



With the SUNY/D2L Contract Approved, Planning Shifts into High Gear

Contract Approval Opens Lines of Communication

As soon as the SUNY/D2L contract was approved, one of the most immediate tasks at hand was to align the internal planning that SUNY had been doing independently, with D2L's approach to implementation planning. "We had both established a project plan and project teams, but prior to contract approval, we couldn't share that work with one another," said Kim Scalzo, Interim Executive Director of Academic Technologies and Information Services and project lead. "The lines of communication were opened when the contract received final approval. We began meeting with D2L immediately to understand our respective approaches and to ensure a fully aligned plan that would support successful implementation."

From the start, SUNY has relied on a collaborative approach to this transition—from faculty engagement in the development of the RFP to faculty and staff involvement in the review of RFP responses, and most recently, to the creation of implementation teams with broad campus and System representation. That commitment to a collaborative approach will ultimately make the unified DLE better and more responsive to campus, faculty, and student needs. At the same time, our collaborative approach does mean that there is some waiting period to finalize plans as we work together with planning teams and work groups—now informed by communications with D2L—to research, make and/or review final recommendations, which inform final decisions.

Identification of Tools and Tool Integrations

Part of the research effort underway is the survey distributed to all campuses to help collect critical information around current tools and tool integrations that campuses deem essential. An accurate snapshot of the landscape today is needed so that recommendations and decisions made around tools and tool integration for the new unified environment meet faculty needs and support students, while reducing redundancies that will achieve cost savings.

To that end, some campuses have asked whether or not they should move forward with plans for campus-wide use of new tools or contract renewals. There will no doubt be some immediate faculty

There is Still Time to Register for an "Introduction to D2L's Brightspace" Webinar

Our initial webinar, scheduled for October 28, filled up quickly. A second webinar was scheduled for November 5, from 10 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. and seats are still available! Register here:

<https://sunycpd.eventsair.com/sunyd2l/req>.

This session brings SUNY and D2L project leads together to talk about project status and to preview the features of Brightspace that led to its selection as the LMS in SUNY's unified Digital Learning Environment.

All registrants will receive a survey providing an opportunity to submit questions in advance that presenters will work to address in the webinar. Questions not addressed will be responded to and posted in the FAQ section of the project website, DLE.suny.edu. Recordings of both sessions will also be posted to the website.

needs campuses will have to meet; however, it is true that there may be some tools, integrations, initiatives that may not make sense to pursue or renew based on the timing of the transition and determination of tools and integrations that will be built into the unified environment and available to campuses. This is another reason why complete survey responses are so important. The survey was sent to CIOs, Directors of Online Learning, and LMS Administrators on each campus with a request for the campus to coordinate on their response. Each campus was also asked to identify a primary contact for survey completion with responses due on 10/27.

Questions and a New Schedule for Website FAQs

“I wish we could answer every question we receive immediately, but I assure you we are making important progress every day to ensure everyone has the information they need,” said Harry Cargile, Manager of Application Services for SUNY Online and a DLE transition project lead. “With the contract now approved, we are working tirelessly to finalize priority actions that will support a first cohort in January.”

This work includes the staffing of the final two teams: the Technical Implementation Work Group (technical architecture, network, security, and campus technical migration); and the Campus Implementation Planning Work Group (campus level configuration, templates, and support for change management at the campus level). Both groups are comprised of campus and System representatives and will likely stay engaged through the first cohort.

Beginning in November, the FAQ page on the DLE.suny.edu website will be updated every Friday, with new additions/updates noted. A new page will also be added to the website with information on upcoming informational webinars and training news; the recordings of the 10/28 and 11/5 *Introduction to D2L's Brightspace* sessions will be posted there (see box on page 1 for information on how to register).

Training

Jamie Heron, SUNY Online Program Manager at the SUNY Center for Professional Development, will coordinate, along with a cadre of campus partner volunteers, a unified approach to training. Plans include options for both asynchronous and synchronous training modules and reference materials, developed at no charge to campuses, that each institution will be able to adapt as needed. Training will roll-out to System Administrators, Help Desk professionals, instructional designers, faculty, and students. Importantly, training will address the needs of faculty teaching in all delivery modes, including faculty who will use the LMS to teach online as well as faculty who utilize the LMS as a resource in their in-person classes and those who teach in hybrid and HyFlex instructional models.

“The broader program will include guided online training, asynchronous modules with LMS expert check-ins and assistance, synchronous live training, and online self-paced training for students,” said Jamie. She said her goal is that any campus-led training will be able to utilize already developed resources so that campus staff can focus on responding to individual faculty and student needs rather than building training materials.

We all understand how critically important the training program is, not only to ensure basic usability, but to support faculty innovation and to promote both faculty to student, and student to student, engagement.

We hope to see everyone at one of the upcoming webinars!

Thank you for reading and for your engagement in this important process.