

Blackboard Faculty Advisory Committee

Agenda, January 18, 2016

Agenda:

1. Blackboard Support at the CFT – Update from Stacey Johnson, CFT Assistant Director for Educational Technology
2. Course Archiving and Availability Policy – Discussion of the draft policy
3. Course Management System Vendor Selection – Initial thoughts on a needs assessment process

Minutes:

Blackboard Support at the CFT

- Stacey Johnson reviewed data on Blackboard support requests for Fall 2015. See appendix.
- Discussion of low numbers for some schools:
 - Medicine numbers are lower because only a few programs there are using Blackboard. Most use VSTAR. Those programs that use Blackboard, however, are relatively frequent users of Blackboard support.
 - Nursing numbers are lower because they have robust in-house technical support. The CFT Blackboard support team is back-up for Nursing tech support.
 - Blair also has fairly robust in-house technical support from their librarians. However, the CFT has begun outreach efforts to Blair faculty, partnering with librarians to do so.

Course Archiving and Availability Policy

- Derek Bruff shared a draft policy for deleting old courses from Blackboard. See appendix.
- The committee discussed technical aspects of the new policy, particularly the ease with which instructors might save course files and/or entire courses to their own computers. Saving a copy of an entire course is fairly easy, but sometimes importing a saved course creates errors. It's harder to selectively save files from Blackboard to one's own computer. Given these difficulties, the committee questioned the wisdom of asking faculty to maintain copies of their own course files and course archives.
- There were also some concerns about the culture shift and faculty training that would be required to move to a policy that requires faculty to maintain their own copies of course files and course archives. Having the institution provide this service to faculty would avoid these transition costs.
- Since most courses are taught every year or every other year, the committee recommended that faculty maintain access to courses for two years after they're taught. That way, Blackboard can serve as file storage for most courses.

- The committee noted that faculty will need easy-to-access and easy-to-follow walk-throughs for saving their course materials from Blackboard. The CFT Blackboard support team said that these resources are already being developed.
- Committee members questioned the need for such a policy. Isn't data storage cheap? When Derek shared the high cost of each extra terabyte of Blackboard storage, there was much surprise.
- There were some concerns about making courses unavailable to students immediately after the end of the course. What about incompletes? An instructor could make a course available to students again, but all students would be able to access the course, not just the student with an incomplete. EMOS said it would research how many incompletes there are in a typical semester.
- Next steps: Derek will revise the policy so that faculty maintain access to courses for two years after the course ends. Then Derek will send the revised policy to Cynthia Cyrus, Vice Provost for Learning and Residential Affairs, to circulate among the associate deans for additional feedback.
- Regarding OAK, Derek noted that a version of OAK has been maintained on VUIT servers. He cited two reasons for shutting OAK down permanently, per the OAK section of the new policy:
 - The copy of OAK running on VUIT servers will eventually be inaccessible. The version of Blackboard running OAK isn't being updated and will become increasingly incompatible with server operating systems as they are updated over time.
 - While we can copy courses out of OAK and into our current version of Blackboard, the course copy function will become increasingly error-prone as Blackboard updates happen over time.
- The committee expressed no concerns about shutting OAK down permanently in May 2016, assuming appropriate reminders are sent to faculty about copying any remaining OAK courses that are needed.

Course Management System (CMS) Needs Assessment & Vendor Selection

- Derek Bruff noted that our current contract with Blackboard ends in July 2017. If we switch to a new course management system, we'll need to pilot that system by Fall 2016. Committee members wondered if that was enough time for a transition. Should a pilot occur in Summer 2016?
- Suggestions from the committee for the Spring 2016 needs assessment:
 - Have ready a dossier on Blackboard complaints and how other course management systems might address these issues.
 - Identify the most commonly used features of Blackboard, the absence of which in another system would be a deal breaker.
 - Create a faculty wish-list of CMS features.
 - Consider the following CMS options: Canvas, Desire2Learn, Sakai, Moodle.
 - Make sure that the new system would be compatible with Kaltura, the streaming media server we currently use.

- Be sure to reach out to students, including undergrads, graduate students, and TAS, to see what features they would like to see in a CMS.

Faculty Advisory Committee Report: YTD as of Dec 15 2015

A. Face-to-face Interactions:

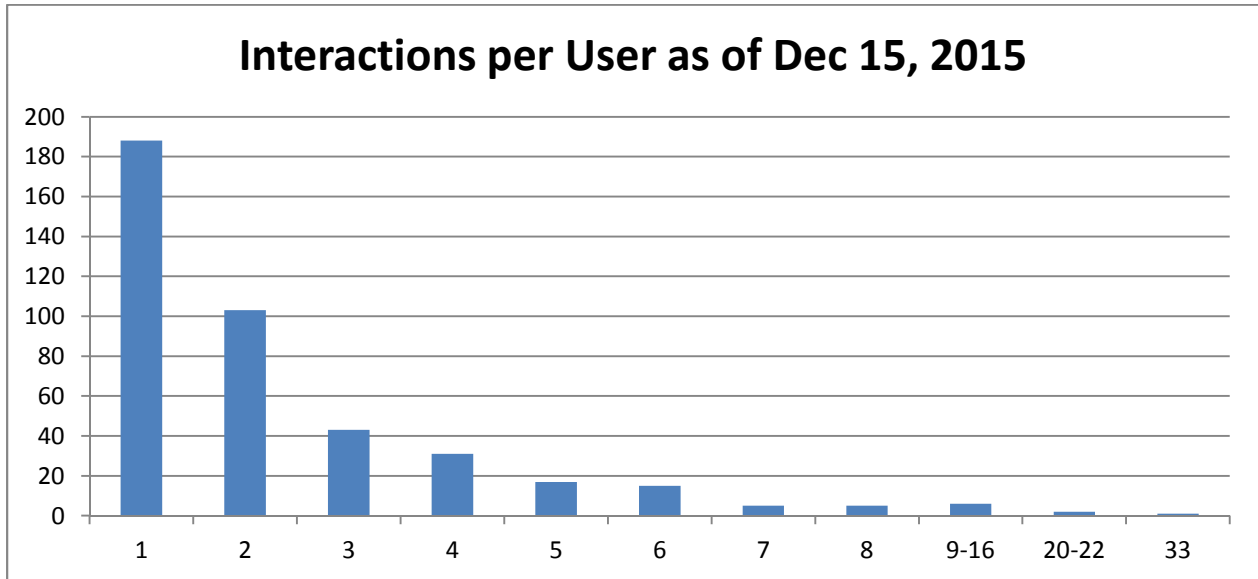
Events and Workshops	Participants
9	85

Consults and Drop-ins	Participants
	51

B. Support requests:

Phone requests	Requests
	41

Email Requests		
New request	Continuation of previous thread	Grand Total
468	541	1009



1 interaction: 188 (or 44.4% of unique requestors) had only one email interaction with Bb Support at the CFT this semester

2 interactions: 103 users (24.3%) had two interactions

3 interactions: 43 users (10.2%) had three interactions

4-16 interactions: 77 users (18.2%) had between 4 and 12 interactions

20-33 interactions: 3 users (0.7%) had between 20 and 33 interactions

Activity: Total Interactions by School and Rank, Year to date as of Dec 15, 2015											% of total support activity	
School	Prof	Asso Prof	Asst Prof	Lect/ Instr	Adj Faculty	Total Faculty	Staff/ Admin	Students	Other	Total		
Arts & Science	52	35	45	97	3	232	34	81		347	39.9%	
Blair	5	4	0	8	0	17	5	0		22	2.5%	
Divinity	4	4	2	0	0	10	3	11		24	2.8%	
Engineering	14	43	11	0	2	70	4	20		94	10.8%	
Law	12	0	4	1	6	23	21	10		54	6.2%	
Medicine	12	8	9	2	6	37	23	17	1	78	9.0%	
Nursing	5	0	1	3	0	9	1	13		23	2.6%	
Owen	20	10	33	1	13	77	32	8	2	119	13.7%	
Peabody	19	8	49	35	18	129	18	33		180	20.7%	
Univ Central/other	0	0	0	2	0	2	49	0	15	66	7.6%	
Total	143	112	154	149	48	606	190	193	18	1007		
								(134 grad)				

Reach: Unique Requestors by School and Rank, Year to date as of Dec 15, 2015											Total
School & Total F 2015 FT Faculty	Prof	Asso Prof	Asst Prof	Lect/ Instr	Adj Faculty	Total Faculty	% of Faculty	Staff/ Admin	Students	Other	
Arts & Science 574	20	15	21	33	2	91	15.85%	12	35		138
Blair 58	1	2		2		5	8.62%	3			8
Divinity 30	3	1	1			5	16.67%	2	8		15
Engineering 143	5	14	6		1	26	18.18%	3	14		43
Law 47	5	1	2	1	1	10	21.28%	9	4		23
Medicine 2,575	4	4	6	1	1	16	0.62%	16	11	1	44
Nursing 248	1		1	1		3	1.21%	1	11		15
Owen 47	8	5	4		4	21	44.68%	17	5	1	44
Peabody 143	5	3	12	10	7	37	25.87%	6	22		65
Univ Central/other na				2		2		18		8	28
Total	52	45	53	50	16	216		87	110	10	423

(75
grad)

Blackboard Course Archiving and Availability Policy [Draft]

When Blackboard, then known as OAK, was hosted on Vanderbilt servers, there were no consistent systems in place to archive courses, and courses were never permanently purged, meaning that courses generally remained available to instructors indefinitely, and instructors generally left courses available to students indefinitely, as well. This meant keeping all past courses on the OAK servers, which may have contributed to the performance and reliability issues OAK suffered in its last years. With the move from Vanderbilt servers to Blackboard managed hosting, we want to avoid this potential problem. Moreover, server space is not free. The greater the amount of course data we maintain on Blackboard, the higher the financial cost to the institution.

For these reasons, beginning May 2016, courses on Blackboard will be made unavailable to students and instructors and eventually deleted per the following schedule.

Two weeks after a course ends, the course will be made unavailable to students enrolled in the course. This helps with compliance with Vanderbilt’s Copyright Policy for Blackboard. The course will remain available to instructors associated with the course.

Example: If grades are due for spring semester courses on May 7th, those courses will be made unavailable to students on May 21st.

Three semesters after a course ends, the course will be made unavailable to instructors associated with the course. The course will remain on Blackboard servers, but will only be accessible by Blackboard administrators. The course will be considered “archived” at this point. (Note that summer courses will be grouped with fall courses for this purpose.)

Example: A Spring 2016 course will remain available to instructors during Summer 2016, Fall 2016, and Spring 2017. It will be made unavailable to instructors at the start of Summer 2017.

Three years after a course ends, the course will be deleted entirely from Blackboard servers. (Note that summer courses will be grouped with fall courses for this purpose.)

Example: A Spring 2016 course will be deleted at the start of Summer 2019.

Consider the following timetable as an illustration:

<i>Course Group</i>	<i>Unavailable to Students</i>	<i>Unavailable to Instructors</i>	<i>Deleted Entirely</i>
Spring 2016	Two weeks into Summer 2016	Start of Summer 2017	Start of Summer 2019
Summer and Fall 2016	Two weeks into Spring 2017	Start of Spring 2018	Start of Spring 2020
Spring 2017	Two weeks into Summer 2017	Start of Summer 2018	Start of Summer 2020

Summer and Fall 2017	Two weeks into Spring 2018	Start of Spring 2019	Start of Spring 2021
----------------------	----------------------------	----------------------	----------------------

This schedule encourages students and instructors to maintain personal copies of relevant course materials, instead of relying on Blackboard as indefinite storage. An email notification will be sent to students and instructors four weeks before they lose access to a course, reminding them to keep personal copies of any course materials they will need after the course ends.

Some caveats:

- During the time period a course is available to instructors but not to students (approximately one year), an instructor can elect to make the course available to students for as long as the instructor has access to the course. Note that an instructor cannot make a course available to a single student—the course is either available to all enrolled students or none.
- During the archiving time period when a course is maintained on Blackboard servers but not available to an instructor (approximately two years), Blackboard administrators can grant temporary access to that instructor upon request. Requests should be submitted via blackboard@vanderbilt.edu.
- Exceptions to the standard archiving and availability schedule can be requested by instructors and school administrators. Exception requests should be submitted via blackboard@vanderbilt.edu, and must be approved by representatives of the University Registrar and the Center for Teaching. Note that once deleted, a course cannot be retrieved, so all exception requests should be made within three years of course end. (If students want access to a course beyond the two-week window after the course ends, they should speak with their instructors.)
- Alternate archiving and availability schedules can be set for individual colleges and schools, depending on local needs. Non-standard schedules should be drafted by the appropriate associate deans and approved by the Provost's Office.

OAK Legacy System

When Vanderbilt moved to Blackboard managed hosting, all courses between Fall 2013 and Fall 2014 were migrated to the new system, along with some courses older than Fall 2013, as requested by instructors. Most courses older than Fall 2013 were not migrated, but have been maintained in an archival mode on Vanderbilt servers with very limited access. The OAK archive will be deleted during the summer of 2016, as supporting the archive is becoming increasingly difficult given the age of the OAK software.

Given the new Blackboard course archiving and availability policy described above, some attention to these older courses is necessary.

Courses older than Fall 2013 not already migrated to Blackboard: These courses will be deleted by the end of May 2016. Instructors who wish to access content from these courses should request access via blackboard@vanderbilt.edu no later than April 30, 2016. Courses will be migrated to Blackboard, then instructors will have four weeks to make personal copies of any materials in the courses before the courses are archived or deleted, per the new policy.

Courses offered between Fall 2013 and Fall 2015: These courses are all currently available to instructors on Blackboard and some are also available to students, but the courses will need to be made unavailable and archived appropriately according to the new policy.

<i>Course Group</i>	<i>Unavailable to Students</i>	<i>Unavailable to Instructors</i>	<i>Deleted Entirely</i>
Fall 2013	End of May 2016	End of May 2016	Start of Spring 2017
Spring 2014	End of May 2016	End of May 2016	Start of Summer 2017
Summer and Fall 2014	End of May 2016	End of May 2016	Start of Spring 2018
Spring 2015	End of May 2016	End of May 2016	Start of Summer 2018
Summer and Fall 2015	End of May 2016	Start of Spring 2017	Start of Spring 2019

Students are encouraged to make personal copies by May 20, 2016, of any course materials they need from courses offered between Fall 2013 and Fall 2015.

Instructors are encouraged to make personal copies by May 20, 2016, of any course materials they need from courses offered between Fall 2013 and Spring 2015.