

Background:

Gartner defines higher education learning management systemsⁱ (LMSs) as the central hub for teaching and learning technologies, offering access to a variety of tools and services both inside and outside of the platform. The LMS:

- directs learners to learning resources,
- provides tools for developing and tracking assignments and assessments,
- can generate reports and analytics on learner performance,
- supports the various roles involved in teaching and learning,
- facilitates online collaboration and communication among learners, instructors and administrators, and
- support and manage the delivery of educational content and services to learners, faculty and staff.

Some of the key purposes of a LMS include:

- Providing a centralized platform for delivering and managing educational content, such as course materials, assignments, quizzes, exams and other resources.
- Supporting various teaching and learning activities, such as online and blended learning, flipped classroom models, and interactive and collaborative learning experiences.
- Offering administrative benefits, such as automating various tasks like grading, attendance taking, and reporting; reducing workload; and increasing efficiency.

These functions often require integration with other administrative and instructional systems used by the university. The University of South Carolina currently endorses and supports the a single LMS, Blackboard from Anthology. However, there are other unofficial LMS solutions that faculty across the System have adopted. Having multiple LMS platforms requires students to navigate multiple technological and administrative hurdles in addition to mastering the coursework and learning objectives. These hurdles can degrade the student experience and negatively affect student performance. A standard LMS would help eliminate some of that burden and provide more opportunity to build tighter integrations with other systems to streamline functions faculty are currently juggling within various systems. In fact, the need to adopt a standard LSM fully supports two of USC's three strategic priorities:

1. Reimagining the Student Experience and Advancing Post-Graduate Success
2. Transforming Service Delivery and Promoting Operational Excellence

Therefore, the Provost and Faculty Senate have created The Teaching Technology Review Task Force (TTRTF) with the following charge and membership.

Charge for the TTRTF:

The Teaching Technology Review Task Force (TTRTF) will conduct a thorough evaluation of available learning management system (LMS) options. Using the existing Blackboard platform as the "current state" for comparison, the TTRTF will define the desired "future state" for a system-wide LMS that:

- empowers an array of pedagogical approaches,
- streamlines course management, grading and reporting processes,
- enhances student learning, and

- adapts to evolving educational trends and technologies.

In addition to these criteria, the TTRTF will assess:

- the LMS user experience for students and faculty,
- the scalability and cost-effectiveness of the LMS across USC system campuses,
- the available support options,
- the capacity of the LMS to integrate with a variety of software tools and platforms that might be used for instructional and administrative purposes, and
- the alignment of the LMS with the strategic goals of the system.

TTRTF will also seek an LMS that:

- complies with relevant accessibility standards
- offers features that support diverse learning styles, and
- adheres to best practices in data protection and privacy regulations.

If the recommendation is to remain with the currently supported Blackboard LMS, the committee report should explain how it meets the goals enumerated above and also include specific recommendations to maximize the features and functions available to our students and faculty. If the recommendation is to migrate to a different platform, the committee will produce a report containing an overall LMS recommendation for the USC system along with the relevant supporting information (how it meets the committee goals, an initial implementation schedule with migration timeline, an annual cost estimate, etc.) This report will be presented to the Faculty Senate and the Office of the Provost for consideration.

TTRTF Composition:

Columbia representatives:

1. 2 representatives from InDev
2. 2 representatives from Faculty Senate IT Committee
3. 2 Columbia IT administrators/staff

System representatives (the three comprehensive campuses)

1. 6 (one IT and one faculty member from each comprehensive campus)
2. 1 Palmetto College faculty

Ex officio (advisory roles)

1. 1 Faculty Senate IT Committee chair (Columbia Campus)
2. 1 InDev Committee chair (Columbia Campus)
3. 1 representative from the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics (OIRAA – Columbia Campus)
4. 1 representative from the office of the Chief Financial Officer

Total: 17 committee members

TTRTF membership for 2023 – 2024

Name	Campus	Unit	Faculty or Staff/ Admin.	Notes
Stephanie Armstrong	Columbia	College of Nursing	Faculty	InDev
Lara Truell	Columbia	HRSM	Faculty	InDev
Ashley Gess	Columbia	College of Education	Faculty	IT
Nikki Smith	Columbia	College of Nursing	Faculty	IT
Rhiannon Mayer	Columbia	Director of eLearning	Staff/Admin.	
Jeff Hostilo	Columbia	DIT	Staff/Admin.	
Susan Quinn	Columbia	DIT	Staff/Admin.	
Katie Vaughan	Columbia	DIT	Staff/Admin.	
Chris Clark	USC-Aiken		Staff/Admin.	
Julie Wise	USC-Aiken	English	Faculty	
Matt Heightland	USC-Beaufort		Staff/Admin.	
Jo Kuehn	USC-Beaufort	Nursing Program	Faculty	
Ryan Crawford	USC-Upstate	College of Nursing	Faculty	
Celena Kusch	USC-Upstate	College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences / CAIFS	Faculty	Task Force Chair
John Catalano	Palmetto College	Associate Provost for Palmetto College	Staff/Admin.	
Mark Minett	Ex officio	College of Arts and Sciences	Faculty	InDev Chair
Nikos Vitzilaios	Ex officio	College of Engineering & Computing	Faculty	IT Chair
La Trice Ratcliff-Small	Ex officio	OIRAA	Staff/Admin.	
Kelly Epting	Ex officio	University Budget Office	Staff/Admin.	
Trena Houp	Ex officio	Office of the Provost	Staff/Admin.	
Lara Lomicka Anderson	Ex officio	Office of the Provost	Faculty/Admin.	

ⁱ [Best Higher Education Learning Management Systems Reviews 2023 | Gartner Peer Insights](#)