Dear faculty and staff,

As part of our commitment to student success, St. Johns River State College continually seeks to leverage the innovative use of technology to enhance student learning. This is key to moving our College into the future and providing the best learning experience possible for our students.

To ensure we have the right tools in place, we've recently been evaluating our operations and technologies to look for new ways to provide faculty and students with the best experience for teaching and learning. After much discussion across our College, St. Johns River State College will implement a new Learning Management System (LMS) and transition from Blackboard to Canvas over the next seven months.

Encouraged by the successful implementations of the Canvas LMS at many Florida College System and State University System institutions, a group of College staff have participated in testing the Canvas platform during the Fall 2017 semester. Additionally, multiple SJR State faculty have experience with Canvas from other institutions. Feedback from the Fall 2017 test was overwhelmingly positive, as were reports from the SJR State faculty with Canvas experience at other institutions, so we are proceeding with the transition to Canvas as our College-wide LMS.

Transitioning to Canvas will provide a more user-friendly interface for both faculty and students, a more stable course management platform, and a more engaging learning environment for our students. This change will result in neither a significant increase nor reduction in cost for the College; instead, what we do expect to experience is a significant increase in service and functionality with a very minor learning curve for both faculty and students. For example, through our contract with Canvas, both students and faculty will now have 24X7 help services. Canvas is also hosted externally, resulting in a more stable online learning environment than we can provide locally. And with tools such as Canvas ARC, a communication tool that allows you and your students to actively collaborate through video and audio media, you'll spend less time on the mechanics of your course and more time interacting with students.

We understand the challenges that come with new systems and want to ensure this transition will be as smooth as possible for our students, faculty, and staff. When we return in the Spring, faculty and students will be introduced to the new LMS in a variety of ways. Blackboard course content will be migrated into Canvas, and we will also provide in-depth faculty training towards the end of the spring semester and technical assistance during the migration period. The phased migration of courses from Blackboard to Canvas is scheduled as follows:

Spring 2018: All spring 2018 courses will continue to be taught through Blackboard. Canvas representatives will be onsite to work with IT and integrate Canvas with Banner. Distance learning staff will work on the behind-the-scenes migration of Blackboard course content to Canvas. Faculty will be provided optional webinars and an optional "sandbox" to get early

exposure to Canvas. Canvas representatives will be onsite to train faculty in the use of Canvas May 1, 2, 3.

Summer 2018: Summer A and Cross-term courses will be taught through Blackboard. Summer B courses will be taught through Canvas. 24x7 Faculty and Student Canvas Help Services will be available beginning Summer B. Throughout Summer A, on each campus there will be weekly Canvas Migration Labs offering faculty an opportunity to get one-onone help with their online courses. Other hours will always be available by appointment.

Fall 2018: All courses will be taught exclusively in Canvas.
We recognize that this project impacts many if not all departments across the College. In the days ahead, a Cross-Disciplinary Canvas Migration Workgroup that will be chaired by Jack Hall and Richard Anderson will be formed. This committee will be made up of both staff and faculty, with membership from IT, Academic Affairs, Workforce, and Student Affairs, and the goal will be to ensure a successful Canvas implementation. More detailed information about Canvas and the course migration process will be shared as we move closer to our full implementation date.

I'm excited about the types of learning capabilities we'll be able to have once we are fully in Canvas. With your cooperation and assistance from our IT and Distance Learning staff, I am sure we'll execute this transition as seamlessly as possible and provide our faculty and students with greater opportunities for success for years to come.

Sincerely,
Joe H. Pickens, J.D.
President