

Profile of Institution C

In 2009, the Texas state legislature enacted House Bill 2504 (HB 2504). HB 2504 stated that public institutions of higher education were to “establish uniform standards for publishing cost of attendance information, to conduct student course evaluations of faculty, and to make certain information available on the Internet.” Course syllabi were among the “certain information” required to be shared publicly.

A large community college in Texas with several campus locations asked the Syllabus Geeks for help with managing syllabi in order to ensure compliance with HB 2504. The institution had attempted to create an in-house syllabus solution, but found it was not efficient or effective. They also had some rather vague policies and standards regarding syllabus content, collection, and review, and required a system that could provide them with consistency regarding these issues.

The Syllabus Geeks went to work right away to help the institution become not only compliant with HB 2504, but also increase their efficiency and organization regarding syllabi. The Syllabus Geeks introduced the institution to **Concourse**, an online syllabus solution. To meet the immediate need to share each syllabus publicly, faculty were able to upload their current syllabi into Concourse. Visitors to the institution’s web site were able to search through each syllabus that had been uploaded into the Concourse system.

The institution then set out to create an institutional template that would include information necessary for each syllabus, and would ensure consistency among all syllabi in all areas. Before the end of the year, the institution had created course templates with specific information for each course as well. Instructors no longer need to upload a syllabus document; they can create their syllabus in Concourse!

The institution now uses the Audit and Report functions in Concourse to keep track of which courses may still need syllabi created, as well as any changes that are made and submitted for review by faculty. They continue to explore the creation of new templates as well as feed processing for even greater ease of use.



Getting Started Survey

General

1. What is it that you expect to achieve throughout this pilot?
 - a. *Want to have online syllabi for each online course we offer that students and faculty can access from Blackboard.*
2. Who will be involved with the administrative functions (school, campus, department, and course maintenance) of Concourse?
 - a. *Director of Online Learning, Instructional Designer, and IT representative.*
3. Are there established content or workflow policies surrounding course syllabi?
 - a. *We currently have a policy that states that instructors have to have a syllabus for their course, but the policy does not state how the syllabi are to be stored, accessed, or reviewed.*
4. How is your institution organized?
 - a. *At this time, our institution is organized by five campuses, five divisions, and several program clusters.*

Content

5. What do you currently know about syllabi at your institution?
 - a. *We currently know that instructors are supposed to submit a syllabus to their division office, but do not at this time know how many instructors are actually submitting their syllabi. We intend to conduct a review of this once instructors are using Concourse as it will be easier for us to access the syllabi.*
6. Where is the information for descriptions, outcomes, and policies stored at your institution?
 - a. *Description, outcomes, and policies are each stored in electronic and hard copy files in division offices.*

Item Permissions

7. Who do you expect to access Concourse?
 - a. *Online students and faculty, as well as the general public.*
8. Who do you expect to be able to edit syllabi?
 - a. *Instructors will be uploading their own syllabi.*
9. Who do you expect to view syllabi?
 - a. *Anyone who accesses Blackboard should be able to access and view syllabi.*
10. Would you like the public to be able to see complete syllabi, only certain parts of syllabi, or none at all?
 - a. *The general public should be able to see all parts of a syllabus.*

Templates

11. Do you expect instructors to upload syllabi they create or will you introduce institutional and/or course-level templates?
 - a. *We expect instructors to upload their own syllabi into the system, but at this time we will not introduce templates.*
12. Do you have a syllabus template already established?
 - a. *No.*
13. Do you find inconsistency among instructor syllabi, even if you have a current syllabus template?
 - a. *Reviews of syllabi are conducted sporadically at this point; there does seem to be some inconsistency among syllabi regarding the format of the syllabi.*
14. Do you have policies you'd like to incorporate into each syllabus?
 - a. *Our institution currently does not have any strong policies regarding syllabi or what should be on each syllabus.*

Integration and Data

15. What student information system (SIS) do you use? Learning management (LMS)? Catalog? Curriculum? Assessment? Central authentication?
 - a. *SIS – Jenzabar JICS; LMS – Blackboard; Online catalog; Jenzabar JICS portal; LDAP.*
16. What is the process for creating courses in the LMS each term?
 - a. *Currently we run feeds manually to populate section and user data each term, from a single course shell.*
17. How do you anticipate users will gain access to Concourse?
 - a. *All users (instructors, students, administrators) will access Concourse through Blackboard.*

Deployment

18. What's your timeline for the implementation? Milestones?
 - a. *We would like to begin uploading all of the syllabi right away. We also would like to integrate with Blackboard so that users can access the syllabi for their online courses directly from Blackboard.*
19. What issues do you believe may arise that could keep you from meeting your implementation goal?
 - a. *Changes to institutional policies regarding syllabi; shortage of available personnel; executive re-prioritization of projects.*
20. How do you anticipate training administrators and instructors?
 - a. *We anticipate putting a link in Blackboard to each syllabus, so that instructors can direct their students to click the link. We also plan to create an online tutorial outlining the steps instructors need to take to upload their syllabi.*
21. How do you plan to validate that Concourse is functioning the way you expect, based on your implementation decisions?
 - a. *We plan to request and use a non-production Concourse site for faculty and administrator training. We will point all training to this site so that instructors can practice, if necessary, uploading their syllabi. We are also interested in feed processing to create courses and sections, as well as assigning users to certain sections. We plan to use the non-production site to ensure that the feeds are processing as we expect.*
22. Who will support users and technical issues at your school?
 - a. *Our Online Learning department will provide support to faculty and students in online courses, and we will consult our IT department if and when it is necessary.*

Once you have completed this questionnaire to best of your ability, please return it to your client success representative to schedule your Concourse kick-off call.