

## Spring 2006 Faculty Survey about Course Management Systems

The Course Management System (CMS) currently being used at the College of Charleston is WebCT 4.1. Our version however is obsolete, characterized by several limitations, and beginning in 2009 will no longer be supported (updates, patches, etc.) by the vendor. In spring 2008, the College will engage in the process to select 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). LMS solutions tend to be more user-friendly. In addition, they augment the teaching management resources with student learning-based tools. For example, several LMS products offer social networking tools (blogs, wikis, voice/text chats) that enable rich interactions between faculty and students! As we begin the review of available LMS products, it is important to assess our current experiences using course management systems and utilize that knowledge in future decision-making.

### ***Faculty Survey: Spring 2006***

An initial step in the transition to a new management system was taken in the spring of 2006. An on-line survey was sent to all of College of Charleston faculty to assess their opinions regarding course management systems. The three general areas of inquiry were: 1) the types of CMS currently being used, 2) the perceived positive and negative attributes of the current system, and 3) the system options of the current system that faculty viewed as most useful.

### ***Summary of Results***

The 13% faculty response to the WebCT Course Management Systems survey provided a remarkably consistent faculty perspective. A short summary of top faculty responses to each criterion is listed below.

- Compelling reasons that would encourage faculty to use CMS
  1. If it saved time to create/convert instructional materials
  2. If there was proof that the CMS positively affected student learning/If it solved a teaching challenge/If it contributed something valuable for the students
  3. If it significantly improved course content and student outcomes
  4. If it was recommended by professional peers as useful
  5. If faculty had more time
  6. If the procedures and directions were user friendly, easy to set up; procedures were intuitive
  7. If there were more tech support and training on how to implement it
- The Top Reasons for Using a Course Management System
  1. Increases the engagement between students and the materials
  2. It simplifies course management tasks
  3. It facilitates the access to supplemental materials
  4. It is a vehicle for providing immediate student feedback
- Major Advantages of Using a Course Management System
  1. It increases the organization of materials
  2. It facilitates the faculty's interaction with students

## Important Options/Characteristics of a CMS as Identified in the Faculty Survey:

<b>Essential</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Neutral</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ease of use</li> <li>• Ability to post syllabi and other administrative information</li> <li>• Ease of posting course material</li> <li>• Ease of re-use across courses and semesters</li> <li>• Cross-browser compatibility</li> <li>• Receive automatic, real-time updates from our student information system</li> <li>• Ease of material creation</li> <li>• Ability to post grades</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate announcements to the entire class</li> <li>• Ability to provide immediate adaptive feedback to student response</li> <li>• Table of contents</li> <li>• Training sessions for faculty (group sessions)</li> <li>• Bookmark</li> <li>• Ability for content sharing among instructors</li> <li>• Logging of student interactions with system</li> <li>• Table of Contents with embedded links to course content</li> <li>• Calendar</li> <li>• Communicate with individual students</li> <li>• 508 compliant</li> <li>• Video services</li> <li>• Ability to randomize problem sets</li> <li>• Automated grading</li> <li>• Automated online assignments/dropbox</li> <li>• Automated online quizzes/exams</li> <li>Templates</li> <li>• File sharing of student-created materials</li> <li>• Ability to search site for key words</li> <li>• Ability to work offline</li> <li>• Your course material stored on the CofC campus</li> <li>• One-on-one training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for musical notation</li> <li>• Support for chemical formulas</li> <li>• Multilingual support</li> <li>• Online discussion forum</li> <li>• Provide real-time electronic chat</li> <li>• Student portfolio capability</li> </ul>