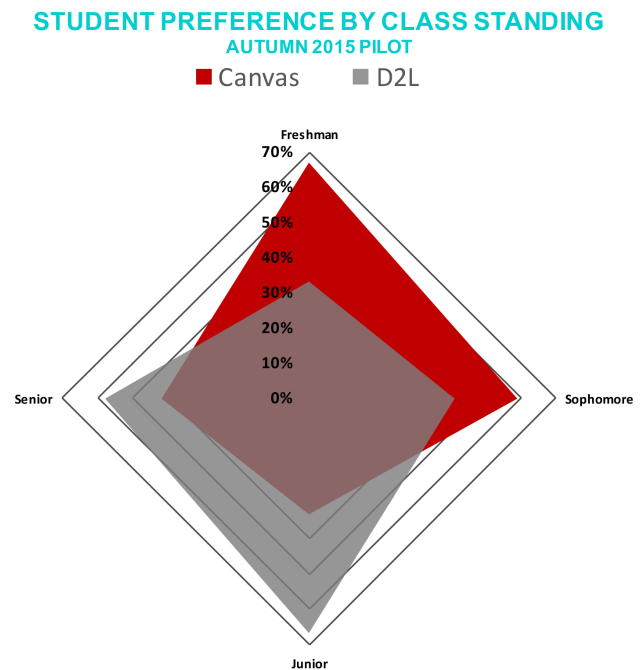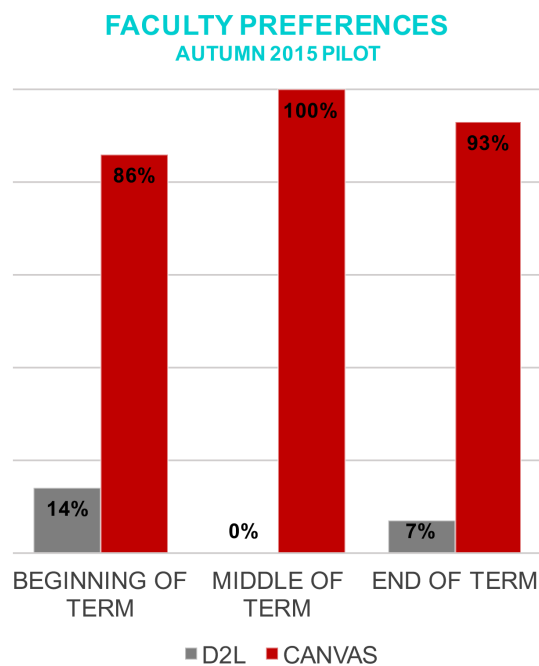# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Canvas Evaluation

Following the recommendation of the LMS Evaluation Committee, the Office of Distance Education and eLearning (ODEE) initiated a pilot of the Canvas LMS software during the autumn 2015 semester at The Ohio State University. Fifteen courses were identified and selected for participation in the pilot. Courses represented a range of colleges, disciplines and course levels. As part of the autumn pilot, ODEE staff surveyed faculty, instructional staff and students involved in pilot courses. An extensive technical evaluation of Canvas and a second pilot involving 50+ courses also took place in spring 2016.

DESIRABILITY

Faculty and instructional staff most appreciated Canvas's slick interface and modern design. Students liked the ability to use Canvas on a smartphone or tablet.

FACULTY PREFERENCES
AUTUMN 2015 PILOT

- BEGINNING OF TERM: D2L 14%, CANVAS 86%
- MIDDLE OF TERM: D2L 0%, CANVAS 100%
- END OF TERM: D2L 7%, CANVAS 93%

Legend: D2L, CANVAS

STUDENT PREFERENCE BY CLASS STANDING
AUTUMN 2015 PILOT

Legend: Canvas, D2L

Axes: Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior
Scale: 0% to 70% (0%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%)

Faculty Like Canvas

In the final survey, faculty and instructional staff overwhelmingly preferred Canvas for most LMS activities.

Faculty's favorite Canvas features included:

- **Clean interface** – Canvas's straightforward, simple architecture lets instructor content be the focus.
- **Easier building experience** – Canvas is easy to navigate, so instructors can build courses easily and consistently.
- **SpeedGrader** – This tool makes grading assignments much easier, enabling instructors to give students better feedback.
- **Student-focused** – Canvas was designed from a student perspective. One faculty member went as far as to say, "If students like it … I like it."

Students Like Canvas

Freshmen and Sophomores preferred Canvas. Juniors and Seniors preferred D2L. While students initially preferred the familiarity of D2L, their opinion of Canvas improved over time. By the end of the term, more students preferred Canvas than D2L.

Students' favorite Canvas features included:

- **Mobile app** – 50 percent of student respondents indicated they used a mobile device to access Canvas, and that the ability to use Canvas on a smartphone or tablet was a significant advantage.
- **Grades** – Students can include hypothetical grades and view their final grade percentage throughout the term.
- **Simplified collaboration** – Students can take a proactive approach to group work, sharing documents and hosting discussions all within the LMS.
- **Calendar** – This tool helps students stay organized, displaying assignments and due dates across all active courses.

Unizin Tie In

Unizin is a consortium of like-minded institutions facilitating the transition toward collaborative digital education. Canvas is the LMS platform that is currently most integrated within Unizin tools. As a member of Unizin we will be able to immediately leverage the power of multiple member institutions to get new features and better pricing for Canvas from Instructure. We will also have access to learning analytics from other member institutions using Canvas.

Cloud

Canvas was developed to run in the cloud, and is hosted on Amazon Web Service (AWS). Rather than Ohio State enduring scheduled downtime for one or two major updates each year, the software will undergo smaller changes on Canvas's regular three-week cycle. The system will scale dynamically, ensuring instructors and students the performance they expect, even during peak usage periods throughout the semester.

FEASIBILITY

With all of its appealing features, there are several aspects of Canvas that need attention before it meets Ohio State's LMS expectations.

Security

- ▶ The Security Advisory Board (SAB) reviewed the 3rd party risk assessment of Instructure / Canvas performed by the IT Risk Management Team. Upon review they found that Instructure / Canvas met basic security standards, but would benefit from additional development.

- ▶ We will need an addendum to Unizin's Instructure contract to address concerns raised by the SAB and IT Risk Management Team.

Accessibility

- ▶ The Web Accessibility Center (WAC) evaluated Canvas and upon review it found the overall system accessibility health rating was good for instructors and fair for students.

- ▶ We will work with Instructure to achieve full accessibility for all users in Canvas as quickly as possible.

Functionality

- ▶ **Quizzing tool**: The quizzing engine in Canvas is being rewritten. Instructure is planning on a limited summer 2016 release with regular enhancements thereafter. The proposed timeline will give instructors with complicated quizzes time to take advantage of these improvements.

- ▶ **Gradebook:** Instructure is addressing some of the gradebook enhancements which Ohio State and similar large institutions have requested.

- ▶ **Release conditions:** This functionality exists within Canvas, though it is not currently as feature-rich as D2L. Instructure is addressing some of these issues as well.

Special Use Cases

We will also work closely with our partners to develop solutions for:

- ▶ **University Libraries**: continuation of the LibraryLink service and user education about library resources and copyright protected content.

- **Student-Athlete Support Services Office (SASSO)**: solution to allow advisors to see athlete grades.
- **Fisher College of Business Executive Education Program**: plan to sunset separate instance of D2L.

ENSURING SUCCESS WITH CANVAS

ODEE has used pilot data and faculty input to build strategies for adopting Canvas across the university. Our plan offers flexibility and proactive support for the Ohio State community.

Adoption Support Plan

- **Timeline**: A year-long adoption will allow for efficiency, with consideration for features under development.
- **Quizzing tool update**: Some courses should remain in D2L until updated features become available. In the event that Instructure does not deliver the promised functionality, ODEE will work with faculty on appropriate solutions.
- **Communications**: We will work with our partners across the university to ensure clear messaging on adoption so instructors and students can get the support they need.
- **Training, events and assistance**: ODEE will provide extensive support in the form of public events, workshops, custom consultations and other resources for successful adoption.

SU 16	AU 16	SP 17
SAY HELLO TO CANVAS	LET'S GET BUILDING	EXEMPTIONS ONLY

Smart Landing Page

An update to the landing page at carmen.osu.edu will allow us to run both systems smoothly during the adoption year and to deliver additional functionality for Carmen. Faculty, staff and students will continue to go to carmen.osu.edu to manage, maintain or access their classes. This page will remain after adoption, to continue to offer additional functionality:

- **Course creation and enrollment:** Faculty members will create their Canvas course in near real-time with the click of a button. Instructors can also enroll guests into their course from the smart landing page.
- **Analytics**: When LMS analytics become available, they can be delivered via the smart landing page.

QUESTIONS?

Contact the Canvas Evaluation team at: canvas-eval@osu.edu.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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