

From: [UHD Provost](#)
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UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-DOWNTOWN

Office of the Provost

Dear Faculty and Staff,

After a brief and intense but thorough review of the options for a new Learning Management System, we are pleased to announce that we intend to move to Instructure Canvas with a soft launch in Fall 2023 and a full launch for **Spring 2024** of all courses. Our LMS transition project team made up of faculty and staff is working on the timeline and key actions that are needed over the next 18 months to ensure a smooth transition; they will communicate regularly with updates and resources.

As you know, our current system, Blackboard Learn no longer meets requirements for accessibility as determined through reviews conducted by UH. The selection of Canvas reflects a faculty-led conversation and recommendation based on surveys and demos as well as conversations with colleagues in IT and the CTLE and review of UH research shared with the team. A key consideration was that Canvas allows us to continue to use all of our other technologies such as Panopto and Ally.

I would like to thank all the faculty and staff who participated in these conversations and demos during an already busy time at the end of spring semester. In particular, I'd like to thank all members of the Academic Technology Committee and members of the CTLE Online Subcommittee, led by Dr. Sarah Heinlein. Their thorough engagement with and representation of faculty perspectives and concerns will continue to inform the transition process.

While the LMS transition is undoubtedly a major undertaking, it is also an opportunity for us to re-establish our collective priorities for how to deliver a high-quality educational experience that engages best practices in technology and course design.

As we work toward the full plan which will include substantial IT support for the migration and conversion of course content, please watch for upcoming information from the transition team on the following:

1. Tips for reviewing and "cleaning up" your BB courses before the conversion.
2. Resources provided by the Office of Disability Services to submit files and other materials for conversion to accessible formats.
3. Pedagogy conversations around how to incorporate best practices into our course shell design and how to take advantage of CTLE videos, trainings, and resources to expand your own skills in course design which will apply across technology platforms.
4. A website with regular updates and resources on the transition process.

If you would like a preview of the product, Canvas offers a [free version](#) you can try out. The transition team will follow up with information about our own sandbox coming soon.

I look forward to working with the faculty to make this a productive and effective transition to new technology for improved experiences for both faculty and students.

Warm regards,
Deborah Bordelon
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
University of Houston-Downtown