

Distance up close

NEWS FROM THE
OFFICE OF DISTANCE LEARNING

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FROM THE DIRECTOR



January 1st is approaching and it won't be long before many of us don our party hats and toast the beginning of a new year. This year we'll be extending the celebration to January 8th – the day marking Canvas as the official LMS of the university. The spring semester will mark a new beginning for many as they adapt to Canvas and finish the move from Blackboard.

The change is exciting, but it will require time and effort to fully take advantage of all of the tools offered through Canvas. Rest assured that ODL is here to help along the way and make the transition as smooth as possible. In December and January, we will be offering Canvas boot camps to those who have not had the opportunity to attend training. Face-to-face consultations and migration assistance are also available to any instructors who would like to work directly with a support specialist. Finally, a wealth of information is available online in the [FSU Canvas Transition Center](#), including a training course, webinars, support articles, guides, and videos.

Considering the pace of this last semester, this winter break may be the most anticipated in a long time. I hope you all enjoy the time away and I am looking forward to kicking off the new year with you in January!

Sincerely,
Robby Fuselier
Interim Director

IN THE NEWS



Getting Ready for Fall Finals Week

Fall Finals Week is slated for Dec. 9–15, 2017. In response to an increase in scheduled examinations, the Testing Center has added weekend testing to the regular Monday–Friday dates, as well as an additional testing site at Oglesby Union. The Testing Center at the stadium will be open 7 am – 10 pm each day of finals.

“Use of the Testing Center continues to rise every semester,” said Nancy Guidry-Hall, ODL’s Assistant Director of Assessment and Testing. “Some recent semesters have seen an increase of 20 percent to 30 percent in volume for finals week. We plan to use the weekend before finals for extending our hours now and in the future to accommodate instructors who require secure testing.”

ODL will be providing support for students during finals week. Miller Hall, located on the third floor of University Center C, will be open Monday–Friday from 7 am to 6 pm as a study area for students waiting to take tests. Staff will be onsite to let students know when the Testing Center is ready to seat appointments. To better assist students needing technical help during finals week, ODL Technical Support has extended its [help desk hours](#).

For more information about finals week, contact the Testing Center at 850-644-3017.

Study Tips for Students

Instructors can share the following tips with their students to help them prepare for Fall Finals Week:

- [Scientifically, the Best Way to Prepare for Final Exams](#)
- [Study Tools and Tips](#)

They can also remind students of their [responsibilities while taking exams](#) at the Testing Center.



Online Mentor Training Fall 2017	<i>"The most valuable resource that all teachers have is each other."</i> Robert John Meehan
Start Here	Modules
Discussion Board	Grades

Training Course Prepares Online Mentors

Mentors play a critical role in the success of online courses, and ODL offers a four-week, self-paced online training course to help prepare online mentors at Florida State.

The 2017 Online Mentor Training Course, delivered through Canvas, offers online mentoring strategies, addresses FSU policies, and provides guidance and best practices for using Canvas tools. Training will

give mentors the skills needed to serve as a qualified online mentor to the university's distance learning community.

"Communication and grading are the main parts of mentors' responsibilities," said course designer Liying Miao of ODL's Instructional Development Faculty. "In this training, mentors will collaboratively learn to identify their role and leverage Canvas tools to serve faculty and fellow students effectively."

The course includes four modules that cover the following:

- Introduction to online mentoring at FSU
- Introduction to Canvas and obtaining assistance with Canvas
- Managing online communication and discussion
- Grading and assessment

Each module includes graded assignments such as quizzes, discussion boards for peer-to-peer interaction, and a Canvas activity. Mentors will receive a certificate of completion after successfully passing the quizzes and completing the assignments.

For more information, visit the [Online Mentor Training page](#). To request enrollment, email [Liying Miao](#).

ODL Travels to Republic of Panama for Canvas Training



In October, John L. Crow, an ODL instructional development faculty member, and Knox Mallette, an ODL technical support specialist, visited FSU's Republic of Panama campus to train their faculty in using Canvas.

Along with the faculty in Tallahassee and Panama City, Florida, the faculty at the Republic of Panama campus are also making the transition to the new learning management system. FSU's Panama campus is located in the City of Knowledge, just outside of Panama City, on the Pacific Ocean side of the isthmus.

"A smooth transition to Canvas is critical for our program," said Alexandra Anyfanti, Vice Rector for Academic Affairs at the Republic of Panama Campus (pictured with Knox Mallette).

The three-day training covered an overview of Canvas, as well as one-on-one consultation sessions with faculty about the specifics of migrating their courses from Blackboard to Canvas. All Republic of Panama classes are in-person, but, as Anyfanti added, "professors rely on the instructional platform as a major support tool to maximize instructional and classroom time." From distributing readings, to assignment submission, or quizzes to reinforce reading material, Canvas will allow faculty to leverage technology to give them more time to work directly with students.

The Republic of Panama students frequently complete their first two years of study in Panama and then travel to Tallahassee to finish their undergraduate degree. With this arrangement, it is important that faculty in Panama are trained in the same technology as FSU's other campuses so students relocating to Tallahassee can quickly adapt to their new learning environment.

"We are thrilled to have had the chance to visit the Republic of Panama campus and work directly with the faculty on the Canvas transition," said ODL Interim Director Robby Fuselier. "The trip not only created a unique training opportunity, but also resulted in a stronger partnership with our colleagues in Panama."

CANVAS TRAINING



Boot camps are back! Hundreds of instructors attended Canvas boot camps during the fall and now these sessions are back by popular demand, with two more offerings added to the current training roster between now and the beginning of the spring semester.

Boot camps will assist instructors with building and finalizing course frameworks before courses begin running in Canvas on January 8, 2018. These intensive, two-hour sessions concentrate on migrating content from Blackboard to Canvas, with a focus on quality, accessibility, and universal design standards.

"The participants who have gone through these sessions have found them helpful and time-saving," said John Braswell, educational technology instructor for ODL.

To reserve your spot for a boot camp, visit our [Registration](#) page. You can also schedule an individual consultation with an ODL technical support specialist or make an appointment for course migration assistance.

TOOL TIME

Welcome to Tool Time, where we feature an instructional design tool and show how it can enhance course development.



Tool: Conferences (using BigBlueButton technology)

What is it? A web-conferencing tool

How does it help? You can use Conferences in Canvas for online meetings and activities.

Canvas features a built-in web-conferencing tool called “Conferences” that integrates with [BigBlueButton](#). Conferences, which can accommodate up to 50 people, can be used for virtual lectures, virtual office hours, student groups, or any event that requires synchronous interaction.

Users can record a Conference, connect with colleagues via webinars, use the whiteboard function, add files, share a screen, and conduct polls during Conference sessions. Conferences also allows users to demo applications or online resources.

Please note that recorded Conferences are stored in Canvas for 14 days and are then deleted automatically.

For more information on how to use Conferences in Canvas, see the “Further resources” section of our [help desk article](#).

TECHNOLOGY TIPS

Support Articles

Check out the most recent articles from our Canvas Support Center:

- [Canvas course menu and settings FAQs](#)
- [Canvas discussion board FAQs](#)
- [Canvas grades and grading FAQs](#)
- [Canvas assignments FAQs](#)
- [Canvas assessment FAQs](#)
- [Canvas miscellaneous FAQs](#)
- [Canvas workshop and appointment registration](#)
- [Canvas notification settings guide](#)
- [How to change your name in Canvas](#)
- [How to request a Canvas organization site](#)
- [How to request a Canvas dev site](#)
- [How do I navigate around/use Canvas?](#)
- [How to search for classes and add them \(myFSU\)](#)
- [How to view and download your class roster](#)
- [How user enrollments and course access work in Canvas](#)
- [How do I communicate with my students in Canvas?](#)
- [What is Canvas’s Rich Content Editor and how do I use it?](#)
- [Instructors: How to access your Turnitin.com account for the first time](#)
- [Using a profile picture in Canvas](#)
- [Students: Tips for a Better Canvas Experience](#)
- [How to ensure the accuracy of final grades within Canvas](#)
- [FSU Canvas Grade Upload Tool](#)

Have questions? We can help! [Contact](#) ODL Technical Support.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

We are eager to receive your feedback on what you would like to see in future issues of the newsletter, so please feel free to **send us your suggestions** about ways ODL can better serve you.

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