SMC Distance Education Committee Course Management System Search Project, January 2010

Wendy Parise, DE Committee Chair and Julie Yarrish, Associate Dean of Online Services & Support

Background

Since the fall of 2003, one of the ongoing goals of the Distance Education (DE) Committee has been to review the functionality of our course management system (CMS) as well as review other options.

In the spring 2009, the Academic Senate requested that the DE Committee launch an intensive campus-wide exploration of CMS c alternatives or determine if the current platform (eCollge) could be obtained at a lesser cost.

In response to district budget review, the college was able to engage in mid-year contract negotiations to change the terms of the current contract. The result of this new agreement resulted in three major concessions from eCollege:

1. The District was moved to an open site license with no seat restrictions for 2009-10 (previous agreement included 18,000 seat limitation and penalty for over enrollment).
2. No loss of services including unlimited 24/7 support for students and faculty. Free use of eCompanion for all ground classes.
3. Forgiveness of $180,000 for seat overage charge from 2008-09.

The District offers a robust online program and represents a substantial percentage of enrollments. The DE committee was well aware that a CMS change would be a serious decision and that there were multiple stakeholders and voices to consider (i.e. IT, student services, faculty, students and staff). Keeping all of these elements in mind, the DE committee set forth to address and honor the opinions and concerns of as many parties or "stakeholders" as possible during this deliberative and inclusive exploration process.

Stakeholders

Faculty:

There are currently approximately 160 faculty relying on our current CMS (eCollege) to deliver their online courses. (Please see appendix E for complete list). There are also a significant number of SMC faculty who rely on this CMS to deliver supplementary course content (eCompanion) to enhance their on-ground traditional campus-based classes. For example, in the spring of 2009, there were over 250 unique faculty users who had some form of course content uploaded in their eCompanion shells and/or were using multiple platform tools such as the gradebook, email function, threaded discussion, synchronous & asynchronous chat, quiz functionality, journal, document sharing, drop-box, etc. In the spring 2009 over 400 faculty members were using the current CMS and it was clear that these users had a stake in this decision and their voices needed to be heard.

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Students:
The DE committee had a student representative this past fall 2009 who sat in on the meetings and participated in the discussions. Student satisfaction surveys were discussed but due to the unique challenges that would exist in surveying students as well as limited time and heavy DE committee agendas, this user group was not formally queried.

We have been using this CMS since we launched our distance education program and in general students are acclimated to the platform and appear to navigate smoothly. Since all our classes use this platform (except for a very few), all SMC DE students seamlessly negotiate each DE class since they all work in the same manner. This is also true for the eCompanion students. This one stop shop system minimizes confusion and promotes student success.

MIS Information Technology:
In an effort to address and fully understand the technical scope, needs and issues necessary to consider in moving to another CMS, we invited Dean Jocelyn Chong to a DE committee meeting. She attended on November 17, 2009 to discuss the various options and considerations. Dean Chong suggested the best way to proceed with this mission was to determine the functionality/model required and then determine the cost. She regarded eCollege, Blackboard and open source models to be the CMS major players.

According to Dean Chong, selection of a model requires the consideration of the following factors:

1. Total outsourcing is our current model with eCOLLEGE in which this CMS supports our distance education program and interfaces with our college's infrastructure (ISIS, student services). If we choose to use an open source model (such as Moodle) which on face value may appear to be economically advantageous (Moodle is "free") we would be faced with having to make some costly decisions such as finding an outside hosting resource or building an on-campus infrastructure that would include servers and support tech personnel. Given the speed and frequency of changes in technology we would also need to consider initial and potential costs of ongoing overhead to support the changes.

    Technological considerations would include determining how much lead-time is required to upgrade the District's band-with. How much customizing would we want to do? How possible is it to customize the platform to fit the needs of each user? How would we reach consensus among faculty users and disciplines? How would customization compromise other SMC systems?

    If we were to migrate to another platform (such as Blackboard) we would have to consider the scalability of the migration process. These factors include the time

and cost of faculty and district staff training, time faculty would spend migrating their content and checking their courses to be sure the format, files and links were transferred correctly.   In addition, we would need to factor in the cost of running two CMS' concurrently for a minimum of a full academic year which would entail two contracts from two separate companies in place during the transition process. This time estimation is based on De Anza College's migration model moving from WebCT to Moodle. Note, their distance education program was one forth the size of our current program.

2. There are a wide number of CMS companies who are merging or being bought out. We need to be sure we are aligned with a stable company that is not vulnerable to take over.

Dean Chong summarized by saying that the decision to change CMS is a very complex process. Each model has its own set of pros and cons. The model/options chosen would have a fiscal impact as well as an impact upon faculty, staff and students.   She emphasized that given all the considerations and using a "business model", the decision to migrate to another CMS would need to be weighed heavily and done for a very good reason.

Distance Education Staff:
While the District has been using eCollege as its sole CMS since the DE program began, and we have a substantial amount of content "living" on the eCollege servers, it is possible for the District to migrate to another CMS if need be. However, this decision would need to be prompted by a solid rationale for such a change. Other considerations would also need to be addressed such as having sufficient time to migrate to a new CMS, funding, training of faculty and staff, additional staff to support the migration and complete buy-in from all parties in order to make a successful transition.

The recent upgrade/migration to the new enhanced version within the same CMS (eCollege's "Legacy" to ".NExT") provided a wealth of fresh information on just how much is involved for staff and faculty in terms of time and effort to maneuver through a change. In this case, the change was merely an enhancement within the same CMS. The preparation, pilot process, training and implementation took five months from pilot to the first full term rollout for the campus (winter 2009) to the newer version of the same platform.

Moving the SMC DE classes to an entirely new CMS would prove challenging to all areas of our college. To illustrate the scalability of such a task, consider this; according to the CCCCO data-mart, SMC listed 1075FTES for the spring of 2009 for DE classes. According to this website, our institution had the largest DE enrollments among the CA Community colleges for the spring of 2009. In considering a move to a new CMS, consider that the 1075 DE FTES is close to the same of other campuses entire

enrollments for the same time-period (Siskiyou 1,246 FTES, Mendocino 1,433 FTES) so one would need to appreciate the task of moving an entire campus to another location.

Exploration Process

In order to assess how well the current CMS was meeting the needs of DE faculty, two faculty satisfaction & inventory surveys were deployed. The first survey was launched in the fall of 2007, the second in spring of 2009. The results of both surveys identified the same issues. While the eCollege platform does not meet all of the needs of all faculty, it is meeting the needs of most.

The first survey in the fall of 2007 had 59 participants out of approximately 125 DE faculty and was prior to the migration to the upgraded version called .NExT. The survey results pointed out that many of the upcoming new enhancements were long awaited improvements requested by faculty users. These enhancements included easier interface with Mac computers, visual editors in most areas of the course, more robust email functionality and the ability to move course units around providing for more course architecture flexibility.

The second survey in the spring of 2009 had 108 participants out of 170 DE faculty and occurred during the first full semester after the District migrated over to the enhanced version (.NExT). Faculty survey comments reflected the disruption prompted by learning the new platform tools as well as new version platform bugs that were present early on during the migration to the upgraded version. There was a predominant theme to many of the comments about changing CMS' many stating that they do not wish to endure moving to a new platform given the disruption and learning curve prompted by the migration to the upgraded version of eCollege. One survey question asked faculty to share their thoughts about a possible migration away from eCollege. " Include how many hours you think it would take, what issues need to be considered—ANYTHING". Of the 108 survey respondents, 69 wrote comments to this question. The results were that 52% said do not move from eCollege, 26% commented that it *would be* a daunting task, 7% commented it would *not be* a daunting task, 7% commented they would like to move to another platform and 7% responded with comments that were unclear (see appendix C).

Both surveys indicated that some faculty were unfamiliar with how to use tools within the platform to ensure a more seamless teaching and learning experience and avoid frustration. One of the common threads seemed to indicate a greater need for ongoing training.

During the fall of 2009 the Distance Education Committee spent time during each meeting to discuss and determine the CMS evaluation strategies. With each step the committee stopped and reflected on their process to ensure that their procedure was deliberate and thorough.

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Step One: In an effort to synthesize the second faculty satisfaction survey results from spring 2009, the committee reviewed the comments and identified the major common threads. Any survey area or tools that indicated a 50> response rate was identified,

summarized and presented to the committee (see appendix B). This allowed the committee to compile a "must have" list of CMS options and tools that the majority of the DE faculty needs in order to succeed in the online classroom.

Step Two: Given that the DE program accounts for a substantial percentage of District enrollments and function and service continuity is key, the committee agreed that it was vital to use an "apples to apples" approach in this search in order to explore options that closely mirror the current CMS provider. Examples such as the 24/7 helpdesk support, course design support, hosting, archiving, integrated enrollments were on the item list. Another consideration was the CMS company stability. This decision precluded shopping the newer smaller CMS'. This decision was further supported by the recent acquisition of Angel by Blackboard as well as Blackboard's recent decision to phase out their support of WebCT, which they also bought several years ago.

Using the Distance Education committee shopping list, (based on survey responses) and the "apples to apples" model, the EduTools CMS search program identified only one competitor with eCollege. It was determined the highest version of Blackboard could mirror the current services provided by eCollege and might be a viable option if a migration away from eCollege was to become a necessity.

Since open source models were discussed including Moodle, the DE chair included Moodle in this next phase of the committee's exploration to honor those faculty who were interested in open source options, even though it did not fall within the "apples to apples" comparison.

Step Three: During this phase of the process the committee sought to determine the platform review process. The question about having vendor presentations was discussed. At first the committee contemplated having a Blackboard representative come to SMC to do a presentation, however after discussion decided that would not be the best use of time. They concluded that given the variability of all CMS customized packages, vendors could promise almost anything and may not be a true representation of what the actual user experiences.

Given the past experience of the WebCT pilot and interaction with the sales people, the committee thought it better to use SMC DE faculty as a resource and have those who teach on multiple platforms share their experience and their point of view on each CMS. This would be in keeping with addressing faculty user needs and experience and provide an "apples to apples" comparison between SMC's eCollege CMS and their experience using other CMS' at other institutions.

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Step Four: At the suggestion of several committee members, DE personnel at other institutions were interviewed about their experience with other CMS' (Blackboard & Moodle) and asked about their experience with their migration process. The comments **r**anged from cautionary tales about the high level of disruption during a migration to multiple vendor problems when leaving a CMS. These findings were reported to the DE committee.

Step Five: SMC DE faculty who teach using multiple platforms were identified and asked to participate in this dialogue. A series of conference calls and WebEx sessions were scheduled during the DE committee meetings providing the members a chance to ask their colleagues specific questions comparing eCollege vs. Blackboard and Moodle.

Step Six: After discussion on an ongoing basis, a motion was made to "send to DPAC the recommendation that we remain with eCollege as our Course Management System; that we continue to stay current on other CMS offerings; and address the limitations of our current CMS for users who have specific needs that are not being currently served." The motion was seconded and passed unanimously with a hand vote of 9 yea, 0 nay and 0 abstentions.

CMS project, spring 2010 DE committee next steps
The DE committee plans to review the 2009 surveys to determine the limitations of our current CMS for users who have specific needs that they feel are not currently being met. The committee will compile these suggestions/concerns and articulate them to eCollege which in turn will hopefully be useful for the negotiations of the new contract.

The DE committee will make every effort to stay current on other CMS options and new products as they emerge in the dynamic world of distance education and education technology.

Appendix A

CMS Platform research – Process from 2003 to present

CMS Platform research – Process from 2003 to present

Fall 2003

- **Dec. 4** DE committee minutes
- Committee expressed interest in evaluating a number of different vendors. Recommended we survey both faculty and students on what issues to address. eCollege contract: that Winniphred should negotiate the best possible contract with eCollege so we can develop and offer as many online classes as possible. The new contract, increasing online enrollment to 7,000 seats for next year, would start in summer and run for 3years. This will allow ample time to research other options for the future.
- Moodle Platform: Jeff Shimizu reported that a pilot program will run classes on Moodle. He stated that Moodle was not entirely intuitive and it was difficult to get help.
- Motion was made & accepted to support amending the eCollege contract by 1 year to reduce costs.

Spring 2004

- **February 17, 2004** DE committee minutes
- In an update of the eCollege contract Winniphred Stone advised the committee that the new contract had been approved by the Board of Trustees and was in the process of being signed. The contract will run for three years beginning Summer 2004. Among the contract terms included the increase of student seats from 3,500 to 7,00per year with the reduced cost of $48 per seat with the waiver of the maintenance fee.
- There was a brief discussion relative to investigating other system we might use should we decide to switch to another platform when the eCollege contract ends

CMS Platform research – Process from 2003 to present

Fall 2004

- **December 7**DE committee agenda
- Action Item: "Review the water cooler complied list of itemized features"
- Minutes: Fariba reiterated that the DE faculty water cooler was to be a place for faculty to state their online needs as far as platform capability (handout provided). Teri will reformat some of the topics.
- **November 23** DE committee agenda
- Action Item: Learning Management Systems – Review the water cooler compiled list of itemized features
- Minutes: Fariba will populate the water cooler. Judith recommended the formation of a subcommittee to keep faculty informed of water cooler discussions.
- **November 9** DE committee agenda
- Action Item continued: "Learning Management Systems – DE Faculty Water cooler (RFS criteria)
- **October 25** DE committee agenda
  Learning Management Systems RFS criteria, Faculty/Administration required list of tools
- Timeline
- Registration procedures for alternate platform

Spring 2005

- **March 1**DE committee agenda
- Item 5: Planning projects for this semester (begin review of other platforms)
- **March 29** DE agenda
- "New Business Item: Planning for next couple of years/projects – review other platforms? What is our renewal date with eCollege?"
- **April 26** DE agenda
- "Old Business: Projects – Review other platforms? What is our renewal date with eCollege"
- **May 3** DE agenda
- Item 3 New Business: Do we want a WebCT demo?"

- **May 3** item #10: "Upon discussion it was determined that the committee would schedule a demonstration with WebCT at the May 31 meeting. Also that platform criterion will be established" <u>Follow-up note: There is no entry for a May 31 meeting on the DE website off the Academic Senate pages.</u>

Summer 2005

- **July 15** – Summer WEBCT activities memo was issued from Chair Bernstein. "A cohort of explorers has been granted access to WebCT's Vista platform. With the support of the District Administration, V.P. Lawson signed a pilot user contract with WEBCT. Six faculty shells were provided with WEBCT guest shells & platform access (Alan Buckley, Diane Gross, Sal Veas, Pat Halliday, Marilyn Adler & Dan Hurley).

Fall 2005

- DE committee Objectives 2005-2006
- "Complete evaluation of the WebCT platform as a possible option; and decide whether to explore this or other platforms further. Develop a way to collaborate with administration in making platform decisions.
- **September 13**DE committee minutes: "Teri presented a preliminary report on summer WebCT cohort experience; more to follow at a future meeting"
- **October 11,** minutes: Item #3 Reports – "Teri Bernstein Report on WebCT exploration. WebCT cohort was underutilized. Although certain features were noted, the primary drawback seems to be the hurdle of transferring current courses to the new platform without requiring faculty to re-enter everything. WebCT implied help could be given, but that it would have to be contract for at some additional amount.
  Step 1: Develop a shopping list of platform requirements. Teri Bernstein and Julie Yarrish will work on creating a draft list for committee discussion. Other input involving this step included Ellen Cutler requested that WebCT proof of their interface with accessibility (508 compliance). Fariba Bolandhemat requested a list of WebCT features. It was announced that the CCC foundation had a contract for some version of the Vista platform, which was not as up-to-date as the versions "6.0" that Rolf Nygaard and Phil Chatterton discussed as being beta-tested this past summer and was instructed to look on the California Foundation web page based on the Vista platform. The new version of Vista is out and it is called "6.0".
  Step 2 – List will be reviewed with Jeff Shimizu at future meeting and procedure for getting a quote will be determined. Committee will discuss what action will be taken at this point. Migration costs may be an issue, but it may be a cost the District is willing to pay to ensure that there is not an enrollment drop in distance education. The administration will need to be an enthusiastic partner if any change is to be made".

- **October 24** DE committee agenda -Item referencing EduTools link "Optional: You can print out a more comprehensive comparison (albeit slightly dated) of information about eCollege, WebCT and BlackBoard at this same Website"
- **November 22** DE committee agenda: Item V. New Business Discussion
  "Preliminary review of must-have list for possible Request for Proposal – initial reaction from committee was that it needed to be a landscape document with room for evaluation and would also require input from all parties."

Spring 2006

- **March 21** minutes: "In a report by Teri Bernstein she reported that a member of DEPAC suggested that, as a cost saving measure, the Distance education Department explore using a platform other than eCollege. They did not name the platform but members of the DE committee speculated that it may be Moodle. After discussion it was determined that the response to this suggestion should be that we were investigating other platform and more information was needed. This item, as well as other platforms, will be addressed at later meetings".

Fall 2006

- **Sept 12** minutes: Item #10 "A discussion of eCollege and platform alternatives was held as part of the discussion of the Goals and Objective for 2006-2007. The objectives were approved unanimously (m/s Judith Remmes/Kay Azuma), and are appended to these minutes, and posted to the web page."
- **Sept 26** DE agenda: Item #3 Old Business – Sign up for areas of interest (platform alternatives).
- **Nov 7** DE agenda: Item #2 Reports – Subctte: Platform Issues
- **Nov 7** DE committee minutes: "The platform issues subcommittee has also met and will be addressing both the current platform and developing a list of platform attributes for evaluating current and possible future platform effectiveness and utility for DE at SMC. Fariba Bolandhemat will be the liaison for this subcommittee."
- **Dec 5** DE committee minutes: Subcommittee editing list of platform attributes for second survey.

CMS Platform research – Process from 2003 to present

Spring 2007

- **February 27** DE committee minutes (item 5) "Subcommittee report: Platform evaluation, Fariba Bolandhemat: The committee will re-convene immediately following the meeting to continue editing a list of platform attributes for the survey for all distance ed. Faculty. Resource people include John Yoder and Teri Beam from Mt. Sac. They plan to be read for a report on April 18.
- **March 27** DE Minutes: "Platform issues subcommittee is continuing to meet on the issues Platform tool grid and the DE platform survey questions."
- **April 18** DE minutes: No mention of a report being presented.
- **May 1** DE minutes (item 5) "Platform issues subcommittee is continuing to meet on the issues of the Platform tool grid and DE platform survey questions and will make a report at the next meeting (May 15).
- **May 15** DE minutes (item 8) "Platform issues subcommittee subcommittee presented a draft of Survey Questions for platform selection. The committee wanted additional comment space and clarity in the introduction paragraph so that DE faculty not familiar with the committee's work would understand the purpose of the initial survey. Survey will be edited for presentation at final meeting (May 29) or by email."
- **May 29** DE minutes (item 6) "Platform Issues subcommittee will continue their work and survey faculty in the fall."

Fall 2007

- **September 18** DE minutes (item 9) "The Platform subcommittee is finalizing its survey to be distributed by Survey Monkey to DE faculty, and will continue its platform review of both other platforms and eCollege service. The committee as a whole will undertake the work of the Strategic Planning subcommittee.
- **October 2** DE minutes (item 10) "Platform Subcommittee presented the proposed survey which had previously been email to committee members. A lively discussion followed. Clarifications were suggested to make the purpose of the survey more obvious. It was also suggested that the preliminary of the survey be emphasized in the survey instructions so that faculty members would not wonder why other vital tools were not among the items queried. Several other wide-ranging suggestions were made -- some to try to include more details and some to include less details. Some suggested an entirely different approach to surveying faculty. It was decided that the subcommittee would meet again to redraft the instructions,

incorporating committee suggestions with the goal of moving on this survey at the next meeting." (Oct 18)

- **October 18** DE minutes (item 8) "Platform subcommittee: the survey and survey letter, which were revised based on the committee's input last time, were presented for approval. Next step: send survey to committee members to beta-test. Approved unanimously.
- **October 30** DE minutes (item 8) "Survey update: Fariba Bolandhemat reported that she would be sending the platform survey out to all committee members for a beta-test. Committee members are encouraged to complete the survey and forward additional suggestions to Fariba. The survey should be finalized at the next meeting and be ready for distribution and collection before the end of the semester
- **November 13** DE minutes (item 6): "Platform Subcommittee is ready to launch survey: Fariba Bolandhemat has used the DE committee beta-testers' suggestions in finalizing the phase one platform survey. She also produced two reports from the beta test so that the committee had an idea of what kinds of data the broader survey could produce. Several members suggested ways to maximize the chance that the survey would be completed and returned. These suggestions included ways to word the introductory email, and under whose email the survey would be distributed (a faculty member? administration? the Academic Senate President? department chairs?). It was also noted that asking the department chairs to encourage people to fill out the survey might help build a partnership with Chairs in communicating with DE faculty. Offering "flex" credit for filling it out was decided against since the survey would only take five minutes to complete. The committee agreed that it was important to convey the concept "This Is YOUR Tool" to distance education instructors. It was decided by consensus to send out the survey from the DE Chair's email address, and to have the survey open from the Monday after Thanksgiving until the following Monday night (8 days). Fariba and Teri will coordinate and follow up."
- **December 4** DE minutes (item #4) "Platform Issues: Survey Report—preliminary: Fariba Bolandhemat reported on the survey results that she could pull together prior to the meeting; the survey had closed at 11:59 pm on Monday Dec 3rd. She said that there were 59 out of about 150 people who responded, and that the comments were the most interesting. She will compile them in a Word document for subcommittee and committee review. More than 50% of the responses raised more questions that will have to be considered.
  - There are additional questions from faculty involving what is going to be fixed in the release of .NeXT, eCollege's upgrade to the platform that was scheduled for release in late 2007 and now is scheduled for release in 2008. It was noted that it will be necessary to survey faculty about what this new release does NOT address, as feedback to eCollege. This discussion will have to be agendized for Spring.

CMS Platform research – Process from 2003 to present

Spring 2008

- **Feb 26** DE minutes (item #8) "Platform committee has not yet met to decide on their semester goals but will meet and get back to this committee in March."
- **April 22** DE minutes (item #4) "The Platform committee will report in May to formulate a plan for Fall 2008
- **May 6** DE minutes (item #9) Platform sub-committee: Fariba Bolandhemat reminded the committee about the survey that was done by the platform committee mid-year. The committee discussed the information gleaned from the survey—for example, many faculty do not use existing tools and need to be retrained in existing eCollege tools. Improvements to the current platform also need to be addressed. The sub-committee's work was placed on hold a bit this semester as we await the roll out of the eCollege upgrade ".NeXT". Committee consensus appeared to be that a satisfaction survey following the .NeXT roll out would be a good next step.

Fall 2008

- **October 29** - Suggestions for Exam Enhancements in eCollege: Fariba Bolandhemat presented a list of suggestions for the survey of faculty regarding changes to the eCollege exam area. She received very few emails from committee members, but will incorporate any suggestions she receives for next time. Fall 2008 - Second DE faculty survey created and deployed end of term. Survey results to be assessed in Spring 2009.
- **October 14** Fariba Bolandhemat requested that all faculty on the committee send her questions and issues they would like to see addressed in the survey on DE faculty regarding requested changes in the exam area of the eCollege platform.
- **December 2:** Fariba Bolandhemat has continued to compile questions for the survey, and will transform the suggestions she has received for survey questions into question format and the proper format for survey presentation. Teri will work with Fariba between now and the next meeting to pull together a draft in survey question form.

CMS Platform research – Process from 2003 to present

Spring 2009

- **February 24 Chair report-- Budget committee request for DE committee exploration of other platforms**.
  -Teri reported on developments affecting DE that had arisen during Winter intersession. Richard Tahvildaran-Jesswein had requested a meeting to discuss the possibility of the DE committee exploring other platforms. This topic had arisen in the Budget Committee of DPAC. Due to the extreme nature of the current budget crisis and ongoing operational deficit, all possible avenues of cost-savings were being pursued. The single largest contracted services item is the contract with eCollege, so the Budget Committee deemed it to be an obvious area to investigate. Teri reported this meeting request to Julie prior to setting a meeting date.
  - Because DE already had an active subcommittee for platform issues, Fariba joined Teri in meeting with Richard T-J, Eric Oifer, and Howard Stahl, all of whom are faculty who were present at the Budget committee discussions. Richard and Eric wanted to ensure that DE faculty and other distance education interested parties were driving the portion of this investigation that involved the platform attributes. It was the hope that the DE committee would be a good vehicle for this exploration. After discussion, a DE committee agenda item on this topic was requested, to be scheduled as soon as possible, with the permission of the DE Committee
  - The DE Committee agreed by consensus that they wanted to hear about this directly from Howard, and also expressed the desire to have been consulted sooner. Questions were asked about what had been said in the preliminary discussion, and Teri explained to the best of her ability the budgetary issues and the perspective that the platform decision was being viewed as a multi-part decision, partly about software attributes, partly about the entity that provides the server, and partly about customer service (helpdesk and faculty training). Rather than being an all or nothing decision, the Budget committee wanted to explore this as a continuum, from totally in-house to totally outsourced, to see if there was a cost-saving point on that matrix that would also provide as good or better results.
  - Committee members suggested: compensation was needed for the migration; customer satisfaction with current product should be surveyed; new platform must not only be explored, it has to be tested by running real classes in the platform, before a decision is made; whole "talent base" including part time faculty who have experience with other platforms must be included, helpdesk must not be undervalued.
  - Also noted: Blackboard and eCollege are the most expensive—Blackboard has the reputation of a more reliable product, but

less service that eCollege. Full discussion will be agendized for March 10, 2009 DE meeting.
- Platform subcommittee: Fariba Bolandhemat has continued to compile questions for the survey, and reported that there was no feedback from committee members regarding the draft last presented to the committee members. She will continue to accept input to the survey and present it at the next meeting.

- **March 10 - Motion [summarized]: Academic Senate requests campus-wide exploration of platform alternatives to eCollege to see if viable or better alternatives exist, or current platform can be obtained at less cost**

  [Rough Draft] :The week prior to the meeting the draft of the motion was mailed to committee members for review and discussion with their constituencies. Also, information about Virtual Learning Environments was sent.

  - Because the request for an immediate focus on this long-standing objective of the DE committee arose from discussions in the DPAC Budget committee, representatives from that committee visited (per committee consensus at the February 24th meeting) to introduce the topic. Present were Academic Senate President Richard Tahvildaran-Jesswein, Academic Senate President-elect Eric Oifer, and Co-Chair of the DPAC Budget committee Howard Stahl,

  - Richard and Eric explained that, due to the extreme nature of the current budget crisis and ongoing operational deficit, all possible avenues of cost-savings were being pursued. The single largest contracted services item is the contract with eCollege, so it seemed to be an obvious area to investigate. They reiterated the process that brought this request to the forefront.

  - Wanting to ensure that DE faculty and other distance education interested parties were driving the portion of this investigation that involved the platform attributes, Richard, Eric and Howard had asked to meet with Teri and Fariba during Winter intersession to ascertain whether such an investigation was within the scope of what the Distance Education committee would undertake. Because platform exploration was already an established function of the committee, it was deemed appropriate to request a focus on this area at this time. A DE committee agenda item on this topic was requested, to be scheduled as soon as possible, if this was a topic the committee was interested in. Teri reported on this item at the previous DE meeting, and the consensus of the committee was to hear from the Budget Committee representatives. The motion summarizes the reasoning behind the timing of the request.

  - After a brief introduction in support of this motion, Richard and Eric left, and Howard presented a framework of the platform contract from a budgetary and administrative technology perspective. He said that the three aspects of the DE platform choice was: 1) software features; 2) server issues (web space and integration with enrollment); and service. eCollege provides

the server and helpdesk services; these are aspects of the contract that can be provided in-house, or can be contracted out separately. Software features available from eCollege are available on several platforms; these would have to be evaluated by faculty users if SMC were to switch. Any mix of "in-house" vs. "outsourced" delivery of these aspects of the platform could be chosen, and these choices would be a primary factor in price. One-time migration and training costs would also be a factor. Howard said that faculty could not be expected to be excited about saving money, but they could get excited about a platform whose features they liked better.

- Howard was present for the beginning of the discussion which ensued, but had to leave to go to another meeting.

- There were several comments from committee members. At the beginning of the discussion, participants expressed support for an exploration of various platforms, however the following questions came up: What about all the costs of migration? What if things go wrong and we lose students? What if it is hard for students? What about the integrity of instruction and services? Has anyone considered that the .NEXT migration was bad enough and that we could not manage a platform migration? How could we live without the 24/7 helpdesk? Has anyone considered the needs of different types of users on campus, for example, heavy users of discussion threads? Why is this coming up now? Can IT help with this? etc…

- A few comments directly addressed the motion presented. One change suggested in the Resolved portion, was to insert the concept of the exploration _starting_ in Spring 2009, rather than taking place in Spring 2009. Another was to remove all mentions of any connections that distance education had to the budget process.

- Some members expressed support for the exploration, and some expressed support for its connection with the budgetary process, particularly if savings in the DE area could save jobs.

- The comments continued and surprise and confusion was expressed around the issues of possibly leaving eCollege, and around the perceived process.

- The Committee felt they needed more information before voting on the resolution, and the urgency made it particularly troubling. As the end of the meeting time neared, the Chair requested that members discuss the issue with their constituencies, and send any revisions via email. The resolution was moved forward to the next meeting; Chair will incorporate member input.

Platform survey: Because the survey had been given short shrift in meetings carried over from the fall, and because of the

importance of the survey if the committee is to involve the distance education faculty in any input regarding the platform, the Chair suggested that the Platform subcommittee and any other interested parties meet at 12:45 on the intervening Tuesday before the next DE committee meets as a whole, to prepare a draft for discussion as a first priority at the following meeting.
- Because of objections regarding scheduling conflicts, no subcommittee meeting was scheduled. This topic also moves forward

- **April 7, 2009 Platform Survey**: A draft of the platform survey was presented as a computer projection. Initially (as of September), the purpose of the survey was to focus on the Test features in eCollege, as we were told that the next focus of change would be that area. The survey draft was expanded to include questions that would gather information to inform the Committee and the campus as to platform feature requirements and knowledge of functionality for platforms other than eCollege. In addition, a committee goal from last Spring regarding feedback from faculty after the .NExT implementation was also addressed in this draft
  - Discussion of the draft survey included the following comments:

  - There was a spelling error in the intro: "instructors"
  - Introduction to the survey needs a rewrite: purpose of the survey needs to be made clear in the intro and/or the accompanying email.
  - It is important to also survey the eCompanion users; maybe these could be sent out and gathered by Waleed.
  - Scale used in some questions needs to be clarified.
  - Connection to previous survey needs to be made
  - Add a question regarding adding editing features for instructors to use, similar to the Comment feature in Microsoft Word
  - Many questions need to be reworded
  - Because time was short, a discussion ensued about how to continue to edit the document in an inclusive and efficient way, before the next meeting. This was important because the survey not only had to go out to faculty before the end of the semester, the survey data also had to be gathered into a report of some kind. Finalization needs to occur at the next meeting.
    - A suggestion was made to use Google docs to communicate possible changes, but not everyone was familiar with that

option. It was decided that Teri would forward the survey to the committee members and also would input the questions into a discussion thread for the DE committee members only. That way, committee members would be able to make comments that others could review. In addition, committee members could "take" the survey, to better test it for clarity and glitches.

- Teri also requested that Julie add any committee members to the list of "students" in FAC 101 that were not already there, either as students or authors, and that Fariba be added as an author.

- **APRIL 28, 2009 Platform Survey**: Between meetings, Teri had created a DE Committee-only group in FAC 101, and had posted the questions in individual threads for comments, in order to facilitate the approval of the survey. Although there were a few posts to FAC 101, several committee members opted to make changes at the meeting that they had not posted. In addition, several of the comments in FAC 101 were not specific language suggestions.
  Discussion of this re-draft included the following:

  - Problems with presence of the Exam Builder questions (although those questions have been there since Fall semester, prior to Budget committee input)
  - Problems with "bias"
  - Specific purpose of the survey seemed unclear to several members.
  - Several questions were not clear; attempts were made to ascertain what specifically needed to be changed in the survey.
  - Chair requested written, specific language in FAC 101, in order to incorporate changes requested and address problems..
  - Controversy continued over inclusion of the questions about needs for institutional support that faculty might have for migration.
  - Out of time to complete the survey review, the Chair suggested a deadline of May 5th for additional input
  - a CCC Confer session was suggested for the 12:45-2:00 time slot on May 5th. Chair will schedule it and inform committee members. Some faculty members knew they could not attend, but they will be given a chance to write input in revised FAC 101 section
  - edits and restructuring for clarity were promised by the Chair, isolating the different topics as she heard them from the committee—eCollege features, other platform features, wish list, opinion section, separate exam builder section.

- Chair voiced necessity of sending out the survey as soon after May 5th as possible.
- **MAY 12, 2009 Approval of the [cover email] to the online survey:** Several editing changes were made to the starting paragraphs. The Background narrative portion, which had been drafted by Dana Del George, Wendy Parise and Julie Yarrish had not previously been presented to the Committee, but had been posted in FAC 101. This section was approved without discussion or edits. The deployment period is the same as that for the eCompanion survey. (m/s Laura Manson/Fariba Bolandhemat; passed unanimously)

  - Approval of the [online faculty survey]: The final draft of the online faculty survey instrument was based on a major re-structuring of the survey that had occurred between the prior meeting, the CCC Confer working group on May 5th, and current meeting, It had been available in FAC 101 in Word form, but was reviewed by the Committee in Survey Monkey format.

  - Requests were made regarding survey protocols: Could the survey be paused and re-entered at a later time? Could "radio buttons" be used in the matrices, which allowed only one response per line? Fariba will investigate and alter if possible.

  - After several edits, and an effective compromise on the question regarding migration support needed by faculty, the Committee approved the online faculty survey, which has three components: Platform features, Opinion section, and Exam Builder section. (m/s Wendy Parise/Erica LeBlanc); passed unanimously.

  - Fariba and Teri will make the editing changes to the survey; Teri will send out the survey to the list of DE faculty provided by Julie Yarrish

  MAY 26 Survey results: Teri Bernstein and Fariba Bolandhemat reported on the survey results for the eCollege faculty, which were inconclusive. Waleed Nasr commented on the results from the eCompanion faculty, which were also wide ranging. Mac users seemed to be in agreement that the .NExT platform had solved several problems. Committee consensus was that all results are to be made available to all Faculty and other interested parties in FAC 101. The executive summary below will be presented to the Academic Senate at its final meeting.

  Summary: Surveys of online faculty and eCompanion users regarding Platform Features

  - The survey of online faculty regarding platform features and functionality was a successful exploration. Of the 170

faculty surveyed, 108 faculty returned the survey (63.5%). It was evident from many of the extensive comments that faculty care deeply about their online courses. It was also evident that platform features and functionality impact both the workload for faculty and the effectiveness of student contact.

- The online faculty survey was a preliminary forum for faculty feedback on platform features required to deliver courses online. It represented a chance for experienced faculty to delineate: "This is what I need; this is what my students need." The survey indicated that needs and experiences with various features ranged widely from instructor to instructor and across departments. Nevertheless, the survey established that several features on the eCollege platform are absolutely necessary for delivery of our courses, and that there are additional features that are also needed.

- Similar results were obtained from the eCompanion survey, which was completed by over 200 users.

- These survey results are a starting point, and will be used for further investigations. Certain other platforms were identified in the survey as possibly comparable to eCollege and may be included in a deeper inquiry. Faculty may be asked for additional input as the platform investigation progresses over the next academic years. Complete results are available in FAC 101 to all faculty members. Members of other campus constituencies can obtain access by contacting Julie Yarrish. The survey results will continue to be discussed by the Distance Education Committee. In addition, the DE Committee hopes that the survey results can be used more immediately to communicate to eCollege areas that need improvement and augmentation to meet faculty needs under our current contract.

CMS Platform research – Process from 2003 to present

Fall 2009

- **September 8** Chair's Report: Wendy stated that Eric Oifer, President of the Academic Senate, recommended several objectives/goals that the Committee should consider pursuing: Continue the process of evaluating other platforms, Access to tutoring for online students, The continued evaluation of online faculty and class quality

- **September 22** Platform survey/evaluation: Wendy proposed that Edutools be used to assist with vetting the platform survey. Kay, Fariba, Jose, Al, Laura, Eve, Judith and Julie each agreed to consolidate the answers to one survey question and forward that information to Wendy by October 2. Julie will arrange for input from other colleges regarding their experience with other platforms and/or migration.

- **October 6** Platform research: Julie recommended that we might start by looking at the experience of comparable colleges in addition to meeting with vendors and "test driving" other platforms. This should be a careful, collaborative experience that considers, among other things, teaching, technology, enrollment, quality and budget. A small pilot program of actual classes on a prospective new platform is recommended.

- **October 20** Platform research:
  § A summary of the survey comments focusing on items essential to faculty was presented.
  § It was agreed that the next step in the process should be to employ Edutools.
  § Julie will contact Santa Barbara City College regarding their switch to Moodle. We will also conference with colleges that have switched platforms to learn about their migration experience and level of satisfaction with their new CMS.
  § Determine what a platform move will mean to the SMC system as a whole.

- **November 3**
  The following points were made during a wide-ranging discussion

  - Julie presented information on Course Management Systems used by other community colleges.
  - A summary of platform considerations was distributed by Wendy.
  - Among additional items to be considered:
  - The migration process and learning curve

- - Are there supplemental features outside of the CMS that faculty may wish to use?
  - Access to previous classes
  - Compatibility with SMC system
  - In response to Wendy's questions of where do we go from here and have we done our due diligence, Steve Druker suggested that we simplify the process by looking at the top three platforms; identify and compare the most desirable features; and make our recommendation accordingly. The consensus was that this was a workable solution.
  - Kay Azuma suggested that there be clarification of what tools are available in eCollege.
  - It was agreed that Jocelyn Chong be invited to the next meeting for her input on the impact of a platform move on Administration.
  - The issue of online faculty hosting their classes and linking in was raised by Kay. Some of the concerns with this would the rapid changes in technology; the instability of some companies; assuring accountability and security; accreditation; lack of backup, retrieval and archiving; and compliance with the Ed Code.
  - This discussion be tabled for now and we will request SMC colleagues who have experience with other platforms to attend the next meeting
- **November 17** Jocelyn suggested that the best way to proceed would be to determine the functionality/model required then determine what will be needed and the cost. She regards eCollege, Blackboard and open source to be the CMS major players. She also stated that among the issues to consider when moving to another platform are:
  - The model we choose:
    - Total outsourcing, i.e. eCollege
    - Purchase and maintain software, pick options, i.e. Blackboard
    - Pick options and level of support, i.e. open source … Moodle
  - Depending on model chosen, how much time and effort to transfer content
  - The speed and frequency of changes in technology
  - The functionality that most fits our needs
  - Stability of a platform , i.e. could it be vulnerable to being "gobbled up"
  - Ability to integrate with ISIS
  - How much of an impact the change would make system-wide
  - The lead time required to upgrade band width

- o The ability to support the services offered and the number and cost of staff required
- o The initial cost and potential cost of ongoing overhead
- o The cost in dollars, time and effort of customizing "out of the box" software"
- o How much customization would we want to do; who would decide on how to customize to fit the needs of each user and would customization compromise other SMC systems
- o The necessity and cost to District of running on two platforms for approximately one year
- Jocelyn summarized by saying that this is a very complex process. Each model has pros and cons, and that the model/options chosen would determine the extent to which the various areas and constituencies of the college would be impacted.
- During a conference call Josh related his experiences with and opinion of eCollege, Etudes, and Moodle and displayed views of his Etudes and Moodle classes.
    - o eCollege: Best support for students and faculty; superior grading, announcements, and discussion boards;
    - o Etudes: Limited faculty/student support and email function; no threads; manual duping takes approx 2 to 3 hours; limited student tracking information;
    - o Moodle: Inferior email function; limited tech support hours; can't extend test times; 5 mb limit on uploading; publisher content difficult; student activity tracking not as detailed; good grading;
    - o Video streaming for Etudes and Moodle is hosted on another server
    - o Ranks these three platforms (1) eCollege, (2) Moodle, (3) Etudes

Appendix B

Synthesized 2009 survey results

SMC Distance Education Committee Course Management System Search Project, January 2010

Wendy Parise, DE Committee Chair and Julie Yarrish, Associate Dean of Online Services & Support

The survey of online faculty regarding platform features and functionality was a successful exploration. Of the 170 faculty surveyed, 108 faculty returned the survey (63.5%). It was evident from many of the extensive comments that faculty care deeply about their online courses. It was also evident that platform features and functionality impact both the workload for faculty and the effectiveness of student contact.

The following is a list of "**essential to me**" items as well as the number of responses (out of 108). Note that in order to qualify for this list, 50% or above of the faculty responded "**essential to me.**"

1. **Which of the following built in platform features do you use while teaching classes on the eCollege platform?**

	Essential to me	Useful but not essential to me	Not useful to me	I have never used this	N/A	Response Count
Built-in syllabus	**45.3% (48)**	31.1% (33)	10.4% (11)	13.2% (14)	0.0% (0)	106
Announcements	**85.2% (92)**	12.0% (13)	2.8% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	108
Course Introduction on the class homepage can be changed	**62.6% (67)**	31.8% (34)	3.7% (4)	1.9% (2)	0.0% (0)	107
Built-in gradebook	**89.8% (97)**	10.2% (11)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	108
Threaded Discussions for responding to instructor questions	**86.9% (93)**	8.4% (9)	2.8% (3)	0.9% (1)	0.9% (1)	107
Threaded Discussion for questions from students	**78.7% (85)**	15.7% (17)	2.8% (3)	1.9% (2)	0.9% (1)	108

SMC Distance Education Committee Course Management System Search Project, January 2010

Wendy Parise, DE Committee Chair and Julie Yarrish, Associate Dean of Online Services & Support

	Essential to me	Useful but not essential to me	Not useful to me	I have never used this	N/A	Response Count
Gradebook sorts Threaded Discussion participation by student name	**59.6% (62)**	25.0% (26)	6.7% (7)	7.7% (8)	1.0% (1)	104
Automatic scoring of T/F and multiple choice exam questions	**75.9% (82)**	11.1% (12)	2.8% (3)	5.6% (6)	4.6% (5)	108
Immediate feedback to students regarding exam grades	**66.4% (71)**	24.3% (26)	4.7% (5)	1.9% (2)	2.8% (3)	107
Timed quizzes and exams	**80.4% (86)**	11.2% (12)	2.8% (3)	3.7% (4)	1.9% (2)	107
Exam question pooling	**60.4% (64)**	13.2% (14)	6.6% (7)	16.0% (17)	3.8% (4)	106
Built-in Email	**91.7% (99)**	6.5% (7)	1.9% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	108
Doc Sharing	**65.4% (70)**	20.6% (22)	5.6% (6)	8.4% (9)	0.0% (0)	107
Dropbox	**75.7% (78)**	14.6% (15)	4.9% (5)	3.9% (4)	1.0% (1)	103
Gradebook connection to	**69.2%**	14.0%	8.4% (9)	7.5% (8)	0.9% (1)	107

	Essential to me	Useful but not essential to me	Not useful to me	I have never used this	N/A	Response Count
Dropbox	**(74)**	(15)				
Bold, color, fonts in visual editors	**60.4% (64)**	28.3% (30)	6.6% (7)	2.8% (3)	1.9% (2)	106
Microsoft office based authoring tools	**69.8% (74)**	18.9% (20)	3.8% (4)	5.7% (6)	1.9% (2)	106
Video/audio downloads	**54.2% (58)**	29.9% (32)	4.7% (5)	11.2% (12)	0.0% (0)	107
Course archiving over several years	**72.6% (77)**	17.0% (18)	5.7% (6)	4.7% (5)	0.0% (0)	106
User activity (for student tracking)	**71.7% (76)**	22.6% (24)	1.9% (2)	3.8% (4)	0.0% (0)	106
Help tab	**62.5% (65)**	21.2% (22)	9.6% (10)	6.7% (7)	0.0% (0)	104
Instructor use of helpdesk by phone	**64.8% (68)**	17.1% (18)	2.9% (3)	13.3% (14)	1.9% (2)	105
Instructor use of helpdesk by email	**61.7% (66)**	24.3% (26)	3.7% (4)	10.3% (11)	0.0% (0)	107

Student access to helpdesk	**84.0% (89)**	11.3% (12)	0.9% (1)	3.8% (4)	0.0% (0)	106

2. **Would you as an individual instructor use the following features if they were available to you in eCollege? (these features are available on other platforms)**

Rights to copy course content from one course shell to another.	**85.0% (91)**	11.2% (12)	2.8% (3)	0.9% (1)	107
Option to see if a thread has been read.	**63.9% (69)**	26.9% (29)	5.6% (6)	3.7% (4)	108

3. **Would you as an individual instructor use the following features if they were available in eCollege?**

Uninterrupted uploading and downloading of video clips.	**53.3% (57)**	29.0% (31)	9.3% (10)	8.4% (9)	107
Option to embed an image in threaded discussion without attaching.	**51.4% (55)**	30.8% (33)	15.0% (16)	2.8% (3)	107
Display eCollege HelpDesk phone numbers and email links on the homepage to find them easily.	**76.9% (83)**	19.4% (21)	1.9% (2)	1.9% (2)	108
Option to copy exams from one course shell to another.	**73.8% (79)**	19.6% (21)	5.6% (6)	0.9% (1)	107

16. How important it is to have the ability to format the essay answer boxes, to provide templates within the exam so that students can use to answer accounting (or math) questions in an orderly manner?
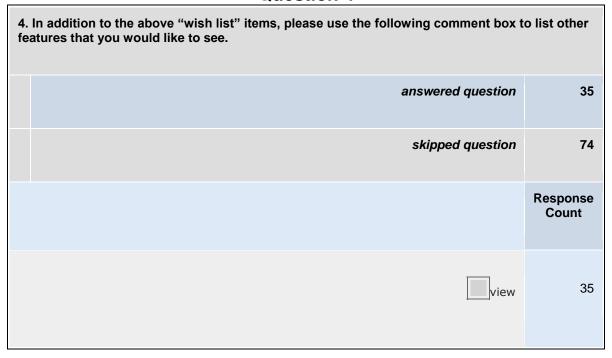
Not important		29.7%	30

17. How important it is to have the ability to copy the exams (with pooling), from one course shell to another or between courses?

Wendy Parise, DE Committee Chair and Julie Yarrish, Associate Dean of Online Services & Support

Extremely		**71.6%**	**73**

18. How important it is to have the option to start exams at a certain time on one day, allow to remain continuously open, and close them at a different time on another day?

Extremely important		**51.0%**	**52**

19. How important it is to have exam security feature that would be like Exam Guard that would work equally well with PCs and Macs?

Extremely important		**50.5%**	**51**

20. How important it is to have the question order scrambled within a pool so that students receive exam with the same questions, different order?

Extremely important		**52.9%**	**54**

21. How important it is to have the option to have the answers to individual questions appear in a different order on each exam?

Extremely important		**43.0%**	**43**

22. How important is it to have the ability to view all the test bank questions, not by exam, in the case that you are creating a comprehensive exam?

Extremely important		**48.5%**	**49**

SMC Distance Education Committee Course Management System Search Project, January 2010

Wendy Parise, DE Committee Chair and Julie Yarrish, Associate Dean of Online Services & Support

Spring 2009 Platform Exploration Survey – Platform Features – Question 4

4. In addition to the above "wish list" items, please use the following comment box to list other features that you would like to see.

answered question	**35**
skipped question	**74**

	Response Count
☐view	35

SMC Distance Education Committee Course Management System Search Project, January 2010

Wendy Parise, DE Committee Chair and Julie Yarrish, Associate Dean of Online Services & Support

Comment Text

1. A gradebook that is able to interact better with publisher homework managers. I also seem to have difficulty with gradebook in internet explorer from remote locations. Easier loading of publisher content and exam solutions for grading purposes.

2. For students' doc sharing documents: automatically assign last-name-first when downloading, as in dropbox; also, automatically assign last-name-first when downloading from individual student dropboxes.

3. Just a friendly FYI: There have been several notices for surveys of this type lately. This survey is longer and has different content than earlier ones. Also, this is the first time the purpose of the survey (i.e., to explore the possibilities of changing platforms) was clearly stated up front. I just wanted to mention that the fact that this information was not clearly stated in previous versions of the survey (and the fact that there were multiple versions of the same survey) can undermine the validity of your results.

4. I would like the response areas in essay questions to contain tables for students to use to enter accounting data (journal entries, financial statements, etc.).

5. Ability to insert tables / columns in the response boxes of a test content item - a must have item for all accounting class.

6. The wish list items that I checked above, while not critical to running my classes, would be a nice enhancement if they are ever made available. In the meantime, I can manage aptly as is.

7. Uploading test bank of any form good customer service oriented staff that is willing to help faculty and students at all time

8. Option to have the ability to select point value of test questions and have all questions changed to that point value, instead of having to manually go into all the questions of the pools and change each questions point value. For example, if there are 50 questions and you want them all to be worth 4 points so that the total points for the exam can be 200 possible points, that it can done for all questions in one menu change.

9. To have the Email WITHIN the course would be great. Emails from my students go to my SMC email which has so many other non-student emails and it means I have to open another window. I ask students to use Q & A, but about 1/2 forget now and then. Someone at Ecollege said that this feature is on the horizon, hope so.

10. Seeing of the students are reading the threads, are a must at this point. I like anything that would help get the students more involved with the treaded discussions. Spooling / uploading the tests, must be changed....too much time to load 1,700 questions. Students will not upload pictures under class introduction, and feel that anything that gets more connection to the course shell, will help in the community involvement. A simple DELIVERABLES page....printable for students, which will eliminate excuses. Thank you for letting me give my input...I love eCollege, and also teach on BB, and would pick eCollege over BB. Drew

11. None. ECollege works well for me.

12. Students should NOT have access to all the other students email addresses!!! This makes cheating very easy!!!

13. Polls & Surveys. I am struggling to figure out how to include polls - or surveys, such as this one into my ECE 64 course. This course is about Health & Safety. Using Polls and Survey's are another way to enhance student learning about the topics. Unfortunately, I have not seen or been able to adapt the quiz to create a poll/survey.

14. Instructors must have more control of fixing the problems for their interface as well as student interface if needed. Help desk is slow and students expect instructors to help them. Thanks.

15. The current system seems very problematic. I often have to refresh when the screen gets stuck. Strange things happen, like the time for allowing students to view their quizzes keeps getting reset to 11:00 PM even with I set it for a different time. I did not want to allow students to retake quizzes, but reset the settings since so many students were having troubles. There problems seem to have gotten worse this quarter (I use Windows XP -- but have it completely updated) The system was not compatible with Cengage testbanks in the past - I was able to get around this by using Respondus (which was compatible with both eCollege and Cengage). For this reason I have not changed my question pools. the ability to upload publisher's testbanks with the graphics showing is essential to my online classes. I use Blackboard elsewhere, and it is clearly superior to eCollege. I am considering switching to a different text, just so I could use their software platform instead of eCollege (it would be Pearson, which offers a version of Blackboard they call "Course Compass" - but I'm unsure how well this would work, and the switch would be time consuming. The main issue is that the system works - especially test banks and online tests and quizzes.

16. I would like the discussion format to be more like ETUDES. Also, in this version of eCollege, text pasted from Word into a discussion box often comes out smushed together with some html added (unless one uses the clipboard). How about built-in access to TurnItIn.com?? Or any access??

17. I would love to be able to communicate with my class via my iPhone without revealing my cell phone number. i.e. being able to "text" the students, so their cell numbers would have to be available to me but perhaps not visible to the entire class. This feature could add more interactive assignments to the class - I'd love it!

18. The gradebook has been changed in manner that requires the instructor to maximize it to see the grade. I like the previous set up, where I could see the grade from the default, smaller window.

19. I heavily rely on linking to my files from the File Manager. I would like the option of having one File Manger for all my courses rather than separate File Mangers for each course.

20. Two things: 1. Adding a grade function in the threaded discussions 2. Adding Photos/Avatars in the threads

21. Please revise what we have with cCollege but PLEASE don't change to some other company. The .NeXT transition has not been easy and still going through transition. Makes preps very time consuming and redundant from past efforts. Many new bugs still being discovered within .NeXT. Thank you!

22. 1. I wish that after an exam is graded, that the student could see which ones they got wrong without giving them the answers to every question. I want them to look up the answers themselves, but if I block the answers, it also blocks which ones they got wrong. 2. I wish that I could edit (like change font size) their submitted work, like in a Journal or Discussion Threat post. Sometimes they post too large or too small, and I want to make it easier to read.

23. Ability for students to upload video (5 minutes) to either their dropbox or to doc sharing

24. I find creating a test in eCompanion arduous. If I could find another way, I'd do it.

25. Spell check needs to be adjusted so that the display showing the various options do not cover-up the word that needs correcting or editing.

26. Paste and copy from a Word document does not always support the original text format. This feature used to be a lot more user-friendly in the previous version of eCollege. It would be nice to make this feature more stable.

27. The option of an Exam Guard feature that actually works ALL the time on ALL operating systems would be very nice to have. As is at this stage Exam Guard is useless.

28. My wish list is about the current NeXT platform. It is really buggy and doesn't function as easily as the last platform.

29. automatic features that would allow site to be accessible to differently abled students. e.g., scripts of videos, automatic alt tags, etc.

30. 1. Better timing for copying classes for new semesters. Taking a class to copy too early and it is not complete. It cannot take as long to copy a class as it does the instructor to build it out 2 times. 2. Stop crashing my IE. 3. to be able to TAB from box to box in exams. 4. To see the question number inside the Add Question page in exams. 5. Easier method to create exams. Such as: Accept the exams created by course technology Exam View as does Blackboard. 6. One page, like it used to be, to change the name of content items, not 3 clicks in to get to one item name change. 7. The ability to set a font style for all pages and exams. I am tired of having to select all and set the size of the text to a size I can read for each of 40 questions, and 160 answers in multiple choice questions boxes.

31. A more useful maintenance panel for modifying unit content. Right now there are too many clicks and panels to interface with.

32. option to see page exactly as student does.

33. all the thread and adaptive learning features in Moodle. Stable platform. "What's New" should include all of the platform programming changes, error corrections, system outages, and we known bugs since the last log-in. Algorithmic test bank capability. Better testbank uploading from publisher, so that questions stay in learning objective-referenced (SLO) order.

34. Option to drop lowest grade automatically Option to retain announcements when shell is copied Consistent fonts Option to use any Microsoft Word font or symbol

35. Ability to see if students have accessed comment box in grade book

?Short? Summary:

- Note three specific alternative platforms were mentioned in comments: Blackboard (#10, #15, #30) and Moodle (#33) and ETUDES (#1)
- **Exam**:
    - Test content item and Essay: ability to insert tables / columns that students can enter data in.
    - Ability to more easily select point value for test questions
    - Ability for students to see which questions they go wrong after taking an exam, without giving them the answers to every question.
    - Functional Exam Guard.
    - Being able to TAB from box to box in exams.
    - To see the question number inside the Add Question page in exams.
    - Ability to set a font style for all pages and exams
- **Testbanks and Exams/Quizzes**
    - Arduous to spool and upload tests.
    - Easier method to create exams. Such as: Accept the exams created by course technology Exam View as does Blackboard
    - Algorithmic test bank capability.
    - Better testbank uploading from publisher, so that questions stay in learning objective-referenced (SLO) order
    - The system was not compatible with Cengage testbanks (in the past) but is with Respondus.
    - Ability to upload publishers testbanks with the graphics
    - Staff assistance uploading test bank of any form
- **Threads/Discussions**:
    - Discussion format to be more like ETUDES

Wendy Parise, DE Committee Chair and Julie Yarrish, Associate Dean of Online Services & Support

- o built-in access to TurnItIn.com
- o Adding a **grade function** in the threaded discussions
- o Adding **Photos/Avatars** in the threads
- o **Spell check** needs to be adjusted so that the display showing the various options do not cover-up the word that needs correcting or editing.
- o Copying and pasting from Word loses original text format. I believe that this has been fixed.

- **Gradebook**:
  - o to interact better with publisher homework managers; easier loading of publisher content and exam solutions
  - o ?difficulty with gradebook in internet explorer from remote locations? I'm a PC/ Window's user and have been able to use IE for the gradebook.
  - o has been changed in manner that requires the instructor to maximize it to see the grade. I like the previous set up, where I could see the grade from the default, smaller window
  - o Option to drop lowest grade
  - o Ability to see if students have accessed comment box in grade book
- **Course Items**:
  - o One page, one click **to change the name of content items** (like it was formerly).
  - o A more useful maintenance panel for modifying unit content. Right now there are too many clicks and panels to interface with
- **Font Type and Size**:
  - o Ability to set a font style for all pages and exams
  - o Consistent fonts Option to use any Microsoft Word font or symbol
- **Duping classes**:
  - o Better timing – taking a class too early and it is not complete.
  - o Option to retain announcements when shell is copied
- **Email:**
  - o To have the Email WITHIN the course.
  - o Students should NOT have access to all the other students email addresses!!! This makes cheating very easy!!!: I believe this is addressed with using the Course Admin => Enable/disable tools function.
- **Journal**: Ability to edit (like change font size) of work submitted to Journal or Discussion Thread post. Sometimes they post too large or too small, and I want to make it easier to read. An instructor is able to edit a student's thread response.
- **Accessibility**: automatic features that would allow site to be accessible to differently abled students. e.g., scripts of videos, automatic alt tags, etc
- **Instructor downloading documents** from dropbox and Doc Sharing **by student's last name**.
- Ability to **create polls and surveys**.
- **Browser issues:** "Stop crashing my IE"
- **File Manager**: Option of having one File Manger for all my courses rather than separate File Mangers for each course.
- **More control by instructors** to fix problems for their interface as well as student interface, if needed because the SMC Helpdesk can be slow.
- **"What's New"** should include all of the platform programming changes, error corrections, system outages, and known bugs since the last log-in
- Student uploading of video (5 min): to either their dropbox or to doc sharing
- Option to see page exactly as student does.
- ?A simple DELIVERABLES page....printable for students? (#10)

Spring 2009 Platform Exploration Survey – Opinion Section – Question 5

5. What features do you like about the .NExT platform?	
answered question	**67**
skipped question	**42**
	Response Count
view	67

	Comment Text
1.	formatting text in emails and treaded discussions
2.	I honestly have not seen significant differences with the platform change.
3.	Multiple communication options, "depth" of layers (journal, threads, chat, etc.).
4.	In general, I am happy about the enhancements: Ability to download dropbox items "en masse" rather than individually, and they're automatically assigned the students' names. Linked dropbox to gradebook. I like that it replaced drop-down menus with all links visible on the page. Usage is pretty intuitive, at least from my point of view. I like the way announcements are displayed and used. I prefer the new syllabus link/style.
5.	Pretty much all of them! One of my favorites is the exam stats function. VERY useful!
6.	I like that I can see if I have read a threaded discussion response or not.
7.	It is more flexible and user friendly than the old version
8.	Um, do you have any suggestions?
9.	- downloading dropbox attachments as a zip file - Visual editor in announcements, email, and threads
10.	Better email functions. Much improved layout and design. Great visual editor!
11.	ability to move entire unit
12.	HTML options and the layout
13.	showing me exactly where the new postings are located
14.	I like that NEXT is Mac friendly. FINALLY! I like that I can move my units around. I like the new options within the email tool. I find it more forgiving in course building and updating.
15.	the look
16.	It tends to work 95% of the time: few bugs. The TDs are easier to grade now -- many kudos.

17. Since this is my first online class, I don't have anything to compare it to, but my previous suggestion would be a good edition that I would very much like.

18. I like to grade from within the thread, although the font is so small and there is no way to make it bigger that I know

19. See my previous comments. The syllabus upload is really easy vs BB.... I like the gradebook vs BB. Easy to print out final grades.

20. Easy to use.

21. Ability to move an entire unit

22. Everything

23. The new design and layout is nicer than the older dated version. New visual editor provides for more design options There is MUCH more flexibility with the course building and updating process in the new version

24. Visual editor, dropbox showing up in the What's New, the ability to grade from the what's new tab, seeing all the thread links within the gradebook for each student.

25. Very user friendly

26. Gradebook, Threaded Discussions, Chat, Dropbox, Doc Sharing.

27. I truthfully have not noticed any improvements from the old system - in fact is seems worse.

28. Nice to be able to use platform with Firefox! There are more options for discussion though I notice that the students don't use them and I've stopped too. I like the set up a lot, as I did with the original. The editor is better and it's easier to post audio/textual lectures.

29. Mostly that it is Mac compatible, before .NExT my "work around" time for developing class content was at least triple.

30. It is about the same to me as the previous platform.

31. It's easy to use and I like the visual editors, especially in the exam items.

32. *Not having a drop down menu to get to each Discussion *Spell check for Journal, Comment Boxes, Announcements, as well as for Discussions *Option to use italics, bold, underlining, regulate fonts *Bigger comment boxes in gradebook, easier to make long comments in *Greatly improved scheduler in the Toolbox

33. It has a more professional look. The ease of using the dropbox, moving student files to the correct dropbox when necessary and grading. There are times (but not always) that files upload faster.

34. 1) Ability to reorder items within individual Units. 2) Ability to use Bold, Italics, etc. in Discussion Threads

35. I like that you can see the number of times a student has responded to the threads up at the start of the threads. I like that the threads are earlier to read now.

36. I liked all the new features.

37. The discussion boards are excellent except for the aspects mentioned below. Grading system is excellent. Webliography is excellent. Overall this platform is easy to use.

38. ability to link to many parts of course etc. Bold/color/attachments within email and other course-generated documents.

39. ability to load up web pages built outside in another platform--I used iweb and loaded the pages into the course shell and it worked very well--although sometimes it took a couple of tries.

40. I like the editing features so that students can use bold, font size, etc.

41. Ability to see new items submitted to the dropbox, the visual editor, the scheduler

42. Familiarity. Having used eCollege for years, its quirks are now well known. Uploading capabilities have improved.

43. the word options are nice when typing.

44. I LOVE that the visual editor works with Microsoft Vista. The allows me to make my classes so much more visually appealing, which makes a real difference for students.

45. The dropbox is excellent now. I like the fact that I can view the entire content of each dropbox folder - and I can grade on that page.

46. I like being able to use BOLD, UNDERLINING, etc. in the threaded discussions.

47. Expanded Microsoft features.

48. the journal separate from dropbox

49. Sorry, this summer will be my first summer using it so I have not spent too much time with yet.

50. Good examples of all the new enhancements.

51. The Gradebook and Dropboxes.

52. ability to disable and enable Email. It would be nice to enable Email only for instructor though.

53. Grading changes and visual editor everywhere.

54. Easy usage. Gradebook . E-mail to individual students or total class. Upload of class syllabus.

55. Not many.

56. journal webliography gradebook phone access for help navigation bar set up on left discussion thread group management is great love the email easy access to students

57. It's easy to use and it's visually appealing. This platform surpasses any other I have used at other schools (such as Black Board). It's intuitive and makes sense to instructors and students.

58. Nothing came in that is much better than before. I have more problems with IE now, and it has been slow.

59. relatively easy to use

60. It's better than the previous version

61. the visual editor for Macintosh computers downloading all Dropbox submissions at once as a zip file the ability to change unit order

62. It' much more attractive.

63. fast file uploads

64. I can author on my MAC

65. Ability to download dropbox items. Visual Editor.

66. I think the platform we use now is fine. I don't want to change. You say it costs the college 800,000 to a million dollars. How much money is the current platform bringing into the college? Why change if it pays for itself? The college could certainly cut money somewhere else.

67. -look of the shell -multiple threaded discussion questions are links (rather than the old drop down box) -faster upload of dropbox attachments

Wendy Parise, DE Committee Chair and Julie Yarrish, Associate Dean of Online Services & Support

Summary: The question, asking for what people like about .NExT, elicited mostly positive responses. In general, they fit into six categories.

Aesthetics

Of the six people who commented on the general appearance of the .NExT platform, all liked the changes calling the new platform "more professional," "nicer," and "more attractive."

Greater versatility and clarity

By far the greatest number of responses fit into this category. 30 of the responders named specific features that they value highly in the new platform. The most popular are: the expanded availability of the visual editor (in emails, threaded discussions, journals, exams), the ability to grade directly from the "What's New?" area and from the drop box, live chat with the help desk , expanded MSWord features, the separation of the journal from the drop box, the ability to download the drop box *en masse* and have the individual items marked with the student's name, having all discussion threads visible (a switch from the previous drop down menu), the ability to upload whole web pages directly into the course, the ability to move whole units, and the option to disable the email feature . One person noted that it would be nice to be able to enable email for instructor only.

Also mentioned is the way the Announcements and Syllabus are displayed, and the presence of the visual editor virtually everywhere, enhancing design options, and the availability of the visual editor for students.

People also praised "new" features that were present in the legacy edition: group management, the left navigation field, the webliography, phone access to the help desk, the drop box link to the grade book, the HTML option, What's new, the ability to upload a syllabus, to reorder content items in a unit, to download items from the drop box, the ability to see which discussion comments you have read, being able to link to various parts of the course, and the drop box being linked to What's New?

Grading

Twelve people specifically listed the grade book as a nice feature, one calling it "excellent." but only five elaborated on what they like. One person likes the larger comment box in the grade book, another likes being able grade through the What's New? feature, one appreciates the ability to retrieve the exam stats, two find grading the threaded discussions easier, though one of them commented that when going in "through the thread" (the What's New feature?), the font is very small and there is no ability to enlarge it. One person preferred this grade book to Blackboard's. One person likes the ease of being able to print out final grades.

Ease of use

20 respondents commented on the ease of use in the .NExT platform. Specific items mentioned are: the course scheduler, the visual editor, downloading from the drop box, moving items from one drop box to another, and grading from the discussions. Also mentioned is that uploading is better or faster, and .NExT is MAC friendly, Firefox

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friendly, and Vista friendly. One person also mentioned that it is "more forgiving in course building and updating" and another that there is "greater flexibility in building and updating." One person commented on its greater dependability ("fewer bugs"). Another noted that "it's easier to post audio/textual lectures.

Evaluation of Differences

Some people offered overall comments on the new platform. Three people said there was no difference between the legacy and .Next versions. Others said they like "everything" about the new platform, see it as "more attractive" and "better than the previous version," or were "very happy with the enhancements" and praised the "improved layout and design." One person evaluated .NExT overall as "user friendly." Two people said it is worse, one mentioning problems with IE and general slowness.

Miscellaneous

Two comments refer to responses made "above" or "below" in other questions, the content of which is unclear from the context.

Two comments compare .NExT favorably to Blackboard, specifically in the ease of uploading the syllabus and using the grade book. Additionally, one comment says .NExT "surpasses any other I have used at other schools (such as Blackboard). It's intuitive and makes sense to instructors and students."

One comment addresses the issue of changing platforms, voting no.

Spring 2009 Platform Exploration Survey – Opinion Section Question 6

6. What features do you dislike about the .NExT platform?

answered question	63
skipped question	46

	Response Count
view	63

Visual editor	Visual Editor summary (7/63)
the visual editor and the html editor have had a lot of glitches adding and subtracting - Visual editor in quiz, drop box, and threaded discussion areas. What you type does not necessary displays as is. Also, in threads, if you use some programming syntax, the editor deletes it. visual editor is bad The alignment default issue in the visual editor In its current form, the Visual Editor of the threads is less useful and can make the threads harder to read and harder for the students to review and study from. If the instructor can select which specific tools the students could use, then it could be more useful. Students being able to post their comments in various colors is generally not helpful In its current form, there is a glitch in the threads that when you copy and paste, certain spaces will not be copied accurately, and hence there are numerous thread responses, where there is a space missing between words. I suspect this is a Visual Editor issue. MS Word problems Visual editor problems Material is not wysiwyg students have visual editor ghost pages visual editor having problems	Glitches

Exam	**Exam summary (15/63)**
I wish I could use my publisher's test bank in the exam program! Would like to "dupe" my exams/exam questions from one semester to the next. I preferred seeing the first line of students' comments in threaded discussions rather than simply the title of the post.	Dupe privileges
The editor in the test bank can be a bit 'clunky'	Editing clumsy
I definitely do not like how the comments area of the exam is so large, requiring me to scroll up and down while grading.	Fix time submitted
Exams, cannot see the complete list of all the questions from all the quizzes or exams in the same course.	Glitches
Lack of formatting features in the response boxes for test content item - continuation of a poor feature from the prior version	Uploading tests
Inconsistent recording in the "Time submitted" field of a test item between the case when a student is timed out versus the case when a student lost connection - makes it impossible for instructor to understand the actual start/end time of the student activity.	
unable to upload test banks	
There are too many buttons to push when (for instance) typing in quiz questions....it is often slow (or is this my high-speed internet connection?)	
Not being able to change all exam questions in the pool to a different point value for all questions at one time, instead of each one manually.	
I spent one day uploading 2000 test questions......not fun. Why not take the easy route and upload 50 and call it a day? I know students pass on the tests...and with 2000 random questions, they start to study after the first exam....higher learning forced.	
Occasional lost exam-student receives problem message, exam disappears, and student is locked out. Have occasional problem with bringing up exam.	
Inability to copy an exam or quiz from one semester to the next.	
When you grade the exam now, they made the area for comment too bad and the area to view student answers to be too small.	
Students encounter too many technical difficulties when taking tests.	
Testing is cumbersome- test bank should be radio button click in a preview pane, pooling questions should be easier, making exams takes too long. Text/Multimedia page should have templates available- streaming video is important- I would like to stream accessible video within an exam or discussion area and have questions underneath (***Comment – needs training on the tools*** -	

Drop box	**Drop box (4/63)**
Drop box attachments during download does not include all the attached files in drop boxes only the latest ones. So, if a student submits multiple files in different times, then the last one is included in download attachments.	
Letter grade and numerical grade in Drop box does not respond when cursor is inserted to make a change: if "abc" was in letter grade area, and cursor is inserted after the, and back button is used, screen changes to previous student!	
Drop box downloads all documents only if they're submitted at the same time	
There appears to be a number of problems with the Drop box window for grading purposes. For example, I cannot block a text and color code it in the window	

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Uploading files unable to download large files	**Uploading files (1/63)** Large files
Helpdesk The helpdesk is not always that prompt for students...	**Helpdesk (1/63)**
Threaded discussion in general the fonts for the threads are too small to read I wish the discussion board were more like ETUDES, which is easier to see. The relative lack of hierarchy in ETUDES is fine. I've gotten used to it and it really isn't that bad. The opportunity to quote the post one is responding to is very helpful; I also like the avatar possibility. I do not like the absence of a double space choice for postings. Nor do I like the absence of the indent tab. It makes it very difficult to instruct students on how to post especially long quotes within their entries discussions require subject line; discussions allow for different types of font; grading discussions and journal entries are much slower than the previous version; the .NExT platform is a step down from the previous eCollege version threaded discussions "jump" when clicking open individual comments	**Threaded discussion (5/63)** Easier to read Don't like subject line requirement
Duping The down time to transfer content from one term to another term is too long. I found many mistakes in the transfer of content from on term to another	**Duping (1/63)**
Grade book The grade book has been changed in manner that requires the instructor to maximize it to see the grade. I like the previous set up, where I could see the grade from the default, smaller window. I do not like the absence of a double space choice for postings. Nor do I like the absence of the indent tab. It makes it very difficult to instruct students on how to post especially long quotes within their entries It seems slower and I am having more problems with the grade book not displaying grades or freezing. When completing grading one item in a unit after hitting save and close the grade book returns to the overall grade page instead of staying within the unit being graded so I have to go back into the unit to continue grading. Grade book does not compute percentage of extra credit based on total grade for class. The grade book is rather tedious to set up, with boxes to check and then points to enter, all from different tabs. grade book is cumbersome- should be able to assign points to an item without it showing up on grade to date- hate the grade to date function Grade book feature that tells students how they are doing. Would like the option to delete the %. Students think they can get an A if they don't take the final, because the grade book tells them they are doing 90%. My course grade is based solely on the number of	**Grade book (8/63)** Don't like the grade to date function

points they earn. Difficult to change grades in grade book pop-up windows. Times out without warning; work or grades can often be lost.	
Spell checker *Spell checker often blocks target words; isn't easy to work with *When I rename a content item, the change is made in ALL the content items of that name instead of just the one I want to change. Terrible spell check. Fonts not consistent, especially in exams	**Spell checker (2/63)**
Browser There are more problems with the use of IE vs. Firefox browsers. ***With the legacy platforms, I was able to author without a problem with IE. With the .NExT platform, I must author with the Firefox browser. I have reported this problem to the helpdesk in January. ***If students use the Firefox browser when posting threads, if they are copying and pasting their responses, they will introduce garbled HTML language. *More MAC user students are complaining about more problems. With the legacy platforms, most student problems were alleviated with using IE as a browser instead of Safari.	**Browser (1/63)**
Email The E-Mail feature has added at least one extra click. It is more time-consuming to mail large batches of attachment	**Email (1/63)**
Uploading Timing out on uploads. I am supposed to have 90 minutes, but I get a "Page Not Found" showing up in less than 2 minutes, and my files NEVER get uploaded. I have to utilize CIS Webs server for my files. I want streaming video SO badly, but I cannot upload the videos. Grading is extremely slow. I can sit for 20 seconds or more per student grading window. That is fast. EVERYTHING needs to be faster. I am on a very fast cable connection and my wait times while building my shells is just stupid. (Yes, I am angry about this)	**Uploading (1/63)**
Printing Grade book feature that tells students how they are doing. Would like the option to delete the %. Students think they can get an A if they don't take the final, because the grade book tells them they are doing 90%. My course grade is based solely on the number of points they earn.	**Printing (1/63)**
Docsharing would like a "delete all" in docsharing	**Docsharing (1/63)**
General too many glitches It is taking a while to get oriented to the new tools and learn all the new options available I have had more error messages, more problems with copy and paste, and more problems with the grade book than in the other platform.	**General** **Glitches**

It is extremely cumbersome and inflexible to use. I do not think that it is very good. *I prefer the flexibility of the legacy platform, no longer available on the .NExT platform, allowing me to link to my files from a File Manager from a specific course shell, and not necessarily the File Manager of the same course shell Bugs that seem to appear as time goes on. Most recently, my students were unable to submit exams. At times the problem occurs with Discussion Threads. The functionality seems just fine, but the basic "look" of the platform is kind of clunky It still appears to be difficult to make changes in the Course unit areas without going through several steps to make even minor changes. It shuts down more than the previous platform. It causes many error messages and in many cases discards changes made. no avatars no smileys no way to get it beautiful on the home page I do not like random changes to the software, creating unpredictability. Tables do not work. There are random spaces inserted into text boxes upon save. CTRL-C and CTRL-V commands do not work (right click paste must be used). Copy and paste from Microsoft office products do not work. Thread subject lines are no longer editable. It kicks me out whenever I refresh if I have been logged on for a while. Many error messages that can be worked around using back button, but recent work is lost	
No complaints Nothing really Too soon to tell. No complaints Too early to tell if I dislike the features because they are new to me or they are actually problematic. I am still learning and trying to master the new options so I am unsure about identifying a feature that I actually "dislike" vs. just not knowing how to use them adequately Nothing Off hand, I cannot think about anything I dislike. n/a none So far, so good, the last platform was so bad this is like heaven. Sorry, this summer will be my first summer using it so I have not spent too much time with yet	

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Suggestions PowerPoint with sound would be nice. Using other software to do voiceover is a real challenge.	

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Spring 2009 Platform Exploration Survey – Opinion Section – Question 7

7. Have you ever taught on another platform? (Check all that apply)		Response Percent	Response Count
	answered question		42
	skipped question		67
Blackboard		**71.4%**	**30**
Etudes-ng		45.2%	19
Moodle		19.0%	8
Angel		2.4%	1
WebCT		45.2%	19
Desire2Learn		2.4%	1
	viewOther (please specify)		16

Comment Text
1. n/a
2. Proprietary CMS at another institution
3. I took an online course on how to teach online courses using Blackboard; I have seen Desire2Learn and looks a great tools for online courses
4. No
5. The original server on CSUN when SMC first came online.
6. The UCLA proprietary system which works well, but I've never used it for quizzes, just posting information and links, and discussion boards and grade book.
7. I haven't taught on Blackboard but I have taken two courses that used that platform. I don't like it as well as eCollege.
8. I have had experience using WebCT but not teaching a class from it.
9. no
10. none--only on eCollege
11. WordPress
12. I used this platform briefly 5 years ago.
13. N/A
14. Manhattan
15. just the eCollage platforms.
16. publisher CMS: McGraw Hill, Cengage, Wiley

Summary of Question 7: Have you ever taught on another platform?

Survey Opinion Section
- 42 out of 109 (**39%**) online faculty **responded to this question**

- Platform responses:
    1. **Blackboard (71%)**
    2. **Etudes-ng (45%)**
    3. **WebCT (45%)**
    4. **Moodle (19%)**
    5. **Angel (2%)**
    6. **Desire2Learn(2%)**

Comment Text Section
- 16 out of 109 (**14%**) online faculty **responded in the Comment Text section**

- 6 out 109 (**6%**) of responders **stated they had taught on another platform**

- 6 out of 109 (**6%**) of responders **stated they had not taught on another platform**

- 4 out of 109 (**4%**) of responders **stated they had taken a course(s) on another platform**

SMC Distance Education Committee Course Management System Search Project, January 2010

Wendy Parise, DE Committee Chair and Julie Yarrish, Associate Dean of Online Services & Support

Spring 2009 Platform Exploration Survey – Opinion Section – Question 8

8. For each platform other than eCollege on which you have taught, please indicate your positive and negative experiences in questions below. Positive experiences:	
answered question	36
skipped question	73
	Response Count
view	36

	Comment Text
1.	I like e-college
2.	NA
3.	I like eCollege - gradebook, loading of text content, email, etc.
4.	I am in love with Blackboard platform because it has more features and user friendly than E-college platform. It's not complicated and If I have the choice, I will only use blackboard. Thanks
5.	Blackboard is MUCH easier to use than eCompanion. I find myself wandering through eCompanion hell trying to figure it out. Blackboard is much more intuitive. MOST IMPORTANTLY: I can navigate away from Blackboard when I am downloading large files. eCompanion traps me at my computer, unable to do anything else, until the file loads. God forbid I walk away and forget to name my file after waiting for it to download, because then I have to process the whole thing again. JUST KILL ME NOW!!!!
6.	- exam or quiz questions pooling; randomizing questions - announcements can also be sent as an email to students - visual editor is functioning properly
7.	n/a
8.	Etudes has a nice discussion board. Blackboard has an option for faculty to copy their own courses forward from term to term.
9.	Moodle - inexpensive, basic tools that allows you to teach, very few upgrades (it does not create issues in your courses). Desire2Learn - offers everything the eCollege has and much more. It is less inexpensive in comparison with eCollege WebCT - basic and it most publisher support this management system
10.	Avatars work on Etudes and this is a great boon. Etudes also allows you to copy the entire course shell to another shell without administrative mediation. This is good and saves time. Etudes has a simple and quick interface and an Etudes-user site that is easily searchable. You

can even hunt for jobs there!

11. NA

12. Blackboard tells you if the students are reading the threads...outstanding. I like that e-mail is built into the course shell, which helps the professor keep focuses. The Color is really a bonus.

13. The original server on CSUN gave more control to the instructor.

14. Exam creation is less cumbersome in Blackboard (vs. eCollege) when using the Respondus product.

15. ability to create rubrics for discussions and use them to grade discussions and have rubrics linked to the gradebook.

16. Blackboard is stable and flexible -- online quizzes easily allow one question at a time to be displayed. It is more compatible with publisher testbanks.

17. ETUDES: discussion board set up and ability to grade discussion (new) by seeing all posts by a given student. Blackboard: I used it in 2003-5 and it's odd but I can barely remember it! The discussion board seemed similar to eCollege. Not bad. Not great.

18. good tech support

19. I really liked Blackboard.

20. Blackboard is significantly more user friendly than E-college. ETUDES NG offer greater flexibility and features than E-college. I think the college would be better off using Blackboard or ETUDES NG rather than E-college.

21. Homepage window has room for video uploads if needed, so you can change these at will. Homepage also has a sidebar for links to frequently used sites. For example, you can set a tab, on the homepage, to go directly to an MLA Directory text. It's very useful. The chat room is visible at all times on homepage and students or instructor can jump in at any time. Announcements are also always visible on homepage.

22. N/A

23. N/A

24. I feel Bb and eCollege are very similar.

25. They're all the same to me because my content isn't fancy.

26. the last eCollege platform

27. user-friendly

28. I love black board, Etudes is a close second as Etudes compared to the eCollege system.

29. 1. stable system. 2. Exam Guard feature works for all systems and browsers and is on by default. 3. ability to upload an gradebook file. 4. ability to check which student read messages in the discussion.

30. Etudes is great. User friendly. Love the use of graphics and avatar. User group is great, and efficient. Angel has some good features. Drop boxes are easy.

31. It tracks student activity fairly well.

32. I like how easily usable the blackboard platform is.

33. I have seen Blackboard interfacing with Wimba and I have fallen in love. I WANT THIS!!!!

34. really do not remember- they all have plusses and minuses

35. I have demo'd WebCT (years ago) and Moodle (recently). Moodle has great thread features and seems to have more exam features. The publisher CMS have GREAT exam features compared

to eCollege: algorithmic questions, ability to scramble questions, ability to scramble answers within a question, gradability by question.

36. I think eCollege works. I don't want to change. Period.

SMC Distance Education Committee Course Management System Search Project, January 2010

Wendy Parise, DE Committee Chair and Julie Yarrish, Associate Dean of Online Services & Support

Summary for 36 answers:

Responses

Typed N/A.

Like eCollege;
Think eCollege works and don't want to change;
Liked eCollege gradebook, loading text content and email

The last eCollege platform

Did not specify any platform:
Good tech support;
User friendly;
They are the same because my content is not fancy;
Announcements can be sent via email;
Visual editor is functioning properly;
Exam or quiz questions pooling and randomizing;
Tracks student activity fairly well;
Homepage window has room for video uploads if needed, so you can change these at will.
Homepage also has a sidebar for links to frequently used sites. For example, you can set a tab, on the homepage, to go directly to an MLA Directory text. It's very useful.:
The chat room is visible at all times on homepage and students or instructor can jump in at any time; Announcements are also always visible on homepage;
They all have pluses and minuses

BlackBoard:
How easily usable the blackboard platform is;
I have seen Blackboard interfacing with Wimba and I have fallen in love. I WANT THIS!!!!;
Love black board;
Really like it;
Feel Bb and eCollege are very similar;
Is significantly more user friendly than E-college;
I used it in 2003-5 and it's odd but I can barely remember it! The discussion board seemed similar to eCollege. Not bad. Not great;
Is stable and flexible;
Online quizzes easily allow one question at a time to be displayed;
It is more compatible with publisher test banks;.
Exam creation is less cumbersome in Blackboard (vs. eCollege) when using the Respondus product;
I am in love with Blackboard platform because it has more features and user friendly than E-college platform. It's not complicated and If I have the choice, I will only use blackboard;
Blackboard is MUCH easier to use than eCompanion. I find myself wandering through eCompanion hell trying to figure it out. Blackboard is much more intuitive. MOST IMPORTANTLY: I can navigate away from Blackboard when I am downloading large files. eCompanion traps me at my computer, unable to do anything else, until the file loads. God forbid I walk away and forget to name my file after waiting for it to download, because then I have to process the whole thing again. JUST KILL ME NOW!!!!

ETUDES:
Is great;
User friendly. Love the use of graphics and avatar;
User group is great, and efficient;
Discussion board set up and ability to grade discussion (new) by seeing all posts by a given student;

Wendy Parise, DE Committee Chair and Julie Yarrish, Associate Dean of Online Services & Support

Has a nice discussion board;

Avatars work on Etudes and this is a great boon;

Allows you to copy the entire course shell to another shell without administrative mediation. This is good and saves time;

Offers greater flexibility and features than E-college. I think the college would be better off using Blackboard or ETUDES NG rather than E-college;

Has a simple and quick interface and an Etudes-user site that is easily searchable. You can even hunt for jobs there;

Is a close second as Etudes compared to the eCollege system.

Moodle:

Has great thread features and seems to have more exam features;

Inexpensive, basic tools that allows you to teach, very few upgrades (it does not create issues in your courses).

WebCT:

Basic and most publishers support this management system.

Desire2Learn:

Offers everything the eCollege has and much more. It is less inexpensive in comparison with eCollege.

Angel:

Has some good features. Drop boxes are easy.

Others:

The original server at CSUN gave more;

The publisher CMS have GREAT exam features compared to eCollege: algorithmic questions, ability to scramble questions, ability to scramble answers within a question, gradability by question;

Stable system;

Exam Guard feature works for all systems and browsers and is on by default;

Ability to upload an gradebook file;

Ability to check which student read messages in the discussion.

.

Question #9 - . For each platform other than eCollege on which you have taught, please indicate your negative experiences in questions below.

There were 30 total responses for question #9. Of the 30, 7 listed they had no experience with other systems. The remaining 23 responses were grouped into 6 categories – Etudes, Blackboard, Other Systems, Negative on eCollege, Positive on eCollege and Other. The Other category was mostly populated by had largely nonsensical responses. The categories and responses are listed below.

1. Etudes (4)

- Etudes does not have streaming capability and we have to share server space with the rest of the college so this is bad for uploading and running allot of multimedia components. Etudes visual editor is not robust enough for my needs and still needs work.

- Emailing is not as easy for Etudes and there is no streaming option available.

- Generating a quiz in Etudes by hand (no publisher questions) is a tedious matter involving too many steps. Also, there should be safeguards built-in to it to alert you when misspellings occur. Etudes does not make it easy to upload images into assignments or almost anywhere, so the professor is prone not to use them as much -- a great mistake in a multimedia platform (eCollege is better at this). Ideally, images should be as easy to upload in a platform as they are to upload to a PowerPoint presentation, where the minute you copy them from a webpage, they are resizable. Tables in both platforms are tricky things and each platform handles just differently enough to cause vexation. Can we all just standardize...!

- Etudes-NG is generally far less flexible than eCollege. For instance, group emailing is limited to 20 students per mailing. In threaded discussion, response to a previous comment does not appear right after the comment. All comments are arranged in a strict chronological order. The Gradebook does not allow for letter grades.

2. Blackboard (4)

- Blackboard does not have the support services that is included with eCollege. Blackboard has a lot of system issues and downtime reliability problems

- the gradebook in Blackboard/WebCT is not very user-friendly for inputting grades or for keeping students aware of their current grade

- It is extremely tedious to operate. There is little to nothing that is intuitive about BB. This platform requires months of adaptation and even then, it doesn't come close to functioning as well or as reliably as eCollege.

Wendy Parise, DE Committee Chair and Julie Yarrish, Associate Dean of Online Services & Support

- Blackboard: the version I used required some html. I could do it but it was a drag. Much prefer wysiwyg. ETUDES: really dislike the Modules set up and the FCK editor, but I haven't used it in awhile (I link to my website instead) so maybe it's better now. But it's too much clicking for students. nExT is much better.

3. <u>Other Systems (2)</u>

- Moodle, Desire2Learn, and WebCT - we need to pay for customer support and for maintenance of server

- Angel has a complex grading system. No help is available. Moodle -- at least the version I was working with was the worst system. The server always had problems, hard to navigate, very slow

<u>Negative on eCollege (3)</u>

- I have had uploading issues with the course shell...some items not transferring. You can't send a pre-e-mail to the students, until the course starts, and they can log on...then they have issues that should have been handled earlier...like: buying books online, making them take a self paced intro to the software... On eCollege, I really dislike the way students can bogart a seat, while others are asking for an add code...and then you have a high drop rate. Take way too much of the professors time at the start of the class....the dropping process for on ground and online should have different rules. Makes sense? Online students should have some skin in the game...you want to have that seat, you will pay some amount....as you have taken a spot for a serious student who can't enroll because of space issues.

- Students seem to have the need to provide an attachment when submitting a response to the drop box. Many of these attachments are difficult to open and I've had student email me their attachments on my smc email address.

- eCollege is my least favorite of the group, as compared to ETUDES and Blackboard

<u>Positive on eCollege (2)</u>

- No negative experiences with eCollege. They have lived up to my expectations.

- Grading is easiest in eCollege vs. Moodle and Blackboard/WebCT

<u>Other (8)</u>

- STUDENT USED EMAIL TAB TO CONTACT OTHER STUDENTS TO CHEAT ON A GRADED ASSIGNMENT.

- Instructors built the course and some may not wish to do the work needed.

- to many steps to go through, not as quick as ecollege grade book is a challenge to set up and use properly

- Too much details

- limitation on file upload which is only 5 mb - dropbox does not have download attachments

- The absence of threaded discussions. You can't track student's time. Students can see when you are online. No Webliography.

- I get confused by course archiving I have had trouble retrieving material used in a class over a year old.

- .NeXT

Spring 2009 Platform Exploration Survey – Exam Builder Question 23

23. What features for exam building would you like to see added to the platform?	
answered question	40
skipped question	69
	Response Count
view	40

Common Themes

Of the 40 responses 6 wanted to be able to import/upload test content directly from publishers as can be done with Respondus*

Of the 40 responses 4 stated the exam functions are fine as is.

Of the 40 responses 4 stated wanting better randomness/algothythmic functionality

Of the 40 responses 2 faculty wanted Exam-Guard to function with Macs (slated release spring 2010)

Of the 40 responses 5 faculty wanted interactive tables/smart cells/keywords in exam answers.

Of the 40 responses 3 faculty wanted students to see parts of the exams (show only wrong answers) not right answers to insure exam integrity.

*Respondus is a third-party product and does interface with eCollege. SMC does not have a campus-wide site license for this product.

	Comment Text
1.	The exam features are the WEAKEST part of E-college. These weaknesses are recurring and have seemingly not been addressed. It is quite frustrating. It is difficult to understand why a spreadsheet function of some kind cannot be inserted into the answer portion of the exam. In grading the exams for a classes like accounting, it is much more cumbersome for students to prepare reports in good format which makes it difficult to view and evaluate the student's understanding of the content. I estimate that I spent almost twice the amount of time grading online exams than I would grading that same exam if it were given on ground. The obstacles include inability of students to format their input, the small window for essay or problem type questions which make seeing the question, answer and the solution almost impossible.
2.	Import test banks from more publishers (the one I use cannot be imported).
3.	As mentioned above, I would like the addition of tables in the essay response area.

4. Exam Pool and then the instructor will select an exam from the exam pool

5. Display statistics on how often each question in a pool is actually assigned in the test, to provide instructors a good understanding of how questions are extracted from the pools.

6. I am fine with the current exam building functions. I use massive publisher test banks and also use my own essay questions. After all these years, I have made my tests to suit the needs of my class and don't want to change them.

7. I would like to be able to add images to the exams and spreadsheets. Also, I would like for my students to have the ability to download the exams from the doc sharing and to have a connection with the drop box so that we can time their exam the same way we do it in class.

8. Ability to change point values for questions throughout the pool, instead of having to change each question manually.

9. Make is easier to upload the questions. Should have one area that a professor can tweek all the needed exam properties....like: viewing questions, time, selection of exam questions, etc. Jumping around is hard, because I forget a step from one semester to another...KISS Principle.

10. In accounting, we need to be able to have appropriate accounting forms for mid-term and final examination questions.

11. Formal logic proof and math symbols to construct formal proofs in online exams.

12. I would like to see a stronger randomization feature for pooled questions so that all questions in the pool are more likely to be used. The current program gives preference to those at the beginning of the pool.

13. Ability to open all test questions while deciding which one to use. It seems that at the moment you must do it one at a time. Also the ability to change the point value once, and apply it to all the questions, rather than one at a time, as it seems at the moment.

14. I assign only essay exams, so my exam needs are pretty simple.

15. Have students answer questions one at a time, so they can not cut and paste an entire exam or quiz (to perhaps be emailed to another student).

16. Oops. I rely on discussion, weekly journal writing (interpretive quizzes, usually passages from the readings), and longer papers. Actually I've been thinking that I'd work on exams this summer. I'd also like to investigate timed writing though I'm afraid of all the "gee, I got thrown offline in the middle of the exam" type of dog-ate-my-homework excuses. I'd love access to TurnItIn.com! I heard it was being piloted....

17. I teach Adobe InDesign online - could it ever be possible for students to work within InDesign online? I may be way off on this one.

18. The features as they are fine with me.

19. Larger areas to work within.

20. Possibly uploading publisher exam questions

21. no opinion

22. I would like the option to have the students see which questions they got wrong, without giving them the answers.

23. not sure right now

24. Can I upload my own test bank and choose questions from that? That's what I do now. Does any exam bank provide a "Matching" question format?

25. exam guard for Mac

26. I'd like to find an easier way to build a test. It takes me a short time to use Word to make a test but several hours to use eCompanion.

27. Pooling should be more random than done by eCollege

28. A feature that would allow students to write an essay in respond to a statement in which the instructor has indicated in the system certain key words/terms/ concepts that must be included in the student essay which would then be automatically highlighted. This would permit the instructor to read the essay with key words highlighted automatically by the system.

29. Ability to upload pools from publisher is very time effective.

30. Be able to copy from a publishers test bank generator

31. I would like to see a feature to give the students some sort of report about their exam result without making the whole test available to them. The other option would be to disable copying and printing (much like the Exam Guard) when the students view the graded exams in the Gradebook. This will prevent the students from distributing the exam questions. Another suggestion would be to let the students view only the questions that most of the students missed, rather than the whole test.

32. None other than the above.

33. Upload feature from publishers.

34. Security--something like Examguard that was more reliable and worked with Macs.

35. Tab to each section to speed up building the exams. Moving from keyboard to mouse to click in each box is slow.

36. easier exam building, pooling radio buttons in a preview pain to select the questions

37. bigger text boxes for essay questions and something akin to the "track changes" feature in Word for making corrections.

38. Algorithmic questions capability!!!!!!!! Those formatted answer boxes to Essay questions are VITAL, IMPERATIVE, ESSENTIAL. An on-ground instructor always gets to format answers on exams, or require a blue book.....Adaptive learning capability! (If you get something wrong you get a different question than if you get it right). Uploaded publisher testbanks need to stay in learning objective order, like printed test bank, instead of eCollege uploading them randomly. Question Pools should be copiable by instructor, so they don't have to be recreated.

39. Use key words to find questions. Consistent fonts. Much faster refresh time

40. I don't use exam building.

Spring 2009 Platform Exploration Survey – Exam Builder
Question 23

24. Have you used any other testing software in your courses (e.g., standalone applications like Respondus, or publisher provided packages with algorithmic questions)? If so, please list the software and describe your experiences with it.

answered question	**32**
skipped question	**77**

	Response Count
view	32

13 people responded that they use Respondus or similar software with eCollege.
Of the 13 answers seven people use Respondus and are happy with it.
Of the 13 answers three people do not use Respondus but use other software and are happy with it.
Of the 13 answers two people do not use Respondus or other similar software because they feel eCollege does not offer or support this software. I was not familiar with Respondus so I went online and watched the Respondus tutorial and it does seem to be compatible with eCollege.
Of the 13 answers one person teaches a hybrid class and has students come to campus for testing.

	Comment Text
1.	No.
2.	No.
3.	I have used Respondus. It is very easy to work with.
4.	No
5.	Respondus - great tool to use to manage test content items; provide the ability to copy, move, upload/download test content items within a course shell as well as from one course shell to another. Downside - not all books come with Respondus test banks.
6.	I have my own respondus account and use this to import and create exams in ecollege and my other university has a respondus site license so I use it for that school as well. It is a great product!
7.	No, I have been typing my exam manually because eCollege never has tried to offer this feature

that we have being asking for over eight years.

8. I would like to use publisher provided packages in my courses, but none supply this yet. Hence, I end up typing in my own questions. THIS IS THE GREATEST EATER OF TIME IN MY COURSE PREP!! Can something be done?

9. ONE-Key....that needs work...and maybe that has been enhanced over the last two years. But I still use it on one course....mostly for content.

10. No

11. I am having problems with Thomson/wads worth software and Formal logic proofs for constructing formal proofs in online exams.

12. No.

13. Respondus worked well

14. I did use ETUDES Classic and Blackboard quizzes. They took forever to put together. I'd still like to do this....

15. N/A

16. I've tried using publisher test software that goes with our textbooks, but they are cumbersome and difficult to use.

17. I teach hybrid courses and the students must come to the campus to take all exams

18. No.

19. no

20. no

21. n/a

22. no

23. No

24. no

25. N/A

26. no.

27. No

28. I've used Respondus with BB. Respondus is very good and serves its purpose well.

29. no

30. Yes. Respondus and 5 different publisher CMS systems. They are all much better than eCollege--question stay in order, the exams are copiable by the instructor, and algorithmic questions are accommodated.

31. No.

32. No.

Spring 2009 Platform Exploration Survey – Opinion Section – Question 15

15. COMMENT BOX: Please share your thoughts about a possible migration away from eCollege. Include how many hours you think it would take, what issues need to be considered—ANYTHING. THANK YOU!

answered question	**69**
skipped question	**40**

	Response Count
view	69

Wendy Parise, DE Committee Chair and Julie Yarrish, Associate Dean of Online Services & Support

Appendix C

Survey 2009 – Faculty comments regarding Migration away from eCollege

Comment Text

1. Learning a new system will take forever. I rather stay with e-college.

2. The payoff in terms of performance of the new platform would have to be HUGE.

3. Inefficient use of my time to migrate. I would dread it.

4. It's impossible to estimate the number of hours involved here but I would be surprised if this would not cause considerable time, effort, and loss of instructional quality for students during (and possibly after the transition). I'd really recommend AGAINST it. But if you're going to do it, I hope that instructors would be fairly compensated for the extra time they will put in. I would predict that the more work an instructor has put into building an instructionally rich course the more difficult the transition would be (since such a course would take advantage of features that are platform specific). A person who has a very basic course (e.g., a syllabus, exams, and discussion threads) will have a much easier time. Kind of ironic!

5. I prefer that we don't switch and that I continue to learn more uses of eCollege. There are always switching costs and a new learning curve for everyone involved.

6. I am a little nervous about switching to a new platform in terms of hours it might take to make the change and learn the new system.

7. It should not be a problem because I consider myself an expert in online teaching.

8. Dear Committee Members: Please envision me down on my knees, hands clasped in solemn desperation, begging you to change to Blackboard.

9. - Give faculty early notifications about the platform migration. - All the courses must be migrated to the new platform before putting the new platform in production. - All the administrators must be completely trained in the new platform - After complete migration, there should be a period for testing and checking the migrated contents. It is mandatory to ensure the migration accuracy - Provide faculty with ongoing technical assistance for the new platform - If needed, provide stipend or reassigned time for faculty to do some of the after migration tasks.

10. Parallel running of old and new platforms for at least one semester to make sure the new platform is fully debugged before pulling the plug on eCollege.

11. ecollege is very friendly for those not computer experts and with all the history we have with ecollege it will take many hours to bring a new system up to date and the returning students that have mastered ecollege will have to learn over again - too much wasted hours by students and staff

12. See above.

13. I am open to try other platform. eCollege is not taking SMC seriously, and they are not providing a great service for the money we are paying. It is time that we find other course management system. In the past, we had very few options, but today this is no longer the case. We can get a better product for less money.

14. Given the functionality of Etudes, Moodle, and other platforms and their inexpensiveness (at LAVC, Etudes costs the county 50,000 dollars a year to lease. What is eCollege costing SMC in these hard economic times???) -- It is not a question of changing over. It's a question of when. The sooner it's done the better. Will profs bellyache about it? You bet. And given the economic downturn, they will (in time) comply or lose out on courses.

15. I hope we would change only if the new platform is more user friendly. Too many times, upgrades end up being more complex and cumbersome.

16. Ecollege is outstanding, both the structure and the help. Paul at isupport is there to guide me and without him, I would have been a bundle of nerves. The students like the format and like the class and I get outstanding evaluations in my form and I attribute the happy camper attitude

in large part to Ecollege. The format is well thought out; they actually care about learning. The 24 hrs helpdesk really helps students when I sometimes cannot figure out a technical issue. Ecollege should remain, because in the long run it contributes to the excellence of SMC and we should keep that.

17. We would continue to need a Help Desk option for instructors and students. I personally have not had any "issues" with eCollege that I can think of... or have my students.

18. I think migration takes longer than you may think. It is my understanding and experience, that it is easier to just build from ground zero, and take items you believe will work...I went from BB to eCollege, and decided to build from a fresh slate.

19. I have been very satisfied with service provided by e-college. Online is still "young", so I think any problems have been minimal.

20. Does migration away from eCollege justify the additional setup work that would be required of teachers?

21. Faculty need to be given presentations on other platforms, their pros and cons. Only after informing faculty of options can we consider the best platform for SMC course.

22. I am not in favor of changing platforms. What we're using works well, and we have strong support within the college itself and with eCollege. Julie Yarrish and team do a terrific job, and eCollege has always been there for me. Students are familiar with it, and faculty is familiar with it. In addition, newly hired faculty who have used other systems have no trouble switching over to eCollege. In fact, they tell me they like eCollege better than the other systems they have used.

23. My course relies upon the use of the textbook publisher's MyLabSchool. I would like to be able to transition with the same course design.

24. I have taught a hybrid course in the past and relied more on my homepage than on eCompanion. However, I rely on eCompanion heavily for my on-ground courses.

25. I am just getting acquainted with the NEXT version and would prefer not to have to move.

26. I am not sure but let's say 5 - 10 hours depending on the transition process.

27. Many. It took me about 200 hours to create one course from scratch; I would like to be able to at least copy most of that content into a new platform if one is chosen. I don't want to have to redo the whole course from scratch.

28. Based on my experience, I would favor a switch from eCollege to Blackboard or something similar. Be careful when sighing on with Blackboard, though, I'd recommend getting some kind of long term commitment from them. Realize SMC's negotiating position will never again be as strong after we have chosen them. Try to get a good clear LONG TERM deal in writing.

29. I guess it all depends on what platform you adopt and one's degree of familiarity with it. I've taken a few CCCOne classes using Moodle and that doesn't seem so bad either. Friends say it's easy to work with. I think you should go with a proven winner rather than something too obscure and buggy....The early ETUDES was truly awkward. The older eCollege wouldn't work with Firefox. But I'm happy enough with both updates. I notice the increased opportunities to use video, live classrooms etc. But student computers, for now, still tend to be slower -- and that makes these "new" features less useful than might appear. Also too much live stuff obviates the purpose of online instruction and privileges people with schedules or time zones similar to the instructor's....

30. Time to train for the new platform, then if course shells can be copied over, no problem changing over. I'd want the new platform to be Mac compatible of course.

31. If it is like the .next migration, it only took me a couple of hours.

32. no problem changing

33. I hate to see the change, but I do understand the fiscal realities. I have personally trained several techno-phobic colleagues who are just now learning how to use eCollege. I'm concerned that a migration away from it will result in many instructors abandoning online tools altogether.

34. I do not want to change!! I am happy with eCollege and the present .NeXT platform. I used Blackboard for two different courses I took online via UCLA extension and did not particularly like Blackboard. Another concern, this one re copyright: All the material I develop for my course belongs to me, neither to SMC nor to eCollege.

35. Get Blackboard!

36. I remember that there were problems here and there with the earliest versions of the eCollege platform. The key to success was the availability of the eCollege Help Desk and having direct connection with certain individuals from eCollege. The transition from the eCollege legacy platform to .NeXt has been the most difficult I have experienced since I began teaching online in 2000. Because I did not teach during the winter session 2009, I spent numerous hours preparing for the spring. This became a full-time job during the winter session. I believe I could successfully transition to another platform if I had multiple training sessions with the new platform during the intercessions; interaction with my SMC Online colleagues regarding glitches and solutions with using the platform; and at least another 6-8 weeks during the intercessions or when I am not teaching a full load to prepare the new course shells. It is essential that our online students have the 24/7 helpdesk support that they find helpful. As our online offerings have increased, the number of individuals serving the Helpdesk support team needs to proportionally increase for both faculty and students.

37. It would be unthinkable to reconstruct all my course work for a different platform. I can't estimate the number of hours that would require--and all with no compensation!!!

38. We need much more discussion of the advantages and drawbacks of various competing platforms from the STUDENTS' and the INSTRUCTORS' perspectives. The discussion and the decision should not be driven budget considerations. We need factual information about the other platforms from instructors and, if possible, students. And the online instructors should have the primary responsibility of making the recommendation to the Administration.

39. Migrating away from a platform is very time consuming. It takes hours and hours of restructuring. I can't even begin to compute the projected time. It's certainly up to a semester's worth of time to get it right.

40. No. Please don't. Downsize eCollege options if you have to. .Next has not gone smoothly. It will take over 2 semesters to get to a good place with .Next.

41. I would hope the decision would be done for practical reasons or educational reasons of ease-of-use reasons, rather than financial. My concern is ease of loading multimedia files into the site--if this can be done easily in a newer platform that would be great. I know it would take time to move stuff over, so I hope this could be done in a way that we would not have to rebuild everything...

42. ECollege is not perfect, but I have made it work very well for me. I can live with it, and I appreciate their effort to improve. I believe that having to re-create my video heavy courses into a new platform would be a substantial project that would likely take 30-40 hours per class.

43. I do not think SMC should change. There is a reason that all of the other institutions for which I teach are also on eCollege--it is very user friendly for both faculty and students. It would take weeks to make the transition. It took weeks (months) for the faculty member to design the class I now teach for at SMC and for me over 40 hours to make my own modifications. It might take me 40-100 hours to be trained on a new system and then get used to my new class.

44. For me, it would take the whole semester. At least. Learning the features of the new platform would have to fit into teaching and other commitments, and migrating the course to the new platform would probably expand exponentially: since revisions of platform would be required,

the revisions of content would follow. Probably about 8-10 hours per lecture (for the easy ones, more for more substantial revisions).

45. Please do not switch. I believe eCollege has a great format and great tech. support.

46. Without knowing what this entails I can say that it takes approximately 40 hours to prepare a new class.

47. Frankly, the whole idea of migrating away from eCollege is daunting to me...

48. I'm not familiar with the attributes of other platforms to be able to comment.

49. Don't mind changes; just keep it user friendly.

50. It would take about 100 hours of transferring all of my classes over. Please do not do it.

51. ecolloge is the best platform. Pls do not change it.

52. If copying over must be done manually, this may take as much as 32 hours.

53. I do not see a reason for this migration. I feel comfortable with this platform.

54. Keep in mind the number of hours spent migrating, may equal to the number of hours spent recovering from eCllege broken features.

55. If I had to do it, I would consider not teaching online anymore.

56. If we migrated from eCollege, the question is if the materials we are using can be transferred. If not then it would take several days to copy format and reinstall in a new platform.

57. It's challenging to move away from eCollege but possible. Educating students is an important factor. It's too bad that eCollege is so expensive. I like using it. I cut and paste a course from ETUDES to eCollege. It took about 40-50 hours as an estimate. I didn't keep track.

58. I would not teach on Blackboard. It is unreliable and is entirely too much hassle.

59. It would be worth everything it takes to get away from eCollege and into Blackboard. When I see the exams from Course Tech saying upload to Blackboard, and then I have to sit and create them in eCollege, I get angry. That is more than 3 times a week. If I add this time into the migration, and then I have free time because I don't have to create exams again... it would equal out very quickly. I want streaming video NOW. I want faster response time when I am grading NOW.

60. We need a supported platform- I do not want the nightmare of Etudes or moodle. I think it would be immensely time consuming. If either Blackboard or WebCT was significantly less expensive than I would advocate a change, otherwise, eCollege works.

61. All of these products essentially work the same... the most useful features are the ability to build and modify the content, the gradebook, classLive, and email.

62. It would be a huge task for me to migrate all my courses to a new platform because I author all my own content. It's hard to estimate how many hours it would take; it took me hundreds of hours to build each of my four courses from scratch. I would also need to be able to trust that there would be excellent technical support with a new platform--helpdesk and so forth.

63. My dept was not listed above. I'm in the Library and teach 2 for -credit classes.

64. Get paid to make the transfer as it will take 100s of hours.

65. a migration would be less trouble than people think. What takes time in building a course is creating content, Downloading content, and then uploading it to a new platform is "donkey work" max of 15-20 hours. EXCEPT for EXAMS that have pooled questions! Extra $$ & support!!!!

66. I worry most about functional integration with support services: counseling, ISIS, Admissions, library and about the time it will take me to transition all my material. I would also hate to lose

archived material.

67. It would be a very difficult process and a long learning curve. However, if publisher's content could be easily uploaded and new provider is willing to migrate content, I would not oppose it.

68. I don't want to change. Period. Online education saves the college so much money because it doesn't require classroom space, etc. It is very much self-sustaining. The money spent is well spent.

69. Migrating away from eCollege would be a huge task and the reasons to move would have to be so compelling and obvious for me to consider such a change. Obviously it is only responsible that the district view all options so as to make an informed decision about what platform we should be using, however, after all is researched, we must be sure that faculty are properly supported and that students will experience a seamless and painless transition into a new shell. How many hours would that take? I think it impossible to predict at this time since I have no idea what the other platforms would be or what it would take to learn them.

Appendix D

Distance Education Committee 2009-2010

Wendy Parise - Co-chair
Julie Yarrish - Co-chair

Members
Al DeSalles
Mona Martin
Kay Azuma
Jose Cue
Judith Remmes
Saul Rubin
Odemaris Valdivia

Interested Parties
Dana Del George
Fariba Bolandhemat
Laura Manson
Ellen Cutler
Peggy Kravitz
Waleed Nasr
Dan Hurley
Marilyn Simons
Christine Miller
Stephen Druker
Eve Mazzara
Rosilynn Tilley
Roberto Campos

Wendy Parise, DE Committee Chair and Julie Yarrish, Associate Dean of Online Services & Support

Appendix E

Current DE faculty as of fall 2009

DE FACULTY MASTER LIST
(Fall 2009)

ABDEL-RAHMAN_AHMAD;
ABODE_PAUL ;
ADLER_EVE;
AGHABEGIAN_DIANA ;
ANDRE_JAMES;
AZUMA_KAY;
BABCOCK_LINDA;
BENNET_SAGE ;
BERNSTEIN_TERI ;
BOLANDHEMAT_FARIBA;
BORETZ_MARIANNE ;
BREWER_SARA;
BROOKINS_GREGORY;
BROWN_BRUCE;
BROWN_NATE;
BUCKLEY_ALAN;
BYRNE_DAVID;
CANADA_SUE ;
CARBALLO_PEBBLE;
CAVANAUGH_JAMIE;
CHABAN_MONICA
CHANDLER_FRAN;
CHEN_THOMAS;
CHIN_DOROTHY ;
CLARK_GERRY;
CLAUSEN_ANDREW;
COPLEN_JOSHUA;
CRAMER_TIMOTHY;
DARWICHE_JINAN;
DEL_GEORGE_DANA;
DEMETRE_NONA;
DESMOND_KATIE;
DISHMAN_WENDY;
DOWNS_JIM ;
DRUKER_STEPHEN;

DUGANNE_JACK ;
EL-KHOURY_NAJA;
ERICKSON_MARIA;
FARBER_GEORGIA;
FICKBOHM_DAVID ;
FIER_BLUE ;
FITZGERALD_RON ;
FLORES_ROBERT;
FRIEDMAN_MARVIN;
GEDDES_JAMES;
GHEYTANCHI_ELHAM;
GILL_HARRY;
GINSBURG_DAVID ;
GONZALEZ_CYNTHIA;
GRASS_HEMMERT_NANCY;
GRAZIADEI_KEITH ;
GROSS_DIANE;
GUNN_KAREN;
GUSTIN_MICHAEL ;
HAIG_JEFFREY;
HALL_TERESA;
HALLIDAY_PATRICIA;
ROBERTS_CATE
HAMMOND_CRAIG;
HANSON_MARIA;
HARCLERODE_JANET ;
HASSMAN_TUPELO;
HERTZ_URI;
HOUGHTON_JACKI ;
HUANG_AILEEN ;
HUNT_SUSAN ;
HURLEY_DANIEL;
JANAKOS_LINDA;
JAYACHANDRAN_SANJAY ;
JERRY_GINA;

SMC Distance Education Committee Course Management System Search Project, January 2010

Wendy Parise, DE Committee Chair and Julie Yarrish, Associate Dean of Online Services & Support

JUNG_DORANNE;
KASRA_MONA;
KAWAGUICHI_LESLEY ;
KELLY_MARCELLA
KESKINEL_MERIC ;
KERZE_MICHAEL;
KIM_JULIE ;
KLUCKHOHN_LUCY;
KRANZ_JACK ;
LEE_KENT ;
LEIVA_CLARISSA;
LONGO_JOSEPH;
LU_MING_CHUN;
LYNCH_JOHN ;
MANDELBAUM_AMY;
MANSON_LAURA;
MANTABE_PATRICIA;
MALASARN_RUEMRUK ;
MASON_KENNETH;
MASSEY_ROBERT;
MAZZARA_EVE ;
MCCASKILL_CAROLE
MCLAUGHLIN_SHARANI;
MCMILLEN_RYAN
MEYER_WALTER;
MIHAYLOVICH_KRISTIN;
MORRISON_MAUREEN;
MOSHIRI_SHANE ;
NAGEL_JAN;
NIGHTINGALE_MELODY;
NOVAK_DEBORAH;
OLEARY_THOMAS ;
PAKBAZ_MATT;
PARISE_WENDY;
PENCHANSKY_AUDRA ;
PETERS_CHAD;
POIRIER_N_PARIS;
POREBA_JANINE;
POURROY_DEBRA;

RAHNI_MICHAEL;
RANDALL_TONI;
REICHLE_ROBERT;
REMMES_JUDITH ;
RESNICK_JENNY;
RICHWINE_DONA-RAE ;
ROCHE_AUDREY;
ROSE_MICHELE;
ROTHAUPT_BRENDA;
RUBIN_SAUL;
SAFARZADEH_MOHAMMAD;
SAKURAI_DORNA ;
SATTERLEE_BRIAN ;
SCHAMP_JUTTA;
SCHAPA_ELEANOR;
SCHAPA_MICHAEL;
SCOTT_JACQUELINE;
SEIDEN_JACKELINE;
SHISHIDO_KEITH;
SHISHIDO_LYNETTE ;
SINDELL_STEVEN;
SMITH_HEATHER;
SOUCY_STEPHEN;
SPECTOR_ANDREA ;
SPIEGLER_MARCI ;
ST_AMANT_KATHRYN
STAFSKY_GAIL;
STEEBER_SHARON;
STOLZ_PHIL;
SU_BOO;
SZEKELY_CLAUDIA;
TAHVILDARAN_RICHARD;
TALLEDA_MARGARITA;
TANNATT_LUPITA;
THIERCOF_HOLLY;
TUCKER_JOY;
VALDIVIA_ODEMARIS;
VANBENSCHOTEN_WILLIA;
VAUGHN_PAUL

VEAS_SAL;

VERLET_MELISSA;

VISHWANADHA_HARI;

WILLIAMSON_TERESA;

WOODS_VENTRIS;

ZIMMERMAN_WILLIAM;