UNCG Selects Canvas by Instructure as New Learning Management System

ITS expects all classes to be migrated by Spring 2016

The University has selected Canvas by Instructure as its next Learning Management System (LMS), replacing Blackboard Learn. UNCG will move from Blackboard Learn to Canvas over the next two years—with the goal of all classes being available in Canvas by Spring 2016.

In June, Provost David Perrin announced the decision to accept the recommendation by the Academic Technology Coordinating Committee that UNCG move to Canvas as its LMS. Benefits of moving to Canvas include reduced downtime to upgrade the software, greater mobility and consistency across multiple devices, and a more modern interface. In August, the University began the initial adoption phase for Canvas. During this phase, a small subset of classes will be held in Canvas, and functionality will be limited. For more information, including the implementation plan, go to http://courses.uncg.edu/.

New Guidance for Handling University Data

UNCG has modified its Data Classification Policy (http://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/data/). The modified policy replaces “Restricted” and “Public” data classifications with “High Risk,” “Moderate Risk,” “Low Risk,” and “Minimal Risk” classifications. These changes provide improved guidance for ITS in data security and storage design efforts, and provide the University community with better guidance in choosing storage locations for data. The revised policy also contains links to documentation (http://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/data/2014-UNCG-Data-Classifications-Guidance-(Approved)-Data-Classifications.pdf) providing specific guidance for choosing appropriate data storage locations. ITS recommends that faculty and staff review these new classifications and adjust any non-compliant data storage practices accordingly.

New Review Procedure for Purchasing Enterprise Application Software

In July, a new policy was approved by the Chancellor requiring a review by ITS prior to purchasing certain types of enterprise application software (http://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/enterprise_applications_prepurchase/). In summary, enterprise applications (defined in the policy) must be reviewed by the Administrative Information Security Committee to ensure that University data is properly protected, and student-facing enterprise administrative applications (also defined in the policy) must be reviewed for compliance with University-approved authentication methods. The related procedure can be found at https://its.uncg.edu/Technology_Procedures/Other/Enterprise_Applications/. Additional information about this requirement is located on the Purchasing Web site (http://purchasing.uncg.edu/).

Information Security Office: Security Awareness Training

From "phishing" (email fraud) that steals your personal information to malware infections that can render your data files useless, security threats are increasing rapidly.

In 2014-2015, the ITS Information Security Office will share several steps to follow for better technology security. The first step is to educate yourself about information security. To help with this, UNCG has invested in online security awareness training that is available to all University faculty and staff.

Security awareness training provides the participant with a better understanding of the threats and risks to the University’s data and ways the participant can help maintain the security of the organization’s information assets. In addition to these benefits, security awareness training can help departments and individuals meet compliance and audit needs.

The security awareness training offered at UNCG is licensed from SANS, an internationally recognized security and information technology training organization. The SANS “Securing the Human” courses are organized as a series of brief videos on a specific topic followed by a short quiz. Some examples of topics are Cloud computing, Data Retention, HIPAA, and Passwords. There are more than thirty five videos in the series and the training can be taken over multiple sessions.

To enroll in the training, log in to Blackboard Learn (blackboard.uncg.edu) and follow the steps outlined at http://its.uncg.edu/Training/Security/SANS/. (As UNCG transitions to the Canvas learning management system, ITS will be moving the training from Blackboard to Canvas. Additional courses will be added to the training package at that time.)

If you have questions about the Securing the Human courses or have issues enrolling in the training, contact the ITS Service Desk at 6-TECH at 256-TECH (8324).
Classroom Technology Study

In cooperation with Academic Affairs, ITS is conducting a study to identify classroom technology needs of faculty and students, and the requisite costs.

As part of the study, ITS will make an inventory of all equipment in the classrooms and will work with the Instructional Technology Consultants (ITCs) and faculty in the College/Schools to identify equipment and software that could be added to classrooms, and equipment and software now in the classrooms that may not be necessary for every classroom. In addition to the inventory, ITS will determine the extent to which existing ITS staff resources can be utilized to bring down the overall cost of supporting classrooms.

This fall, ITS will work with faculty committees, survey faculty and students, and hold faculty forums, to get faculty and student views.

Campus Technology Updates

SPSS Software Update

If you use SPSS, be aware of Windows 8 compatibility issues and licensing changes which will likely impact the way you get SPSS. To use SPSS with a personally owned Windows 8 computer, you must purchase Version 22 through UNCG's online software store (http://its.uncg.edu/itsnews/uncg.edu/2014/07/30/campus-network-upgrades/ for more information).

Box Storage Service

Box is a new Web-based storage offering for UNCG that will provide users with 50 Gigabytes of space. Box is accessible from almost anywhere - Web, mobile, or desktop sync client. Box allows you to share files with people inside and outside of UNCG, and is configured to be a “2-Lock” storage service (go to http://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/data/2014-UNC-G-Data-Classifications-Guidance-(Approved)-Data-Classifications.pdf for guidance on data storage). Learn about other features of Box at its.uncg.edu/box. Access this new storage service at box.uncg.edu.

Managed Print Services

Earlier this year, the University announced a new program for managed print services (MPS). The MPS program is expected to lead to future cost savings. UNCG selected Systel as its MPS vendor. Department printing needs assessments are underway. When an assessment is completed, a report of printer recommendations and estimated savings is provided to the department. Go to http://its.uncg.edu/Printing/MPS/ for more details.

New Data Stewards Council Begins Work

During the spring, a new data governance body was established.

The Data Stewards Council, drawn from UNCG’s senior functional leadership, is responsible for the University’s standard glossary of data terms. The Council received its charge and specific principles for establishing data standards from the Chancellor in April, and began work in clarifying UNCG’s most widely used data terms.

In accordance with its charge, the Council has also developed a new terms approval process for the University, chosen institution-wide software for data terms management and approval, and begun investigation of the University’s data-driven decision-making requirements. The new data terms approval process and terms management and approval software will rollout University-wide this Fall in conjunction with detailed data stewards training for all University Data Stewards.

Reduced Voice Service Rates

ITS has announced significant rate reductions for voice services, effective October 1.

The estimated campus-wide reduction in rates is $350,000 per year, assuming everyone keeps the same lines. Rate reductions range from $8.34 - $13.84 per phone per month. Cost savings come from scale — through a managed services agreement between UNCG and North Carolina State University. Charges for the first six months of 2014-15 will be split between the old and new rates. Visit http://itsnews.uncg.edu/2014/07/28/new-voice-service-rates-an-its-efficiency-initiative/ for additional information about the rate reductions.

ITS Voice Services is available to answer questions about rates and service options. If you have questions or would like to request a visit from a Voice Services staff member, contact 6-TECH at 256-TECH (8324) or at 6tech@uncg.edu.