



JIMMY H. BAKER
Chancellor

MEMORANDUM #2023-EXE-038

DATE: August 29, 2023
TO: ACCS Presidents, Deans, IT Directors, Fiscal Officers
FROM: Jimmy H. Baker, Chancellor, Alabama Community College System
RE: Systemwide Transition to Canvas

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J H Baker", is written over the "FROM:" line of the memorandum.

Your commitment to enhancing the student experience through excellence and cutting-edge technology is unwavering. Over the last eight years, I have watched your colleges and the System Office make significant progress in facilitating accessibility through implementing a systemwide ERP and CRM. We have achieved notable milestones in skills training with the establishment of the Innovation Center's Skills for Success and the development of Adult Education's ACE and MAPS. Our outreach through the deployment of Wiley to reach nontraditional learners represents yet another innovative approach to workforce development that is instrumental in fostering enrollment growth.

In our 60-year history, the support of the state's leaders for the Alabama Community College System has never been stronger. We want to continue developing data-driven, higher education strategies that work for Alabama's residents. In building on the success that we have seen with unifying our technology, our next logical step toward expanding access is to implement a single, unified Learning Management System (LMS) statewide. I am pleased to announce that after careful consideration that involved a three-year evaluation period, and thanks to the state-approved national purchasing cooperative allowed by state law, we have selected Instructure's Canvas as our new LMS provider.

For our students, selecting Instructure supports our vision for every resident in every community who chooses the community college system to have the same consistent, scalable experience. Students who start in an adult education or skills training program and decide to continue classes at their community college will not have stress over navigating multiple platforms. Students who need classes from another of our community colleges to complete a degree will no longer have to develop new logins for multiple LMS platforms.

Further, I am particularly encouraged that we will be able, as a system, to provide digital credentials. Instructure is one – if not the only – higher education platform that offers us the opportunity to validate our students' skills and achievements by awarding digital badges that are recognized by business and industry. In doing so, we will be able to track and share skills-based learning achievements from the first day students engage in meaningful training from our programs. The phenomenon is close to our identity as institutions that don't just mark success with a college degree; there are several other opportunities that can gauge that a student has achieved.

For instructors, selecting Instructure's Canvas allows for simplified management and more engaging content delivery for their course creation. Instructors are bound to have an easier time customizing their courses and using the communication resources to connect with their students. In addition, there will be greater capability to upload and share course materials across colleges, as well as to conduct virtual and blended learning experiences with evidence-based strategies. Currently, two different LMS providers are in use at our colleges.

Canvas already serves as the foundation for more than half our colleges' LMS, and it also supports our specialized noncredit programs. Now, even colleges currently using Canvas will benefit from updates that will enhance the platform's value.

We expect to begin migrating some colleges into the platform in Summer 2024, with a full migration expected in Fall of 2024.

Rest assured that we are diligently working on finalizing the implementation plan and identifying the best groups of colleges to transition together. We will furnish resources over time that will be specifically tailored to our needs in the Alabama Community College System. Please send any additional inquiries to our team at canvas@accs.edu so that we can continually enhance our customized resources.

I am confident that our efforts to deploy a robust and uniform technology infrastructure will serve our students for years to come. Thank you for your ongoing support.