Colleagues:

This email message is long. I wanted to be brief. But, I also wanted to be complete.

While I believe everyone will benefit from the information in my message, the primary target audience is faculty who will teach in Fall 2020 and who wonder whether they should adopt Canvas or use eCampus (Blackboard). The purpose of the message is to provide the information I currently have available to facilitate your decision making process.

Executive Summary

This message includes the following sections.

1. Background – Canvas Selection and Implementation
2. Fall 2020 – Should I Choose Canvas or eCampus (Blackboard)?
3. Fall 2020 – What Can I Do Now to Prepare?

Background – Canvas Selection and Implementation

In January 2020, the university announced the selection of a new learning management system (Canvas). Prior to Spring Break 2020, the envisioned implementation timeline for Canvas included a small pilot (about 100 courses) for Fall 2020, a broader scale adoption (about 500 courses) in Spring 2021, and full scale adoption for Fall 2021.

During Spring Break 2020, the pandemic spread of the COVID-19 virus and subsequent shelter-in-place restrictions resulted in the rapid move to remote course delivery for all Spring 2020 courses. In Summer 2020, Mays faculty used (will use) remote delivery for all of their courses. For Fall 2020, course delivery will include both 100% remote delivery (synchronous and asynchronous) and face-to-face delivery (all face-to-face class session will have synchronous remote delivery).

Given the remote delivery requirements for Summer 2020 and Fall 2020 outlined above, the importance of a robust learning management system (LMS) has increased. As a result, the Office for Academic Innovation (OAI) and the LMS implementation team adjusted the envisioned Canvas implementation timeline to include a small pilot during Summer II 2020. Beginning in Fall 2020, all faculty across the university have the option to use Canvas for their courses.

The university launched a [new LMS website](#) to provide a central location for learning about the Canvas LMS and the implementation process. The new [LMS website](#) includes the revised [Keep Teaching](#) and [Keep Learning](#) website resources. As you prepare to migrate your course content to Canvas, please review the information on the [lms.tamu.edu](#) website for the latest information about the implementation process.

Fall 2020 – Should I Choose Canvas or eCampus (Blackboard)?

The university [announced a set of release waves](#) for when faculty will have the option to adopt Canvas for their courses. Beginning with the Summer II 2020 session, faculty had the option to choose Canvas as

the LMS for their course. The wave model continues through the Fall 2020, Spring 2021, and Summer 2021 semesters. For those semesters, faculty will have the option to choose Canvas as the LMS for their course.

At least one faculty member in four of the five Mays academic departments has chosen Canvas as the LMS for their Summer II 2020 courses (8 – 12 total faculty members). Be sure to talk with your colleagues to learn about their experience using Canvas and the migration process.

For Fall 2020, Spring 2021, and Summer 2021, all faculty members have the option to continue using eCampus (Blackboard) as the LMS for their course. Beginning with Fall 2021, eCampus (Blackboard) will be decommissioned and all faculty will only have the option to use Canvas as the LMS for their course.

The LMS website will provide information to assist faculty in determining whether to move to Canvas or stay with eCampus (Blackboard) for Fall 2020. This website is evolving with weekly releases of information planned for Thursdays (i.e., if new content is available for the LMS website, it will be published in the weekly Thursday release).

Decision Aids – Currently Available

The following information to assist faculty members in choosing between eCampus (Blackboard) and Canvas is already available on the LMS website. The Make the Move page on the LMS website provides the following information to help inform faculty about the similarities and differences between eCampus (Blackboard) and Canvas.

- Evaluate your course features to determine if you should import from eCampus (Blackboard) or start over and "build from scratch" in Canvas
- eCampus (Blackboard) to Canvas Import Guide (if you choose to import)
- eCampus (Blackboard) to Canvas Comparison table
- Canvas features to love (as recommended by the OAI staff)
- LMS Course Design Checklist – a checklist to review for ensuring your LMS course is ready for delivery to your students and provides complete, timely information about your course

In addition, the Tools page of the LMS website provides information about third party tools and custom software integrations available in Canvas.

Decision Aids – Coming Soon

- Quiz to guide faculty in choosing between import and build from scratch
- Canvas "out of the box" explained
- More concrete timelines for when Fall 2020 faculty will have access to Canvas (dependent on finalization of the revised Fall 2020 course schedule)
- Training and support schedule for Fall 2020 faculty (**NOTE**: This page has training available for Summer II 2020 faculty right now. While any faculty members may attend the current training sessions, only Summer II 2020 faculty members have Canvas accounts.)

Fall 2020 – What Can I Do Now to Prepare?

Whether a faculty member chooses eCampus (Blackboard) or Canvas for Fall 2020, the faculty member will need the robust support of the LMS to deliver their Fall 2020 courses using remote instruction. Two pages from the LMS website provide information and action items that faculty members can use now as they prepare for their Fall 2020 courses.

Catch the Wave

The Catch the Wave page provides the following information for faculty regarding things to do now in preparing for Fall 2020 remote course delivery.

- Best practices in online teaching and learning (same content as best practices on Keep Teaching page below)
- What Aggies are saying – feedback from students and learnings from faculty based on Spring 2020 experiences

Keep Teaching

The Keep Teaching page of the LMS website provides the following information for faculty regarding things to do now in preparing for Fall 2020 remote course delivery.

- Best practices in online teaching and learning (same content as best practices on Catch the Wave page above)
- Design an online course
  - Organize content into modules
  - Course design checklist
- Facilitate an online course
  - Transform learning activities for online engagement
  - Plan time to facilitate your online course
- Communicate a cohesive plan
  - Communicate expectations
  - Change communication challenges to opportunities
  - Sample communication templates
- Plug in to learning technologies
- Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Faculty members can also consider the following additional resources in preparing their Fall 2020 courses.

- TAMU Center for Teaching Excellence Workshops
- REMOTE: the connected faculty summit hosted by Arizona State University