

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN**

Sam Houston State University
SHSU Online
Huntsville, Texas, U.S.A.

AND

Sul Ross State University
Alpine, Texas, U.S.A.

Sam Houston State University (SHSU) and Sul Ross State University (SRSU) have common academic interests and seek to develop collaborations in the area of shared services to support online education. The activities undertaken pursuant to this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are based on a spirit of cooperation and reciprocity that is intended to be of mutual benefit to both parties.

1. Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) serves as a written understanding of agreed upon principles between Sam Houston State University, SHSU Online, and Sul Ross State University, Online Education, concerning a set of general service objectives. This is a non-binding agreement and is intended to clarify the nature and extent of the complementary activities that might be undertaken for the mutual benefit of the two parties.

2. Objectives, Scope, and Major Activities

Both institutions agree to encourage the development of Shared Services for online education. The objective is to share services and resources in alignment with the Texas State University System Vision 2020 online education goals.

Scope of Shared Services and Major Activities

- **Shared Instance of the Learning Management System.** Both parties will share the same instance of the Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS). This includes access to Blackboard Learn, Blackboard Communities, Blackboard Content System, Blackboard Outcomes, and Blackboard Analytics. All courses, users, and orgs will be hosted in the same instance.
 - Each of the parties' I.T. departments will import student, course, and org data from the Student Information System (SIS) to the shared LMS.
 - A common institutional hierarchy node structure will be designed and followed by both institutions.
 - Blackboard/System Administrators from each of the institutions will manage and administer the maintenance of their respective institutional nodes and portals. This includes, but is not limited to, course management, user management,

organizations management, tab & module management, brands and themes management, tools and logs, B2's, SRSU, content system, analytics, and outcomes.

- Both SRSU and SHSU will mutually observe an annual system upgrade schedule.
 - Both SRSU and SHSU will continue to have individual contracts with Blackboard.
 - The migration costs associated with migrating SRSU into a shared instance of Blackboard (\$65K) will be absorbed by SRSU.
 - The planned implementation date of the migration is Fall 2020 to coincide with the end of the SRSU Blackboard 3-year contract.
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- **Shared Tools and Academic Applications.** Both parties will have access to system tools and academic applications integrated within the LMS. Tools include, but are not limited to, Blackboard Collaborate, EesySoft, Blackboard Ally, Blackboard SafeAssign, Blackboard Mobile Student, ProctorFree, Kaltura, Qquickly, NBC Learn, LogInAs.
 - Blackboard/System Administrators from each of the institutions will work in together, collaboratively, to systematically evaluate tools integrated in Blackboard, assist in their management and troubleshooting, and establish an upgrade and installation protocol and maintenance schedule.
 - **Shared Faculty Development.** Both institutions will centralize faculty development efforts to certify instructors for online teaching. Online webinars, self-paced training courses, and face-to-face sessions will be utilized. Personnel from both parties will work together, collaboratively, to create a robust faculty-training program, offering multiple opportunities for training and certification throughout the academic year.
 - **Shared Video Production.** Both institutions will centralize efforts around the production of multimedia, to include videos, animations, and simulations as deemed necessary and appropriate for academic use within fully online courses. Personnel from both parties will work together, collaboratively, to establish a recording and production schedule, as well as multiple opportunities for filming and production throughout the academic year.
 - **Shared Captioning, Transcription, and Accessibility.** Both institutions, working with the support of their respective offices for disabilities, will centralize efforts to promote and ensure accessibility in fully online courses.
 - **Shared Instructional Design & Course Development.** Both institutions will centralize efforts around the production of course design and development. Instructional designers will work together, collaboratively, to support the creation, maintenance, evaluation, and redesign of fully online courses for both institutions. Both parties will agree upon a course development methodology, including development scheduling and process. Each institution will support the use of best practices in online course design as determined to meet their respective, instructional needs.
 - **Shared Support Desk Services** SHSU Online Support Desk will provide technical and troubleshooting support to faculty and students 24hrs a day, seven days a week, when school is in session.
 - **Exchange of academic information and materials.** Given the collaborative nature of the Shared Services Project, academic information, including student grades, as well as academic course content, including assessment information, will be accessed and exchanged by personnel from both institutions holding system administrator level

privileges in the Learning Management System. Such privileges are necessary for the day-to-day functions of the operations.

3. Responsibilities of the Parties

The two parties recognize that the implementation of any agreed upon activity will depend upon the interests and expertise of the individuals involved and the availability of financial resources, space and other resources. Accordingly, the two institutions shall periodically evaluate the implementation of any exchange and cooperative program based on this MOU.

It is the expectation of this MOU that personnel from both parties will work together, collaboratively, to pool and centralize human resources, space and other resources (such as time), to support the success of the Shared Services Project.

SRSU agrees to pay SHSU \$50,000 annually for the services outlined in this MOU beginning in fall semester of 2020, to be revisited annually to determine the availability of financial resources and assess the services provided. This examination will be conducted periodically by the Associate Vice President for Distance Learning at SHSU and by the Executive Vice President and Provost at Sul Ross State University.

It is further expected that both parties will be compliant with all applicable State and federal laws and regulations and University policies.

4. Duration and Option to Amend, Extend or Terminate

This MOU will become effective when signed by both parties. The agreement will remain in effect for one academic year from the signature date, below, with the intent of subsequent annual renewal by mutual agreement of the parties.

The parties agree to periodically review the activities undertaken and the progress made and to consult concerning amendments, renewal or termination of this MOU. Either party may terminate this MOU at any time by providing written notice of such termination to the other party.

5. General Terms

This MOU is not intended to, and does not create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity, by either party, its officers, employees, or agents against the other party, its officers, employees, or agents. Nothing in this MOU obligates either party to commit or transfer any funds, assets, or other resources in support of projects or activities between the two parties.

To the extent that the implementation of any agreed upon activity requires a commitment of resources, personnel, credit-bearing coursework, or intellectual property, a supplementary agreement must be negotiated and approved by the two parties before work on any of the projects can commence.

6. Signatures

This MOU shall enter into force on the date of the signing by qualified representatives of both institutions.

Richard Egan
Sam Houston State University (SHSU)

Robert Kincaid
Sul Ross State University

Richard Egan, Provost
Printed Name & Title (SHSU)

Robert Kincaid, Provost
Printed Name & Title (SRSU)

9 JAN 2020
Date

12/19/2019
Date