

**UNIVERSITY SENATE**  
**ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORT 2020-21**

**Committee Name:** Technological Resources Committee

**Number of meetings held this year:** Fall 2020: 3 meetings. Spring 2021: 3 meetings + 1 more upcoming in May. Additional meetings between subgroups in Fall 2020 as well as email correspondence.

**Committee Chair:** Kimberly Poolos

**Committee Members: (list here)**

Kimberly Poolos  
Michael Dominik  
Kristine Johnson  
Jill Perry  
Gerald Hough  
Christopher Winkler  
Nina Karin Isaacson  
Chia Chien  
Ping Lu  
Paul Grossman  
Jeff Hiatt  
David Manley  
Christine Davidian  
Christopher Taylor  
Liam Cutri-French

**Purpose of/Charge to Committee:**

The Technological Resources Committee monitors technological resources to insure that the services and resources meet the needs of the campus community in research and academic pursuits. By soliciting and compiling input from the campus community, the committee attempts to insure that the faculty, staff and students are aware of the current services on campus that can and do support these efforts. Responses to a periodic faculty and staff survey will insure that a collaborative effort exists in developing recommendations to enhance the University vision in the areas defined by the committee charge.

**Summary of Activities this Year:**

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, for over a year many faculty and professional staff transitioned to working remotely. This transition impacted students as well because most learning transitioned to either fully or partially remote. Additionally, during this time, Rowan University transitioned from Blackboard to Canvas for all undergraduate courses. Remote work, remote learning, and the transition to Canvas directly impacted the work of the Technological Resources Committee during the 2020-2021 term.

**TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTED WORK**

1. The Senate Technological Resources Committee is now directly involved in Third Party Canvas Integration requests. Policy here: <https://confluence.rowan.edu/display/POLICY/LMS+Third-Party+Integration+Policy> In short, the Senate Technological Resources Committee reviews new integration requests and prioritizes them for implementation based on factors such as, but not limited to: number of impacted students, number of impacted courses, and necessity of the integration to function in Canvas directly.
2. The Senate Technological Resources Committee met to prioritize Third Party Canvas Integration requests for the first time in December 2020. The Committee met to review and prioritize new

integration requests during the duration of the Spring 2021 semester. Frequent meetings each semester to review new Third Party Canvas Integration requests will need to continue with the 2021-2022 Technological Resources Committee per the policy.

3. In Fall 2020, the Senate Technological Resources Committee sent out a Survey titled “Canvas Concerns Form” to identify areas of focus and concern as the University transitioned from Blackboard to Canvas. Data collected can be characterized in the following groups:
  - a. Major Issues and Concerns with Canvas
  - b. Benefits Canvas has over Blackboard
  - c. Third Party Software Packages to be embedded in Canvas
  - d. Other Tech Concerns
    - **This data highlighted issues that ultimately led to the Senate Technological Resources Committee involvement in the Third Party Canvas Integration Requests (see #1 above).**
4. In Spring 2021, the Senate Technological Resources Committee sent out a follow up Survey titled “Canvas and Other Tech. Concerns Follow Up Survey.” While the survey was more positive about Canvas, there were still some concerns about functions being removed/turned off from faculty (**see recommendation #1**).
5. The Spring 2021 “Canvas and Other Tech. Concerns Follow Up Survey” also identified large concerns and issues with the ITAP process (**see suggestion #2 and recommendation #3**).
6. Another major issue of focus for the Technological Resources Committee during the 2020-2021 Academic Year is the issue of textbook/course “add on” fees. This has been brought up to the Senate President and Senate Executive Board and also the Affordability Taskforce. All involved are working towards a solution, but need some clarification and process information first (**see suggestion #1 and recommendation #2**).

## SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### Suggestions:

1. Textbook/Course “add on” fees are an increasing issue for students and a concern for the Senate Technological Resources Committee. Since we are now part of the Third Party Canvas Integration process, we view all incoming requests and see much of the burden of cost is placed on students. These are sometimes “extra” packages offered by a publisher that may offer things like tests, quizzes, homework problems, or homework help. The Committee is concerned about the added cost for students (especially if the student cannot successfully take a course without the add-on). We are also concerned about the status of these “fees” as “fees” must be approved by the Board of Trustees. Before we can recommend a strong solution for this growing problem, we need the following information: definition of a fee and process for fee approval.
2. Data from the survey as well as personal accounts shared with the Chair of the Technological Resources Committee shows a large problem with the ITAP process at Rowan University. The survey data suggests the process is unclear and not consistent. Words like “inconsistent” and “frustrating” appear frequently. This process is essential for critical materials for success for students (for use in courses) and faculty (for use in courses, research, and grants). The Technological Resources Committee suggests a revision of this process and would welcome involvement, similar to the involvement we had in revising the Third Party Canvas Integration Request policy and procedure.

### Recommendations:

1. Certain functions in Canvas are removed/shut off from faculty use in Canvas. The Technological Resources Committee has been working with the Senate President and Rowan Global Leadership to recommend the following functions are turned on for faculty use: **import function** and **attendance function**. These are two Canvas functionalities that already exist and the data from our Canvas & Other Tech. Concerns follow up survey support the desire and need to have these functions available. As of writing this report, these functions are still not available for our faculty.

2. Since the committee cannot yet provide a comprehensive recommendation about the growing problem of add on fees until we get an official definition and an official process, we still want to recommend all faculty reconsider any “add on” for a course where the burden of cost falls on students directly and/or the student cannot be successful in the course without purchasing this extra add on. **(For context, first see suggestion #1)**
3. The ITAP process needs to be revised with the following in mind: transparent processes and response time, clearly defined expectations, clarification on what needs ITAP approval and what does not. Based on collected data, it appears this process lacks any consistency and experiences vary drastically. A well-functioning ITAP process is essential for the success of our faculty and students and, as the process stands now, unnecessary barriers are confusion are presented to many who use it. **(For context, first see suggestion #2)**