

Faculty Fellows Project Report, Spring 2019
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Brief Overview: Most of our department faculty was not prepared for the campus transition to Canvas. I initiated an in-house training session for the department August 30, 2018. Many unexpected events unfolded from this effort.

Describe the challenge you addressed in your department with this project:

I have conducted trainings for our department in FRPA reporting and calendar organization to aid their efficiency. These trainings were well attended, but faculty elected not to utilize many of the tips and tricks offered. Each of us is incredibly busy with department productions. THDN is the one department on campus that teaches a full load of classes, then can be assured of regular late-night rehearsals and weekend technical runs/performances. Our hours are long, time for enrichment is thin, and usually squeezed in on the fly.

Describe the desired result:

I aimed to ease our faculty's adoption of new technology, minimize reluctance, and prevent a sense of paralysis if they encountered challenges in the new platform.

Describe the project. What did you do?

I enrolled in several Canvas training courses and attempted early migration of my D2L content. I made myself the department tester.

I then scheduled an all-faculty training on the morning of August 30, 2018 with an IT Canvas coach. Ideally, multiple trainings would be sought and the faculty deepened their familiarity with the new course augmentation platform.

Describe the outcome. What worked, what didn't work, lessons learned:

My plan to partner with faculty member Gesel Mason on a department project was unable to happen, as she left CU Boulder to join another institution in Texas. I proceeded to work on my own.

On August 30, our IT representative was a no-show despite confirming just a few days earlier. Since a gathering of the faculty is always difficult to coordinate, I patched my computer into the AV system and proceeded to give an interactive introduction to

Canvas by building an example through the sandbox. As faculty confidence and curiosity grew, I was pleased (and surprised) to have fulfilled their need for information. All were successful in migrating their courses, and we continued to share tips and tricks throughout the semester. It was a particularly cordial transition for our team.

Through our usage, we learned that Canvas was extremely nimble regarding presentation and formatting. Faculty required extensive explanation of the different applications and capacities of pages vs. modules, and needed tips on how to where to locate important functions in the menus.

All of us have agreed that Canvas is not useful in two ways:

1. Tracking extra credit. By not being able to document extra credit, students who check Canvas for an updated grade will not see the changes reflected. This customarily results in a panicked and stressed email from the student.
2. The attendance function is utterly unhelpful. Taking attendance is easy in the program, but the reporting functions are inadequate. We hope this aspect of Canvas will be corrected, as we find it virtually unusable. Frequently the program cannot locate students by their identification number (and there is no field to enter a name). I researched supplementary application for the faculty to use, and chose *A+ teachers aid*. This market app has all of the features and reporting flexibility we desire. It is problematic to use, because it requires us to place students' personal data on our phones, and this is not secure. We need for Canvas to be remedied quickly for this important reason.

My own migration from D2L to Canvas glitched badly, but this can be attributed to the unusual way in which I linked files to my D2L pages. I ended up having to rebuilding everything in Canvas from scratch.

Reflect on your experience in the Faculty Fellows program and working on your project:

I always enjoy meeting colleagues from across campus, and found that very valuable. My ASSETT cohort seemed to have different needs, and my own technology needs were very different from the rest. Perhaps it might be good to split up groups into areas of interest and need early in the season's gatherings, and then come back together for periodic reports? I did find the homework assignments ineffective, and customarily more confounding than helpful. I did not feel any sense of increased proficiency in the skill sets covered by the homework. Earlier notification of assignments and duties would be important for future cohorts.

Other artifacts and visuals (data, weblinks, pictures, write-ups):

No content to share

Follow up: We did receive a lovely apology from our MIA IT coach. It would benefit us tremendously to repeat this training session in the fall, as many of us have not learned to migrate our grades to the Web Grading system. I will be arranging further trainings for the faculty. I have also offered our Canvas to IT through the campus survey.