Profile of Institution D

In 2010, a large community college had begun looking for a replacement for their current syllabus repository. While the current solution had met their needs at first, it was becoming apparent that they needed a system that would be easier to use and provide more syllabus management capability. After a period of careful research, they found Concourse, and contacted the Syllabus Geeks as soon as possible for help.

The institution had established policies and processes regarding syllabus management, but the system was becoming weak due to the lack of technical support and an increase in frustration among users. Faculty were required to turn in an electronic copy of their syllabus to their department office, staff in these department offices would file the syllabi away in a locked cabinet, and would attempt to keep track of who had and who had not turned in their syllabus for that semester. All syllabi were to be turned in by the end of the second week of classes...and because the institution had a number of late-start classes, this presented even more of a challenge.

The Syllabus Geeks went to work, helping the institution to review of the state of the current syllabi. The review showed that many instructors were not following established syllabus policies and practices...in fact, some instructors did not even know that a current syllabus system, housing syllabi with consistent formatting and information, even existed at the institution. The Syllabus Geeks learned that along this institution would not only need help with creating a manageable syllabus repository with formatting consistency and the ability to archive syllabi, they would also need a system that allowed them to track syllabus submissions, and alert faculty and staff when a new syllabus had been created in the system.

After determining where the information that was to be on every syllabus was currently stored, the institution was able to extract most of the data that was to be on every syllabus from the various systems in which the data were stored, and feed the information into Concourse. This was especially helpful to the institution, since most of the information that was to be on each Concourse syllabus was already contained in other systems! This meant that staff would not have to manually enter this information onto each syllabus...which became an extraordinary time-saver!

The institution was able to create a series of syllabus templates in Concourse, which, coupled with their newfound ability to process feed files containing course information, resulted in a consistently-formatted syllabus for each course, and a syllabus that every instructor at the institution could then edit portions of and tailor to their individuals classes. They also incorporated the power of LTI integration. Instructors and students could now access their Concourse syllabus directly through their LMS...a familiar interface! This resulted in faculty and student adoption of the system in no time!

Soon after contacting the Syllabus Geeks and moving from their old syllabus system to Concourse, the institution was able to share their syllabi with anyone who wanted to view it...students, faculty, staff, and the general public. Instructors were able to maintain their academic freedom by editing appropriate syllabus items, and the administration was able to ensure that mandatory information was present on every syllabus.

Concourse™

Getting Started Survey

General

1. What is it that you expect to achieve throughout this pilot?
   a. *To decrease the workload overall for faculty and staff regarding syllabus management and storage.*
2. Who will be involved with the administrative functions (school, campus, department, and course maintenance) of Concourse?
   a. *Primarily Academic Affairs office will manage the system and provide training to faculty and template managers. IT department will provide feeds.*
3. Are there established content or workflow policies surrounding course syllabi?
   a. *Yes. Currently, syllabi are created and managed through an online system that includes an established workflow. Faculty create the course and syllabus, which is reviewed by the department chair, then Academic Affairs, then the Provost and Deans.*
4. How is your institution organized?
   a. *Our organization includes four divisions; within each divisions are departments that include several programs.*

Content

5. What do you currently know about syllabi at your institution?
   a. *We currently have established master course syllabi for each course. These master syllabi include the course code, course description, learning outcomes, methods of evaluation, instructional materials, grading scale, course practices, detailed course sequence outline, transfer potential, disability statement, student academic integrity, and any other pertinent information for every section of the course.*

      Current policies dictate that instructors need to add supplemental information, and submit an electronic copy of their syllabi to their department by the end of the second week of the semester.

6. Where is the information for descriptions, outcomes, and policies stored at your institution?
    a. *Course descriptions are housed in Banner; student learning outcomes are housed in CurricUNET; academic policies are housed in the course catalog; course policies will come from both the department and the instructor*

Item Permissions

7. Who do you expect to access Concourse?
    a. *We expect that anyone who comes to our school's web site searching for syllabi to be able to access Concourse. We expect students and faculty to access Concourse via Desire2Learn.*
8. Who do you expect to be able to edit syllabi?
    a. *Instructors should be able to edit Meeting Times, Contact Information, Materials, Evaluation, Course Policies, Additional Information, and Schedule. Template Managers should be able to edit every syllabus item with the exception of Institutional Policies. Administrators should be able to edit every syllabus item.*
9. Who do you expect to view syllabi?
    a. *We expect everyone to be able to 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. *We would like students to be able to see everything on a syllabus, and limit the general public's view to only show Description, Outcomes, Evaluation, Course Policies, Institutional Policies, and Additional Information.*

Templates

11. Do you expect instructors to upload syllabi they create or will you introduce institutional and/or course-level templates?
    a. *We want to create institutional and course templates.*
12. Do you have a syllabus template already established?
    a. *Yes, in our current system.*
13. Do you find inconsistency among instructor syllabi, even if you have a current syllabus template?
    a. *We have found that some instructors do not even know that we have a syllabus system, let alone a syllabus template for them to use. We have found a lot of inconsistency in instructor syllabi, and are hoping to alleviate that with the implementation of Concourse.*

14. Do you have policies you'd like to incorporate into each syllabus?
    a. *Institutional policies should be on every syllabus, regardless of where the course is housed. We also want to incorporate official course descriptions and course outcomes 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: Banner; LMS: Desire2Learn; Central Authentication: SSO with CAS and LDAP; Current syllabus management system: CurricUNET; Curriculum: Degree Works; Assessment: N/A.*
16. What is the process for creating courses in the LMS each term?
    a. *Our eLearning department loads the courses approximately two weeks prior to the beginning of each semester. Instructors are notified when this happens so that they can access their Desire2Learn course sites and begin uploading the necessary information for the semester.*
17. How do you anticipate users will gain access to Concourse?
    a. *We would like students and faculty to access Concourse through Desire2Learn. Staff in each department who will manage templates should be able to log in directly to Concourse by either entering the URL or accessing Concourse via our portal. We plan to place a link in the portal that will direct users directly to the Concourse login page for our school.*

Deployment

18. What's your timeline for the implementation? Milestones?
    a. *We would like to deploy this system for use no later than Summer 2013. This means that we will have to have everything turned on so that we can migrate all of the data from our SIS and current syllabus system no later than two weeks prior to the beginning of Summer semester for faculty to be able to input their syllabus information.*

19. What issues do you believe may arise that could keep you from meeting your implementation goal?

    a. *At this time, our institution has many projects that have been ongoing for quite some time; the same individuals sit on many committees regarding IT project implementation. A major risk to this implementation would be a lack of qualified personnel to be able to devote time and attention to Concourse. Another factor we are facing is the resignation of our Provost and Associate Provost; we are expecting a reorganization of our division and department structure, which could impact not only the availability of the members of our implementation team but could ultimately lengthen the amount of time to deployment. We are also aware of typical factors such as implementation team members resigning or having their employment terminated, thus resulting in a relative knowledge "gap" that may not be filled easily.*

20. How do you anticipate training administrators and instructors?

    a. *Training will be handled by the Academic Affairs office. A series of training documentation will be produced for disbursement to both faculty and template managers. We also anticipate working with our Organizational Development office to create an online tutorial accessible through our portal, specifically geared toward faculty. In-person trainings will be carried out by Academic Affairs initially, with a series of "Train the Trainer" workshops for instructional designers in each division. All training will be done in the Concourse sandbox.*

21. How do you plan to validate that Concourse is functioning the way you expect, based on your implementation decisions?

    a. *We intend to use the Concourse sandbox to initially process feeds so that we can understand how they work, and intend to run any ideas we have for template design through the sandbox as well before making any changes to the production system. Basically, all training and initial feed runs and changes will take place in the sandbox before being implemented in production.*

22. Who will support users and technical issues at your school?

    a. *Our helpdesk will be the first line of system support. Academic Affairs personnel will assist the helpdesk with questions that are beyond the scope of the helpdesk. IT will also assist with access issues.*

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.