



Canvas Up and Running

UCF has a new learning management system (LMS)! After the vendor discontinued UCF's former LMS, Blackboard Vista, faculty, students and staff exhaustively reviewed alternates, giving an overwhelming recommendation of Instructure Canvas. And this semester (spring 2013) is the first time the entire campus will be using Canvas.

Features:

Native Cloud Hosting

Canvas is the only LMS native to the cloud. Native cloud hosting means no versions, no upgrades, no migrations, or inconvenient down times. Canvas is automatically updated every three weeks without tedious downloads or patches. Cloud hosting provides other benefits over dedicated hosting, including increased security, scalability and more uptime.

Automated Peak Load Management

A common complaint with some LMSs is that they go down right when they're needed most. Heavy usage at the beginning of the term, at finals or during other peak periods puts a severe strain on servers and can bring them to a halt. With automated peak load management on Canvas, additional server capacity is added automatically as activity increases, thus matching demands with additional resources.

Canvas Mobile Apps Now Available

With UCF's new Learning Management System, Canvas, there are three new mobile apps to support teaching and learning online: Canvas for iOS, Canvas for Android, and Speedgrader for iPad.

Canvas for iOS and Canvas for Android allow students and instructors to interact through discussions, assignments and conversations while checking grades, course schedules and the activity stream. Both of these applications are now part of the free UCFMobile app. Speedgrader for iPad is a separate download for instructors that enables grading assignments, discussions and quizzes on the go.

UCFMobile, is available for the iPhone, iPod touch and Android devices. Students and faculty members can download the applications at no cost through their devices' app stores by searching for UCFMobile.

For more information about any of these apps, please visit <http://ucfmobile.ucf.edu>.

Telecommunications Unit on the Move



With the start of the new year, the Telecommunications unit of Computer Services & Telecommunications (CS&T) completed a month-long move to its new location in the Central Florida Research Park. The new space houses Telecom's Communications Services team, UCF Service Desk, Network Services and the Voice Services Engineering Group (VSEG).

The new space was designed to ensure that teams that work closely together were grouped together. This layout encourages collaboration and communication. By designing the space to have a logical workflow, and accounting for potential staffing additions, it is anticipated that the new Telecommunications building will accommodate growth in the department over the next decade.

UCF's MOOCs

The first of UCF's two MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) has begun. MOOCs are courses offered with little or no charge to anyone, usually with unconstrained enrollments.

International Health Systems taught by Dr. Bernardo Ramirez, assistant professor in Health Services Administration, launched Jan. 7 to a full roster of 500 students from around the world. The course will run through the spring. Students will be evaluated based on objective-based testing, participation in weekly discussions, and a simulation where a student will assume the role of a health care consultant. At the end of the course, students who fulfill all of the requirements will receive a certificate of completion.

Writing History will be taught by Dr. Robert Cassanello, assistant professor of history. The course is scheduled to launch in mid-February with approximately 500 students from around the world, and run 15 weeks. At the end of the course, students who fulfill all of the requirements will receive a certificate of completion.

The MOOCs are offered through Instructure's Canvas Network (<http://canvas.net>). Currently, there are 26 courses offered by UCF and other institutions through the beginning of April.

Promotion and Tenure Processing Moves Online

After nearly three years of development and testing, much of the promotion and tenure (P&T) process will now become electronic. Instead of candidates preparing a book one and two, book one documents will be submitted and reviewed online. This new format was piloted in the College of Sciences, and a university-wide rollout is expected in the near future.

Aside from the environmental benefits of the eP&T system, this process provides document consistency among tenure-earning and tenured faculty candidates, as well as a much more convenient review method for committee members. Instead of signing out and reviewing candidates' book one dossiers, as previously required, the eP&T system allows instant on-demand access. Moreover, multiple committee members can review the same dossier at the same time, an option not available within the paper process.

In order to create the eP&T system, the Office of Faculty Relations worked with Computer Services and Telecommunications to convert every step in the original paper promotion and tenure process to its paperless electronic equivalent. Since then, the system has been repeatedly tested and modified based upon recommendations from users.

"The aspect that's proved to be very functional as we moved forward was the ability to work within the existing system [PeopleSoft] and construct a method of going through each of the requisite steps to make the P&T process work," said Lyman Brodie, associate vice provost of the Office Faculty Relations.

Since book one dossiers route through PeopleSoft from start to finish, candidates and reviewers have instantaneous access. That also means the promotion and tenure dossiers will be stored in PeopleSoft, where they will be securely available for faculty members who may need to reference their P&T information for other processes, such as grant and award applications and retention by academic colleges.

Lyman Brodie would like to thank his team, Jordana Navarro and David Kuhn, for their efforts in getting this process up and running. He would also like to express special thanks to partners Ronald Matthews and Ginger Nielson in CS&T, as well as Ryan Retherford in the Faculty Multimedia Center, Melody Bowdon in the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, and Provost's Faculty Fellow John Weishampel, from the Department of Biology, for their help.

Online Courses: How to Keep Students Connected to the Library

Helping students find and use academic, peer-reviewed sources in an online course can be challenging. With Google, students readily find and cite all kinds of web sites and web "articles," but not necessarily the kind of sources required in a higher education environment.

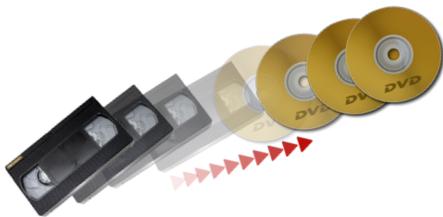
One antidote is to include librarians and library resources in online courses. Embedding library sources into your web course is as easy as including links to the Ask a Librarian service and to the libraries' new discovery tool, OneSearch, in your Canvas course and encourage students to use them.

Students can chat, text, or call the Ask a Librarian service through <http://library.ucf.edu/ask>. And, OneSearch is available from the library home page at <http://library.ucf.edu>.

Another option is to "embed" a librarian into your upper-division or graduate-level, research-related course. Embedding a librarian means including a librarian as an integral component of your online course. The level of participation by the librarian is negotiated and dependent upon the class needs and the assignments.

For example, an embedded librarian may monitor the discussion board and answer library-related questions. Librarians may also create customized research guides for specific course assignments. Students will be able to ask for library help within the Canvas environment and get to know a UCF librarian who can be a resource for the rest of their academic careers. To request a librarian for your course or for questions about this service, contact Elizabeth Killingsworth at elizabeth.killingsworth@ucf.edu.

Tech Fee Award Helps Libraries Transition from VHS to DVD



Thanks to a successful technology fee proposal, the UCF Libraries began purchasing DVD replacements for a selection of highly used VHS recordings currently in the collection. There is an urgency to replace VHS tapes with DVDs because VHS is fast becoming an obsolete medium. The Office of Instructional Resources offers only limited support for VHS and has had to discontinue installation of VHS players in classrooms. The change in policy regarding VHS was previously highlighted in the August 2011 and November 2012 issues of this newsletter.

In addition to the lack of access to VHS players, the tapes themselves suffer degradation with age and use. Copyright law prevents the library from simply copying the VHS to DVD or digitizing the content. The UCF Libraries believes that access to this content will be needed in the future, so the tech fee award of \$63,522.58 is being used to replace heavily used VHS recordings with their DVD equivalent, when available.

The Libraries identified a rich, relevant and frequently used collection of educational videos on VHS. The titles were often selected for in-class viewing.

With more than 10,000 VHS titles in the collection, the cost to replace all VHS tapes with DVDs is prohibitive. Therefore, the Libraries identified 397 VHS titles that showed a strong record of use and academic importance. The selected titles support nearly all UCF departments with many covering language and literature, history and law, science and medicine, and technology.

Purchasing the identified titles is underway, and a complete list of the titles can be provided upon request.

First Anniversary of Tech Commons

The Technology Commons celebrated its first anniversary on Jan. 11. The facility, which provides students with access to technology and study space, launched a week-long celebration filled with seminars and student events. As part of the celebration, the Tech Commons organized seminars for students and staff on various learning technologies from Dell, Apple and Adobe.

The facility opened to a modest level of foot traffic, but has since grown into a bustling hub of technology and academics. Students have truly adopted the facility as their own and appreciate the availability of the “smart” spaces afforded to them.

Between January 2012 and October 2012, the labs within the Tech Commons have provided computer and Internet access to 11,162 individual students. More students are spending more time in front of lab computers to complete assignments and personal projects. In fact, some of the more interesting projects seen in the Commons come from student entrepreneurial endeavors.

The Technology Commons provides the UCF community with a greater degree of technology resources than a traditional computer lab and is currently being examined for replication in universities nationwide.

Students have been provided access to “smart” collaborative study rooms that include technology and internet access for group work, 14 iMacs complete with the Adobe Production Suite, more than 80 Dell PCs complete with Microsoft Office and SPSS, a Video Recording Lab that allows students to create and edit HD video projects, a Student Support Desk that provides face-to-face diagnostics, WiFi setup, and student PC/smartphone repair, a fully certified Apple and Dell technology repair center, mobile device charging lockers, plenty of seating and charging stations, UCF’s Technology Product Center, and a spectrum of free classes and seminars.

“The university recognized a need to provide a space for students to get the support they need to use technology in pursuit of their academics,” said Alice Hansen, CS&T director of Technology Sales and Support. “The Tech Commons adds a valuable resource to students as a location for ‘all things technology related.’ support, training, workshops, collaborative study areas, service, recharge stations, etc., in a relaxed environment dedicated to students.”

“Simply amazing facility, great for engineering majors. It’s hard to describe in words so go check it out!” commented one student through Facebook.

The Student Support Desk, modeled after the Apple Genius Bar, has seen significant use over the past year as it supports most student and staff issues on their personal devices. The Student Support Desk (SSD) services most student issues ranging from WiFi connection to PC repair check-in. The SSD has completed more than 3,000 service requests in the past year alone, and is well on its way to pass that number in the upcoming year. As the popularity of the desk has increased, the Technology Commons and Technology Service Center have introduced services such as iPhone and iPad screen repair, addressing a need of students with mobile devices.

Since its opening, the Technology Commons has introduced weekly Adobe workshops hosted by both Adobe and Tech Commons staff, special technology seminars, as well as a host of various social events to provide students with a place to meet others with commons interests. As interest grows for these activities, the Commons has been securing a relationship with Microsoft to provide students with access to the IT Academy. The IT Academy will give students access to materials free of charge that will prepare them for various IT certifications available through Microsoft and Continuing Education.

Other amenities such as the Video Recording Lab (VRL) and collaborative study rooms have seen an increase in activity during mid-terms and finals weeks as students prepare for their assessments. The VRL in particular has provided a creative outlet for students to produce video projects and webcasts that satisfy course requirements and creative needs. The lab has seen its share of guitars, human beat boxes, pitchmen and informational recordings.

Find the Technology Commons on Facebook for up-to-date news and events at fb.com/UCFTechCommons.

Results of PeopleSoft Waitlist Pilot

In response to student requests, the Registrar's Office and Computer Services & Telecommunications (CS&T) have enhanced the student course enrollment process to include waitlist functionality. A waitlist is an electronic process that auto-enrolls students in filled classes as seats become available. This enables students to get into the classes they want without having to continuously check for possible openings. Waitlists operate on a first-come, first-served basis.

In preparation for implementing the waitlist functionality, the Registrar's Office and CS&T held discussions with college advisors and student focus groups who offered the following comments:

- The functionality was easy to understand. It was easy to distinguish the waitlisted classes from those in which the student was actually enrolled.
- It was easy to understand the difference between a full and closed class that does not have a waitlist option, from those with a waitlist, and from those sections that are actually open.
- Messages to students reminding them of their waitlist status are important.
- Confirmations were important — when a student is successfully added from a waitlist as well as when a student is not added for one reason or another.
- Use of text messaging was a particularly important feature.

Each college manages its waitlist class offerings. If a waitlist is available for a class, an orange triangle icon will appear next to the section in the Class Schedule lookup.

During the enrollment process, students may waitlist themselves to any number of classes. They can also remove themselves from the class waitlists. The auto-enrollment process runs once a day until the week before classes start. Then it runs several times a day in expectation of students adjusting their schedules more frequently.

The auto-enroll process will always email students to alert them to their status. In addition to the email, students have the option to request text message communications. Using the myUCF Student Center, students have the ability to monitor their progress on the waitlist.

Additionally, enhancements to the myUCF portal for inclusion of a Student Message Center tab were developed. The Student Message Center displays the email and text message communications sent to the student. It also provides the functionality to opt in or out of receiving text messages for the waitlist process.

During the spring 2013 waitlist pilot test, 4,580 students were automatically registered for classes they had requested, generating 13,831 student credit hours.

UCF Libraries Digitizes Yearbooks

UCF has added the majority of its Pegasus and Knight Yearbooks to its online digital collections. As part of the University's 50th anniversary initiatives, undertaken by Special Collections and University Archives, the books are being dis-bound by the book conservator, then scanned and added to the collection by the library's Digital Initiatives Unit. To further make the material available to users, they are being shared with UCF's Marketing department for use in anniversary web pages. These yearbooks contain a wealth of UCF history, which can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/a2r22x8>.

Worth mention is the 1971 Pegasus Yearbook (pictured below), which includes a signed and numbered print (edition of 725) of Hans Krenn's original watercolor, "Homage A FTU," on page 109, commissioned by the Student Government.



information technologies & resources websites

Center for Distributed Learning (CDL) <http://cdl.ucf.edu>
Computer Services & Telecommunications (CS&T) <http://cst.ucf.edu>
Information Technologies & Resources (IT&R) <http://itr.ucf.edu>
Library <http://library.ucf.edu>
Office of Instructional Resources (OIR) <http://www.oir.ucf.edu>