief Technology Officer Jake Martin

### June 2019 - Summer 2020

- eLearning will lead the project to implement the recommendation made by the faculty-led LMS Review Committee

### LMS Review Task List

The subcommittee is tasked with the following 6 items between August 2018 and May 2019.

1. Identify which learning management systems to review - EMAT has created a comparison chart to help with this process
2. Create a comprehensive rubric to objectively review each LMS
3. Contact the LMS vendors to organize product demonstrations on campus
4. Create a systematic process for collecting feedback regarding the LMS demonstrations from the other faculty within their college
5. Use the feedback to make a final LMS decision - each college gets 2 votes
6. Outline a plan for migration if an alternate LMS is picked