Blackboard Faculty Advisory Committee

Minutes, November 2, 2015

Attendees: Derek Bruff, Stacey Johnson, Kelly Wolgast, Craig Smith, Malcolm Getz, Tim Hanusa, Sue Hale, Larry Reeves, Jesse Blocher, Michael Hime, Greg Kyle.

Agenda:

1. Blackboard Support at the CFT – Report on the new support model from Stacey Johnson, CFT Assistant Director for Educational Technology
2. New Features
   a. Now Testing
      i. Respondus Lockdown Browser
   b. Under Consideration
      i. Textbook Publisher Extensions
      ii. OpenBadges Building Block
3. Looking Ahead
   a. Archiving Policy
   b. Needs Assessment

Minutes:

Blackboard Support at the CFT – Report from Stacey Johnson

- The CFT became Vanderbilt's primary source for Blackboard support (both technical and pedagogical) on August 16, 2016. This was a change from the previous support model, which relied on VUIT staff embedded in the schools. The School of Nursing continues to provide Blackboard support to its faculty (via SoN informatics staff), but for the rest of campus, the CFT is now the place to bring any and all Blackboard questions.
- Initial feedback on the new support model has been very positive, with VUIT and other staff reporting that instructors are quickly learning to go to the CFT with Blackboard questions. When necessary, VUIT-to-CFT handoffs have been handled well, in general.
- The CFT shared the new model with a number of colleges as part of the "EdTech Roadshow" featuring the CFT, the Library, and the Vanderbilt Institute for Digital Learning, which has helped get the word out about the new support structure.
- The CFT hired two new instructional technologists, Lee Scarborough and Rebecca Panter, as part of its new role in providing Blackboard support to instructors and students.
- The Blackboard support team has created a number of on-demand resources for instructors. See the Blackboard website, https://www.vanderbilt.edu/blackboard, for details. Stacey: "If we get three questions about something, we add it to the list of on-demand resources to create."
- Most Blackboard support is handled through email (blackboard@vanderbilt.edu). The support team also has weekly drop-in support hours, and availability by phone and Lync (for screen-sharing).

- The CFT Blackboard support team stayed busy throughout the semester. Initial weeks were full of urgent, technical questions. There was a shift to more conceptual, harder-to-answer questions around Week 3 or 4 of the semester. Then, around Week 6 or 7, a shift to more education and outreach by the team as support inquiries slowed down.
- The support team offered a number of workshops during the fall, including three "standard" workshops (Using Media in Blackboard, Academic Integrity in Blackboard, and Assignments and Grading in Blackboard) piloted at the CFT and now available to be offered upon request around campus.
- Question: Why do I have to click through two screens to login?
    - o Answer: The Blackboard link from the main Vanderbilt website leads to www.vanderbilt.edu/blackboard/, our support website. From this page, the login link leads to blackboard.vanderbilt.edu, the actual Blackboard application. The link there leads to Vanderbilt single sign-on, which in turn leads to one's Blackboard landing page.
    - o We could link directly from www.vanderbilt.edu to blackboard.vanderbilt.edu, but that would mean fewer people would know about Blackboard support resources.
    - o We can't embed the Vanderbilt single sign-on in http://blackboard.vanderbilt.edu, because some users (particularly administrators) need to use a different kind of login.
- Question: I've had students try to submit an assignment, be refused by Blackboard (because the assignment is submitted late), then email me with their assignment. Is there any way to verify the student's story?
    - o Answer: As of the summer 2016 update, Blackboard now accepts late assignments by default, marking them as late, so this should be less of an issue going forward. If questions remain, it is possible to check the server logs to verify a student story.
- Question: Occasionally, I need to enroll people in a course who aren't Vanderbilt faculty, staff, or students. Has the CFT taken over the granting of temporary VUnetIDs for this purpose?
    - o Answer: Yes. During September, the CFT Blackboard team got the training and permissions they needed to handle these requests.

New Features

- Respondus Lockdown Browswer
    - o This fall Steve Buckles (Economics) has been piloting Respondus Lockdown Browser. This web browser can be used to facilitate in-class testing via Blackboard. The student installs the browser, uses it login to Blackboard, then the browser prevents the student from doing anything else on their laptop while taking a test within the Blackboard environment. No other programs, no Internet access, no local file access. See the Blackboard support website for more details on the tool.
    - o Two potential wins from this, stemming from the ability to ask free-response test questions in a digital environment: more efficient grading of free-response questions and (as Buckles has observed) longer, higher quality student responses.
    - o The Blackboard team is collecting feedback from Buckles, as well as from other instructors piloting the tool. The pilot is being funded by the College of Arts & Science.

Given positive feedback and sufficient interest outside of A&S, the Blackboard team will propose central funding of the tool.

- o The School of Nursing isn't likely to be interested, given that they use Remote Proctor for distance testing. Remote Proctor doesn't lock down the student browser. Instead is monitors the student via screen capture and webcam.
- o Question: How well does Respondus work with accessibility tools like screen readers?
  - Answer: Will investigate, checking with EAD as necessary.
- o Question: What about virtual operating systems as a workaround?
  - Answer: If a student wants to learn how to use a virtual machine to beat Respondus, that information is available online. The Blackboard support team's message: The tools put safeguards in place, but nothing works 100%. More important is creating a culture of integrity, and tools don't solve that problem.

- Textbook Publisher Extensions
  - o Major textbook publishers make available Blackboard extensions that enable Blackboard to communicate with publisher-hosted digital learning platforms. The CFT Blackboard team has worked with the Vanderbilt bookstore to identify the most commonly used textbook publishers at Vanderbilt (Cengage, MacMillan, McGraw-Hill, Pearson, Oxford, and Wiley). The team is currently testing Blackboard extensions from these publishers. The goal is to announce to faculty improved integration between Blackboard and online textbook resources before the start of the spring semester.
  - o Note that this kind of sandbox testing doesn't require Faculty Advisory Committee vetting.
- Open Badges
  - o The CFT Blackboard team is also testing a digital badges Blackboard extension, Open Badges.

Looking Ahead

- At our January meeting, we'll discuss a proposed course availability and archiving policy.
- Also in 2016, we'll develop a needs assessment process to help determine Vanderbilt's next course management system. Our Blackboard contract expires in July 2017, and we'll need to decide to renew or switch to another vendor.