**Task Force Members Compiled Evaluation  
June – July 2015 College of Southern Maryland**

**27 members – 17 reviewed**

**Summary Comments from Individual Users:**

1. I don't know how much of this is that I already know BB, but overall, **I found that Canvas and D2L were not very intuitive other than for basic functions** -- having used WebCT and BB in the past, I assumed I would be able to figure out more easily some of the functions, but I seemed to get lost and not know how to best proceed -- for instance, like setting up multiple question sets.
2. Overall, **I liked them both** and all the options integrate with Starfish!
3. I hope this helps a little bit (and that others on the task force managed to be more conscientious than I in completing their homework). I did not check Blackboard at all in these areas. In general, I found that **I liked Canvas a bit better for ease of use but D2L a bit better for its basic set-up, particularly the way it is presented to students.**
4. **Overall, I think Canvas is easier to use.** Though I tend to be a quick learner with computer programs, I really think that this will be an easier system to teach faculty who may be less computer savvy. The UI is cleaner and if you are looking for something it tends to be in an area that makes the most sense. I found it easier to create assignments and quizzes since all of the specifications (due date, special access, availability of test, submissions, etc) is all inline with the content area. A whole assignment can be created in one screen rather than selecting different tabs.
5. My biggest concern is the learning curve for both Canvas and D2L.  There has to be something simpler to educate on the ease of the systems.  There are so many videos and how to's that is overwhelming.  This is where things will need to be streamlined.  **I like D2L, from a student view point, but had problems with setting up quizzes and course in general.  I hope this helps.  Canvas, I liked from an instructor stance.**  I attended the presentation for Blackboard and I am not convinced there are many changes from what we have now.
6. **1st choice: Canvas.** The fact that another community college (Howard CC) has adopted this LMS is a big plus. 2nd choice: Desire2Learn. 3rd choice: Blackboard
7. **There was no comparison, Canvas was much easier.** I am sure there are many other features (in checklist) that I would use given some training but the ease of transition will be much greater with Canvas.
8. **From a user experience standpoint, I like Canvas the most**, Blackboard the second-most, and D2L the least. I find D2L to be clunky and unappealing, while Canvas is so easy to navigate with a clean, modern interface. Blackboard is nice but still a little clunky and overwhelming compared to Canvas. Canvas also seems to have a lot more features for third-party integration with YouTube, Dropbox, etc., than the other LMSs, which is great for creating an interactive learning experience, particularly for online classes. Overall, communication with students (especially since you can have multiple user roles so that advisors can access info as well) and grading also seems far more dynamic and feature-rich in Canvas than in the other LMSs. I don't like that Canvas can't be branded currently to match CSM's brand and colors, but I do see that that it is a feature that's in development. Blackboard and D2L both have this option already built-in.I like that Canvas and Blackboard both offer mobile apps. However, students have to pay for a license for the Blackboard app if we don't buy an institutional license, which isn't good for students. The Canvas app is free and has great reviews in the app stores. Desire2Learn doesn't offer a mobile app at all, which is disappointing because the website isn't mobile-friendly either. Overall, I think Canvas is the best option, in my opinion. Blackboard is also still a good product. I don't like Desire2Learn at all.
9. As I don't teach (nor do I intend to teach) online classes, creating assignments and rubrics were not high on my list. I did investigate them briefly in each LMS, but I felt that I am not one to judge such things and so I gave most of them a 0. **My favorite by far was Desire to Learn.** I found it very easy to pick up, though I'm sure I missed many nuances of the program. I did spend a great deal of time trying to navigate both Canvas and D2L, re-creating what I have been doing in Blackboard for the last several years and importing old Bb courses into each system and found D2L to be the most intuitive, most likely requiring not as much time for training as Canvas would. Although appearances and the flashy presentation seem to suggest that Canvas is the Tesla, many of us would prefer a great working, easy to use Toyota like D2l!
10. **I know BB is changing its format, but I still think BB is the way to go**. It has so many more features and they seem to be much easier to use. Of course, I may be bias, since that is what I am use to using.
11. **I have worked in canvas for over a year** (maybe two?? time flies when you are having fun).
    1. very student centered in customization
    2. for ADA students can set up different testing/assignment details
    3. using html instead of java has added stability with quizzes (still have issues sometimes but mostly students computer not platform)
    4. very heavy in set-up so a learning curve will be needed especially for those just using gradebook
    5. I like the module set up look
12. **Overall I like Canvas.** Highlights:
    1. Announcements: tools are equal however in D2L and Canvas you can have the announcements sent as a text. Only D2L has automatic spell check.
    2. Assignments: I like the content editor for D2L but Canvas shines with Speed Grader and inline editing. The D2L will send email to user when they submit their assignment.
    3. Calendar: Both Canvas and D2L shine! Canvas also has the announcements shown on calendar. Both have agenda, the ability to turn off sections.
    4. Chat: D2L wins because you can save the discussion. D2L is a little more confusing than Canvas. Canvas has a 3rd party integration with whiteboard called BigBlue Button.
    5. Course Creation: Canvas for it’s ease of use.
    6. Discussions: Canvas wins with Speedgrader. Discussions don’t convert over very well in D2L. You have to create a forum.
    7. Attendance: Canvas all the way. Canvas automatically creates a column in the grade center.
    8. Grade Center: Canvas wins! Click and drag columns. The GUI’s ease of use. In D2L items are not added until they are published. In Canvas you have to create an assignment to create a column.
13. ADA Overview: **Canvas is more inviting and accepting** however accessibility standards are “nonexistent.” This was true in all three systems. D2L does have a link to skip to the redundant list for screen readers but it’s still confusing. Suggest instructors put more information in the syllabus that will assist ADA users.
14. Most D2L **resources are found from other colleges**. Training faculty would not be easy because instead of standardizing a guide for instructors and students, D2L wants you to sign up for a 30 day trial of search through tools. Not very user friendly. You will see from the review so far that some schools have done a good job of doing D2L's job of making good resources in a searchable format. The notes so far in the spreadsheet for both speak volumes. **Canvas is just more intuitive and easier to find help as needed.**
15. **I found Canvas more user friendly and intuitive**. I took some of their quizzes, created assignments and discussions. Also, their layout seemed less cluttered. From the beginning, I had difficulty accessing some of Desire2Learn's features. I did like Desire2Learn's option to drag and drop files to the assignment screen. I liked the Discussion board options for both packages. I was never able to import course content into Desire2Learn. As I mentioned, I did not have as much exposure to Desire2Learn due to technical difficulties.
16. My first observation is that **Canvas is Intuitive for this Blackboard user**, I like the left-hand navigation in Canvas a lot. I appreciate Canvas' streamlined layout. There are still options for customizing the look/feel of a course, but Canvas makes putting together a clean, concise, and user-centric design easy for users to accomplish.
17. **Desire2Learn is much easier to maneuver from a student perspective** than an instructor. Also, I believe since **Desire2Learn is more customizable**, we can change the look and feel it to make it more friendly to our faculty staff, if Desire2Learn is the chosen system.

**Blackboard**

1. With either LMS it seems that we will lose our **institutional history to check for academic misconduct**. This is concerning for me, though it does not appear that there is a solution to that problem. I wonder if TurnItIn would batch load a few semesters worth of papers for us if faculty still have them around?
2. I do **use Safe Assign** for all paper submissions, online and traditional classes.  
   I would not want to see this service go away.  There are others like it, though.
3. Create Assignments, Discussions, and Quizzes with no points to be added to grades.
4. Can copy text from Microsoft Word into the Content Editor
5. Can embed images from my Computer
6. Grade center (Options available for percentages)
7. Rubric features are extensive for high-level users

**Canvas**

1. Canvas allowed a Date Adjust function at import, however, unclear what it will adjust. Provided a Begin date adjust to MMDDYY and End date adjust to MMDDYY. Unsure if this is referring to just the start/end dates of the course or will adjust all due dates within the course – looks like only start/end dates of the course because all due dates were cleared. Basics like syllabus didn’t import as expected. All pages in module could not be viewed as a list – like table of contents similar to what we see in BB; next / previous to see what else is in the module. Assignment grading rubrics not attached. Test option do not allow start after due date not available. Student view - stumbled at one point into Student View but not sure how I got there. Not clear how to customize the navigation panel – if it can be customized; like to reorder or delete items not needed (conferences, collaborations, etc. -- very negative if it can’t be. After looking around the course after the import, I wasn't very impressed with how the content imported from the BB zip file; would need to spend considerable time getting the course organized how it appeared in BB.
2. I really liked the overall look of Canvas. It is visually appealing and I think students would pick up on using the format quickly. I liked the calendar functionality. My main focus was to look for compatibility with Starfish and it was clear that Canvas works with the software.
3. I played with Canvas first and was able to import a course. I had no problem creating assignments. I liked the option of creating different due dates for different students. Announcements were easy to create. I like the look of the discussions. In the grade book you could speed grade an assignment which is better than the current "needs grading" page. I noticed you can message the group of students who had not submitted an assignment yet from the grade book. Grades export easily for end of semester reports. Quizzes were easy to set up and my quizzes seemed to have imported perfectly. It was intuitive you were not constantly searching for how to get something done.
4. Canvas seemed to be lacking many things that I have come to like about BB, especially in the gradebook section. We add columns all the time in nursing, for example, columns for our TB and CPR expiration dates. These columns make it easier for the instructors to monitor these health requirements.  We also add columns for our clinical evaluations tool that students do by hand, but we log in their “P” for pass or “F” for failure in the gradebook.  We add columns for passing Summative check offs in lab, we add columns for lab and clinical absences; we add columns for tons of things. I think you get my drift, we are an adding group of people in nursing I add columns in my online classes for final course grades. Sometimes I use points, sometimes I use the weighted total feature (percents). So both types grade features would be very nice. Navigation has always been an issue with Canvas when I reviewed QM courses that use Canvas. I found the same problem with these trial courses too. See my comments in that section. If I have overlooked something that Canvas has, that I did not see or could not figure where to go to see it, I apologize.
5. From a teaching perspective the layout and ease of use of Canvas was much better. I never felt like I had to attend training or call tech support. Imports most content seamlessly from Blackboard.
   1. I was pleased to have automatic spell check with Canvas
   2. Speedgrader for Inline editing
   3. Calendar: Canvas has the ability to turn off section calendars. Useful for course coordinators.
   4. Conferencing and white board: Canvas has the Big Blue Button Integration
   5. Canvas wins with the ease of course creation and management
   6. Grade Center: ease of use and simple with click and drag columns
   7. Attendance: automatically creates column
   8. Support. We will recommend Help Desk with Tier 1 Support: “We paid for the 24/7 helpdesk with Tier 1 support, and we have an average solve time of less than 2 minutes with a 96% satisfaction rate,” says Kate Hill. First-line help desk support to address and resolve end user issues such as login, questions about features and functions, and resolving other operational problems. The Canvas community is very strong with Canvas and users sharing videos, resources, and even “shells.”
6. The ability to move assignments, discussions, grade columns around without cutting and pasting from a menu.
7. Adding a new user to your course is intuitive.
8. Easily organized by categories, such as Assignments. Access everything in 1 location.  
   \*Note: Discussions, Assignments, Test/Quizzes are all identified as Assignments. From a design perspective, students can become confused based on terminology. So, in Canvas, it is an “Assignment” Assignment, Quiz Assignment, Discussion Assignment, and etc…..
9. Intuitive on importing test/quizzes in a course.
10. Create Assignments, Discussions, and Quizzes with no points to be added to grades
11. Easy course statistics
12. Create Survey’s for Student Feedback
13. Provide feedback via video
14. Ability to see ALL assignments due under the Syllabus link
15. Print Grades (students ONLY)
16. Conduct a “What-if” Grade and revert back in forth.
17. Able to see instructor’s comments in 1 view of the Grades area
18. Can subscribe to a discussion with just an easy click. Option is available in Blackboard, but the instructor will have to set it up for that to happen.
19. The Alt-tag identification of icon/images in Canvas is great! By “hoovering” the mouse over the item, the title/description appears.
20. Ability to chat to other classmates
21. \*Note: Only if a classmate knows that they are online
22. Help Search feature works great!
23. Able to see the roster of the course and send a message (e-mail) directly to the classmates
24. Alt-tag option is available

**Instructure D2L**

1. I tried to import the same BB zip file I did in the Canvas course, but it ran for a long time with no feedback (hours) - as far as I can tell, it did not import anything. So instead I added some components from scratch. The drop-n-drag option for content creating is a plus. Adding content in D2L seemed a bit less cumbersome that in Canvas. Saving as draft option is nice - like announcements. Navigation panel customization -- not clear how to go about doing that. Assignment set up - need to work more on that; how to set up for submission. update . . . I left the process running when I left, thinking that maybe it was just taking a while. Went back into the course today and nothing imported -- so not really sure what it was doing . . . it continually gave me a message like it was doing something and displayed a progress bar but I don't see that anything was imported.
2. I wasn't able to view the webinar (it didn't open) so I went through and watched the videos on their You Tube channel. Overall, I was impressed with the software. I liked the view vs. Blackboard (folders method). I checked the Starfish website and Brightspace also integrates with Starfish (good news!). The videos seem to stress reporting of student progress, which I liked. Canvas had similar reporting (if I remember correctly from the session).
3. The greatest benefit for me with D2L is the student progress information. This could make a difference to faculty and staff that are tasked with outreach to under performing students. Though we have myProgress, it would be helpful to have this information two clicks away from your course shell. I also think their ADA certifications are a strong selling point also.
4. I tried to import a course unsuccessfully. I swear it ate my 1010 class. It is no longer in my documents. I asked Ken to try and import my course and he could not do it either. I struggled to post a discussion and e-mail. Nothing was where I expected it to be. It was in no way intuitive and frankly I gave up. I know this is probably not as complete a response as you expected, the checklist was overwhelming. I looked at what I currently use and the ease of use.
5. D2L: I did not like this LMS at all. Everything is too crowded. The access is too small for all items on each page - just too much clutter. It has nice features, but too "busy".
6. D2L allows faculty members to create their own templates for a personal “look and feel” for their courses.
   1. Gradebook can be set up to mimic what faculty members have included in their syllabi regarding how they are calculating grades. Using percentages, weights, and custom formulas is a nice feature.
   2. Desire2Learn is very customizable. “An organization can create a branded look and feel for their D2L instance, while still providing flexibility for specific course customizations. However, if the organization prefers the courses all look and feel the same, they can remove permissions for other to customize their course shells,” – Carrie Ann Desnoyers
   3. Easy drag and drop features allow instructors to design their course layout with little training.
7. Can create customized course pages
8. Discussion alerts appears for students to know when another classmate has replied to a thread (Student’s Role)
9. An Instructional Design Wizard  
   \*Note: Can this wizard be customizable according to CSM standards?
10. Able to import quizzes from another LMS and course
11. Embedded print feature in all the areas