

Learning Management System Recommendation

Background

At the March 22, 2011 meeting of the Chancellor's Cabinet, agreement was reached to obtain a single Learning Management System (LMS) to be used by the colleges. Further, it was agreed that Mojdeh Mehdizadeh would convene a representative ad hoc group to participate in developing specific requirements for this purpose. The LMS Task Force was initiated in fall 2011 with several goals including that of recommending a single LMS to the Chancellor's Cabinet.

Status

The LMS Task Force met regularly starting with a first convening on September 29, 2011. By December, the task force had developed a comprehensive list of requirements for the LMS based on surveys distributed to faculty and students in early November and a detailed review of Maricopa College District's recent request for proposal (RFP) for an LMS. The requirements were turned into a comprehensive RFP for CCCCD and sent out mid-December with responses due in January.

A total of seven vendors responded to the CCCCD LMS RFP. They were Blackboard, Epsilen, Etudes, Moodlerooms, SyMynd, Instructure, and Desire2Learn (D2L). The task force met in late January and again in early February to review and rank the responses and select the top responders to provide a live, scripted demonstration of their products. Blackboard, Moodlerooms, Instructure, and D2L made the short list. Faculty and classified staff from across the District were invited to attend the demonstrations which spanned a three day period in March. Upon completion of the demonstrations, many task force members kicked the tires of the four different products in sandbox environments developed for CCCCD. Members also conducted reference checks. Upon further discussion, the Task Force further refined the short list by eliminating Moodlerooms as it did not meet CCCCDs current needs. Moodlerooms was also purchased by Blackboard during the LMS review process (soon after their live demonstration at CCCCD).

The group also reviewed the self-hosted versus vendor-hosted solutions. Of the top three candidates, Blackboard offers both solutions with a steady rise in colleges selecting their vendor-hosted model. D2L also offers both, however, over 85% of their customers are vendor-hosted, and Instructure is only offered in the cloud (vendor-hosted).

Recommendation

The consensus recommendation, reached on 4/19/2012 by the LMS task force, is for CCCCD to move forward with the Desire2Learn LMS platform. It is further recommended that the vendor-hosted/cloud-based model be implemented. The task force recommends an 18-month timeframe to migrate all course work from the various versions of WebCT and Blackboard currently offered at CCCCD. It is expected that by Spring 2014, D2L will be the only LMS offered by CCCCD. It is also recommended that licensing for the platform will be ratcheted up over a four year timeframe to include every course at CCCCD in order to take advantage of the built-in SLO support framework.

Why Desire2Learn?

Careful consideration was made when reviewing each LMS. D2L was selected for its clean interface, ability to meet all question types for tests and quizzes, simple email and communication protocol (including the ability to allow students to select how they will receive communiqués from the LMS), built-in SLO development and tracking, and the company's history and current position in the LMS market.

Why Vendor-Hosting?

The ability to maintain a 24/7 operation for the LMS was ranked high by task force members and others providing input. Currently, CCCC does not have the personnel or hardware infrastructure resources to maintain a 24/7 operation. A cost analysis revealed vendor-hosting as a more favorable solution both in overall cost and system availability and performance.

Thanks and Next Steps

Special thanks go out to the LMS task force members and chair:

- Neal Skapura (DVC Classified)*
- Mario Tejada (DVC Faculty)*
- Karen Edwards (DVC Faculty)*
- Jessica Barksdale (DVC Faculty)*
- Andy Kivel (DVC Manager)*
- Guang Yao Leng (DVC Student)
- Judy Flum (CCC Faculty)*
- Richard Ramos (CCC Faculty)*
- Kenyetta Tribble (CCC Faculty)*
- Susan Lee (CCC Manager)
- Clayton Smith (LMC Faculty)*
- Linda Johnson (LMC Faculty)*
- Mike Becker (LMC Manager)*
- Rod Raumer (LMC Classified)
- Shawn DeMille (LMC Student)
- Ted Wieden (DO)*
- Mojdeh Mehdizadeh (DO)*
- Satish Warriar (DO, Chair)*

The asterisk denotes those that participated through to the final recommendation. It was a herculean task with many hours of meetings, demonstrations, and personal review time. Members from the Purchasing Department were also actively engaged and provided excellent support.

However, the group has not completed meeting its full charge. Assessing faculty and student help desk needs, identifying training programs, and determining integration requirements are still on the list to complete.

Upon agreement from Cabinet, Mojdeh, Satish, and Purchasing will move forward with contract details including pricing. The task force will remain active in this phase to ensure the terms (including training, total licenses, etc.) are fully vetted.