Academic Senate Faculty Taskforce to Address Implementation of FERPA Compliance Recommendations made by the Merged Shells Workgroup

Purpose and Function

This taskforce was convened in response to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Article 13: Distance Learning signed May 25, 2024. This taskforce will review the recommendations made by the Merged Shells Workgroup regarding FERPA and create a plan for implementation to ensure compliance.

History

The Distance Learning Committee (DLC) issued "Recommendations for Merging Canvas Shells" in April 2023. (See Attachment A). Academic Senate approved the DLC's recommendations and guidelines in 2023 (See Academic Senate Minutes for April 20, 2023, Meeting). Effective fall 2023, faculty were permitted to merge asynchronous online courses only. Administration deemed Fall 2023 courses as a pilot. The Canvas Shells Workgroup was reconvened to evaluate the pilot. Based on the review of pilot data the Canvas Shells Workgroup made five recommendations, which were presented to the President's Cabinet in May 2024 (See Attachment B).

Goal

Address the implementation of recommendations two and three made by the Canvas Shells Workgroup (See Attachment B).

- **Workgroup Recommendation 2:** That faculty be trained in and follow guidelines for maintaining FERPA compliance in merged Canvas shells.
- **Workgroup Recommendation 3:** That faculty be trained in and follow guidelines for maintaining FERPA compliance when using third party tools and publisher sites in merged shells.

Membership

Tania Anders, Academic Senate President
Raul Madrid, Academic Senate Co-Vice President
Shiloh Blacksher, Academic Senate Co-Vice President
Tamra Horton, Faculty Association Vice President
Allie Frickert, Accreditation Assistant-Coordinator
Catherine McKee, Assistant Distance Learning Coordinator, Canvas Shells Workgroup
Michael Dowdle, Professor of Psychology, Academic Senate Director, Canvas Shells Workgroup
Mike Hood, Professor of Earth Sciences, Canvas Shells Workgroup
Abby Wood, Professor of Business Law and Paralegal Studies, Canvas Shells Workgroup

Academic Senate Faculty Taskforce Recommendations for Implementation

Recommendation 1: Faculty will be trained in maintaining FERPA compliance in merged Canvas shells.

- Faculty will complete the FERPA training through POD approved by Academic Senate. **Faculty only need to complete this training once.**
- Faculty will review the DLC guidelines regarding Canvas settings for merged shells and considerations for third-party tools and publisher sites.
- Faculty will complete the [FERPA Verification Form](#) to submit documentation for training and acknowledgement of FERPA compliance, which includes a checklist of the guidelines established by DLC. **Faculty only need to complete this form once.**
- Content on the [FERPA Verification Form](#) is the purview of the DLC.
- FCLT will maintain a list of Faculty who have completed the FERPA Verification Form.
- At least two weeks prior to the start of each term faculty can [complete an IT request](#) for the merging of course shells for the same modalities and courses.
- Faculty who previously completed [approved FERPA training through POD Connect](#) and submitted the FERPA Verification Form are not required to repeat it.

Recommendation 2: Establish Pop-Up Reminders with the Compliance Checklist

- A pop-up or autogenerated message should be sent to faculty who request merged shells as a reminder of FERPA compliance requirements.

Recommendation 3: FCLT will adjust default Canvas course settings as recommended by Academic Senate.

DLC Recommendations as of April 2023 (See [Attachment A](#)).

- Hide the People link from students in the course navigation menu.
- Hide the Chat and Conferences/BigBlueButton
- "Let students create discussion topics" is not checked
- "Let students organize their own groups" is not checked
- "Disable comments on announcements" is checked
- "Hide grade distribution graphs from students" is checked

Recommendation 4: Use of Third-Party Apps and Publisher Sites as recommended by Academic Senate.

DLC Recommendations as of April 2023 (See [Attachment A](#)).

- Faculty should use FERPA compliant third-party apps and interactive publisher platforms.
- Discussions and collaborations should ideally take place within the Canvas shell to ensure compliance.
- Faculty should verify that any app integrated into Canvas is FERPA compliant and separate students by sections if using interactive apps.

Attachments

Attachment A: [Distance Learning Committee's Merging Recommendations & Guidance](#) (April 2023)
Attachment B: [Canvas Shells Workgroup (Reconvened) Merging Recommendations Following Fall 2023 Pilot](#) (May 2024)