Summary

Within institutions in the Big Ten, Canvas is by far the most frequently used LMS. The last few years have been marked by rapid transition, with seven institutions completing LMS evaluations and selecting to transition to Canvas. Many institutions were motivated to perform an evaluation due to their membership in the Unizin Consortium, which selected Canvas as the central platform for the technology ecosystem, facing the end-of-product life/support, as well as platform upgrades, and contract renewals. Many Big 10 institutions supported their decision to select Canvas because of faculty and student satisfaction with pilots, and its cloud-based infrastructure. Notably, with the exception of Purdue, no Big Ten Institution has completed an LMS evaluation and not selected to migrate to Canvas since 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Big 10 University</th>
<th>Current LMS</th>
<th>Last LMS Evaluation</th>
<th>Transition Duration</th>
<th>Evaluation Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indiana University Bloomington</td>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>August 2013</td>
<td>24 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan State University</td>
<td>D2L</td>
<td>July 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern University</td>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>April 2014</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>18 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio State University</td>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>March 2016</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania State University</td>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>July 2015</td>
<td>18 months</td>
<td>multiple searches from 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutgers University</td>
<td>Canvas, BB, Sakai</td>
<td>underway</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Chicago</td>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Illinois (UC)</td>
<td>Bb Learn</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Iowa</td>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>Jan 2016</td>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Maryland</td>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>July 2012</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>24 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>February 2015</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Minnesota</td>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>18-24 months</td>
<td>16 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Nebraska-Lincoln</td>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>May 2017</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Wisconsin-Madison</td>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>October 2017</td>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>24 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purdue University</td>
<td>Bb Learn</td>
<td>June 2015</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Management Systems in the Big 10

Only three systems serve as the primary LMS amongst Big 10 institutions, Blackboard Learn, D2L/Brightspace, and Canvas. Canvas is the primary LMS for 11 institutions, followed by Blackboard, used by two institutions, and D2L/Brightspace used by just one institution. In the period of time since Purdue completed its Canvas evaluation pilot in Spring 2015, seven institutions have completed full scale LMS evaluations. Each evaluation concluded with a decision to transition from their current LMS to Canvas. The following figure displays institutions grouped by their current LMS, and/or the LMS they are transitioning to.

*Big 10 LMS transitions, July 2015 to July 2018, excluding Purdue University*
Recent LMS Evaluations

Seven Big 10 institutions have completed LMS evaluations since Purdue completed its last evaluation in June 2015. Those institutions are listed below, with their evaluation completion date:

- Pennsylvania State University - July 2015
- University of Iowa - Jan 2016
- Ohio State University - March 2016
- University of Chicago - Spring 2016
- University of Minnesota - March 2017
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln - May 2017
- University of Wisconsin-Madison - October 2017

An eighth evaluation was started by Rutgers University, however, the results of their evaluation are unavailable at this time.

Prior LMS Evaluations

Prior to June 2015, seven institutions completed LMS evaluations. Those institutions are listed below with their evaluation completion date:

- University of Illinois - 2012
- Michigan State University - July 2012
- University of Maryland - July 2012
- Indiana University Bloomington - August 2013
- Northwestern University - April 2014
- University of Michigan - February 2015
- Purdue University - June 2015

With the exception of Michigan State University and Purdue University, each LMS evaluation in the Big 10 that took place between July 2012 and June 2015 resulted in a decision to move to Canvas. Michigan State University selected to migrate from Angel to D2L in July 2012, and Purdue University elected to continue with Blackboard Learn in May 2015.

Motivators for Recent LMS Evaluations

Numerous factors were cited as motivators for eight institutions that began evaluations after June 2015. Among the most common include membership in Unizin consortium, facing the end-of-product life/support, a major system upgrade, and/or a contract renewal.

Pennsylvania State University

Pennsylvania State University was faced with the end of product life and support for their LMS, ANGEL. In 2009 they were notified by Blackboard that support of ANGEL would be discontinued in 2014. In March 2012 that decision was reversed when Blackboard decided to provide indefinite support for the product and Penn State renewed their agreement with Blackboard through 2017. In 2014 the University piloted Blackboard Learn during the summer semester, and cancelled their fall pilot after changes in the Blackboard Learn roadmap were announced. In October 2014 Blackboard reversed course again and informed Penn State of an end-of-life plan in which most instances of ANGEL would be unsupported beyond October 2016. In November 2014 Penn State became a founding member of the Unizin Consortium, with a vision to develop a “learning environment that will include numerous instructional technology tools supporting a full range of online instructional activities. The first layer of this environment is the Canvas LMS”. In Spring 2015 Penn State began piloting Canvas.

1. [https://nbfc.rutgers.edu/documents/resolution-keeping-and-supporting-sakai](https://nbfc.rutgers.edu/documents/resolution-keeping-and-supporting-sakai)
University of Iowa
The University of Iowa used D2L as their single LMS for a decade before making a decision to evaluate learning management systems. The University joined the Unizin consortium in December 2014, and began a full scale LMS evaluation in order to “fully leverage the future vision of Unizin”.

Ohio State University
In 2015, after a full decade of using D2L, Ohio State University was faced with a major upgrade to the D2L platform. They determined a new evaluation of the top three LMSs was needed before committing to a major change. They completed a review of Canvas, Blackboard, and D2L, and elected to pursue Canvas as their next LMS. OSU became a founding member of the Unizin consortium in November 2014, and cited the benefits of using the consortiums selected LMS in their evaluation.

University of Minnesota
In late 2014, UM joined the Unizin consortium. At the time, UM was using a self-hosted version of Moodle for their 100k+ users, and was the only Big 10 institution using Moodle, and their implementation was “one of the biggest, most complex Moodle implementations in the world.” The complexity of the self-hosted system had led to increasing operational and support costs, and the University sought to reduce both costs and challenges by exploring cloud-based options.

Rutgers University
In January 2017 Rutgers acknowledged their decentralized LMS strategy in which “Separate campuses, schools, units, and departments have adopted diverse strategies and different software platforms” had resulted in students using multiple platforms and suboptimal outcomes. They formed a working group to pursue a single, enterprise-level learning management system strategy, which would result in consolidating the many learning management systems at the University.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
UNL used Blackboard as their learning management system since 1999, however, shortly after joining Unizin in June of 2015, they set out to evaluate Canvas. They cited their membership in the consortium, and potential use of Canvas, as a mechanism to “provide leadership in and help shape the future of learning analytics and the development, distribution and sharing of digital content”.

University of Wisconsin-Madison
The University of Wisconsin system was one of the first major clients to select D2L in 2002/3. After joining the Unizin consortium in 2014, UW-Madison weighted their renewal of their D2L contract (set to expire June 30, 2016) against the benefits of the consortium LMS. After a successful pilot, UW-Madison adopted Canvas, which motivated the UW system to undertake a multi-year effort to identify the LMS needs of the institutions in the system, and identify gaps in their current academic technology ecosystem.

University of Chicago
In the Fall of 2014 the University of Chicago cited significant pending changes to Blackboard as the catalyst for beginning their LMS evaluation. At that time Blackboard Learn was set to be replaced by Blackboard Ultra, and while Blackboard’s product strategy has changed since that time, UChicago evaluated Blackboard Learn & Ultra alongside other systems and concluded in the spring of 2016 to implement Canvas.
Evaluation Timelines

The timelines for LMS evaluations varied amongst Big 10 institutions, with the shortest evaluation taking place over a year, and the longest spanning over many years. In many cases evaluations began with teaching pilots that were extended.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Big 10 University</th>
<th>Review Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indiana University Bloomington</td>
<td>24 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern University</td>
<td>18 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio State University</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania State University</td>
<td>2009-2015 (multiple)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Chicago</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Iowa</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Maryland</td>
<td>24 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Minnesota</td>
<td>16 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Nebraska-Lincoln</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Wisconsin-Madison</td>
<td>24 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recent LMS Transitions

Seven of the Big Ten institutions that underwent an LMS evaluation since June 2015 opted to migrate or transition from the current learning management system to Canvas. Notably, universities are choosing to transition from many different Learning Management systems to Canvas, or consolidate numerous learning management systems into a single, enterprise level LMS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Big 10 University</th>
<th>Prior LMS</th>
<th>New LMS</th>
<th>Transition Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania State University</td>
<td>Angel</td>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>18 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Iowa</td>
<td>D2L</td>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>24 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio State University</td>
<td>D2L</td>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Minnesota</td>
<td>Moodle</td>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>18-24 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Nebraska-Lincoln</td>
<td>Blackboard</td>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Wisconsin-Madison</td>
<td>D2L</td>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>24 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Chicago</td>
<td>Blackboard</td>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LMS transitions are a major undertaking, requiring careful consideration, planning and input from multiple campus stakeholders. As a result, LMS implementation timelines range from 6-24 months, with many Big 10 institutions using a phased approach, which allows migration to occur over multiple semesters. In each transition it was observed the institution adopted and implemented the new LMS while running and supporting the legacy LMS for some pre-defined period of time. Examples of transition plans timelines, and their phases are shown below:
University of Chicago

Transition timeline

Transition results shown by LMS adoption/usage

https://courses.uchicago.edu/canvas-transition/
Northwestern University

Transition Timeline

Ohio State University

Transition Timeline
University of Iowa

Transition timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Spring 2016</th>
<th>Summer 2016</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Spring 2017</th>
<th>Summer 2017</th>
<th>Fall 2017</th>
<th>Spring 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>D2L</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>canvas</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses start in Canvas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

University of Minnesota

Transition timeline

Canvas development sites available for exploration purposes. Existing pilot participants may continue using Canvas.

Moodle 3.2 remains UMN primary production LMS.

2017
Summer
Consultations with units and workshops begin.

Fall
Preparation for fall and system integrations continue.

2018
Spring
Early adopters may teach using Canvas.

Summer
Moving to Canvas

Fall
Active instruction in Moodle ends.

2019
Spring

Summer

Fall

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Transition timeline

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Course rosters imported into Canvas and Canvas added to Learn@UW Course dashboard

First Canvas courses offered

Conversions from D2L/Moodle/Other

Non-Credit conversions begin

D2L and Moodle LMS services end

SUMMER 2015

FALL 2016

WINTER 2017

SPRING 2017

SUMMER 2017

FALL 2017

WINTER 2018

SPRING 2018

SUMMER 2018

Inventory of course complexity completed

Converting low, medium, high complexity courses

Personalized support ends

CANVAS ACCESS & SUPPORT


11 https://it.umn.edu/canvas-transition-information

12 https://canvasinfo.wisc.edu/project-background/
Consolidation within the Big 10

When Purdue completed its last formal LMS evaluation in 2015 there were a variety of Learning Management Systems being used within the Big 10, as shown in the figures here. Between 2015 and 2016, a clear trend had emerged. Institutions using D2L, ANGEL, Blackboard, and Sakai opted to transition to Canvas. In 2018, that trend has continued with the single institution using Moodle, the University of Minnesota opting to transition to Canvas.

Purdue is one of only two institutions within the Big 10 to use Blackboard as its primary LMS, with the other being the University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign. Notably, UIUC last completed a LMS evaluation in 2012, and choose to renew their Blackboard contract in the summer of 2014.
Motivators for LMS transitions

Making a change to a new LMS requires extensive resources, but staying with a current LMS often stems from a pain point, for example the University of Minnesota said their prior LMS, Moodle, was not “well-positioned to provide the strong and flexible learning environment the University will need in the future” and in particular, the resources being used on site to maintain it was problematic. The cloud implementation and services for Canvas was the solution that worked better for their needs with an ecosystem that would move them forward in sustainable manner. They were not alone in their sustainability concerns. Pennsylvania State University echoed University of Minnesota as they found the move to offer needed sustainability, desired core functionality, and overall ease of use.

Ultimately, the rationale for transition varied by institution, including student and/or faculty preference. At Northwestern 85% of those recommended the switch. At University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lance Pérez, interim dean of the college of engineering and former associate vice chancellor for academic affairs stated that, “Canvas will significantly enhance the teaching and learning experience at the university and, ultimately, for all of the University of Nebraska,” as they are part of the Unizin consortium.

Ohio State cited the significant benefits to Canvas’ mobile usability, clouds, community building, better tools and like Northwestern (as well as University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Iowa, University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, and University of Wisconsin-Madison) their Unizin connection helped illustrate that the move to Canvas simply made sense.

University of Chicago found that Blackboard was making so many significant changes that it was the equivalent of moving to a new LMS anyway, so making a change was almost decided for them by Blackboard’s drive to be more like Canvas.

University of Michigan’s rationale matched more of what our Teaching and Learning Technologies team often looks for in leveling up our offerings to faculty and students. Specifically, they cited that Canvas was more intuitive, was easier to customize, and had clearer and stronger analytics and tools than they had at their disposal before the migration. University of Iowa added that better reporting moved the needle for their migration decision. University of Maryland found that Canvas communication tools, integrated calendaring, grading interface weighed heavily in their decision in addition to overall usability.

Ultimately, each move addressed the institutions’ needs for long-term growth and the scaling associated with it, while best serving their core users, students and faculty.

Supplemental Resources

Indiana University Reports - LMS pilots
Northwestern University - LMS Recommendation
Northwestern University - Transition Plan
Ohio State University - Canvas Evaluation
Ohio State University - LMS Recommendation
Penn State Canvas Pilot - Website
Penn State - History of LMS
University of Iowa - LMS Recommendation
University of Minnesota - LMS Recommendation
University of Wisconsin - RFP