

Canvas Update | Launch Date for Faculty; Updates on Training and Migration

provost@slu.edu

Thu 4/22/2021 10:03 AM

Dear Colleagues,

I write today with updates on the University's move from Blackboard to Canvas.

Since my last message, we've been working to fill in some key details about training and course migration. And we have a scheduled date for opening Canvas to faculty.

Below ([and attached in PDF format](#)), you'll find additional information on training and migration, among other things. While I still can't provide all the details you need, I want to share what I know now, in case it helps you to get a feel for how things will unfold this summer. Faculty on nine-month contracts will find this information particularly helpful as you plan when and how you'll learn about Canvas and build your fall courses in the new system.

We've also been working to finalize a date for opening Canvas to faculty. Right now -- assuming final preparations continue to go smoothly -- we expect to open Canvas to faculty on **Friday, April 30**. Those assigned to fall 2021 courses will see those courses in Canvas. As a reminder, summer courses will not appear in Canvas because they will continue to be offered in Blackboard.

In my next message, late next week, I will confirm whether we are on schedule for the expected launch, as well as provide detailed training schedules and registration links (for those who wish to attend live, virtual sessions). If we have additional course migration details at that time, I'll share those, as well.

I appreciate your continued patience. I assure you the team is working as quickly as possible to make sure everything is in order as we prepare to open Canvas for faculty next week.

Best,
Debie

--

Debra Rudder Lohe, Ph.D. (she/her)
Special Assistant to the Provost

Canvas Update | Launch Date for Faculty; Updates on Training and Migration

Canvas Access and Availability for Faculty -- April 30

Faculty are expected to have access to Canvas on Friday, April 30. Faculty who are assigned to teach courses in fall 2021 will have access to their fall course shells on that date. Faculty who are not assigned to fall courses also should be able to access Canvas for training and exploration purposes. Students will not be able to access courses in Canvas until the fall term begins and faculty have "published" their Canvas courses for students to see.

Blackboard Access and Availability for Faculty -- Reminders

As a reminder, Blackboard will continue to be available and used for teaching this summer. Faculty will be able to review or access materials from prior courses in Blackboard through June 2022, when the Blackboard contract ends. After summer 2021 courses end, no courses may be taught in Blackboard. We

are making progress on a long-term course archive plan and will be able to provide you with additional information later this summer.

Training and Support for Faculty

As I shared in my previous update, we will take a multi-pronged approach to training, since different faculty members have different needs and preferences. Some sessions will be live/virtual sessions, while other training opportunities will allow faculty to work at their own pace and on their own schedule.

We are still finalizing the schedule of live sessions with our Canvas colleagues, but we hope to be able to publish that schedule - along with registration links for live sessions - late next week.

In the meantime, here's a high-level look at what you can expect . . .

- **On-Demand Training**: Faculty will have many opportunities to access on-demand training. All faculty will have access to a customized version of *Growing with Canvas*, a self-paced course that provides a solid overview of Canvas and allows faculty to have the experience of being a “student” in Canvas. This course, along with a personal Sandbox course (where you can experiment and explore), provide foundational knowledge and learning opportunities. Additionally, we are able to record the live/virtual Canvas training workshops (see below), and we expect to make recordings available to all faculty in mid-to-late May. Finally, you'll have access to a robust set of web-based resources, including SLU-specific resources and a robust set of resource guides from Canvas.
- **Live/Virtual Workshops**: Starting in early May and continuing through the end of August, we will offer numerous live/virtual training sessions that range in focus from getting started in Canvas to understanding course organization to creating assignments to grading student work. These sessions are typically 90-minute workshops with a combination of presentation and hands-on activities working in your own Canvas courses. Canvas has a series of six sessions that constitute their most thorough introduction to the basic functionality of the system. Faculty may wish to participate in only some of these sessions, or they may wish to take all six. In late-May, early-June, and mid-July, we plan to offer what we're calling a week-long Canvas Design Institute, in which faculty attend all six sessions, along with open studio working time and a final Q&A session with Canvas trainers at the end of the week. All workshops will also have a Reinert Center facilitator, in case SLU-specific questions arise. For those who cannot attend live/virtual sessions or who prefer to work at their own pace, recorded versions of all six sessions also will be available starting in mid-to-late May.
- **Live/Virtual Q&A Sessions**: This summer, we also will periodically offer 60-minute Q&A sessions with a Canvas expert, sometimes focused on a specific topic and other times more open-ended. These sessions will be limited to faculty who have already completed some initial training and begun to work on their courses in Canvas. They allow focused space for those who've started to build courses to ask targeted questions. Q&A sessions will also have a Reinert Center facilitator, to address SLU-specific questions.
- **Other Live/Virtual Sessions**: As we get farther into Canvas training, we'll determine whether we need to add additional virtual sessions, such as drop-in “open studio” working sessions with members of the Reinert Center or the ITS team.

Finally, a word about Canvas support. When you begin to use the system, you'll see that we have put in place a robust support model for you and your students. Our contract with Canvas allows anyone to access support directly from Canvas, 24/7, by chat or by phone. The addition of Canvas-specific support represents a significant commitment to ensuring you and your students are able to get help any time you need it.

Migration of Blackboard Courses to Canvas

We are still working through the logistics of how migration of courses from Blackboard to Canvas will work. As I mentioned in my last email, whether you prefer to migrate a course from Blackboard -- rather than building a course from scratch in Canvas -- will be up to you. The mechanics of exporting your Blackboard courses and importing them into Canvas is not especially complicated; most faculty can do this on their own. However, many faculty will prefer to have assistance with this process, and we want to ensure faculty have adequate support for migration if they choose this path.

While we are still finalizing the details, I can give you a sense of how we expect the process to work and the resources we're putting in place to support you:

- **Do some training first:** We recommend that faculty complete the first two 90-minute Canvas training sessions before they make a final decision to migrate or build from scratch. Having a basic understanding of the architecture and building blocks of Canvas will give you a better understanding of what happens when a Blackboard course is imported into Canvas.
- **Self-Migration:** Faculty who wish to do so will be able to migrate their Blackboard courses on their own. This essentially involves exporting your whole Blackboard course and importing it into Canvas. We'll provide detailed instructions on how to do that, along with some guidance on things you'll want to pay close attention to when you start cleaning up the Canvas version of your course. *Timeline: Self-migration can be done any time after the system opens on April 30.*
- **Supported Migration:** Faculty who want help with migration will have the opportunity to work with a Course Migration Assistant. The course migration support team will be led by the Reinert Center. We are currently working to hire the team of Course Migration Assistants who will be able to work with faculty this summer to ensure their courses reflect their desired approach to teaching with Canvas. This process likely will be triggered by a faculty member completing an initial intake form. Those who choose supported migration will be given a pre-migration checklist of key actions to take before the migration process can begin. *Timeline: Supported course migration will be available starting May 24 and continuing through the summer. Because this work takes a significant amount of time, after August 15, we may not be able to offer the same level of support we can offer during the summer.*

In the coming weeks, you will hear more from me about how to prepare for course migration and how to opt in for support.