TERMS OF REFERENCE

THE WORKING GROUP FOR LMS REVIEW

One of the high priority recommendations adopted by the Task Force on the Future of Technology Infrastructure Supporting Teaching and Learning, and the Academic Mission of the University is a review of the University of Regina's learning-management system. The recommendation reads as follows:

Within the next six months, review the current state of the University's LMS (Moodle-based UR Courses) and decide if upgrading or adopting a new LMS is required. The review needs to consider the following factors: faculty / student user experiences in different areas of studies; the LMS's capacity to produce relevant learning analytics; life-cycle costs; the University's and users' expectations of institutional LMS over the next five years; and impact on the University's partner institutions delivering UofR programs or courses. (Task Force Report, May 2022)

The Governance Committee for Academic Technologies (GCAT) discussed this recommendation at the meeting of August 15, 2022 and decided to create a small subcommittee composed of GCAT members to draft the terms of reference for a working group responsible for the LMS review. This subcommittee was composed of Alec Couros, André Magnan, Christie Schultz, and Nilgün Önder. The terms of reference of the Working Group for LMS Review was drafted by this group. The group consulted some relevant literature related to LMS reviews at post-secondary institutions and gathered information on the recent migrations to a new LMS at the University of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

Purpose: The Working Group for LMS Review (WGLR) will review and evaluate the University's current LMS (UR Courses) based on relevant information and consultations and make a recommendation to the GCAT regarding whether upgrading or adopting a new LMS is needed. In the event that a new LMS is needed, the WGLR will also recommend the selection of a particular LMS to the GCAT for institutional adoption.

Membership: Five volunteer members from the GCAT (at least two of whom are faculty members) and the two co-chairs of the Group of Experts as resource (referenced in the GCAT terms of reference and the terms of reference the GCAT approved for the Group of Experts). The WGLR will select the chair at its first meeting.

The WGLR may engage other individuals and departments with relevant expertise as resource (e.g., Centre for Student Accessibility) throughout the review process.

Administrative Support: The AVP Information Services Office will serve as administrative resource.

The AVP Academic Office will also provide support when needed. The AVP Academic as the co-chair of the Task Force on the Future of Technology Infrastructure with the Provost will have the oversight of the LMS review process and participate in the WGLR as an ex officio member.

PRINCIPLES

Process:

1) The review process will be transparent and consultative. The working group will provide all stakeholders with a variety of opportunities for input and feedback. A webpage will be created with an input portal. This webpage will be updated on a regular basis. The working group will ensure that faculty and students are involved in the review process. To this end, the working group will organize a series of facilitated discussion groups with faculty and students separately. The target date for the completion of these consultation meetings is 30 November 2022.

2) The WGLR shall review, assess, and compare the three most commonly used LMSs, the University's current LMS (Moodle 3.x), along with Moodle 4.x. The other three LMS to consider are Blackboard, Canvas, and D2L/Brightspace in alphabetical order.

3) There will be a public demonstration of each LMS. The demos will be video-recorded and posted on the LMS webpage for viewing at a later time. Following each demo, a short online survey will be given to attendees. The survey will also be available to those who could not attend the demo or prefer to watch it at their own convenience. The WGLR will set an appropriate deadline for the survey completion.

4) Based on its evaluation of the named LMSs and all the input received, the WGLR will select a new LMS for piloting to compare it to the University's Moodle-based UR Courses. The pilot is expected to be completed in the Spring 2023 semester.

Factors to Consider for the Review:

The WGLR will pay due attention to the following factors for the LMS review. It may add some other factors as a result of the input received.

1) Overarching Principle: The teaching and learning needs of faculty and students across disciplines and modalities of course delivery are the most important factors to consider when reviewing LMS, although other factors such as security, privacy, and cost must be considered in tandem.

2) LMS features that address the evolving teaching and learning needs of faculty and student users over the next five years or longer (e.g., use of virtual reality in teaching).

3) Academic analytics capabilities that are embedded in the LMS and integration of these capabilities with other relevant student systems at the University and the ease of generating and using the relevant data and data analytics to support student learning and success as well as early intervention. .

4) Accessibility features of LMS: To what extent does the LMS support the common accommodation requirements of students with disabilities?

5) Does the LMS design offer features that speak to the varied learning needs of students? Does the LMS support UDL principles?

6) Seamless LMS experiences for students enrolled in UofR programs delivered jointly or in collaboration with other post-secondary institutions.

7) Mobile-friendly.

8) System and data security.

9) Price and life-cycle costs (including the potential costs of LMS training for faculty and students and the costs of migrating existing courses to a new LMS). In the case of open-source LMS, it is important to consider the infrastructure, hardware, and support staff costs the University has to bear to support the open-source LMSs as opposed to the vendor providing such services as part of the overall pricing.

10) The LMS is supported by an academic community of resource-sharing, cooperation, and collaboration.