

Sent: Monday, October 28, 2024 8:27:30 AM

Subject: Introducing Our New Learning Management System (PLATO)

The Westfield State University community, like many other colleges and universities, must adapt to changing circumstances. We have moved into the last year of our contractual obligation with our current LMS provider, BlackBoard. At the end of our contract, BlackBoard will no longer support the current platform. This significant change necessitated an opportunity for Westfield State to explore other LMS opportunities in the market.

We are pleased to announce that Westfield State and D2L Brightspace have signed an agreement for the adoption of D2L Brightspace as the new Westfield State University Learning Management System (LMS). This is designed to enhance your learning experience and provide you with a more intuitive and efficient platform for your studies.

Key Features of the New LMS:

- **User-Friendly Interface** : Students have many ways to stay aware of what is happening in a course, including notifications and alerts. There are also many ways for professors to communicate with students, which means they can help students track their progress and their learning in courses.
- **Enhanced Collaboration Tools** :There is weekly navigation in all Brightspace courses, which means that students and faculty will have a familiar and consistent experience of navigating across all their courses. Brightspace is a very visual and engaging platform.
- **Increased Collaborative Support**: All students and professors will have access to support directly from Brightspace, 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This includes chat with screenshare, email and phone access. Additionally, students and faculty will still have access to the Plato Help Desk.
- **Integrated Resources**: Access all your learning materials, assignments, and grades in one place.
- **Accessibility**: Brightspace is very committed to accessibility and provides many tools that help professors ensure that courses are accessible for all students.

Important Dates:

- **Fall 2024**
 - CIT will work with the D2L implementation team, setting up the new LMS.
 - Creating course and program templates and migrating BlackBoard courses into D2L Brightspace.

- **December 2024 – January 2025**
 - CIT will train faculty volunteers in the newly created LMS.
 - Volunteers will beta test during the Spring 2025 semester and provide valuable feedback to the team.

- **Spring Semester 2025**
 - Campus is still on the current BlackBoard Learn platform.
 - Training continues and beta testing of D2L Brightspace occurs for an estimated 20-30 courses.

- **Summer I & II 2025**
 - Campus rollout of new LMS for all Summer I & II courses will be using Brightspace.
 - Training of all remaining faculty.

- **Fall 2025 - Full campus roll out of new LMS**

What You Need to Do:

1. **Embrace the Change:** we are confident that the change is a positive one for Westfield State University and embracing that change will enhance your experience in the new LMS
2. **Be on The Lookout:** Watch for future announcements via email and in the current LMS
3. **Attend Training:** Join one of our training sessions to make the most of the new system once they are available

We believe this new LMS will benefit your online academic journey, and we are here to support you every step of the way.

Thank you for your attention, and we look forward to seeing you thrive with our new LMS!