eLearning and Instructional Support: Canvas Administrative Guidelines

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I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Canvas, the current learning management system (LMS) in use at San Jose State University (SJSU), is available for faculty to use to supplement their teaching and learning activities. The LMS serves as a digital learning classroom and adheres to all university policies and procedures to support academic needs. These Administrative Guidelines includes all faculty, students, and courses at SJSU that are in PeopleSoft and imported into the LMS.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

eCampus, a division of Academic Technology, administers and supports the use of the LMS by faculty, students, and staff. Support includes responding to requests for help and assistance with the LMS through the iSupport/Online ticketing systems, telephones, walk-ins, and emails. The support provided follows all university policies regarding usage and user creation, assigned roles, additional courses, cross-listed courses, semester transitions of content, incompletes, and course ownership.

III. DEFINITIONS AND PROCEDURES: USERS

A. Usage and User Creation

All persons associated with SJSU as faculty, students, or staff have access to Canvas through their SJSUOne ID. Guest roles must be created by eCampus and granted access on a temporary basis upon requests from faculty or staff in relation to a specified teaching and learning need. Only SJSU students will have access, unless other contractual arrangements are made. All courses are generated in Canvas and are issued unique Student Information System (SIS) IDs. Faculty may use Canvas for teaching, research, and/or committee work. This provides all faculty the option to use the LMS for their teaching assignments.

B. User Roles

Assigned roles and courses in SJSU are integrated with the student information system in PeopleSoft. Academic departments are responsible for input and accuracy of schedule information. Changes to any course's instructor should initiate in the academic departments and requires they submit the necessary paperwork. This will allow the correct information to be pulled through PeopleSoft into Canvas. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, there may be necessary exceptions to this general principle.

Possible Canvas roles attached to a SJSUOne account include the following:

Course Level Roles

- **Instructor**
  This is the primary instructor of the course, who creates all course elements and has access to all course and student information in a Canvas course. Instructors may upload content, send email (conversations) to students, and access student grades.
- **Teaching Assistant**
  The teaching assistant role is given by the instructor of a course for a student that will assist in the teaching or construction of materials for a given course. The teaching assistant cannot be enrolled for credit in the course he/she is a teaching assistant in. The teaching assistant can be added by the instructor or by eCampus pending instructor request and written and/or verbal consent.
- **Student**
  The Student Role is a course-level role. The student has access to the content, activities, and grades that are provided by the instructor of a given course.
- **Guest Student**
  The Guest Student Role is a course-level role. The guest student role differs from a student role in the following ways: cannot create collaborations, cannot create conferences, and cannot view the list of course participants.
- **Designer**
  The Designer Role is a course-level role that does not edit grades, add/remove other users, or have access to the faculty journal. Designers can edit course content throughout the entire course.
- **Observer**

The Observer role can be used by guests who would like to participate or view a Canvas course but are not enrolled in it. Observers have limited permissions that allow them to see what is going on in a course without interrupting the flow of daily course communication.

Administrative Roles

- **Administrator**
  An administrator may change settings for the entire program and login as any instructor or student to troubleshoot. The administrators include staff from eCampus and the Information Technology departments. Administrators are responsible for the maintenance of beta, test, and production instances.
- **Administrative Assistant**
  An administrative assistant has access to all courses to provide technical support for instructors and students. There is no access to grades or SIS information. Administrative assistants are eCampus student assistants.
- **Unit Administrator**
  A unit administrator has access to all courses within the unit they support to provide assistance to faculty and students. Unit administrators include a designated technician from a specific college with a specific job specification to provide administrative assistance for the college. Unit administrators are provided with training on the system from eCampus personnel as well as from the vendor (if the unit elects to offer this service from the vendor).

Exceptions to PeopleSoft

Canvas imports course information including classes, instructors, and students from PeopleSoft. Since Canvas is a digital classroom environment rather than a registration system, there will be discrepancies between the two software systems, such as roles and accounts. Exceptions may be manually added to Canvas for the following reasons:

- **Additional guests in instructor roles**
  Faculty may request from eCampus that additional outside guest speakers be added into their course. Guests will have an account created using their email address and will log in using an alternative URL that does not require SJSUOne credentials.

- **Students**
  Because Canvas can be audited internally and externally for registration, tuition, and academic record information, eCampus and the Office of the Registrar will need to approve student adds that are exceptions to PeopleSoft information. For custom student account creation, faculty can fill out the form located on the eCampus website. The form specifies the following required details: instructor information, rationale for request, course information, and student information.

- **Entire courses**
  Faculty and staff may request new courses to be created for advisement, tutoring, committee work, pilot studies, research, and/or training purposes.

- **Additional courses requested by staff**
  Staff may request courses so that they might have contact with the student population they are trying to reach. A conflict may arise where students' course lists may become too lengthy so that academic courses become buried in the non-courses. For this reason, the responsible authority for any given population of students must approve student enrollments in non-academic "courses".

C. User Support
User support is provided in multiple ways.

- **Online tutorials and forms**
  Detailed tutorials discussing the different components of Canvas at the following links: http://guides.instructure.com and http://www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/canvas/. Webpages at http://www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/canvas/ contain links to additional request forms.
- **iSupport**
  SJSU has an online ticketing system, iSupport. Users can open and submit a ticket describing the issue they are encountering by visiting the following webpage: https://isupport.sjsu.edu/ecampus/ContentPages/Incident.aspx. eCampus will promptly respond to all inquires.
- **Canvas help**
  Canvas has a built in Help feature. Any user can click on the "Help" button on the upper right corner of the screen and select "Report a Problem".
- **eCampus email**
  Users can submit an email to ecampus@sjsu.edu to request help with Canvas.
- **Instructional design support**
  Faculty can contact eCampus Instructional Designers for assistance in using Canvas to develop their courses. Instructional designer's contact information is located on the eCampus Staff page: http://www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/staff/index.html
- **eCampus – Canvas Help**
  This is a course within Canvas that all instructors have the option of joining. They are enrolled in the course as students and are able to access materials, interact with other faculty members and staff, and ask questions.
- **Faculty consultants**
  Faculty consultants provide college based, department level, training and support for the use of technology in traditional co-located, hybrid, and online courses. They also assist departments in modernizing and diversifying their course offerings. The faculty consultants will work with appropriate committees and department heads to make sure their suggested innovations are in line with faculty perspectives regarding curriculum.
- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Library**
  The Dr. MLK, Jr. Library provides basic in-person Canvas support for students at the Student Computing Services desk and through the Library's Student Technology Trainer, both located on the 4th floor of the Library. Instructors may contact Neil.Ordinario@sjsu.edu to request Course eReserves be added directly to their Canvas course shell. Additional assistance embedding library resources and subject-specialist librarian support into a Canvas course is obtained by contacting the

department's librarian. The subject-specialist librarian directory is located at: http://library.sjsu.edu/sjsu-library-staff-directory/sjsu-library-subject-liaisons

D. Student Privacy

In accordance with the Policy for Privacy of Electronic Information and Communications (UP F97-7) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines, Canvas courses are password-protected, so that students meet in a private online classroom space. Students do not have access to other students' personal information, such as student ID or email address. The system allows students to send emails to one another without revealing the email address. Students are able to view other students' Display names, which appears in activities that are participated in within the course. Students have the ability to adjust their Display name to their own personal preference. Besides the Display name, Canvas keeps a record of each student's Full and Sortable name, which is only accessible by the instructor, teaching assistant, and administrator.

IV. DEFINITIONS AND PROCEDURES: COURSES

A. Cross-listed Courses

There are a number of possible types of cross-listed courses.

- **Courses cross-listed in PeopleSoft**
  These courses have different course codes (course titles) but are approved through the traditional process as one course. Canvas imports these cross-listed courses as one course, with the additional course codes listed as sections within the designated main course, exactly the same as in PeopleSoft.

- **Accommodated faculty requests for combined courses**
  These courses are taught by the same professor and are identical sections with the same content and course resource materials used.

B. Semester Transitions

The process of copying course content between semesters in Canvas is designed to be as simple as possible. Instructors can transfer their course content themselves through the Copy Course Content tool, or they may request assistance from eCampus by filling out the Copy Course Content form, submitting a ticket, or sending an email. Content will then be moved for instructors if desired.

There are two basic types of courses in the LMS - "term-based" courses and "persistent" courses.

Term-Based Courses

A term-based course is an "official" course, which belongs to a specific term and is recorded in the student information system. At any one time there are eight terms of term-based courses on the LMS - the current term, and the seven previous terms. There will be short windows (of perhaps a month) during which there will be nine terms of courses on the server. The specific technicalities are spelled out below. Term-based courses follow this life cycle.

- A term-based course will be created on the LMS server (via an automated interface with the student information system) six-weeks before the start of the term to which it belongs. For example, if a course belongs to a spring term that starts on January 23rd, then the course will be created approximately on December 9th (six weeks earlier).
- Courses exist on the Canvas server for two years (based on the end date of the term they belong to) after which time they are concluded and archived (faculty and students will no longer have any access to the courses). Example: You teach a Fall 2013 course. It will remain available to you and your students until the close of Fall 2015.
- Teachers will have access to the course throughout its life cycle - from the moment it is created until the moment it is concluded and archived.
- Students will have access to a course two days prior to the start date of the semester. For example, if a course in Fall term starts on August 23rd, then the course will become available to students on August 21st. Students will continue to have access to the course

for 60 days from the last day of instruction as noted by the university academic calendar for each term. For example, the last day instruction for the Fall 2013 semester is December 9th, so students will retain access to the course until February 7th. Instructors have the option to make the course hidden to students at any time.

- If students un-enroll from a course or are dropped from a course by PeopleSoft for non-payment, they will lose access to Canvas during the next scheduled system run. This automated run occurs twice a day - early morning and early evening - and refreshes the course enrollment information.

Persistent Courses

A persistent course is one, which is not bound to a specific term. It is not archived at any specific point in time, but rather stays in Canvas until there is an explicit reason to remove it (like the request of the faculty who owns it). Persistent courses fall into the following general categories:

- **Practice courses**
  Two practice courses are created for all faculty and staff. These course shells are created for faculty to store course data or develop courses. No students from PeopleSoft are imported into the practice courses. Faculty may use these courses for developing content for teaching, service, and research purposes. Additional practice courses can be requested and created for faculty by eCampus.
- **Custom Courses**
  Faculty may have courses created for a digital space that enhances committee work or academic work. Courses can be requested by filling out the custom course request form on the eCampus website.

C. Incompletes
San José State University Undergraduate Policy regarding incompletes states, "The symbol "I" (Incomplete Authorized) indicates that a portion of required course work has not been completed and evaluated in the prescribed time period due to unforeseen, but fully justified, reasons and that there is still a possibility of earning credit. The student cannot reenroll in the course. It is the responsibility of the student to bring pertinent information to the attention of the instructor (regarding the unforeseen reason(s) for requesting an Incomplete) and to determine from the instructor the remaining course requirements that must be satisfied to remove the Incomplete. A final grade is assigned when the work agreed upon has been completed and evaluated. Clearing an incomplete grade does not permit retaking previously completed portions of the course, nor does it permit assignment of additional graded work (e.g., extra credit) that was not available to other students in the class. An "I" must normally be made up within one calendar year immediately following the end of the term during which it was assigned. Failure to complete the assigned work within the established calendar year period for an "I" grade will result in an automatic grade change to an "IC" grade which calculates as a failing grade for grade point average and progress point computation."

Canvas will have the current term and the last three terms worth of courses available. This should accommodate "I" type situations as described above. This means that accommodating

incomplete requests should not require a concluded course to be restored. If, however, the course is from a term that is no longer available, the faculty can request that the course be restored. eCampus will construct a shell for the archived course and import the content, so that the instructor and student can both access it. If an instructor wants a previous student to complete his/her grade accessing the current semester's course, the instructor or eCampus can add the student to the new course after the Registrar's approval.

D. Course Ownership

Faculty shall individually own their courses in Canvas. The original materials entered into the learning management system are the property of the faculty that created and uploaded them. All links to journals and other external sources remain property of those sources. No other faculty member, administrator, or academic unit may copy an individual's Canvas course without their written permission. However, if a particular unit and their faculty share modules or courses among a certain group and approve alternate written arrangements or contracts, eCampus will follow those arrangements if they are consistent with all other policies in this document. In addition, these administrative guidelines will be guided by the Senate on Distance Education S01-10 and the Policy Recommendation for Intellectual/Creative Property (UP F98-3).

E. Course Backups and Retention

Course Backups

- **Server backups**
  Canvas Cloud, Instructure's fully hosted LMS stores all LMS content as a subscription cloud service over the Internet. Canvas cloud has a disaster recovery plan in place in case a disaster scenario arises to assist with backup and recovery.
- **External hard drive backups**
  At the end of a given semester, a report will be run for the entire semester that will have a gradebook for all students and their corresponding grades on assignments. This file will be stored on an external hard drive and only accessible by LMS administrators.
- **Faculty backups**
  Faculty should create backups of their courses by (1) downloading a zip file of all course files, (2) downloading the entire .csv file of the course gradebook, and/or (3) downloading the entire course export file .imscc. The faculty can download the files to their own computer for storage. This is an instructor's best protection against losing course data.

Retention

- **Two-year retention – full access**
  Instructors will retain access to their courses in Canvas for two years. Courses will then be concluded and only accessible by administrators of the LMS. Faculty can contact eCampus for access to certain course data in case of grade challenges and other access requirements.

- **Database retention**
  If faculty require access to data stored in a previous LMS used by SJSU, such as Desire2Learn, they will need to contact eCampus. As part of the grade dispute and retention policy, administrators of the LMS will retain learning environment access to assist faculty with such requests.