



Northern Arizona University

 **28,000+ Students**

 **Founded in 1899**



SCAFFOLD MIGRATION

Northern Arizona University Leverages K16 for Migration & More Consistent Branding Across Canvas LMS

Founded in 1899, [Northern Arizona University](#) (NAU) is a Comprehensive institution (R2, HSI) focused on access and postsecondary value. NAU's main campus resides in Flagstaff, Arizona, with 20+ statewide locations. In recognition of the unique sovereign status of Native Nations and the sacred land on which the university was built, NAU is dedicated to serving the diverse needs of Native American and Indigenous communities nationwide.

After 12 years with Blackboard, NAU's contract was coming to an end. The academic affairs team decided to do a more

general review of the LMS landscape with a desire to revamp the learning technology ecosystem. With over 28,000 students and 150+ online programs, NAU knew that its Learning Management System (LMS) was the institution's most used and important IT system.

After a year-long review gathering faculty and student feedback, Canvas was the unanimous choice for the new LMS. The university's next challenge was migrating 2,500 courses while providing faculty and students with the most support possible during the transition.

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- Dan Stoffel, Assistant Director of Teaching and Learning Technology Services

CHALLENGES

Previous Migration Mistakes

NAU had completed a migration project back in 200_, and the process was much more difficult than the university had anticipated. A group of instructional technologists had to manually move each course individually to the new LMS. The team had developed a 38-step process to move each course and had to hire and train student employees to help ease the burden. Moving just 3,000 courses took well over a year. The team was determined to learn from this previous migration project.

Easing the Workload Burden

The team at NAU knew from the beginning that a manual migration wouldn’t be possible. The university’s small team couldn’t move all those courses without hiring and training extra help, which wasn’t in the budget. That’s why NAU started to look at other migration options.

Content that Didn’t One-to-one Match

Some content from Blackboard to Canvas wouldn’t transfer seamlessly. For example, Blackboard holds content in the form of journal entries, which is something that Canvas doesn’t have. The new LMS wouldn’t recognize this type of content without some customization that would take considerable time. NAU would need to find a scalable solution for items that wouldn’t transfer naturally.

SOLUTION

As the NAU team researched alternative migration options, it became clear that only one solution could transfer courses with the ease their team needed: Scaffold Migration by K16 Solutions. Working with K16 Solutions, in addition to a strong project management component in the institution’s IT team that helped organize the migration process, proved to be key to NAU’s successful transition.

“We migrated 2,500 courses and heard no issues from faculty, staff, or students,” said Dan Stoffel, Assistant Director of Teaching and Learning Technology Services at NAU. “That had never happened before.”

The NAU team strategically used summer sessions as a soft launch opportunity to test the new LMS for any updates the team might need to make and were pleasantly surprised that the transition was much easier than anticipated.

A massive bonus to such a smooth transition was that neither students nor faculty had to work in two different LMSs at once.

“With K16, we were able to do a straight cutover and turn off our old LMS as soon as the new one went live,” said Don Carter, Director of Teaching and Learning Technology Services at NAU. “We didn’t want students or faculty working in two LMSs at once, so this made it all easy.”



RESULTS

More Consistent Branding

Stoffel and Carter both agreed that the biggest advantage of Scaffold Migration was that the automated migration process allowed the team to easily apply more consistent branding across the LMS. Previously, students had complained that each course online had entirely different navigation. During the migration project, K16 funneled that content into a consistent structure so that all courses would have the same menus and navigation styles.

Automated Migration Saves Staff from Manual Work

Using an automated solution like Scaffold Migration saved NAU from needing to hire extra help to complete the transition. K16 easily migrated courses without any copying and pasting or manual work, including custom content like journal entries. "It went very, very, very smoothly. This isn't our first rodeo in LMS transitions, and this was the smoothest migration we'd ever had," said Stoffel.



Flexibility & Communication

NAU noted K16's flexibility and stellar communication made the project as easy as possible. To better support faculty, the NAU team decided to migrate courses in 10 different batches, which K16 easily accommodated. Additionally, the NAU team expressed that K16's project management process eased the project along. "Sam and Chani were always super responsive to any questions we had throughout the process. We appreciated that we also had regular meetings to make sure we were all on the same page," said Carter. "If we're ever involved in another migration, we would seriously consider working with K16 again! We enjoyed our partnership so much that we're now beginning to archive historical content with K16 as well."



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