

Date: December 8, 2017

ASU RFP # 081704

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Subject: Evaluation Committee Recommendation

This is a summary of the committee activities for the vendor selection for a Learning Management System (LMS) to serve the entire university.

The Evaluation Committee was comprised of:

Voting Members:

- Charles Kazilek, Chief Technology Innovation Officer, Office of the Provost (Committee Chair)
- Ruvi Wijesuriya, director, Academic Technology Support Group, University Technology Office
- Frederick Corey, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Office of the Provost
- Donna Cataldo, Academic Senate, Clinical Associate Professor, SNHP Exercise Science & Health Promotion
- Andrew Ross, Associate Director and Head Learning Support Services, SILC
- Kristin Kennedy, Director of Information Technology Services, University Technology Office
- Philippos Savvides, Manager Online Learning, ASU EdPlus
- Leah Lommel, Assistant Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, EdPlus at ASU
- James Casey, Director, Information Technology Services Academic Technologies, University Technology Office
- Denise Bodman, Principal Lecturer, The Sanford School, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Non-voting Members:

- Catherine Thart, Purchasing Manager, Procurement (ASU)- Facilitator
- Katherine Ranes, ASU University Technology Office (Project Manager)
- Jim Dwyer, Auxiliary Business Services (Director)

All responses to the RFP were due on 6/20/2017 by 3:00 P.M MST. A Pre-Proposal Conference call was held on 5/31/17 at 10 AM MST. The deadline for inquiries was 6/7/17 at 3:00PM MST. Based on vendor Inquiries, One (1) Addendum was issued.

Responses to the RFP were received from the following vendors:

- Blackboard
- Instructure

After independent review of the proposals, based on the Evaluation Criteria of the RFP listed below, the committee met on June 30, 2017 and decided on the following ranking:

1. Instructure
2. Blackboard

Evaluation Criteria:

1. Response to Specifications/Scope of Work – 40%
2. Response to Proposer Qualifications – 30%
3. Response to Pricing Schedule – 15%
4. Sustainability efforts – 10%
5. Acknowledgment and acceptance of the terms and conditions of the License Agreement – 5%

Initial Committee RFP evaluation was as follows:

Instructure

1. *Response to Specifications/Scope of Work:*
Instructure's Canvas product meets ASU's requirements for a Learning Management System. Standard items from the requirements checklist such as functionality, student tracking, assignments, tests, blogs, participation, discussion boards, control of content, and navigation, will address ASU's needs. Additional development will be required to address specific workflow requirements for several ASU Colleges.
2. *Response to Proposer Qualifications:*
Instructure has experience working with large Universities. They have been offering their product in the cloud since 2010. Their product was originally designed to run on a cloud based platform and has proven to scale in that environment. All services associated with the LMS are cloud-hosted. They have a healthy financial statement and provided a viable migration plan for moving from Blackboard to their Canvas LMS product.
3. *Response to Pricing Schedule:*
Pricing is higher than Blackboard.

4. *Sustainability Efforts:*
Instructure focused more on sustainability initiatives related to Amazon and other partners rather than what they were doing.
5. *Acknowledgement and Acceptance of the Terms and Conditions of the License Agreement:* Instructure took exceptions to ASU's terms and conditions.

Blackboard

1. *Response to Specifications/Scope of Work:*
The Blackboard SaaS solution meets ASU's requirements for a Learning Management System. Standard items from the requirements checklist such as functionality, student tracking, assignments, tests, blogs, participation, discussion boards, control of content, and navigation, will address ASU's needs. Minimal modifications will need to be made to the existing infrastructure to facilitate a migration from the current platform. However, there were initial concerns about limitations to obtaining Blackboard student data, such as grade to date.
2. *Response to Proposer Qualifications:*
Blackboard works with many large Universities and has 20 years of experience providing LMS solutions, however they do not have as much experience with cloud hosting that Instructure has. Not all Blackboard services are cloud hosted, which creates concern about the potential risk of outages for those services. They have a reasonably healthy financial statements. Blackboard did an adequate job completing this section, with a viable migration plan.
3. *Response to Pricing Schedule:*
Price is lower than Instructure's offering.
4. *Sustainability Efforts:*
Blackboard's answers to this requirement were complete and focused on their own sustainability initiatives.
5. *Acknowledgement and Acceptance of the Terms and Conditions of the License Agreement:*
Blackboard took exceptions to ASU's terms and conditions.

Based on the Committee's review of the RFP responses, follow-up questions were prepared and submitted to both respondents to clarify certain items in their initial submissions.

After the initial and preliminary evaluation, the committee determined that Blackboard and Instructure met the essential requirements of the RFP and requested on-site interviews/demonstrations with each of them.

Onsite visit

Each on-site visit consisted of a morning open community presentation with question and answers followed by an afternoon presentation and question and answer period for the Evaluation Committee. On-site demonstrations were held on August 2, 2017 (Blackboard) and August 3, 2017 (Canvas). Both demonstrations took place on the Tempe Campus.

Blackboard and Instructure were provided with a detailed agenda to ensure that all relevant topics were covered during their demonstrations. Attendees were asked to submit feedback by filling out an online evaluation form for each vendor. After the demonstrations, the evaluation committee collected remaining questions from staff members and evaluation committee members. The ASU Purchasing Lead submitted these questions to the vendors on 8/25/2017 and requested that answers be returned by 5:00 pm on Monday, August 28, 2017. Evaluation committee members incorporated these answers, as well as the online evaluations from those attending the public sessions, into their decision making process. Follow-up calls were made to both vendors to clarify their responses to the questions submitted to them by the committee.

On September 14, 2017 the RFP Evaluation Committee convened in person and via phone to discuss the evaluation criteria in order to recommend which company to move forward with.

Final Assessment

The summary below reflects the final ranking based on the proposals, clarification questions and answers, on-site interviews, and product demonstrations.

1. Instructure
 2. Blackboard
- Instructure has been offering their product in the cloud since 2010. Their product was originally designed to run on a cloud based platform and has proven to scale in that environment. All services associated with the LMS are cloud-hosted. They have a faster recovery time than Blackboard, in case of catastrophic failure, due to the deployment of near real-time replication in separate hosting locations.
 - Instructure's Canvas LMS was viewed as having a better usability experience for faculty, student and administrative users. This was reflected in both surveys and feedback from the community presentations.
 - The Canvas mobile student and instructor clients were seen as more feature rich. For example, Canvas' Teacher app allows you to post and edit content and announcements, create and participate in discussions, grade homework, conduct

- a chat, send messages, etc.
- During the on-site visit it was discovered that the codebase Blackboard plans to use is a migration of their existing code. ASU knows from experience there are bugs in this codebase and the committee has concerns that Blackboard cannot address these issues simply by moving the product to a cloud hosted environment.
 - Canvas was developed from the beginning as a cloud SaaS solution. It has been stress tested by comparable size institutions and has performed well based on our interviews with several institutions. While Blackboard has 20 years of experience providing LMS solutions, they do not have the experience with cloud hosting that Instructure has. In addition, Canvas services are all cloud hosted, which mitigates concern about the potential risk of outages for those services.
 - It was unavoidable to include our past LMS experience as part of our evaluation. Regarding service level performance we have also experienced major bugs and sporadic outages of which the underlying issues have taken months to resolve. This does not provide us with confidence that moving the existing codebase to a SaaS cloud hosted environment will improve the service.
 - Instructure provided a viable migration plan for moving from Blackboard to their Canvas LMS product. The transition was a major concern for the committee, but once Instructure outlined how they would assist, the committee was comfortable moving forward with the Canvas LMS.

For the reasons stated above, the committee has determined that Instructure is responsive and responsible and that its proposal is the most advantageous to the University based on the evaluation factors set forth in the RFP.

Respectfully Submitted,



Charles Kazilek

Committee Chair