

Dear WebCT Users:

As you have read in recent emails, the College has begun the process to bring a new Learning Management System to campus. Beginning in 2009 our current version of WebCT (4.1) will no longer be supported (updates, patches, etc.) by the vendor. This presents the College with an exciting opportunity to identify a new teaching-learning management system that meets the needs of the campus community and reflects the emergence of newer vendor solutions, descriptively termed as Learning Management Systems (LMS).

While this is an "exciting opportunity" for most of the campus, we fully understand that many of our current WebCT users have invested a great deal of time and effort in building their WebCT-enhanced courses and, as such, this opportunity may also bring some trepidation.

How will I convert my old WebCT classes to the new LMS?

Some of you have asked if you will have to recreate your courses from scratch in the new LMS. We acknowledge and share this concern. In an effort to make the transition to the new LMS as easy as possible, our solicitation will request that a conversion tool or service be provided in every vendor's bid. The Instructional Technology team will be available to help with residual conversion problems and provide on-going training sessions. We will be in this together!

How long will I have before I have to start using the new LMS?

Everyone will be on the new system by 2010. However, we think that you will want to convert to the new LMS as soon as possible, given that it should be much easier to use and will be packed with more tools and features! We will run the new LMS and WebCT 4.1 in tandem for 1.5 years. This will give you plenty of time to get all of your existing materials converted to the new system. At the end of this period, WebCT 4.1 will be brought down and the campus will solely use the new LMS.

How will I learn to use the new LMS?

The Instructional Technologists will conduct LMS training classes regularly over the next two years. In addition, the Faculty Technology Institutes will include training on the new LMS.

On February 11th and 12th, the College will hold four lunchtime town meetings to talk about the LMS Project, answer questions, and respond to concerns. From February 18-29, IT will also host vendor demonstrations to showcase the variety of teaching and learning tools available in several systems. We strongly encourage you to attend as many of the vendor demonstrations as you possibly can! As experienced users your feedback is critical to identify the tools you believe best support your teaching.

You can find the dates/times/locations for the town meetings and vendor demonstrations at the project's website <http://www.cofc.edu/it/tlt/lms>. This site also includes sections for the project overview, Q & A, timeline, and updates. Brochures outlining the different facets of the project were delivered last Friday. As we move through the process, don't hesitate to contact your Instructional Technologist or Susan Beattie, Project Director with any questions or concerns.

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