

Catalyst Courseware Development Plan **Prepared for the Academic Technology Advisory Committee** **9.12.2007**

As identified in earlier updates, courseware functionality is divided into four priorities, with the first two carrying the most importance:

- **Priority 1:** A configurable dashboard that provides quick access to current and future Catalyst Tools and functionality that makes it easier for faculty to set courses up for themselves.
- **Priority 2:** Administrative functions that make it easy for a user to set up and manage courses for faculty and instructors.
- **Priority 3:** Finely-grained participation tracking/reporting.
- **Priority 4:** Branding (e.g. allow a school or college to brand its courseware).

Progress To-Date on First Priority Courseware Functionality

The Catalyst team is currently working on the design and development of the Priority 1 functionality, a process that involves three phases of work:

Phase 1 provides access to all Catalyst Tools through the Catalyst account page, providing a “wrapper” for the Catalyst Tools.

- Released on 12.20.06.

Phase 2 updates Catalyst Tools to provide baseline courseware functionality, making it easy for faculty to post and share a syllabus or other documents, create homework turn-in areas for students, return homework to students, offer quizzes and surveys, and provide forums for online discussions.

- **GoPost betas** released on 12.20.06, 03.21.07. **GoPost 1** released on 8.23.07.
- **QuickPoll 2** released on 03.21.07.
- **Collect It** released on 05.12.07.
- **ShareSpaces** updated and released to faculty and staff on 7.9.07
- **File Manager / WebFiles** updated and released to faculty and staff on 7.31.07.
- Minor revisions to these tools will be ongoing as users provide feedback.

Phase 3 involves the user-centered design and implementation of a “One-stop shopping” courseware experience where faculty can see and access all course-related tools and resources together in one space. This phase also includes a baseline grade book with posting and viewing capabilities that integrates with WebQ and class lists. Following the ATAC’s advice, the baseline grade book would not enable complicated transformations.

- User research completed on 3.23.07. See *Catalyst Courseware and Workspace Needs Assessment: Summary of Main Findings*.
- Design began in April 07; development began in August 07.

As we finalized the functional requirements based upon the research findings outlined in *Catalyst Courseware and Workspace Needs Assessment: Summary of Main Findings*, our team came to the conclusion that the problems identified in the user research could not be adequately addressed by Catalyst alone. We could buy or build full-featured courseware and still not meet

the needs expressed by faculty and students for "one-stop shopping" nor solve the significant workflow issues we identified.

As a result, we spent several weeks in Spring 2007 broadening the conversation to include the partners below to begin the collaborations that will tackle these issues in a comprehensive manner. We have identified 6 different problem areas which encompass Phase 3, and are taking steps to move forward on most of them in parallel. These problem areas are explained in detail below.

Factors Influencing Work on First Priority Functionality (Phase 3)

Funding & Staffing: With funding requested by the ATAC and provided by the Provost (effective July 1, 2007), the Catalyst team has brought on two graduate assistants and has retained a designer (effective September 2007). These additional resources will help speed up progress by the Catalyst team over the 2007-08 academic year.

Ownership of the Work: Key pieces of the baseline courseware solution lie outside the purview of the Catalyst Research & Development team, so work is sensitive to the priorities and timelines of many campus partners.

Upcoming Work on First Priority Functionality (Phase 3)

(1) Improving the "course portal": This involves work with MyUW, MyUW Class, and course content providers like the UW Libraries to integrate online course resources available through MyUW and MyUW Class along with information from and links to Catalyst Tools into a "one-stop shopping" experience.

- **Partners:** This involves contributions from the Office of Information Management's (OIM) Student Database (SDB) team, the Office of the Registrar, Computing & Communications' (C&C) MyUW team, and UW Libraries.
- Catalyst team completed *Course-Related Resources in MyUW: User Research and Usability Study* to inform the redesign of the "Teaching Class Schedule" for faculty and "Class Schedule" channels in MyUW in August 2007.
- SDB team and the Registrar are working to implement channel designs. Release date TBD, but planning to be ready for Winter Quarter 2008.

(2) Greater course workspace functionality in Catalyst Tools: This functionality makes creation, access, and management of tools and activities for a course easier within the Catalyst Tools account for both faculty and students. Additional work will simplify the collection, management, and publication of course content.

- Design work is underway (see wireframes), with usability feedback due by 9.21.07. Development timeline and planned release dates will follow on 9.28.07.
- This work will also involve a great deal of the Priority 2 courseware functionality.

(3) Creating the online grade book: The grade book application will allow faculty and students to view scores online securely throughout the quarter, with posting and viewing capabilities, and will integrate with WebQ and class lists.

- **Partners:** Creating the online grade book involves collaboration with the SDB team, the Registrar, and the department of Computer Science and Engineering (CSE).

- Initial design discussions have begun. Catalyst team is prioritizing this work against work on the problem areas listed below. Once this is done, a design, development, and release schedule will be crafted with the help of developers from CSE who will also work on the project.
- The Registrar and the SDB team will work independently on the issue of end of quarter grade submission. A proposal covering this work, *Web Grade Collection*, has been submitted for consideration to the I-MAC.

(4) Simplifying course-related accounts: The current structure of personal and supplemental Uniform Access accounts creates a significant workflow problem for faculty. Finding easier yet secure and auditable ways for faculty to access, manage, and share course-related content and materials is needed.

- **Partners:** This project involves contributions from C&C's Security and Middleware (SMW) and potentially from their Applications Engineering and Unix Engineering teams.
- Initial technical discussions with the SMW team are underway. Catalyst team has completed a prototype for switching between accounts. Timelines are TBD but should be in place sometime in October.

(5) Providing complete, accurate class lists via Catalyst: Faculty currently have inconsistent student data available in Catalyst class lists, making it difficult to track and evaluate student performance. This inconsistent data also poses a challenge for the online grade book.

- **Partners:** After meetings amongst the SMW and SDB teams and the Registrar, two project proposals to provide consistent class list data are awaiting prioritization by the SMW team. We hope to have the work done during Fall Quarter 2007.
- The Catalyst team has begun design work and will complete development work by mid-October to make the appearance of names throughout Catalyst Tools uniform.

(6) Building a future course portal: The Catalyst team will be one of many players in the longer term planning for the evolution of the MyUW portal to better meet faculty and student needs for online course resources.

- **Partners:** Initial discussions with C&C's Emerging Technologies and MyUW teams began in June 2007.