K16 SOLUTIONS

Ithaca
College

🎓 **5,400 Students**

🏛 **Founded in 1892**

🌐 **5 Schools**

ITHACA COLLEGE
Scaffold Migration

Aided by campus-wide buy-in, Ithaca College's successful migration to Canvas prompted a shift in how its IT staff works with faculty.

Founded as the Ithaca Conservatory of Music in 1892, Ithaca College's campus overlooks the picturesque Cayuga Lake in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. Its 5,400 students, who hail from all over the country, can select from 90 majors and 70 minors among its five schools. More than 70% of the students live on campus and have easy access to Ithaca's eclectic downtown, which features a lively music scene, world-class restaurants, and tech startups.

After using Sakai's Learning Management System for about 10 years, Ithaca was wrestling with a series of challenges. It no longer had enough staff to support the older version's technical issues, and students wanted a more modern system.

Ithaca's Vice President for Academic Affairs and the college's Chief Information Officer partnered to launch a search for a new system in the fall of 2020, prompting the mobilization of a series of committees charged with everything from selecting the new service provider to developing an implementation plan. With less than a year to migrate to a new LMS, Ithaca looked to K16 Solutions for help in migrating courses from the old LMS to the new one.

Instructure offered Ithaca two options—they could stick with a manual migration or work with K16 Solutions. The team tested both options. The LMS vendors' tools only supported a few types of content, and they weren't necessarily usable. Exams and quizzes didn't reproduce well. **"When we saw the K16 Solutions Scaffold Migration process and the results from it, it really was a night and day difference,"** said Jeff Trondsen, LMS & eLearning Applications Administrator at Ithaca. The committees governing the migration process, which included faculty, staff and students were supportive of working with K16 Solutions on an automated migration, in part, because of the college's tight timeline.

Ithaca opted to break its 3,500-course migration into three batches. Because faculty don't teach every course every semester, this strategy allowed them to add courses they teach on a rotating basis. It also meant the Ithaca team could manage special requests. **"This was a big benefit,"** says Jenna Liskens, Ithaca's Director of Learning and Innovative Technologies.

CHALLENGES

Tight timeline

Ithaca selected Instructure's Canvas system in January of 2021. Because the college did not want to operate two LMS platforms simultaneously, it would only have eight months to migrate its classes to Canvas before the start of the fall 2022 semester.

Pathway from old to new

Ithaca initially tried to migrate a few courses from Sakai to Canvas using native tools to determine feasibility of doing the migration themselves. They found that the data that did move over would require significant modifications, meaning staff and faculty would need to spend time reworking it for Canvas, taking time they could have used for training and course development and diverting it to a more complex migration.

Small staff

With limited staff, migrating from Sakai to Canvas using the built-in tools would have required the college to hire temporary workers, ultimately driving up cost and wiping out any savings from a do-it-yourself approach.

"It gave the faculty some options and allowed us to help those faculty who needed a little extra support. It's one of the benefits of working with K16 Solutions—they were very flexible with us."

- Jenna Liskens, Director of Learning and Innovative Technologies

By using an automated course migration in batches, Ithaca's faculty could focus on refining and redeveloping their classes on Canvas. Because they didn't have to spend time copying and pasting content from one platform to the other, Liskens and her team could help faculty focus on instructional design. **"We could work with them on making courses more accessible for students,"** she says, adding that they can now consider what elements make courses truly effective and engaging.

In the end, Liskens believes working with K16 Solutions saved the college money. Because they would have had to hire temporary staff to work long hours to migrate each course, **"We would have spent more if we had done it ourselves," she says.**

Trondsen adds: **"I don't think we could have done it in our timeframe without K16."**

Faculty and students are equally pleased with the move to Canvas. **"Everyone loves it,"** Liskens says. Faculty members are **"using the Canvas tools, and a large number are redesigning their courses and are thinking more about what the students need."**

RESULTS

The move to Canvas has also changed how Liskens and her team support the Ithaca community. **"We were able to transform the way the faculty was using the LMS and how our team supports the LMS,"** she says. **"Jeff is not bombarded with tickets all day every day—he can focus on other aspects of the LMS, like analytics and what we can learn from them."** They're now collaborating with faculty to improve course delivery. **"We can be more than just the administrator who has to fix things that have broken,"** she says.

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