Course Content: Policies and Guidelines

The Center for Online Learning & Innovation and the Information Technology Services Department together manage several online systems (including but not limited to Desire2Learn, WordPress, Network Drives, Qualtrics, Zoom, SPSS, and Google Drive) used by faculty, staff and students to conduct courses and campus administrative work. Since much course content is in some way or another intellectual property, COLI and ITS have developed a series of guidelines concerning the proper use, transfer, or support for this content. This includes:

- Content written or developed by Canisius College full-time and part-time faculty (including adjuncts).
- Content imported into a course from a third-party publisher.
- Content written or developed by Canisius College students.
- Content written or developed by a Canisius College employee.

Our Policies Below:

- Faculty Generated Content
  - COLI or ITS Staff Access
  - Faculty, Staff, or Administrator Access to Course Content in Courses Other Than Those They Teach
  - Copying Faculty-Generated Content Between Desire2Learn Course Offerings or Shells
  - Student Access to Course Content
- Third-Party Generated Content
  - Guidelines for Faculty

Faculty Generated Content

COLI and ITS consider all original course content created by a faculty member in the course of her or his teaching duties to be the intellectual property of that faculty member, and an essential ingredient in the value of a Canisius College education. Several policies below result from that position:

COLI or ITS Staff Access

In order to ensure the proper maintenance of our course content systems, and to support faculty and students, COLI or ITS staff have administrator-level access to our Learning Management System, Desire2Learn, and other content management systems on campus. Those with administrator access are a matter of record.

Faculty, Staff, or Administrator Access to Course Content in Courses Other Than Those They Teach

Faculty, staff, or administrators (including programs directors or chairpersons) can be added to courses in which they are not the instructor of record (course instructor). Course instructors, themselves, are able to enroll these individuals into their courses. To perform or assist with this process, COLI (or ITS staff if COLI staff is unavailable) requires the explicit WRITTEN consent of the course instructor if they were, are or will be on payroll within an academic year. The program director or department chairperson can request or approve access to a course offering for someone who is not the course instructor, if the course instructor was not, is not, or will not be on payroll within an academic year. In the case of a death or debilitation of an instructor, the program director or department chairperson can request or approve access to a course offering for someone who is not the course instructor. Any other conditions must have the approval of the Dean.

Copying Faculty-Generated Content Between Desire2Learn Course Offerings or Shells

COLI and ITS staff are responsible for Desire2Learn user support. It is the responsibility of each course instructor to copy their own course content between course shells. (Desire2Learn: Copying course content from one section shell to another.) COLI and ITS provide tutorials and occasional troubleshooting help for faculty in copying course content between one semester's course shell or another in Desire2Learn. Occasionally, for various reasons, COLI or ITS staff are asked to grant access to staff or faculty other than the course instructor to course offerings, for the purposes of copying course content into other course offerings. COLI or ITS staff will only do this with the explicit permission of the course instructor who teaches the course and who created the course content. If the course instructor will not be on payroll within the current academic year, we require the explicit permission of the program director or chairperson. Any other conditions must have the approval of the Dean.

In systems other than D2L, such as WordPress, Google Drive, and others that the College may procure or provide, COLI and ITS follow a similar principle: It is the responsibility of each instructor to manage her or his course content, since it is her or his intellectual property. COLI and ITS will facilitate and support this to the greatest extent. We will only copy, transfer, share, or otherwise make available that content to other persons after we have received explicit permission from the course instructor who owns it, or if that instructor will not be on payroll within the current academic year, we require the explicit permission of the program director or chairperson. Any other conditions must have the approval of the Dean.

Student Access to Course Content

When students are enrolled in a course, they are provided access to that course's content at the instructor's prerogative. By default, courses become open to students on the Friday before classes begin, and course access for students ends at the conclusion of a semester or session. At all times instructors have features within the various online systems to limit access to course content, in whole or part.

COLI and ITS consider student access to course content during a semester or session to be standard operating procedure. If a faculty member requests help in limiting student access to course content, we will provide it.

Within Desire2Learn, before or after a semester or session, courses within that semester or session are not available to any students, regardless of their enrollment relationship with that course. Instructors have features within Desire2Learn to make a course available to all students enrolled in that section prior to the Friday before classes begin, or after the semester ends. If requested by a student or anyone other than the course instructor, COLI or ITS will not make a course available without the explicit consent of the course instructor. Students requesting access to a course, including their own materials within that course, will be instructed to contact the course instructor. If the course instructor is no longer employed at Canisius College, students will be directed to contact the program director or department chairperson.
Third-Party Generated Content

Guidelines for Faculty

Canisius College Library supports databases provided through their website (library.canisius.edu). Beyond those, ITS and COLI do not provide support for digital products, content packages, course cartridges, websites, or other tools supplied by content creators outside Canisius College. These publishers may include, for example, for-profit textbook or educational content publishers, database websites, mobile apps, or other providers with which Canisius College does not have a formal, college-level business relationship. There are too many and they vary widely in function, capability, and quality. Publishers must provide support for how to enroll students into online components of their packages, upload their content cartridges into Learning Management Systems like D2L, employ faculty tools such as quiz or exam builders, and so forth.

ITS and COLI strongly urge faculty to investigate and thoroughly test publisher digital products before using them in a class. Here are some questions faculty should forward to any content provider:

- How and where will students enroll, if enrollment is required beyond Desire2Learn, to access the content?
- How and where will students get personal assistance, troubleshooting help, and tutorial documentation to use the content?
- How will the provider handle any student-specific or -generated data that is stored in their system? What security measures do they have in place to ensure the security of this data, in accordance with Federal Government guidelines concerning student data?
- Does the publisher supply step-by-step text instructions with image examples, or even tutorial videos, for instructors?
- Does the publisher supply a number to call, email address, or a web form to contact instructor support services?
- When may instructors access or obtain any student-specific or generated data, and when does that access end?
- How might instructors download and store student-specific or generated data, for record-keeping purposes? In what file formats will that data be available to download?
- Some content package providers enable instructors to upload their own content to use in conjunction with publisher content. What stipulations does the publisher make concerning the intellectual property rights of the instructor who uploads her or his own content?

Instructors should have a “plan B” in case a portion of publisher-supplied content doesn’t work the way it should.

Guidelines for Publishers

Generally, Canisius College ITS and the Center for Online Learning & Innovation are willing to install publisher tools and integrations into Desire2Learn, but there are some important things content publishers should be aware of:

- Canisius College ITS and the Center for Online Learning & Innovation reserve the right to reject any such tool or integration at any time. This means we might elect not to install it, or might remove it at our discretion.
- Canisius College’s D2L administrators do not provide training or troubleshooting support for publishers’ integrations or tools. Canisius College ITS Help Desk does not support these tools or integrations. If students or faculty encounter problems with publisher applications of any kind, they are directed by Help Desk to contact the publisher for technical support.
- If a publisher representative becomes aware of a problem with their integration within Canisius’ D2L instance that requires Canisius administrator intervention, they should supply specific instruction to the Canisius administrator, and should anticipate several business days before action can be taken.