

### Executive Summary

This report provides the results of the Courseware Documentation Working Group's (CDWG's) evaluation of existing Penn-created Canvas documentation and user-submitted Canvas support requests. The group audited 207 pieces of existing documentation, surveyed 6,695 users for feedback on Canvas documentation and preferences, and analyzed approximately 23 months of user-submitted support requests (10,678 tickets).

### Results of the data analyzed show that:

- The current documentation was largely procedural (how-to instructions) and less pedagogical (consisting mainly of best practices or instructional design principles), and/or technological (reporting warnings, errors, or bugs).
- Many users seem to be unaware that documentation exists and where to find it.
- The vast majority of documentation (75%) was aimed at faculty.
- Some procedures and tools were heavily covered, while others, such as importing content and using some LTIs, were not thoroughly documented.
- Across all roles, survey respondents most often seek Canvas help by talking to friends or colleagues; after that, they seek solutions by using a search engine (Google) or by emailing Courseware Support (Penn Libraries).
- All types of users of online documentation strongly preferred searchable text-and-images documentation over video documentation.

### The report finds that, going forward:

- Canvas documentation for Penn should be hosted on a single website (Canvas at Penn) and all program-specific documentation should be linked from this site.
- There should be a new group--the Courseware Documentation Editorial Board--responsible for the creation and maintenance of Canvas and related courseware documentation, and it should follow a workflow that ensures the utility, currency, and accessibility of all such documentation.
- Templates based on instructional-design best practices should be created and made optionally available to instructors through the various Canvas course request forms at Penn, and instructors should be encouraged to be consistent within their course sites.
- Universal-design-for-learning standards should be encouraged and requisite skills for implementing these standards should be provided to users through an online tutorial.
- Documentation intended for students should be considered separately from documentation intended for faculty and staff.

The group understands that this was a first attempt at such a large-scale review of Canvas documentation, so audit and survey processes may not have been perfect. Any future reviews of documentation would be able to learn from this work.

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## I. Introduction

### The Courseware Documentation Group (CDWG)

The Courseware Documentation Working Group (CDWG) formed in January 2015 to unify end-user documentation efforts among Canvas support staff across schools and programs at the University of Pennsylvania. The following is a report of the CDWG's findings and recommendations for the future of Canvas documentation at the University of Pennsylvania.

### Background of Canvas at the University of Pennsylvania

On May 30, 2014, Canvas became the official learning-management system (LMS) at the University of Pennsylvania, replacing Blackboard. During the 2012-2013 Canvas pilot and 2013-2014 migration from Blackboard to Canvas, support staff diligently tested and documented Canvas's behaviors, features, and functions for various cohorts of end-users, many of whom exhibited unique needs, and some of whom already had experience with Canvas through separate instances at the University (Wharton and GSE users) that would eventually be merged into a single UPenn Canvas instance before the May 30th sunsetting of Blackboard.

### Post-Migration Documentation Issues

Support staff had begun to notice these issues with documentation written during the Canvas pilot and migration phases once users were fully transitioned to Canvas:

- There was much unnecessary redundancy, and some inaccuracies, in documentation across schools and programs that wrote their own, independent of Courseware Support and the vendor (Instructure).
- Time constraints imposed by the need to quickly on-board new users led to sufficient-but-improvable quality of documentation in many cases.
- Most documentation was made in consultation with those who participated in the Canvas pilot. Therefore, much of the documentation did not anticipate the full range of users' needs.
- There was no accessibility policy in place for documentation and no effort to encourage universal-design-for-learning<sup>1</sup> practices for building Canvas sites.
- Some documentation referred to features, tools, or services no longer offered or supported. This is due, in part, to Canvas's three-week production release cycle, through which new features are added and bugs are fixed, as well as the proliferation of LTIs, both licensed and piloted.

Through the diligence and creativity of numerous support staff, these issues have had minimal impact on the quality of the Canvas user experience at Penn. Nevertheless, to avoid the

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<sup>1</sup> The National Center on Universal Design for Learning defines "universal design for learning" as "a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn" (<http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/whatisudl>).

proliferation of these and other documentation issues, a new approach to managing Canvas documentation is necessary at the University of Pennsylvania. While anecdotal evidence of the issues listed above has been numerous and consistently reported, there needed to be a substantial investigation of Canvas documentation at Penn before any effort to improve it could be initiated, hence the formation of the CDWG.

## II. Courseware Documentation Working Group (CDWG)

### Formation

Originally formed by three colleagues from different organizations at Penn, the CDWG grew to include nine support staff from the following organizations:

- Cadence Anderson, Senior IT Project Leader, Courseware Team, Wharton Computing (founding member, participated through September 2015)
- Angelina Conti, Associate Director, Arts & Sciences Online Learning (founding member)
- Linda Lee, Instructional Design Project Leader, Courseware Team, Wharton Computing (joined September 2015)
- Julie McGuirk, Associate Director, Center for Teaching and Learning (joined January 2015)
- Becky Moulder, Courseware Instructional Designer, Penn Libraries (joined April 2015)
- Joe Schaffner, Courseware Support Librarian, Penn Libraries (founding member)
- Elizabeth Scheyder, Instructional Technology Project Leader, SAS Computing (joined January 2015)
- Jon Stewart, Web Application Developer, Graduate School of Education (joined January 2015)
- Min Zhong, Library Service Assistant II, Annenberg School for Communication (joined January 2015)

In December 2014, a call for CDWG membership was placed for anyone in the Courseware Advisory, which is a group of Penn academic and IT support staff who help faculty and students with Canvas and related courseware. Any member of the Courseware Advisory was eligible to join the CDWG. In January 2015, the CDWG convened officially for the first time, after which regularly monthly meetings were held until April 2016.

### Objectives

From its outset, the CDWG's work has been guided by the following objectives:

- To use existing documentation that is deemed effective as a model for future documentation recommendations.
- To create guidelines for new Penn-wide documentation based on our users' needs and that uses the most effective mode for the topic.

- To identify and preserve school and program-specific documentation and, when appropriate and solicited, help revise/improve this documentation.
- To develop policies and processes for maintaining and revising documentation.
- To use accessibility standards to make sure documentation is useful to all Canvas users and to encourage accessibility practices in Canvas sites.

## Data Points, Rationale, and Methodologies

CDWG members agreed that many of the issues, existing or potential, with Canvas documentation could be rectified if the group's objectives were met. To meet these objectives, the CDWG identified three necessary data points:

- An audit of existing Penn-created Canvas documentation
- A survey of user feedback on existing documentation and preferences
- An analysis of user-submitted support requests

The following table outlines the rationale for each data point and gives the chosen methodologies for obtaining and analyzing these data:

Data Point	Rationale	Methodology
An audit of existing Penn-created Canvas documentation	To identify academic and IT support's assumptions about users' needs; to see whom was most targeted (e.g., faculty); to identify redundancies and inaccuracies; to find school-specific needs	Qualitative content audit of online documentation solicited from the Courseware Advisory
A survey of user feedback on existing documentation and preferences	To understand how users are currently accessing Canvas help and support; to identify users' format and content preferences for documentation; to see what they think about existing Penn-provided Canvas documentation; to note when documentation seems not to reach users (i.e., documentation already exists for something a user wants documented).	Qualitative and quantitative analysis of results from a user survey that was promoted via a system-wide announcement in Canvas and paper flyers distributed across the university
An analysis of user-submitted support requests	To identify use-case trends across the University and within schools and programs; to find processes and features that could be better documented and consequently reduce support requests; to note user-types (e.g., students), categories of objects (e.g., Canvas features), and specific objects (e.g.,	Analysis of ticketing data from Courseware Support's central FootPrints ticketing system

	quizzes) across support requests	
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## Outcomes

The CDWG would like to see the following outcomes from sharing this report:

- The formation of a new group--the Canvas Documentation Editorial Board--to oversee the creation and management of Penn-specific Canvas documentation based on the CDWG's conclusions.
- The creation of new Penn-specific Canvas documentation based on the CDWG's conclusions, composed from the guidelines the Canvas Documentation Editorial Board establishes.
- The establishment of a single online resource for Canvas documentation at the University of Pennsylvania.
- The retention of school-specific documentation when it is deemed necessary, and the adoption of the new Penn-specific documentation by all schools and programs in the UPenn Canvas instance.
- The creation of optional templates for Canvas sites based on instructional-design best practices and UDL principles.
- The application of accessibility standards to all Penn-specific Canvas documentation, school-specific documentation, and user-built Canvas-site content, including appropriate training and resources on these topics for staff and users alike.

The remainder of this report describes the process by which these outcome-goals were reached by sharing the method-details and findings from the three data-point inquiries, the conclusions drawn from each, and the concluding recommendations upon which these outcomes are based.

### III. First Data Point: An Audit of Existing Penn-created Canvas Documentation

#### Content-Audit Purpose

The first initiative of the CDWG was to create a comprehensive audit of all the Canvas documentation currently available to students, staff, and faculty at the University of Pennsylvania. The purpose of the audit was to identify academic and IT support's assumptions about users' needs; to see which population of users was most targeted (e.g., faculty); to identify redundancies and inaccuracies; and to find school-specific needs.

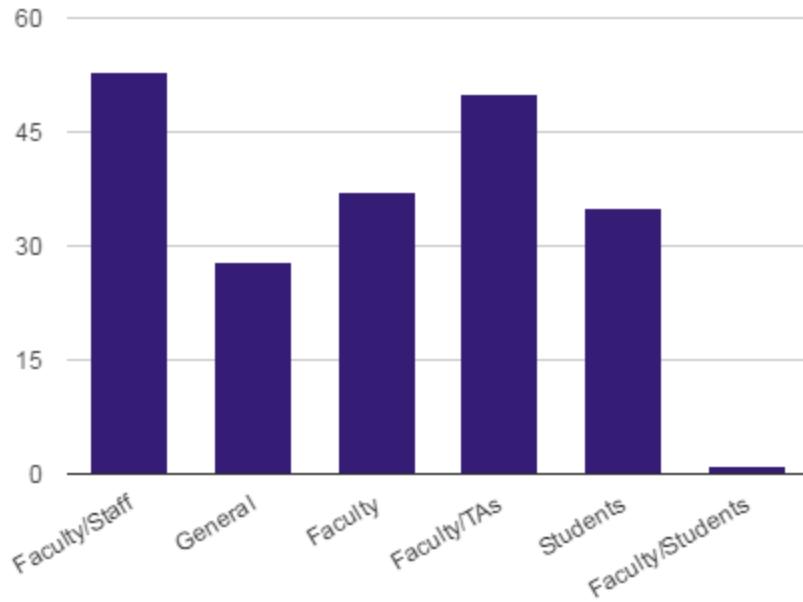
#### Content-Audit Methodology

In order to understand, categorize, and improve the current Canvas documentation available to the entire Penn community, the CDWG developed a content-audit process. This process began with identifying all webpages that mention using Canvas at the University of Pennsylvania and organizing each page by school or affiliation. This data was compiled into a master documentation spreadsheet and divided among CDWG members (coders). A Google Survey served as the vehicle for auditing content and taking notes about each piece of documentation. The survey contained questions asking the coder to categorize each piece of documentation as pedagogical (consisting mainly of best practices or instructional design principles), procedural (how-to instructions), and/or technological (reporting warnings, errors, or bugs). The full list of survey questions is contained in [Appendix I](#).

Each team member was responsible for reviewing approximately 25 webpages and completing the survey to report on what documentation the pages contain, who the intended audience is, if there are any broken links or incorrect information, and whether the documentation was a "how-to" guide, best practice, or pedagogical instruction. Coders could also include any other comments or observations they found while viewing each page.

#### Content-Audit Findings

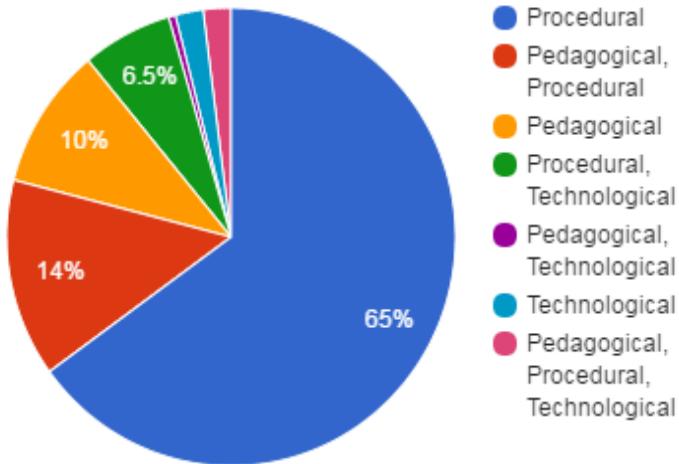
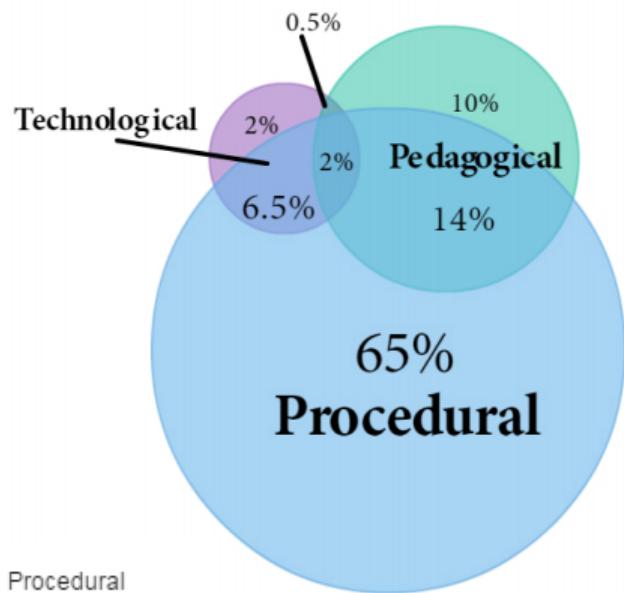
The content audit identified that 75% of current documentation is aimed at faculty as the primary audience, but may also be applicable to staff and TAs. Thirty percent of documentation mentions instructions for staff, 45% is applicable to TAs, and approximately 23% of documentation is specific to students.



**Figure 1: Target audience for Canvas documentation.** Documentation was categorized by audience: faculty, staff, TAs, students or general. More than one category could be chosen for each documentation site.

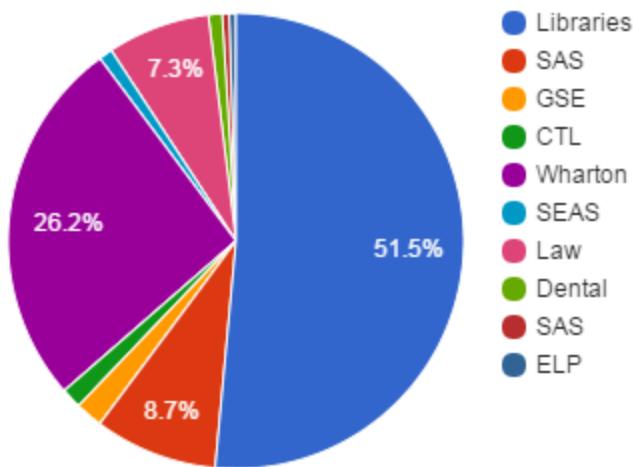
The majority of Canvas documentation is text-based and procedural in nature rather than pedagogical. A strong example of pedagogical documentation, however, is found in the teaching support resources ([teachingsupport.wharton.upenn.edu](http://teachingsupport.wharton.upenn.edu) [Please see [Appendix I.I](#)]) offered by The Wharton School. Approximately half of all documentation includes step-by-step instructions and/or links to Canvas guides found online through the [Canvas Community](#). The Canvas Community guides created by the vendor, Instructure, contain detailed instructions and screenshots of each step. These guides are also frequently updated, making them an ideal supplement to the Penn-specific documentation.

**Figure 2: Relative representation and overlap of documentation purpose.** This Venn diagram represents the relative amount and overlap of documentation that were categorized as serving as technological, pedagogical, or procedural guides.

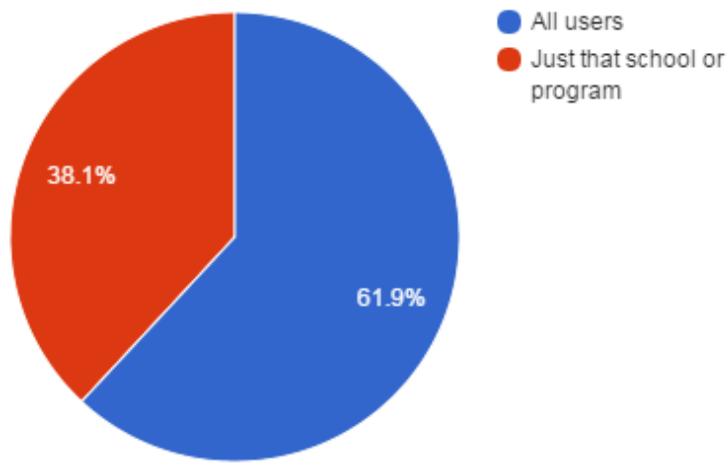


**Figure 3: Purpose of Canvas documentation.** Categorization of all documentation sites by the single or multiple purposes they served: pedagogical, procedural, or technological

Schools and organizations that did not have any specific Canvas documentation at the time of the content audit (August 2015) include the School of Nursing, School of Design, School of Social Policy & Practice, Perelman School of Medicine, Annenberg School for Communication, and other programs that may not be under a specific school but manage non-course sites. The [School of Nursing](#) has since added school-specific Canvas documentation.



**Figure 4: Overview of documentation sources by school or center.** The relative amount of Canvas documentation sites in various Penn schools or centers. Canvas documentation is hosted on web pages for the following schools and organizations: Penn Libraries, School of Arts and Sciences, The Wharton School, Graduate School of Education, the Dental School, School of Engineering and Applied Science, English Language Programs, Penn Law, and the Center for Teaching and Learning.



**Figure 5: Breakdown of school-specific or general audience for documentation.** Documentation was categorized as being either specific to a certain school's audience or to all users.

Through the process of the content audit, the CDWG found that substantial documentation exists regarding the following processes in Canvas:

- Creating Assignments
- Using Canvas Communication Tools
- Adding Files and Course Materials
- Getting Help
- Using the Gradebook

- Creating Course Sites
- Site Configuration
- Navigating Canvas
- Using the Calendar
- Logging In
- Creating Quizzes

The CDWG found that across all documentation, the following processes were not well covered:

- Importing Content
- PennKey Creation/Use
- Creating User Accounts
- User Management
- Pedagogical best practices and instruction

Some of these topics--including PennKey creation, user accounts, and user management--were intentionally not included in Canvas documentation because they are covered by automatic processes. Additionally, the majority of users would not have the permissions and ability to take any of these actions on their own. Some of these topics may be appropriate for Canvas administrators, but not faculty, staff, and students. Topics specifically directed toward sub-account administrators are also not well covered in the documentation.

Regarding specific tools and features in Canvas, the following topics were the most covered:

- Assignments
- Gradebook
- Files
- Quizzes
- Modules
- Pages

The following tools and features were not well covered at the time of the content audit:

- LTI Tools, such as Piazza, Yellowdig (no documentation), Respondus, and Kaltura (no documentation), McGraw-Hill
- Draft State
- Outcomes
- Speedgrader
- Adding People
- Course Reserves
- Canvas Conferences
- YouTube

Since the time of the content audit, procedural documentation has been created for these 2015-2016 tool pilots: Yellowdig, Respondus, Kaltura, and Poll Everywhere. Additionally, documentation has been written for the new Turnitin LTI, which appeared in the UPenn Canvas instance on May 17, 2016.

The following comments are those included in the free-text box for the content-audit survey used for this process. These comments were submitted by individual CDWG members reviewing documentation:

- Some documentation pages are out of date or include broken links
- Many content pages are applicable to most schools, except X and Y (should these pages be marked? And if so, how?)
- Suggestion to create a table displaying different tools/instructions used by each school

## Content-Audit Recommendations

- Because faculty members and TAs have more editing permissions and use more Canvas features, it is expected that there would be more instructions and best practices aimed at those in a teaching role. Considering that 92% of Canvas user survey participants were students, however, the Courseware Documentation Editorial Board may want to review whether current documentation for students is sufficient or needs to be expanded.
- Text-based documentation is appropriate for users since it can be easily searched and scanned.
- The Courseware Documentation Editorial Board may want to consider including more pedagogical instruction as there is currently significant documentation on how to use Canvas features, but little direction given regarding the “why.”
- With a new Canvas user interface having debuted in May 2016, Penn-hosted documentation will need to be updated to reflect this change. It is anticipated that the Canvas Community guides will be updated to show the new user interface.

## IV. Second Data Point: A Survey of User Feedback on Existing Documentation and Preferences

### Canvas-User-Survey Purpose

The purpose of the user survey was to understand how users are currently accessing Canvas help and support; to identify users' format and content preferences for documentation; to see what they think about existing Penn-provided Canvas documentation; and to note when documentation seems not to reach users (i.e., documentation already exists for something a user wants documented).

### Canvas-User-Survey Methodology

The data came from a Qualtrics survey that ran from September 8 through September 28, 2015. Administering the survey during the academic year excluded visiting summer students. The survey was promoted in a variety of ways, including as a system-wide announcement in Canvas and via paper flyers with a QR code (please see [Appendix II](#)). To increase the response rate of Canvas users with teaching roles, the survey remained open until late September with a system-wide announcement in Canvas targeting those with teaching roles (teacher and TA). Incentives for participation among all respondents included three randomly awarded prizes and one prize for the most helpful comment.

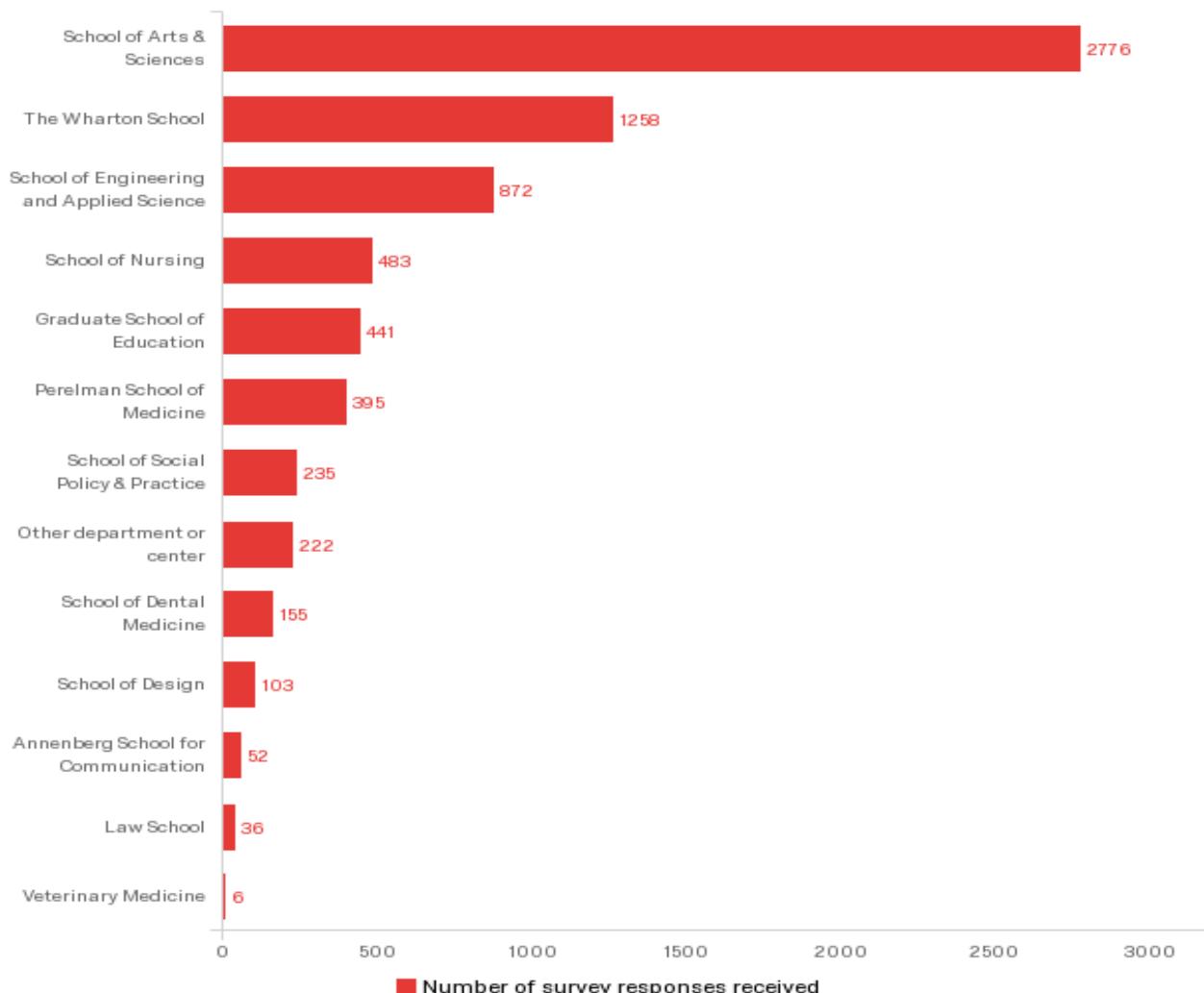
The survey produced qualitative and quantitative data from 5,653 completed responses to the survey (6,695 surveys started). Respondents were asked two demographic questions (home school and Canvas user role) and then a combination of multiple choice and open-ended questions about how users access Canvas help and preferences for Canvas documentation.

Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used to analyze the survey data. Qualitative responses were hand-coded using a combination of etic and emic codes; other codes were emergent. All non-student-only responses were hand-coded by two people, and at least 10% of the comments for questions with large student participation were hand-coded by two people. (Please see [Appendix II.I](#))

## Canvas-User-Survey Findings

### Demographics

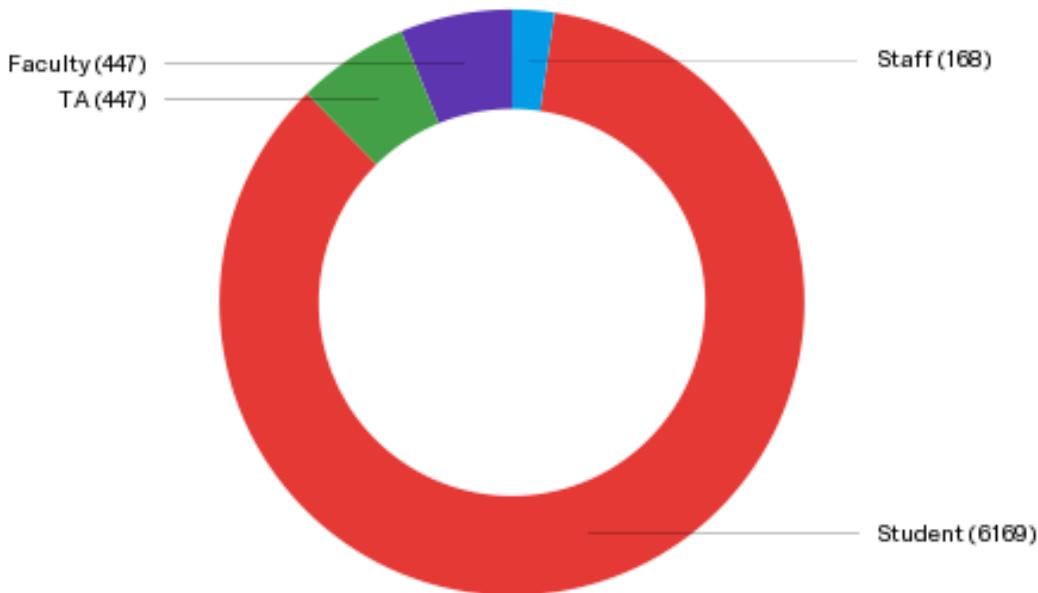
We collected basic demographic information for all survey respondents, including their home school and user roles in Canvas. Schools with the most responses included the School of Arts and Sciences (2,776 responses, 41%), The Wharton School (1,258 responses, 19%), the School of Engineering and Applied Science (872 responses, 13%), School of Nursing (483 responses, 7%), and the Graduate School of Education (441 responses, 7%).



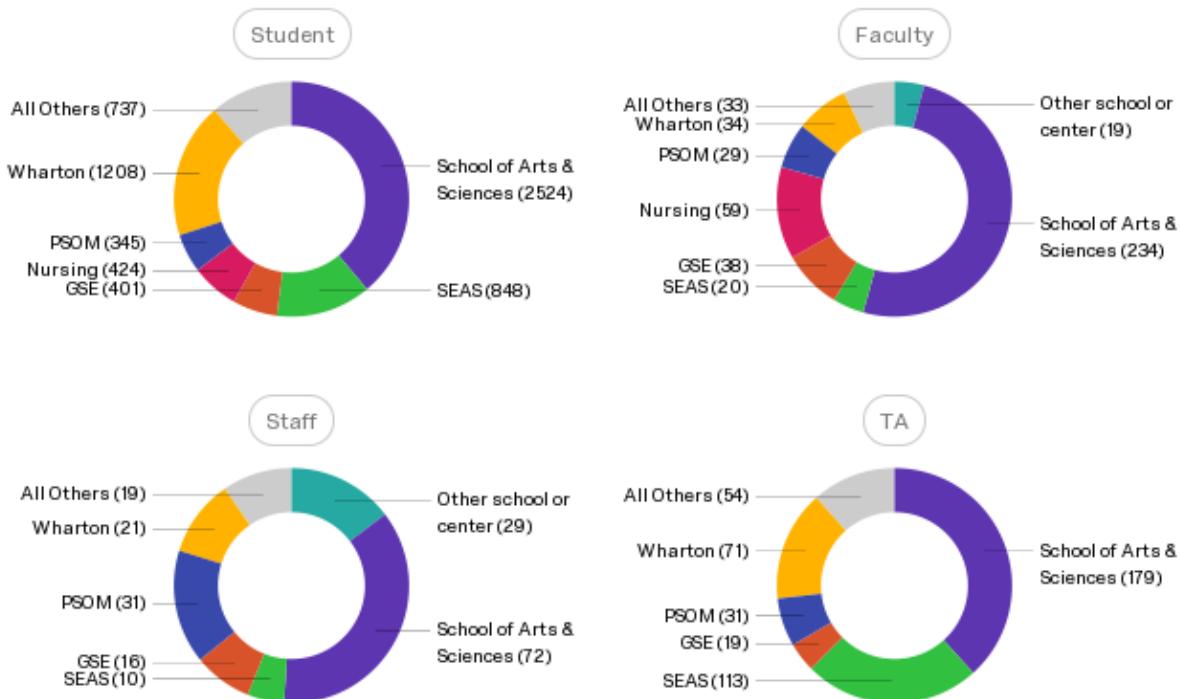
**Figure 6: Home schools of Canvas user survey responses.** Survey respondents were asked to indicate a primary home school or center; only a single response was permitted. As expected, schools with larger populations generally had more responses.

### User roles in Canvas

We asked respondents to identify their roles as Canvas users. They were given the choice of student, faculty, staff, and TA, and instructed to identify all the roles that apply. The majority of the respondents identified a Canvas role of student (6,169 responses, 92%), with 447 (7%) selecting faculty, 447 (7%) selecting TA, and 168 (3%) selecting staff.



**Figure 7: Canvas user roles of survey responses.** Respondents were instructed to indicate all roles that apply; multiple responses were permitted. In total, 6,695 surveys were started and 7,231 Canvas roles were identified.



**Figure 8: Breakdown of user roles by home school.** There is considerable variability of reported user role by school. For example, users reporting a Canvas role of "TA" are most often in SAS, Wharton, SEAS, PSOM, or GSE. While some variability reflects the relative size of the schools/organizations, there are some roles within schools that are over- or under-represented in the survey results.

The options presented are consistent with terminology used to identify primary roles within the university (student, faculty, staff, TA) but do not align with the user roles within Canvas (student, teacher, TA, designer, admin). Students and TAs may be either undergraduate or graduate students, or faculty or staff who take courses may select also select a Student role. Additionally, the implications of “faculty” (university role) and “teacher” (Canvas role) are different.

Of the 6,169 people who identified a Canvas role of “Student,” 495 also selected at least one other role: 48 also selected faculty (respondents were primarily from SAS, GSE, Wharton, SEAS, and PSOM); 64 also selected staff (respondents were primarily from SAS, GSE, PSOM, SEAS, and Wharton); and 383 also selected TA (respondents were primarily from SAS, SEAS, Wharton, Design, GSE, and PSOM).

**Figure 9: Users specifying multiple roles in Canvas.** This table demonstrates how many respondents of each user role indicated additional user roles. For instance, among the 477 people who identified their Canvas user role as TA, 383 also selected student, 23 also selected faculty (“teacher” in Canvas), and 19 also selected staff. These 447 responses represent 6.68% of the total 6,695 respondents. *Note: The totals in the bottom row add up to more than 100% because multiple responses were permitted.*

	Student	Faculty	Staff	TA	Total
Student	6169 100.00%	48 0.78%	64 1.04%	383 6.21%	6169 100.00%
Faculty	48 10.74%	447 100.00%	26 5.82%	23 5.15%	447 100.00%
Staff	64 38.10%	26 15.48%	168 100.00%	19 11.31%	168 100.00%
TA	383 85.68%	23 5.15%	19 4.25%	447 100.00%	447 100.00%
Total	6169 92.14%	447 6.68%	168 2.51%	447 6.68%	6695 100.00%

In consideration of these multiple possible roles, this analysis of the survey results differentiates between respondents who answered student-only (referred to as SO in this report) and those who responded as something other than student-only (responses identified as FST in this report)—that is faculty, staff, TA, or a combination of those roles including student.

### Question 1: Current Sources of Canvas Help

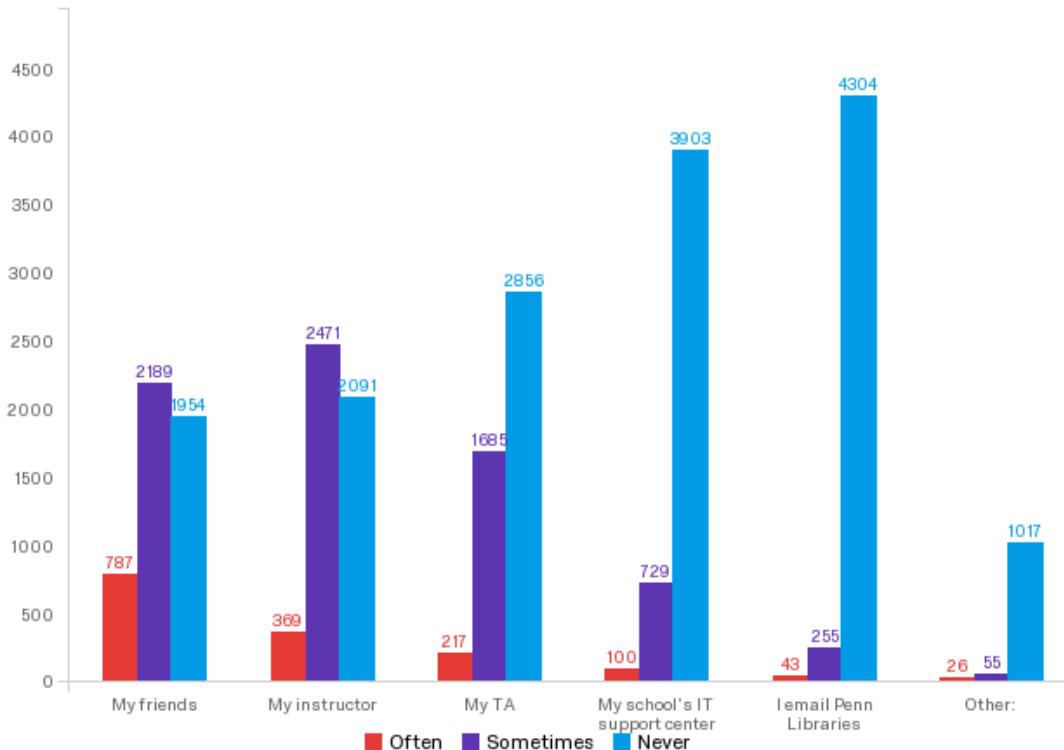
The first survey question asked about where users currently go for help with Canvas, how often that help is sought (often, sometimes, or never), and how that help is requested (talk, email, or ticket). Respondents were presented with a list of options for help, along with an open-ended “other” response option, and instructed to select all that apply.

The list of help options varied according to user type. Respondents who indicated a “student” role in Canvas could choose from among: my friends, my instructor, my TA, my school’s IT support center, Penn Libraries, and other. Respondents who did not indicate a “student” role in Canvas could choose from among: colleagues, departmental staff, departmental IT support, Penn Libraries, and other.

Although respondents could select multiple user roles in the introductory demographic question, question 1 (Who do you contact for Canvas help?) displayed a different set of possible responses depending on whether “student” was selected as a Canvas role. Consequently, appropriate information about individuals with multiple Canvas roles including “student” may not have been captured.

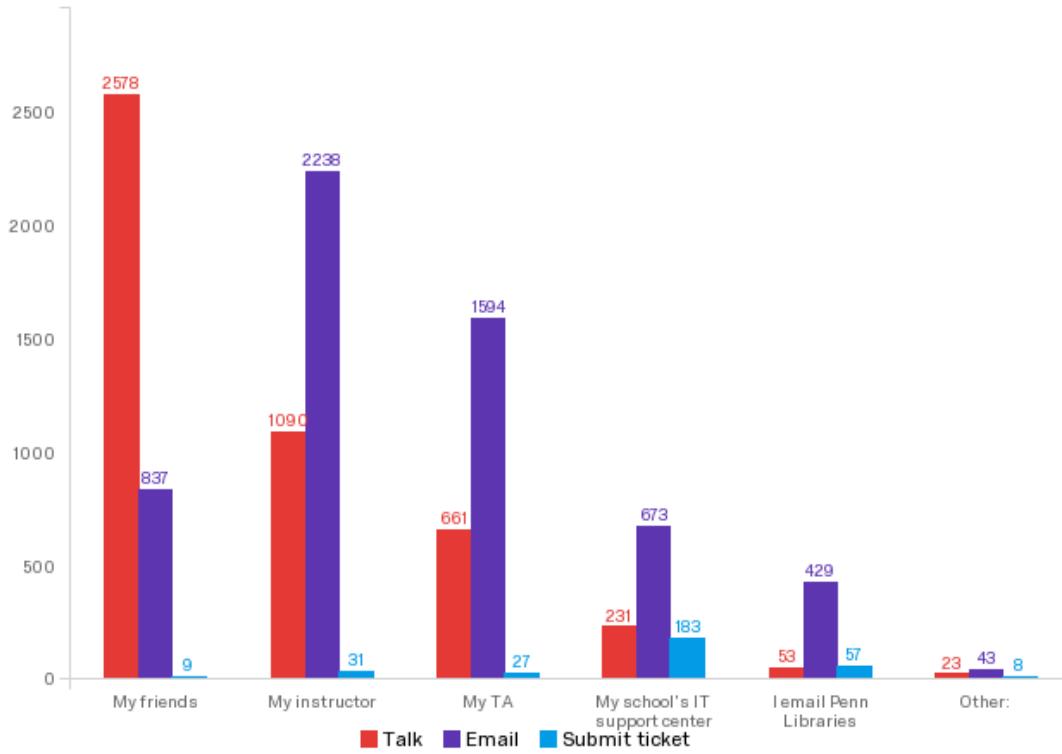
*Student responses:*

Students most often seek out Canvas help by talking to friends or emailing instructors or TAs; they rarely or never request assistance from their departmental IT support or Penn Libraries. Among those who answered “other” (131 responses), the most common response was that they had never needed help with Canvas, followed by specific non-course people (such as advisors, program directors, and support staff), and web-based resources like Google or social media sites like Facebook or course-based communication tools like Piazza for assistance from peers. Most students do not use school IT resources or Penn Library support for Canvas.



**Figure 10: Question 1a: Who do you contact for Canvas help and how often do you contact them?**

Students were presented with five options (and an open-ended “other”) for where they seek assistance with Canvas and how often. Most students rely on friends, instructors, and TAs for help, while very few seek help through school IT resources or Penn Libraries Courseware Support team .

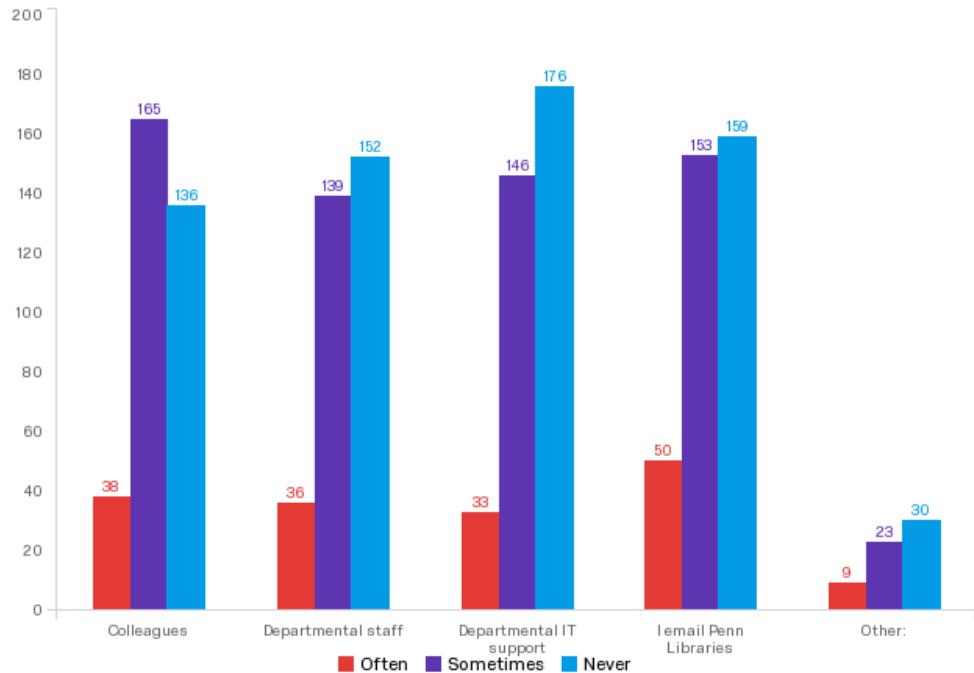


**Figure 11: Question 1b: Who do you contact for Canvas help and how do you contact them?**

Students were asked how they contact each type of help. Some options (submit ticket) were not appropriate to every option. Talk and email are the most frequent means of obtaining Canvas assistance. For some options (IT support, Penn Libraries), sending an email might generate a support ticket.

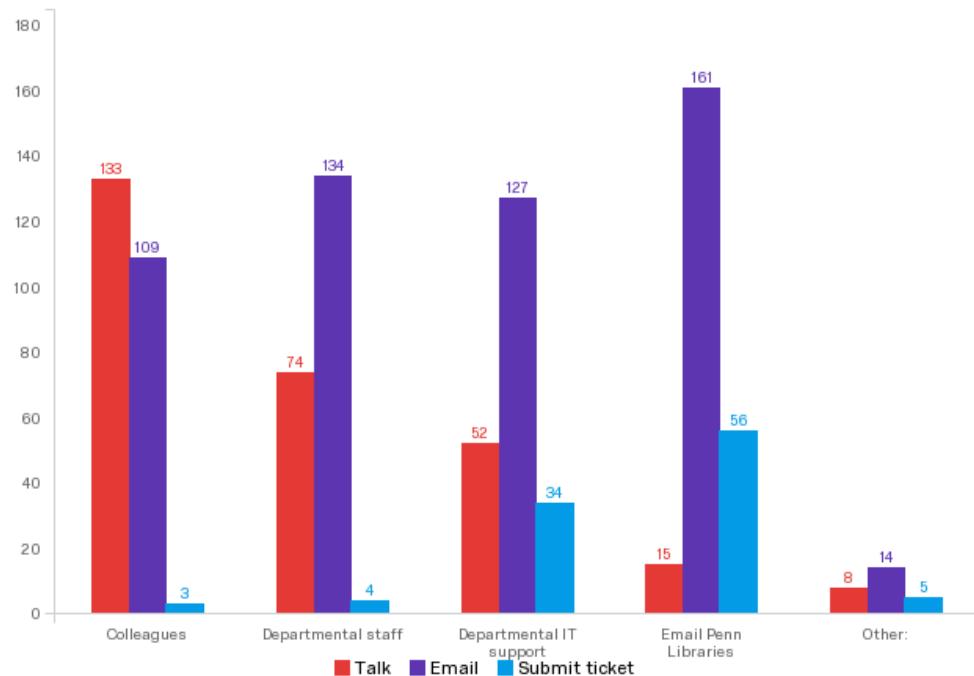
*Non-student responses:*

Non students most often talk to colleagues or email other resources (departmental staff, departmental IT reps, or Penn Libraries) for assistance with Canvas. Among those who answered “other” (53 responses), the most common responses were Penn-based support (16 responses), specific non-course people (15 responses, such as IT support staff, colleagues, or program support staff). Other common responses included not needing assistance (8 responses), course-specific people (TAs and students, 7 responses), and web-based resources like Google (6 responses).



**Figure 12: Question 1a: Who do you contact for Canvas help and how often do you contact them?**

Respondents who did not indicate a role of student were presented with a list of options (and an open-ended “Other”). These results suggest that currently, there is no preferred channel that FST respondents use for Canvas support.



**Figure 13: Question 1b: Who do you contact for Canvas help and how do you contact them?**

Faculty, staff, and TAs were asked to indicate what methods they used (talk, email, or submit ticket) when seeking help with Canvas. Some means of contact (submit ticket) were not appropriate choices for all options. This group is more likely to talk to or email someone for assistance.

## Question 2: Seeking Canvas help online

Question 2 asked respondents to indicate where they go for help online (if they do so). This open-ended question yielded 1,893 responses from people with a student-only (SO) role in Canvas and 443 responses from people with a non-student-only (FST) role. These responses were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods, including coding using a combination of etic, emic, and emergent codes. Additionally, word cloud visualizations, generated automatically by Qualtrics, present the 50 most common words that appear in responses (excluding stopwords).

### *Student-only responses*

Ten percent of the 1,893 SO responses were hand-coded. These responses indicated that people primarily seek online assistance from non-Canvas web sources like Google (89 responses), Instructure's Canvas guides (42 responses), or not at all (68 responses). The complete set of responses are presented in a word cloud automatically generated by Qualtrics. The most common words include Google, Canvas, guides/quiding, Instructure, and school(s).



**Figure 14: Question 2: If you go online for Canvas help where do you go?** This word cloud, automatically generated by Qualtrics, presents the 50 most frequent words in the 1,893 responses given by students. Larger words appeared more frequently. This word cloud visually demonstrates the importance of online resources, with “Google” appearing as the most common term. These data also surfaced other external online resources (YouTube, Facebook, search, online, sites/websites). It also emphasizes both course-specific resources (professor, instructor, teacher, TA) and school-specific resources (Penn, UPenn, library, Wharton). Although the question asked about online help, many responses reference people (friends, TA, person, people, professor). Additionally, numerous words suggest not looking for help at all (don’t, haven’t, rarely, none, can’t, nowhere).

### *Non-student-only responses*

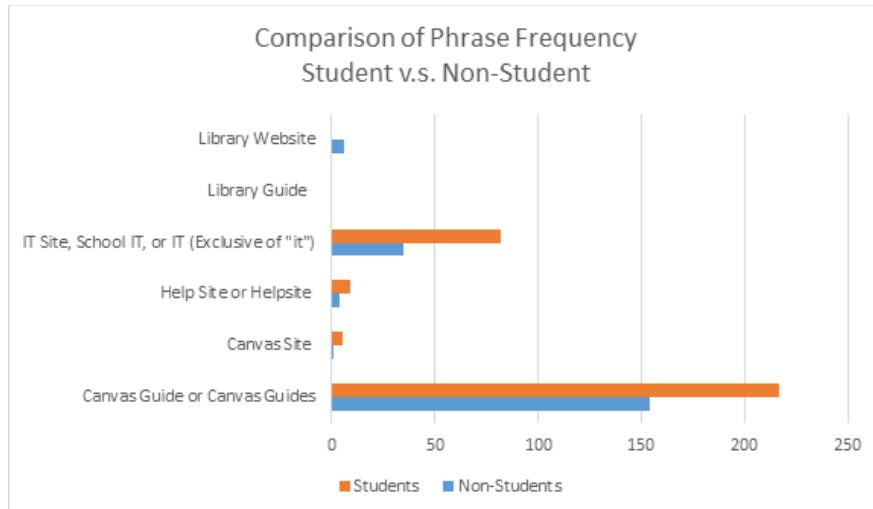
All 443 faculty, staff, and TA (FST) responses were hand-coded. These responses indicate that

people primarily seek online assistance from Instructure's Canvas guides (201 responses), non-Canvas web sources like Google (153 responses), and Penn support documentation (90 responses). The complete set of responses from each group are presented in a word cloud automatically generated by Qualtrics. The most common words include Google, Canvas, guides/guiding, and Instructure.



**Figure 15: Question 2: If you go online for Canvas help where do you go?** This word cloud represents responses given by faculty, staff, and TAs. Larger words appeared more frequently in responses. As with the student-only responses, the most common words include Canvas, Google, and guides/guiding. Several words suggest various external online sources (Instructure, Google, search, YouTube, canvaslms, websites, community), while others suggest Penn or school-specific resources (library, UPenn/Penn, van, pelt, Joe, pobox, school's/schools, support, GSE). Several responses reiterated this group's preference for seeking assistance through talking to friends/colleagues or emailing (Joe, friends, instructor, people, email). Additionally, a smaller number of words in the cloud suggest not looking for help (don't, nowhere, na).

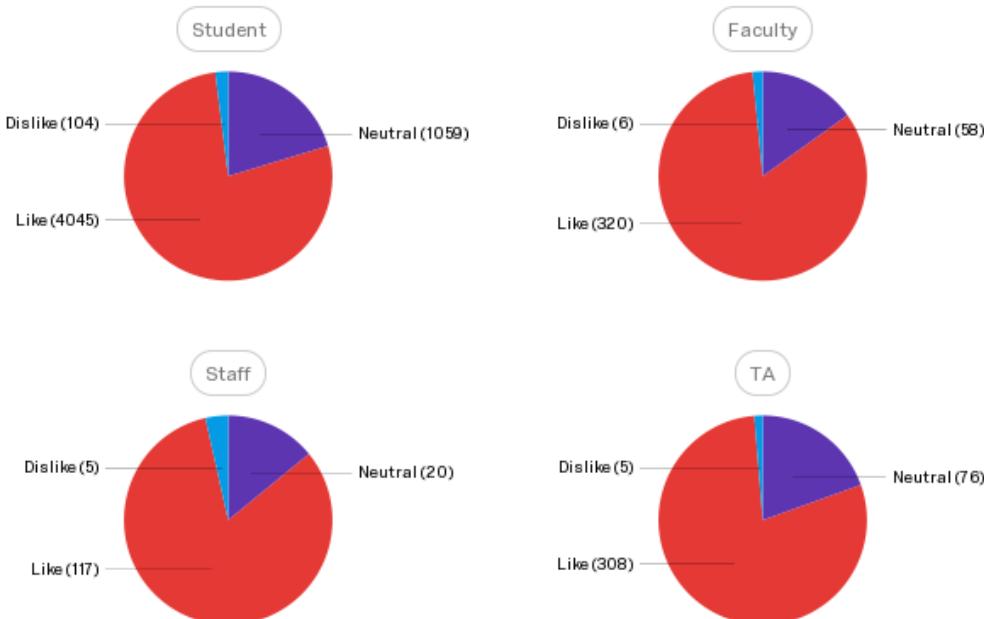
Word clouds have limitations. Because only a limited number of words can appear within a word cloud, not every response can be represented. Additionally, word clouds present individual words rather than phrases. This was a specific concern for responses to this question because the acronym “IT” (information technology or instructional technology) was automatically eliminated from the word clouds along with its homonym, the pronoun “it.” To account for this, the frequency of phrases in the SO and FST responses were analyzed. The most common phrases that appeared in SO responses were Canvas guide(s), IT site, and school IT. The most common phrases that appeared in FST responses were Canvas guide(s), IT site, and library website.



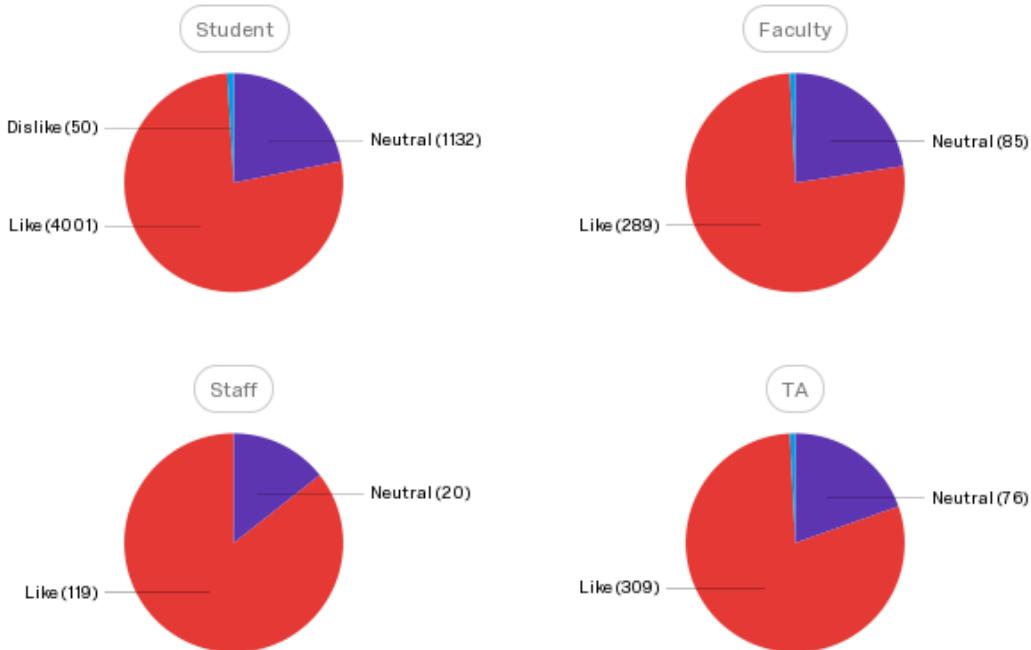
**Figure 16: Question 2: Comparison of phrase frequency in SO and FST responses.** Students used the phrases “Canvas Guide(s),” “IT site/school IT,” and “help site” most often; faculty, staff, and TAs used the phrases “Canvas guide(s),” “IT site/school IT,” and “library website” most often.

### Question 3: Online documentation preferences

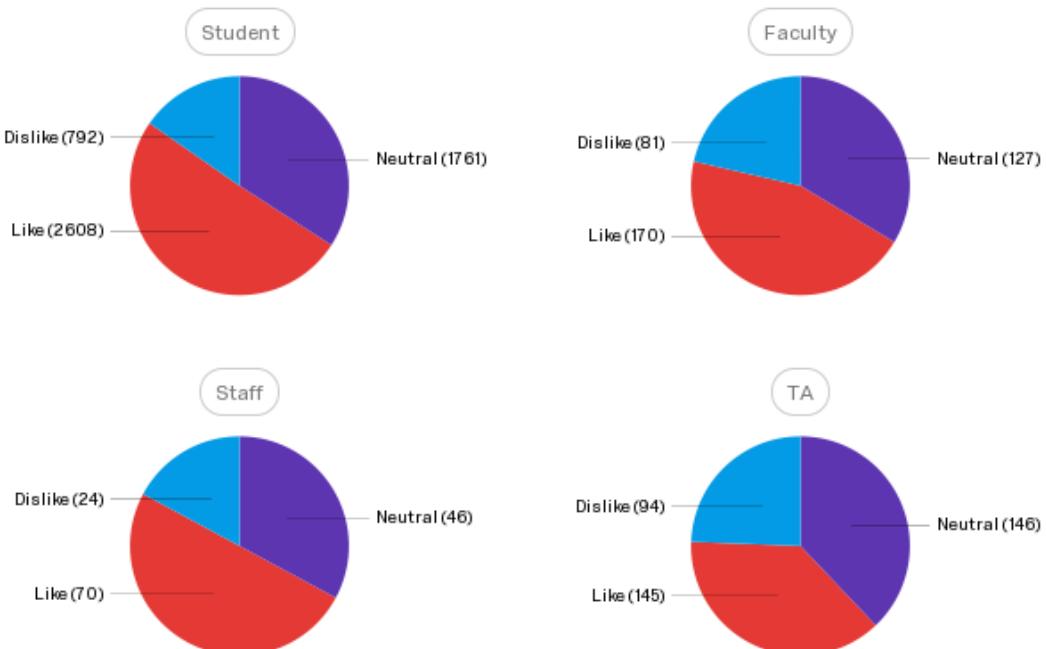
Question 3 asked respondents to indicate what kind of documentation they like (text, image, or video), and they could indicate their preference (like, neutral, or dislike). With more than 5,600 responses to this question, Canvas users at Penn demonstrate a clear preference for text and image over video. Though roughly half of the respondents indicated liking video, a large number indicated disliking video.



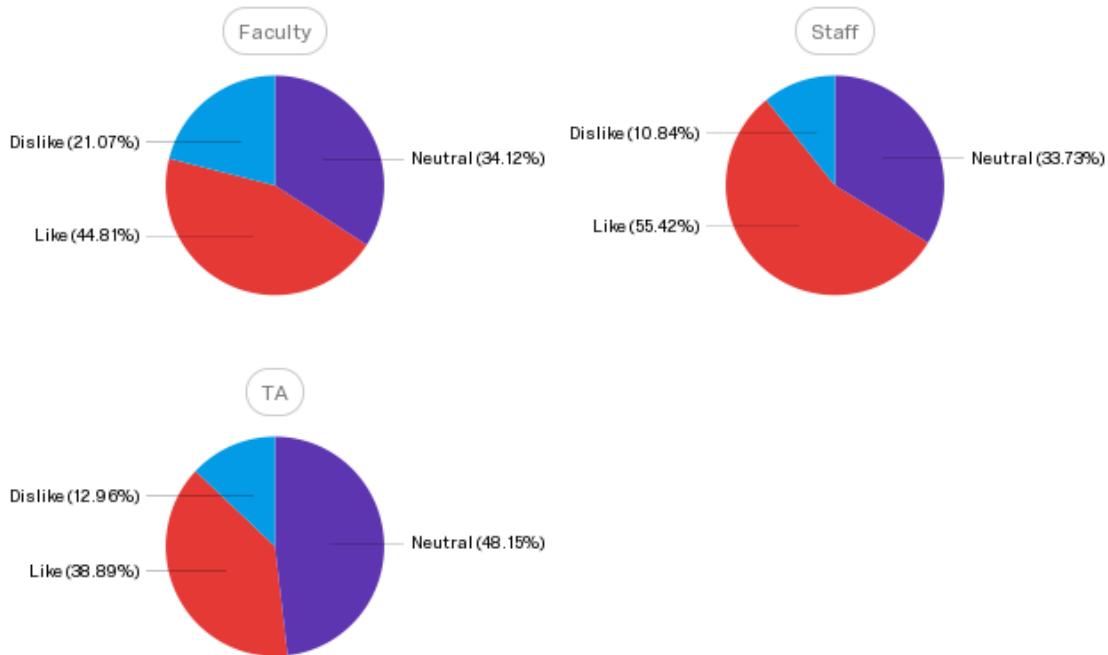
**Figure 17: Question 3: What kind of documentation do you like? (Text)** Responses from students, faculty, staff, and TAs regarding preferences for text-based documentation. Regardless of Canvas role specified, respondents expressed a liking of text-based documentation (77.67% to 83.33%). When student responses are excluded, the like response rate increases (83% to 87%). Though staff was more likely to express a dislike of text-based documentation, this is a significant minority (3.52%).



**Figure 18: Question 3: What kind of documentation do you like? (Images)** Responses from students, faculty, staff, and TAs regarding preferences for documentation with images. Similar to the results of text-based documentation, respondents of all user roles expressed a liking of documentation with images (76.66% to 85.61%). Overall, less than 1% of respondents expressed a dislike of documentation with images; when student responses are excluded, TA dislike results are 0%.



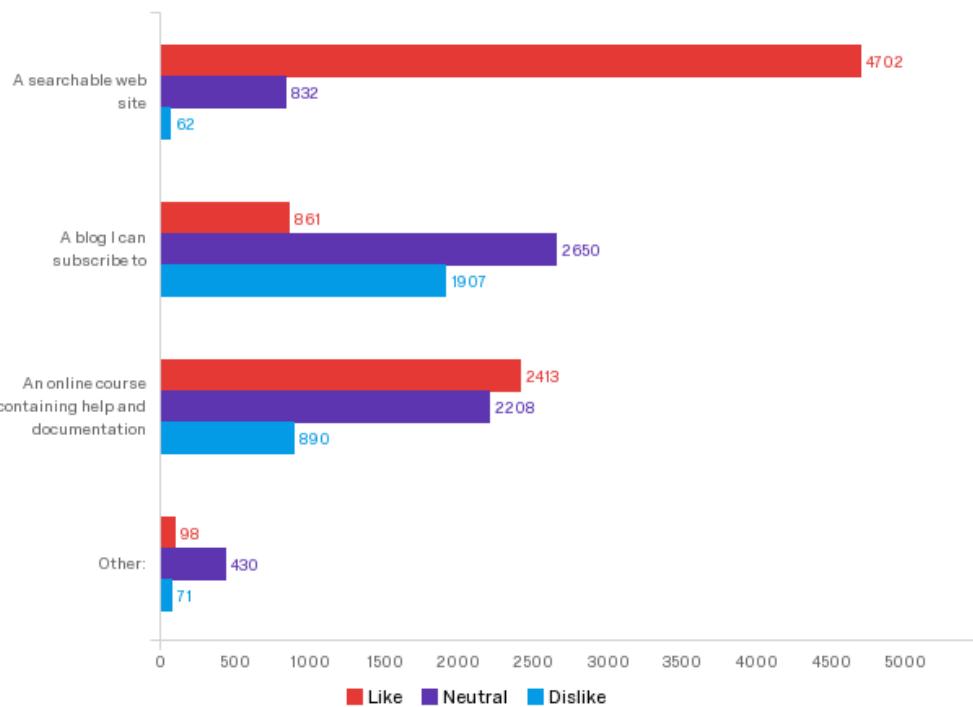
**Figure 19: Question 3: What kind of documentation do you like? (Video, all responses)** Responses from students, faculty, staff, and TAs regarding preferences for video documentation. Overall, approximately 50% of respondents expressed liking video documentation, while 15.6% expressed disliking video documentation. The user role expressing the most dislike for video is faculty (21.43%).



**Figure 20: Question 3: What kind of documentation do you like? (Video, FST responses)** When responses from students are excluded, the preferences expressed by staff and TAs change, with liking response rates increasing (55.42%, 38.89%) and dislike decreasing (10.84%, 12.96%). This suggests that video documentation targeted to specific audiences might be an effective strategy.

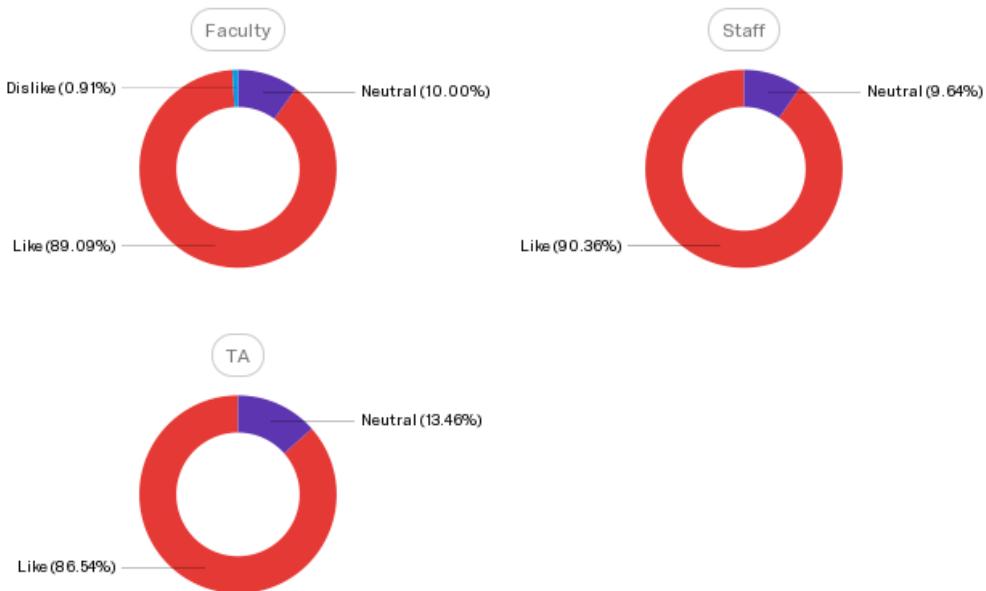
#### Question 4: Preferred Penn-provided Canvas documentation

Question 4 asked respondents about their preferences for Penn-provided Canvas documentation. Users were asked to rate their preference (like, neutral, dislike) to a range of options (searchable web site, blog they can subscribe to, online Canvas course, or other). “Other” provided an option for an open-ended response.

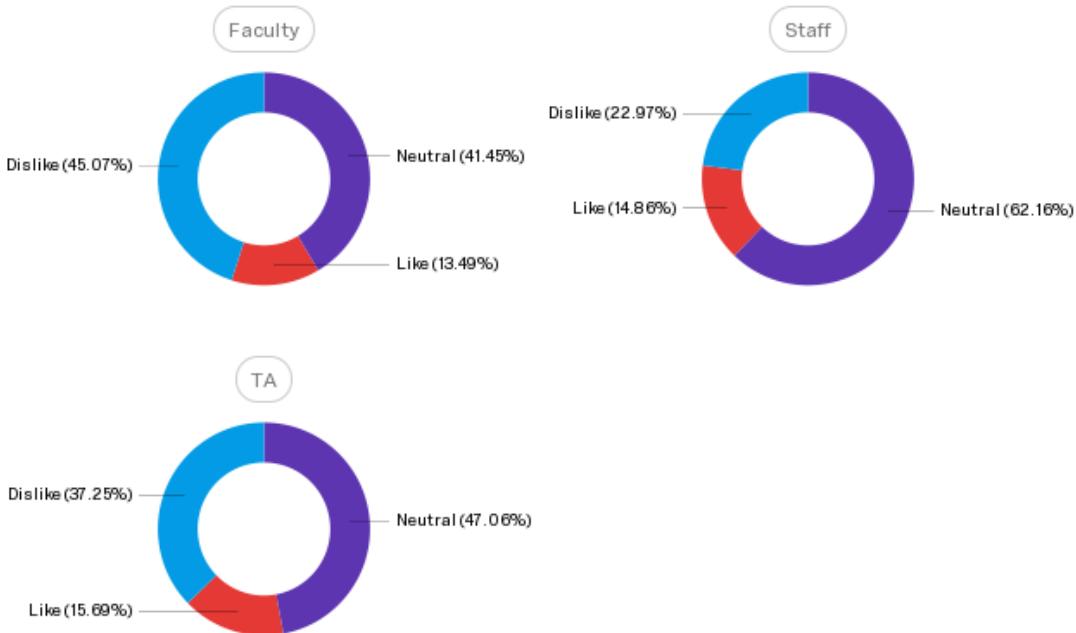


**Figure 21: Question 4: What kind of Penn-provided Canvas documentation would you like? (All responses)** With more than 5,600 responses to this question, Canvas users at Penn across all user types demonstrate a clear preference for a searchable website over other options. Overall, users are not interested in a blog they can subscribe to.

Preferences expressed by the non-student-only respondents are similar, again with a clear preference for a searchable website (89% of faculty, 90% of TAs, and 85% of staff), and less interest in a blog.



**Figure 22: Question 4: What kind of Penn-provided Canvas documentation would you like? (Searchable website, FST responses)** An overwhelming majority of faculty, staff, and TA Canvas users prefer a searchable website. Less than 1% of faculty expressed dislike for this option.



**Figure 23: Question 4: What kind of Penn-provided Canvas documentation would you like? (Blog I can subscribe to, FST responses)** Only about 15% of faculty, staff, and TA respondents prefer Penn's Canvas documentation in the form of a blog they can subscribe to. Most expressed a neutral (41.45% to 62.16%) or dislike (22.97% to 45.07%) response.



**Figure 24: Question 4: What kind of Penn-provided Canvas documentation would you like? (Online Canvas course, FST responses)** There is significant interest in an online Canvas course that hosts Penn's Canvas documentation. When student responses are excluded, faculty, staff, and TAs express considerable interest in this option, with more than 58% of staff preferring it. Less than 15% of these respondents dislike this option.

Responses from faculty, staff, and TAs demonstrate considerable consistency. Taken together, they suggest avenues for future documentation efforts, including the development of a website with searchable text- and image-based documentation. A significant part of this population is also interested in an online Canvas course that provides documentation and instruction.

### *Other responses*

These responses were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods, including coding using a combination of etic, emic, and emergent codes. Additionally, word cloud visualizations, generated automatically by Qualtrics, present the 50 most common words that appear in responses (excluding stopwords).

Among the student-only users who answered “other” (93 responses), the most common response (43 responses) expressed a preference for self-guided resources like guides, an online course, searchable database, or wiki. A significant minority (11 responses) prefer personalized support, such as live online help chat. Some (26 responses) expressed a preference for one modality over another (video, not-video, images, etc.).



**Figure 25: Question 4: What kind of Penn-provided Canvas documentation would you like? (Other, student-only responses)** This word cloud presents the responses given by students. Larger words appeared more frequently in responses. These responses emphasize specific Canvas features (assignment, notifications, calendar, discussions), as well as preferences for how to access assistance (FAQs, searchable, website, chat, email, tutorial, page, pdf, app, watch, videos). Some responses suggested specific times when Canvas interventions might be appropriate (incoming, freshmen, nso [new student orientation]) and qualitative attributes (simple, direct, explains/explanatory, easy, quickly, searchable).

Similarly, among the non-student-only users who completed an “other” text-entry response (47 responses), the most common response (24 responses) expressed a preference for self-guided resources like guides, hardcopy manual, videos with captions, searchable database, and help

menus. Again, some users (16 responses) indicated a preference for personalized support, including one-on-one consultations, someone who could be reached via phone or email, and live help chat. Some (10 responses) expressed a preference for one modality over another (especially video).



**Figure 26: Question 4: What kind of Penn-provided Canvas documentation**

**would you like? (Other, FST responses)** This word cloud presents the responses given by faculty, staff, and TAs. Larger words appeared more frequently in responses. These responses emphasize preferences for how to access documentation and assistance (FAQs, chats, searchable, website, videos, manual, documentation) as well as the need for immediacy in that help (speaking, person, email, talk, times, live, sessions, constantly, direct, answers, questions, meet, face, Rob). Some responses emphasized qualitative attributes (basic, quickly, direct, specific, clear, great, informative).

## Question 5: Open-ended feedback about Penn's Canvas documentation

The last question provided respondents with an opportunity to provide feedback about Penn's current Canvas documentation. Among SO users, 1,148 responded to this question, while 255 FST users responded.

These responses were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods, including coding using a combination of etic, emic, and emergent codes. Additionally, word cloud visualizations, generated automatically by Qualtrics, present the 50 most common words that appear in responses (excluding stopwords).

### *Student-only responses*

Ten percent (114 responses) of the total SO responses (1,148 responses) were hand-coded. There was little feedback regarding Penn's documentation among the hand-coded responses. The largest group (59 responses) indicated "no" or "N/A." The next largest group (35 responses) commented on Canvas or how faculty use Canvas, rather than Penn's Canvas documentation. Representative comments include faculty's inconsistent use of Canvas across classes and schools, technical quibbles with the LMS, and issues with specific features (Calendar, assignment submission, notifications, etc.). Only 13 responses commented on Penn's Canvas documentation; most were general ("It's okay") rather than constructive, while 12 responses indicated that users were unaware that Penn-specific Canvas documentation existed.



**Figure 27: Question 5: Open-ended feedback about Penn's Canvas documentation (student-only responses)**

This word cloud presents the responses given by students. Many responses comment on specific Canvas features and tools (assignment, announcements, calendar, syllabus, page, notifications, file, module, navigation), as well as a range of qualitative feedback (informative, difficult, better, easy, confuse, great, organic).

#### *Non-student-only responses*

All 255 FST responses were hand-coded. Again, much of the feedback provided here was not on Penn's Canvas documentation. The largest group (103 responses) commented on Canvas itself. Representative comments included that Canvas is easy to use or intuitive, problems with specific features, dislike of the user interface, and the excessive time it takes to set up a usable site for students. Of the 98 responses that commented on Penn's Canvas documentation, it is clear that many people use Instructure's Canvas Guides and many drew comparisons between Penn's documentation and Instructure's. Representative comments include: "Canvas themselves has a robust documentation site, but Penn's seems either lack or hard to find" and "What Penn lacks in documentation is easily made up for by existing documentation online and the terrific personal guidance provided by the Librarians." Other comments indicated that users found Penn's documentation hard to find or difficult to navigate unless you already knew the correct Canvas terminology. Some users (49 responses) had no feedback, while 19 responses indicated that users were unaware that Penn-specific Canvas documentation existed. And 37 respondents commented on departmental or library support staff.



**Figure 28: Question 5: Open-ended feedback about Penn's Canvas documentation (FST responses)** This word cloud presents the responses given by faculty, staff, and TAs. These responses offer a range of qualitative feedback (informative, difficult, problems, great, intuit, responsive, easy, specific) and specific attributes (linked, videos, search, page, online).

Overall, this question did not provide the qualitative data expected. “Documentation” seemed to be an often-misunderstood term among the survey respondents. In addition to providing feedback about the Canvas itself, some respondents directly asked what was meant by documentation.

## Canvas User Survey Conclusions

Based on the findings of the Canvas user survey, we recommend targeting most documentation toward Canvas super-users or content creators. Instructors, TAs, and staff are more often engaged in more complex tasks within Canvas that could appropriately be supported through Penn- and school-specific documentation efforts.

However, documentation needs for students should not be ignored. Currently, students are more likely to ask someone they know (a friend, a professor, or a TA) if they encounter a problem accessing course materials on Canvas or submitting an assignment, which suggests that many are unaware of university-provided avenues for support. Support documentation targeting students should address their specific needs and be presented in a tone and style that is inviting to students. Further, students should be introduced to Canvas resources during new student orientations or other early opportunities.

The survey results demonstrate that all types of respondents use the Google search engine when beginning an online search for Canvas help. However, the results do not indicate what sources of help users ultimately find and use. The word clouds suggest some destinations (YouTube videos, Instructure's Canvas guides, Penn Library resources). This finding suggests that future documentation should be created with search engine optimization to improve the likelihood that Penn Canvas users find Penn- or school-specific documentation and resources when searching for Canvas help.

These results also suggest that many users are unaware of or unable to locate Penn- and school-provided assistance. This suggests an opportunity at both university and school levels to provide greater outreach regarding avenues of Canvas support and information.

It is clear that most Penn or school-specific Canvas documentation should be searchable with text and images. To improve the likelihood that Penn Canvas users can find Penn-provided Canvas documentation, new documentation should be created with search engine optimization, and ideally with Google Analytics to track use. Documentation should also be accessible to screen readers.

The survey reveals mixed responses to video, suggesting that nothing should be available only in video. Given the resources required to make high-quality videos, topics appropriate for videos should be carefully selected. Other considerations include making videos accessible through captioning/transcripts and the inclusion of time markers to facilitate use.

Survey results also suggest possible additional pathways for support, including more opportunities for live support (chat, phone, one-on-one sessions). Individual courseware support centers will need to consider what a reasonable SLA would be and whether current staff levels could support this avenue.

The survey also reveals several sources of student frustration and anxiety with Canvas. This stems primarily from inconsistency in how faculty use Canvas and students' corresponding difficulty in locating and accessing course materials and resources through Canvas sites. This suggests an opportunity for communicating best practices and providing recommendations regarding the organization of content within a Canvas site, possibly through the development of Canvas template or model course sites.

## Recommendations

The CDWG hopes these findings will influence future documentation created and managed by the Courseware Documentation Editorial Board in the following ways:

- Emphasize documentation containing searchable text with images
- Include SEO in documentation, and use Google Analytics to track use
- Clarify the support pathways for users, which may vary by school, needs, and expectations of how people use help materials
- Be selective about video use
  - No documentation should be available only in video
  - Consider accessibility issues, including captions/transcript
  - Include time markers to facilitate location of desired content
- Explore options for providing live Canvas support (online chat, phone)
- Recommend best practices for Canvas site organization to improve consistency across courses
  - Provide templates that model best practices
  - Provide options for organization using Modules and Pages

## V. Third Data Point: An Analysis of User-submitted Support Requests

### Ticket-Data-Analysis Purpose

The purpose of the ticket-data analysis was to identify use-case trends across the University and within schools and programs; to find processes and features that could be better documented and consequently reduce support requests; to note user-types (e.g., students), categories of objects (e.g., Canvas features), and specific objects (e.g., quizzes) across support requests.

### Ticket-Data-Analysis Methodology

The data collected came from closed support tickets that end-users submitted to the Courseware Support FootPrints Project via [canvas@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:canvas@pobox.upenn.edu) from June 1, 2014 to May 4, 2016. The Canvas FootPrints Project has been operational since Fall 2012, which was the start of the Canvas Pilot at the University of Pennsylvania. Since the purpose of the ticket-data analysis was to find trends to inform future documentation practices, it was decided that the data-date range should not include tickets that were received during the Canvas pilot (Academic Year 2012-2013) or the migration (Academic Year 2013-2014), during which times the Blackboard LMS was still available to users. On May 30, 2014, Blackboard was officially sunsetted and Canvas was adopted as the University's primary LMS. Thus, the data analyzed here begins on June 1, 2014, the date by which many users had fully transitioned from Blackboard to Canvas and were actively using the [canvas@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:canvas@pobox.upenn.edu) email address for Canvas support. The CDWG maintains that the tickets analyzed for this report are the most representative of typical issues to be considered for future documentation because they are from a period during which support requests began following normative content- and volume-trends, and tickets about the pilot and migration ceased.

Each staff member in the Courseware Support department at the Penn Libraries monitors the Canvas FootPrints Project from Monday through Friday during standard business hours and on weekends for during busy times of year (e.g., before the start of the Fall term). Aside from a user's name, email address, subject line, and issue description, the metadata associated with a ticket is manually applied based on information a user provides directly (e.g., a user self-identifies as a TA in a chemistry course offered in SAS) or is synthesized from several sources that include the Canvas administrative console, IRQDB, StaffWeb, and others (e.g., a user is searched for by name in Canvas and is found to have the "student" role in all of her Canvas sites, so the user is identified in the ticket as student).

These metadata can be used to run reports in the Canvas FootPrints Project. For the CDWG's inquiry, metadata were configured so the report generated would include the following for tickets received between June 1, 2014 and May 4, 2016:

- All tickets marked with the status "Closed," indicating that staff-user communication about an issue via the ticket had ceased.
- All "affiliations," which include established schools (e.g., SEAS), organizations at Penn (e.g., Penn Libraries), as well as unaffiliated (i.e., "Unknown") and complexly affiliated (i.e., "Interdisciplinary") users.
- All issue-specific metadata, such as:

- Main Category: The general class of feature (e.g., Mobile App.) or activity (e.g., Site Request) to which the issue belongs.
- Sub-Category: The specific feature (e.g., Assignments) or activity (e.g., Login issues) about which the issue has been reported.
- Role: The official (e.g., TA) or self-identified (e.g., Other) function the user has in relation to the course or organization the issue affects.

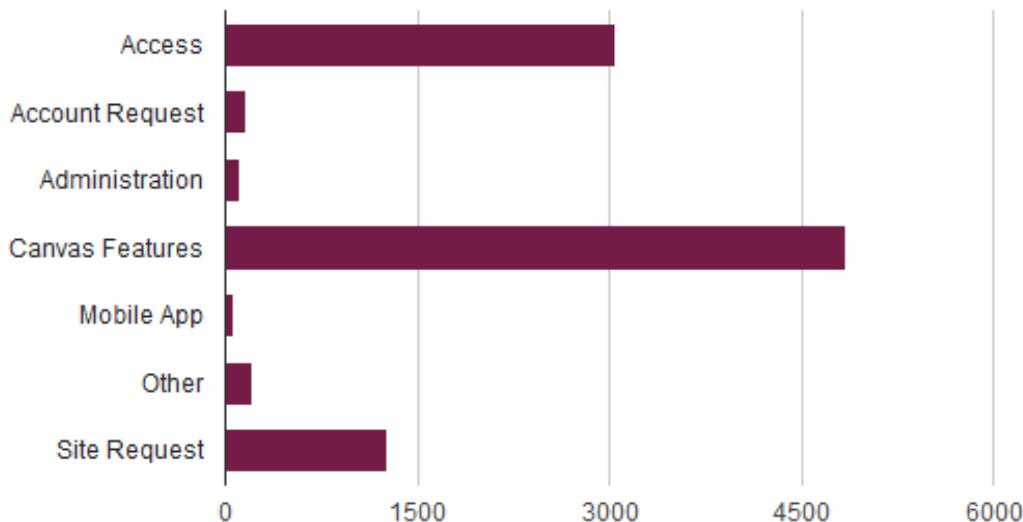
The rationale for selecting these metadata was that they best represent the documentation needs of particular audiences. Additionally, comparing the report to our other data-points could prove useful when considering documentation gaps (i.e., no documentation for an issue exists, and there were many tickets about it) and blind spots (i.e., many tickets are sent for issues that have documentation). What follows are the results of the ticket-data analysis.

## Ticket-Data-Analysis Findings

There were 10,678 support requests sent to [canvas@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:canvas@pobox.upenn.edu) between June 1, 2014 and May 4, 2016. The following information, represented in the bar graphs in this section, was discovered.

### All Tickets by Metadata-Type

The CDWG wanted to learn more about the common issues affecting all users on the UPenn Canvas instance and decided that the best way to do this would be to look at data for three of the main metadata-types assigned to tickets--“Main Category,” “Sub-category,” and “User Type.” This section covers the findings of that metadata-type analysis. When necessary for focusing on the most pressing issues for future documentation, only the top-six highest-volume ticket categories are represented.



**Figure 29: All Schools & Programs: Main Category**

“Main Category” metadata, which staff use to establish the general area of support to which an issue belongs, show that the majority of Canvas issues received during the data-date range fell into “Canvas Features” (49.9%). The “Canvas Features” category is applied to issues focused on a particular tool or feature in Canvas (e.g., Quizzes) or an LTI Tool (e.g., Piazza). “Access,” a category used for system-login and site-access issues, had the second-highest number of

tickets (31.3%). “Site Requests,” which had the third-highest number of tickets (13.1%), is used when users write to Courseware Support directly to have Canvas sites created for courses rather than using the Course Request Form, or when users ask to have special purpose (non-SRS) Canvas sites created.

The fourth-highest category was “Other” (2.1%), which is used for issues that do not meet any established criteria of support. “Account Request” (1.6%) was used for non-persistent PennKey requests, a service that Courseware Support discontinued in Spring 2016. The sixth-highest category was “Administration” (1.2%), which is used for appointment and workshop requests outside official services like the Canvas-Help appointment service, Canvas Office Hours, and workshops. “Mobile App” (0.7%), which is used for tickets about the Canvas mobile app, had the seventh-highest number of tickets.

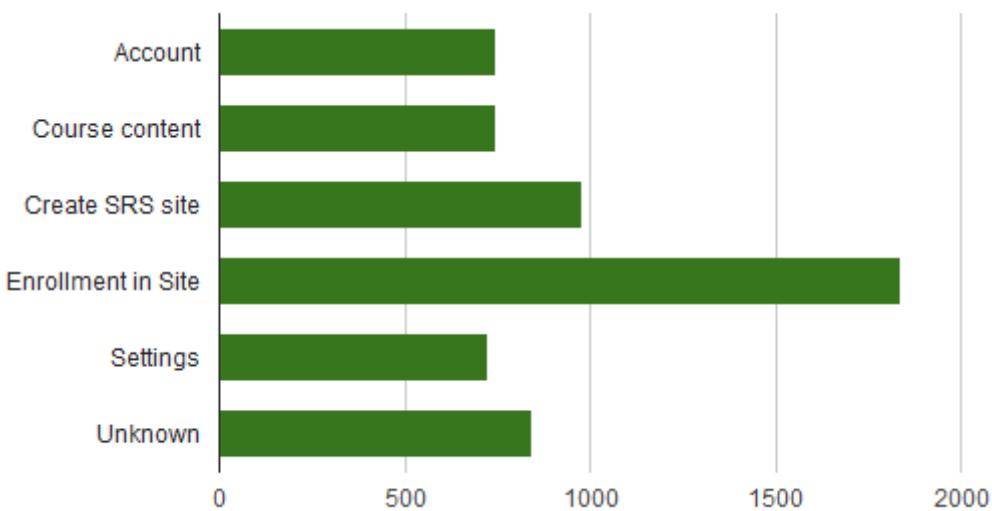
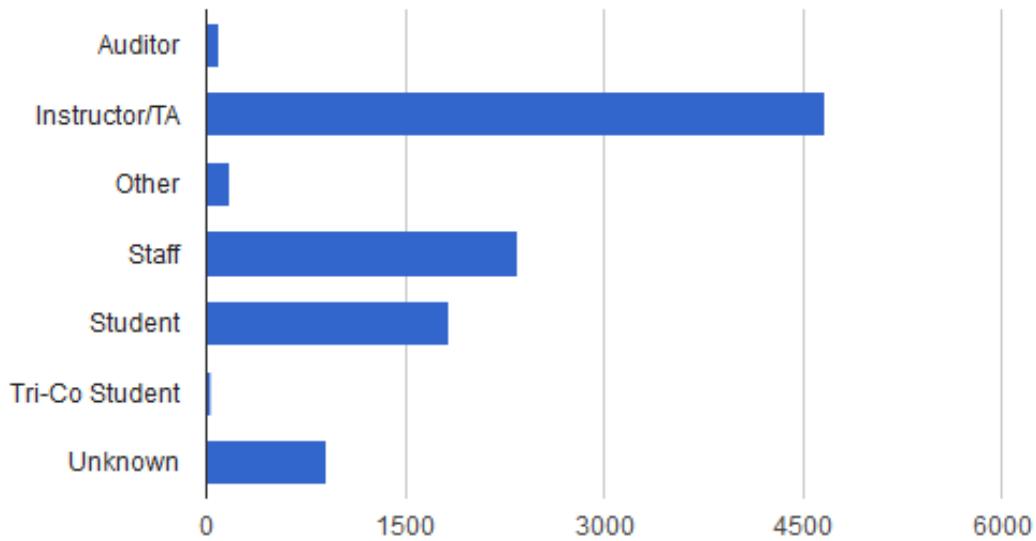


Figure 30: Canvas-Features Tickets by Sub-category: Top 6

“Sub-category” metadata adds granularity to a ticket; in many ways, it is one of the most important staff-added pieces of metadata because it pinpoints the exact nature of an issue. “Enrollment in Site” (31.3%), the sub-category with the highest number of tickets, falls under the “Access” main category and is used when users cannot access a Canvas site, which can be for any number of reasons (user not registered in a course, site unpublished, no site exists for a course, etc.). “Create SRS Site” (16.6%), with the second-highest number of tickets, corresponds to the “Site Request” main category and is used for course-site requests not placed through the Course Request Form. “Unknown” (14.3%) had the third-highest number of tickets and is used when an issue does not have an established sub-category criterion. “Course Content” and “Account” (12.7%) were tied for the fourth-highest number of tickets. “Course Content” is used for any issues pertaining to files, links, or other non-functional (e.g., text on a Page) parts of a Canvas site. “Account” is applied to issues when a user needs a Canvas user account created. “Course Content” corresponds to the “Canvas Features” main category, and “Account” corresponds to the “Access” main category. “Settings” (12.4%), with the fifth-highest number of tickets, is used for any site-level settings issue (publishing a site, placing a site in a term, changing a site’s availability dates, etc.).



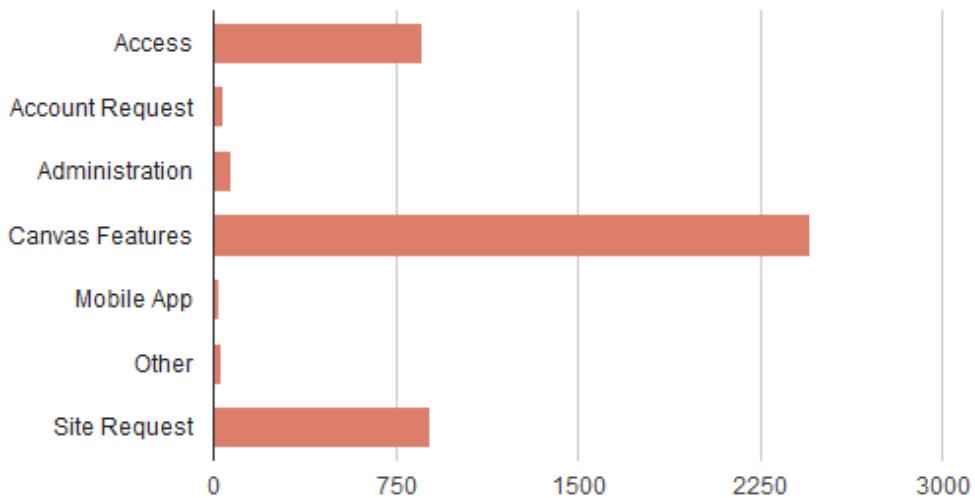
**Figure 31: All Schools & Programs: User Type**

The “User Type”-metadata category is used to identify the person who placed the support request; it is essential for knowing their relationship to the issue and informs how staff proceed finding a solution. The “Instructor/TA” category (46.4%), which includes anyone in a Canvas site with “teacher or “TA” permissions, had the majority of tickets. “Staff” (23.3%) sent the second-highest number of tickets; this category includes support colleagues from schools and programs both in and outside Penn Libraries, as well as users who have “Designer” and “Librarian” roles in Canvas. “Students” (18.2%), with the third-highest number of tickets, is a category used for any user who is officially enrolled in a course using Canvas. “Unknown” (9%), the fourth-highest ticket-submission category, is applied to issues submitted by any user for whom no identifiable relation to Canvas can be established. “Other” (1.8%), the user-type category with the fifth-highest number of ticket submissions, is used for tickets from users without a clear relation to Canvas; usually, “Other” denotes a user from outside the University of Pennsylvania’s Canvas instance (e.g., support personnel from other universities who write to Courseware Support with questions). “Auditor” (1%) had the sixth-highest number of tickets submission and is used to identify users who are not officially enrolled in a course but have been granted access by an instructor to a Canvas site in the “student” or “observer” role. “Tri-Co Student” had the seventh-highest number of ticket submissions and is used for Tri-College Consortium students from Bryn Mawr, Haverford, and Swarthmore who are taking courses with Canvas sites at the University of Pennsylvania.

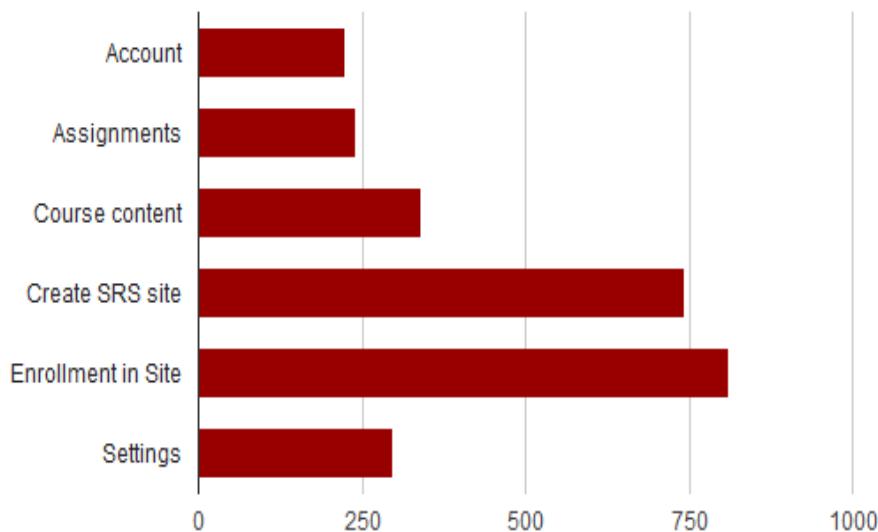
### Tickets by User-Type

In an effort to learn more about the documentation needs of specific user-types, the CDWG decided to look at main-category and sub-category ticket-submission data for user-types for “Instructor/TA,” “Student” and “Staff” user. The following bar charts show the main and sub-categories for each user-type. When necessary for focusing on the most pressing issues for future documentation, only the top-six highest-volume ticket categories are represented.

Instructor/TA (4,681 tickets)



**Figure 32: All Schools & Programs: Main Category by Instructor/TA**



**Figure 33: All Schools & Programs: Sub-category by Instructor/TA: Top 6**

Students (1,843 tickets)

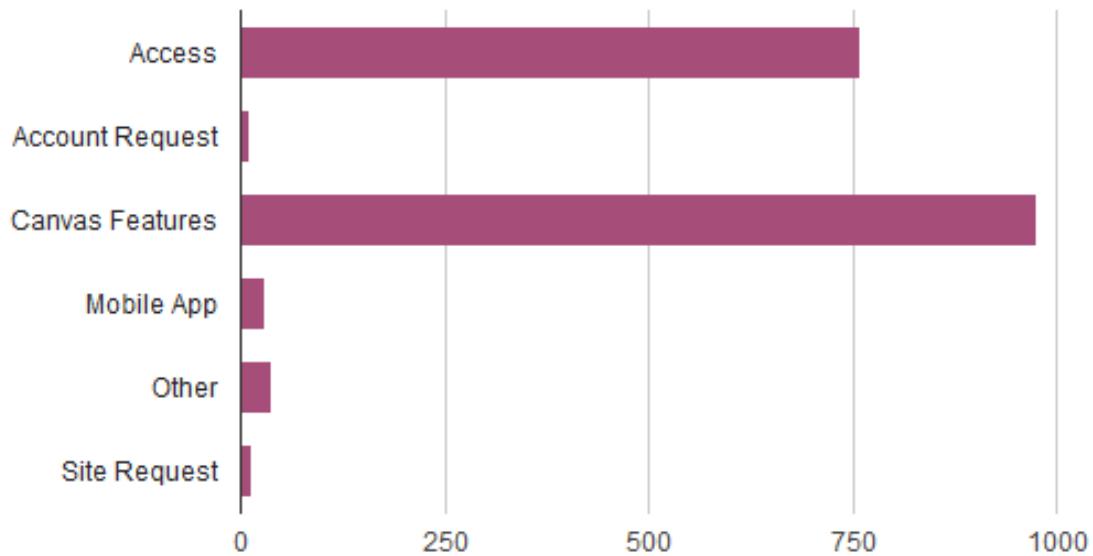


Figure 34: All Schools & Programs: Main category by Student: Top 6

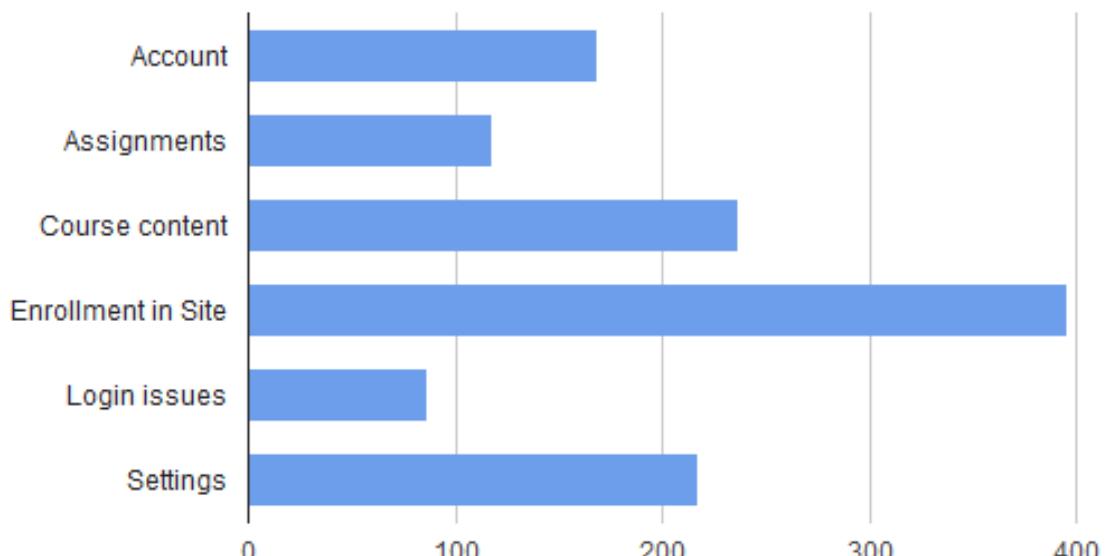
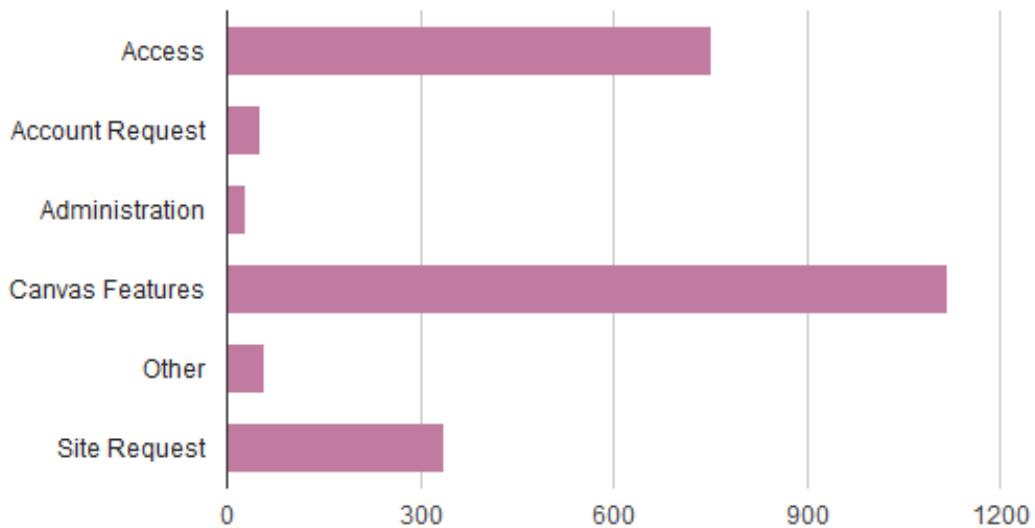
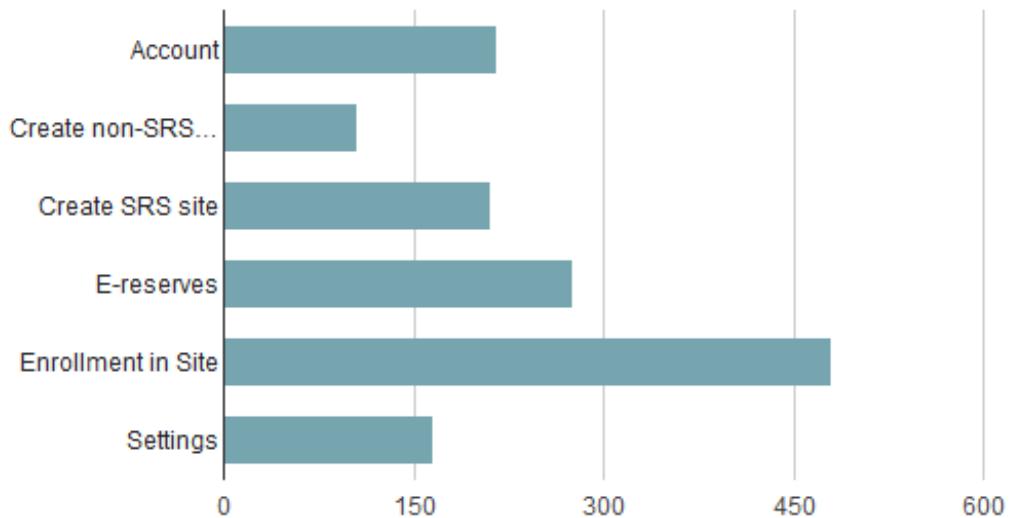


Figure 35: All Schools & Programs: Sub-category by Student: Top 6

Staff (2,355 tickets)



**Figure 36: All Schools & Programs: Main category by Staff: Top 6**



**Figure 37: All Schools & Programs: Sub-category by Staff: Top 6**

## Ticket-Data-Analysis Conclusion

The analysis of ticket data from June 1, 2014 to May 4, 2016 reveals that users have generally needed assistance with specific aspects of Canvas ("Canvas Features") and help with accessing Canvas at the University of Pennsylvania, either with specific Canvas sites or with the system itself via the central login portal. Since these issues apply to all users, future Canvas documentation should treat them as main organizational categories through which users can find specific information about accessing and using Canvas. If documentation were organized according to these and perhaps other main-category issues about which Courseware Support

has received many tickets (e.g., “Site Request”), the next level of organization could address specific user types; however, documentation creators should be careful not to use support nomenclature when making user-type categories, as users might not be able to easily identify themselves according to this terminology, which could affect their ability to find the information they need. Once user-centered categories for user-types are made, documentation could then list information for users based on their main- and sub-category needs.

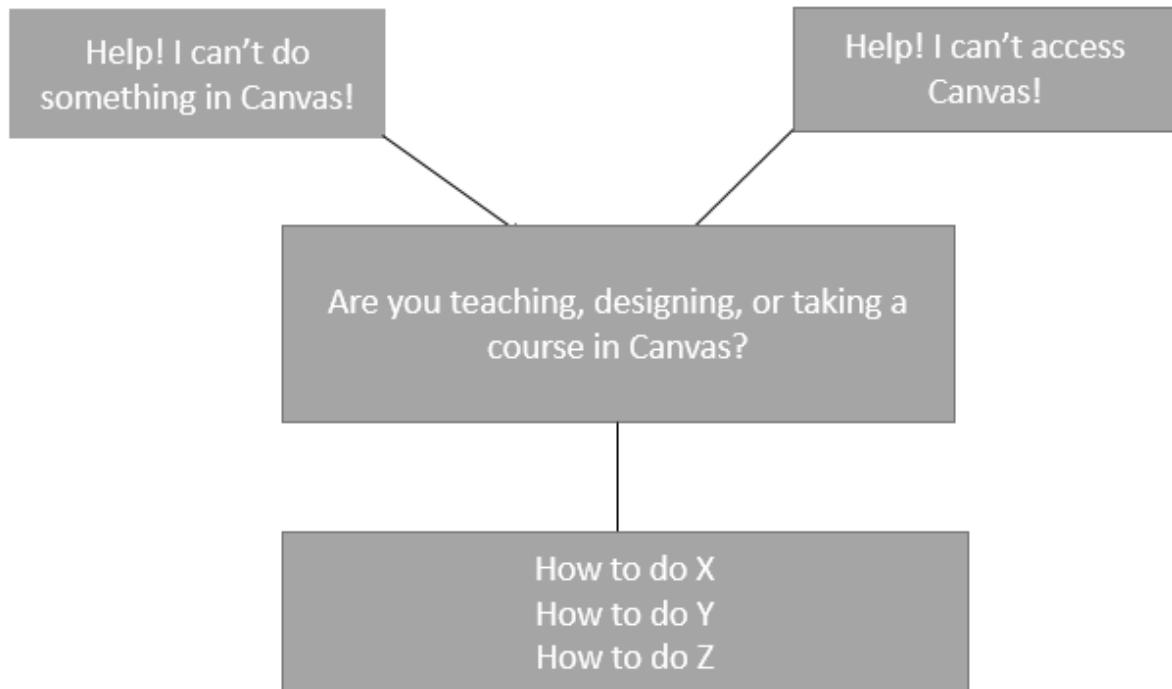


Figure 39: Rough documentation map based on ticket data

The CDWG recommends that schools and programs who would like to create their own Canvas documentation use a similar model. Ticket data for schools and programs can be found in [Appendix III](#). Any action taken based on the ticket-data analysis should be considered in conjunction with the content-audit and user-survey results.

## VI. Concluding Recommendations

The analysis and interpretation of these Canvas-documentation data-sources lead to several recommendations, corresponding to the outcome-goals in Section II of this report, from the CDWG on how to proceed with Canvas documentation at the University of Pennsylvania:

- a. The Canvas at Penn website (formerly the Canvas at Penn blog) should be the primary resource for Canvas documentation at the University of Pennsylvania:
  - i. The site should undergo substantial re-design in the summer of 2016 to:
    1. Make it less “blog-like” and more like a stable website.
    2. Add existing documentation that is still deemed relevant.
    3. Act as a portal to school-specific documentation that is deemed essential.
  - ii. LSPs should refer users to the Canvas at Penn site as the primary resource for Canvas documentation, unless it is more expeditious to refer users to the vendor’s (Instructure’s) or school’s/program’s documentation.

A link to the Canvas at Penn site should be added to the **Help** menu in Canvas, and this link should be identified as the primary source of documentation for Canvas at the University of Pennsylvania.

This recommendation corresponds to the outcome-goal of establishing a single online resource for Canvas documentation at the University of Pennsylvania. The Canvas at Penn site has been selected due to its current widespread use among users and because of the vast amount of legacy content on the site that can be retained or repurposed for the new Canvas documentation effort at Penn. Additionally, the ability for users to subscribe to the site for content updates is conducive to keeping users informed about new features, services, etc. for Canvas at Penn.

Before the redesigned Canvas at Penn site is released to the public, any schools or programs maintaining separate Canvas documentation should be asked to submit links to this documentation to be included on the site’s landing page. If the documentation does not refer to school- or program-specific features or services, the submitter will be notified that the documentation will not be added to the landing page.

- b. During the summer of 2016, the Courseware Documentation Working Group should be disbanded and a new group--the Courseware Documentation Editorial Board--should be formed in its wake. This new group will consist of educational and IT support who work with Canvas and other courseware at Penn and will be organized into subcommittees focusing on tasks such as creating and reviewing documentation, accessibility compliance, and outreach. The Courseware Documentation Editorial Board should identify short-term projects that support long-term goals (e.g., Kaltura in-video quiz documentation) and should open communication with the Courseware Advisory to prioritize projects.
- c. A Canvas-based tutorial on universal-design-for-learning should be created and made available to any instructor who creates a Canvas site using the Canvas Course Request Form or through some other mechanism. This should only happen once so as not to impose on instructors.
- d. Templates based on instructional-design best practices and universal-design-for-learning should be created and made optionally available to instructors through the

various Canvas course request forms at Penn, and instructors should be encouraged to be consistent within their course sites.<sup>2</sup>

- e. The Courseware Documentation Editorial Board should establish recommendations for schools and programs that wish to continue creating documentation independent of the Canvas at Penn site and the Board's participation. These guidelines should cover the following areas:
  - i. Accessibility and Universal Design
  - ii. Currency and Revision
  - iii. Format

These concluding recommendations include both feasible and ideal suggestions, most of which can be established and set in motion relatively quickly (a central documentation website, the Courseware Documentation Editorial Board, a new documentation-workflow, etc.); the more resource-taxing projects (universal-design-for-learning tutorials and templates for Canvas sites), however, will require further discussion and planning before being actualized.

It is the CDWG's hope that all of these concluding recommendations will come to fruition with support from the Courseware Advisory and the Courseware Steering Committee.

---

<sup>2</sup> A more elaborate approach would be to create site-design templates that employ universal-design-for-learning practices, one for each of the standard Canvas-site-structure recommendations, that users can choose when requesting a Canvas site through the Course Request Form. In this scenario, the options would be: Modules, Pages, No Template.

## Appendix I. Content Audit - Coder Survey

See <http://bit.ly/1Sw8zO4>

5/27/2016

Canvas Documentation Survey

# Canvas Documentation Survey

**Coder**

**School/Organization hosting the resource**

**URL (or location info)**

**Who is the audience?**

Faculty  
 TAs  
 Students  
 Staff  
 General

**Scale**

All users  
 Just that school or program

**Category**

- Pedagogical (eg, best practice)
- Procedural (eg, how-to)
- Technological (eg, warnings, bugs)

### Activity

- Assignments
- Calendar/scheduling
- Communications/notifications
- Creating/adding media
- Discussions
- Files/course materials
- Getting help
- Grades/feedback
- Importing/copying content
- Logging in
- Modules
- Navigation/getting around
- Pages
- PennKey Creation/Use
- Settings - personal
- Site configuration/settings
- Site creation
- Site design
- Syllabus
- Quizzes/tests/exams
- User Account Creation
- User management
- Other:

### Tool/Feature

Optional - use if the activity describes using a specific tool or Canvas feature

- Announcements
- Assignments
- Calendar
- Campus Pack tools
- Chat
- Collaborations
- Conferences

- Course Request Form
- Course Reserves
- Discussions
- Draft State
- Files
- Gradebook
- Groups
- Inbox (Conversations)
- Kaltura
- McGraw Hill Campus
- Mobile app
- Modules
- Notifications
- Outcomes
- Pages
- People
- Piazza
- Respondus Lockdown Browser
- Rich Content Editor
- Quizzes
- Scheduler
- Settings - Course
- Settings - Personal
- Speedgrader
- Study.Net
- Syllabus
- Yellowdig
- YouTube
- Other:

**Special comments**

Is there anything notable or interesting about this resource?

**Mode(s)**

What is the format?

- Text
- FAQ
- Step-by-step instructions not written by Canvas
- Includes screenshots
- Includes video
- Includes links to Canvas Guides
- Other:

*Never submit passwords through Google Forms.*

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## Appendix I.I. Wharton Teaching Support Website

<https://acadcomputing.zendesk.com/hc/en-us>



Wharton UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

COURSEWARE SUPPORT  
Online assistance for Canvas from Wharton Computing's Courseware Team

Announcements Help for Faculty and Staff Help for Students

Search

### GETTING READY FOR YOUR CLASS

- ★ **STEP 1. Request a Canvas site for a Wharton course**
- STEP 2. Review your site
- STEP 3. "Publish" your site to make it available
- Copying content from one Canvas site to another
- Using StudyNet to distribute copyrighted materials
- Course materials recommendations: Canvas and StudyNet

### CANVAS BASICS

- ★ **All about Files and Folders**
- Getting around in Canvas
- Notifications
- Communications
- System requirements
- Canvas Quick Start Guide

### ASSIGNMENTS

- ★ **All About Assignments**
- Using Turnitin LTI for plagiarism detection
- Downloading submitted assignments
- Groups and teams in Canvas
- Muting assignments
- Linking to articles and files

⇒ See all 8 articles

### QUIZZES AND EXAMS

- ★ **All about Quizzes: exams, surveys, & graded online homework**
- Preparing an online exam for delivery through Canvas
- Muting quizzes
- Conducting a timed take-home exam

### CALENDAR AND SCHEDULER

- ★ **Scheduling meals, office hours, presentation slots, and appointments**
- Class and schedule changes
- Best practices for assignments & calendar events
- Managing meals, office hours, presentation slots, and appointments

### ACCOUNTS AND ACCESS

- Canvas accounts
- About PennKeys
- Adding a user
- Deleting an enrollment from a Canvas site
- Access after course conclusion

### GRADING

- ★ **All about grading**
- ★ **Understanding grading in Canvas**
- Assigning individual grades in a group assignment
- Offline grading
- Providing online feedback
- Importing scores to the Canvas Gradebook

### OTHER WHARTON TEACHING TOOLS

- Instruction Center vs. Instructure
- Use Wharton's Instruction Center to post final course grades
- Electronic textbooks
- WebCafé discontinued November 25, 2013

## Appendix II. Canvas User Survey Flyer

*Want to win a prize? \**



Take a short survey to help Penn improve online documentation & resources for Canvas.

- 3 people will win a prize! \*
- Survey open from Sept 8 - Sept 22

*The panda is the unofficial mascot of Instructure, the company that makes Canvas.*

**Scan this code to get to the survey:**



**Or use this URL:**

<http://bit.ly/1hHkdrf>

\* Three prize winners will be chosen at random. You must be a Penn student, staff person, or faculty member to win.

This survey is being conducted by Penn's Canvas Documentation Working Group, which is a group of Penn staff who are working to consolidate and improve Canvas documentation and online resources at Penn.

If you read this far, you must be bored or waiting for someone...here's a secret! There is another, 4th prize that will be awarded to the survey which gives us the most helpful feedback. If you are the person who always skips the "Is there anything else you want to tell us?" question at the end of the survey, you won't win this prize.



## Appendix II.I. Hand-Coding Process and Responses

### Hand Coding Process and Responses

#### Hand coding process

1. First reviewer reads each qualitative text entry and applies codes that reflect the themes of that comment. Entries may have multiple codes. See codes sheet
  - a. For every question, we will delineate student and non-student-only.
  - b. Coders split reviewed responses in half—if coder is coding 50 responses, code the first 25 and the last 25 responses.
2. Second reviewer looks at first reviewer's work and either 1) agrees on codes or 2) disagrees and flags coding for further discussion

#### Responses Coded

- All of non-student-only (FST) comments
- 10% student comments for questions with large student participation

### Hand Coding Responses

Question Asked	Student Total Responses	Student Responses Coded	FST Total Responses	FST Responses Coded
Where do you go for help and how often?	131	131	53	53
Feedback about current Penn Canvas Documentation?	1148	115	255	255
What kind of Penn-Provided documentation would you like?	93	93	47	47
If you go online for Canvas help, where do you go?	1893	193	443	443

### **Appendix III. Supplementary Data: User-submitted support requests**

The following data are from the Canvas Support FootPrints project ticket data written about in Section V. Each table gives ticket data for a school or program as indicated by the “Affiliation” metadata associated with each ticket. The main- and sub-category data for each school or program shows the top-three highest-volume ticket issues for these categories. Schools and programs that create their own Canvas documentation are welcome to use these data inform their documentation-topic choices.

<b>School of Arts &amp; Sciences (SAS)</b>	
# of Tickets	4,204
Top #3 Main Categories	Canvas Features (2,136), Access (1,277), Site Request (629)
Top #3 Sub-Categories	Enrollment in Site (739), Create SRS Site (480), Course Content (371)
# of Instructors/TAs Tickets	2,596
# of Students Tickets	882
# of Staff Tickets	514

<b>School of Nursing (SON)</b>	
# of Tickets	1,015
Top #3 Main Categories	Canvas Features (570), Access (327), Site Request (90)
Top #3 Sub-Categories	Enrollment in Site (212), Quizzes/Surveys (84), Course Content (81)
# of Instructors/TAs Tickets	696
# of Students Tickets	156
# of Staff Tickets	115

### **Biomedical Graduate Studies (BGS)**

# of Tickets	630
Top #3 Main Categories	Access (298), Canvas Features (216), Site Request (109)
Top #3 Sub-Categories	Enrollment in Site (188), Create SRS Site (91), Account (87)
# of Instructors/TAs Tickets	222
# of Students Tickets	93
# of Staff Tickets	284

<b>Penn Libraries</b>	
# of Tickets	556
Top #3 Main Categories	Canvas Features (434), Access (97), Site Request (15)
Top #3 Sub-Categories	E-Reserves (242), Enrollment in Site (72), Quizzes/Surveys (32)
# of Instructors/TAs Tickets	12
# of Students Tickets	2
# of Staff Tickets	532

<b>School of Engineering and Applied Science (SEAS)</b>	
# of Tickets	525
Top #3 Main Categories	Canvas Features (293), Access (143), Site Request (77)
Top #3 Sub-Categories	Enrollment in Site (96), Create SRS Site (67), Settings (55)
# of Instructors/TAs Tickets	322
# of Students Tickets	111
# of Staff Tickets	70

<b>The Wharton School</b>	
# of Tickets	507
Top #3 Main Categories	Canvas Features (257), Access (190), Site Request (47)

Top #3 Sub-Categories	Enrollment in Site (110), Settings (53), Course Content (50)
# of Instructors/TAs Tickets	127
# of Students Tickets	279
# of Staff Tickets	57

<b>Perelman School of Medicine</b>	
# of Tickets	443
Top #3 Main Categories	Access (251), Canvas Features (126), Account Request (22)
Top #3 Sub-Categories	Account (145), Enrollment in Site (99), Settings (27)
# of Instructors/TAs Tickets	120
# of Students Tickets	79
# of Staff Tickets	212

<b>Penn Dental Medicine</b>	
# of Tickets	320
Top #3 Main Categories	Canvas Features (150), Access (119), Site Request (50)
Top #3 Sub-Categories	Enrollment in Site (57), Account (47), Term Restriction (35)
# of Instructors/TAs Tickets	59
# of Students Tickets	40
# of Staff Tickets	201

<b>School of Social Policy &amp; Practice (SP2)</b>	
# of Tickets	306
Top #3 Main Categories	Canvas Features (122), Access (96), Site Request (77)
Top #3 Sub-Categories	Create SRS Site (64), Enrollment in Site (55), Settings (22)

# of Instructors/TAs Tickets	139
# of Students Tickets	43
# of Staff Tickets	114

<b>School of Design</b>	
# of Tickets	228
Top #3 Main Categories	Canvas Features (82), Site Request (77), Access (68)
Top #3 Sub-Categories	Create SRS Site (69), Enrollment in Site (48), Settings (15)
# of Instructors/TAs Tickets	174
# of Students Tickets	22
# of Staff Tickets	22

<b>Unknown</b>	
# of Tickets	193
Top #3 Main Categories	Access (86), Canvas Features (51), Other (68)
Top #3 Sub-Categories	Unknown (40), Account (34), Login Issues (20)
# of Instructors/TAs Tickets	27
# of Students Tickets	47
# of Staff Tickets	9

<b>Other Penn Department</b>	
# of Tickets	157
Top #3 Main Categories	Access (85), Canvas Features (43), Site Request (21)
Top #3 Sub-Categories	Enrollment in Site (43), Account (32), Create Non-SRS Site (18)

# of Instructors/TAs Tickets	56
# of Students Tickets	17
# of Staff Tickets	73

<b>Graduate School of Education (GSE)</b>	
# of Tickets	112
Top #3 Main Categories	Canvas Features (65), Access (34), Site Request (11)
Top #3 Sub-Categories	Enrollment in Site (20), Settings (16), Course Content (11)
# of Instructors/TAs Tickets	43
# of Students Tickets	47
# of Staff Tickets	11

<b>Annenberg School for Communication</b>	
# of Tickets	107
Top #3 Main Categories	Access (52), Canvas Features (32), Site Request (18)
Top #3 Sub-Categories	Enrollment in Site (25), Settings (25), Create SRS Site (18)
# of Instructors/TAs Tickets	30
# of Students Tickets	12
# of Staff Tickets	51

<b>Penn Law</b>	
# of Tickets	23
Top #3 Main Categories	Access (12), Canvas Features (10), Mobile App (1)
Top #3 Sub-Categories	Enrollment in Site (5), Other Canvas Instance (4), Multimedia (3)
# of Instructors/TAs Tickets	5

# of Students Tickets	7
# of Staff Tickets	8

<b>Interdisciplinary Programs</b>	
# of Tickets	14
Top #3 Main Categories	Canvas Features (5), Site Request (3), Access (3)
Top #3 Sub-Categories	Create Non-SRS Site (3), Settings (2), Appointment Request (2)
# of Instructors/TAs Tickets	2
# of Students Tickets	1
# of Staff Tickets	11