Title:

Moving a Major Research-Extensive University from Three LMSs to a Single Platform - Herding the Cats

Abstract:

Moving a University's 13 colleges and schools from three LMSs to a single platform would appear to be a fool's errand. For over a dozen years the University used three LMSs; no one was well served, redundant systems were wasteful and conflicting, and in recent years both a new Strategic Plan and a Middle States accreditation visit loomed. This session focuses on planning and communication strategies, getting buy-in from academic and administrative units, as well as successes to leverage and pitfalls to avoid. Insights from attendees relative to this challenging and multi-dimensional topic will provide them with practical and meaningful takeaways.

Objective:

Enable the audience to learn from a multi-dimensional project plan and rollout that was successful, well-received, and effective.

Outline:

1. Where the University was 12 years ago.
2. The interim steps that were taken as part of the larger, strategic, effort.
3. How the single LMS plan evolved.
4. The technical 18-month Roadmap is fashioned.
5. Gaining leadership buy-in and sponsorship.
6. Establishing a core cross-department team.
7. Proceeding across the Roadmap.
8. Ramping up the communication and training activities.
10. Escalating the data-driven progress reports and dimensions.
11. Nearing the finish line.
12. Completing the move to a single LMS.

13. Preparing for the future, e.g., sunsetting the existing systems.

14. Where we are right now and what we have left to accomplish.

**Instructor’s Qualifications:**

Mike is the Associate Vice President - Instructional Technology Support, in Drexel University's IRT (Information Resources and Technology) department, focused on online learning support, collaboration, HD video-conferencing, Webcasting, and archiving, and myriad client services. This group of about 40 professional staff supports 30K end-users at Drexel University as well as their partner schools in their ASP model. The training, support, and collaboration areas include the university's standard LMS, Blackboard Learn v9.1.8, all of its Building Block applications, and others that can enhance the teaching and learning experience.

Mike led the entire project to get Drexel onto a single LMS. This was accomplished on June 23, 2012, on schedule. He envisioned, fashioned, communicated, coordinated, and spearheaded this effort. The University is now on a single LMS for the first time in its history.

Through a joint appointment in the Provost's office, Mike also leads others at Drexel as the Executive Director of the Online Learning Council, a cross-unit group focused on course quality, accessibility, and scalability, student retention, student support and engagement, and communication.

**Comments:**

Many folks will gain insights into how to orchestrate large-scale initiatives in higher education settings with their inherent silos, multiple constituencies, and slow-to-adopt-change mindsets.