Canvas Course Merger Policy

Loyola University New Orleans has developed guidelines for course mergers that are meant to address concerns about student privacy under FERPA and faculty workload.

If a course is properly listed as a cross-list in Colleague it will be merged automatically. This includes W/Y course sections. The easiest way to have a course cross-listed on Canvas is to have the course cross-listed properly on Colleague.

Mergers of 001/002 sections or other sections which would be operated as two independent classrooms on the ground cannot be merged without authorization of the faculty member's Dean's office who will review the proposal to ensure that course mergers are not attempts to reduce overall teaching load by treating multiple course sections as a single large class. Faculty who are approved to merge such sections will need to take additional steps to ensure that student privacy is maintained. The Online Learning Team (onlineed@loyno.edu) should merge these courses to prevent accidental data loss. Courses cannot be merged or un-merged without data loss after there are submitted assignments in either section.

Student privacy is paramount. From time to time students must be put in separate sections of a course in order to comply with directives around stalking, intimate partner violence, or other conduct issues. An instructor may unwittingly be merging such students together when they merge a course on their own. In order to avoid this, if the Dean's office approves a course merger for a non-cross listed course, the instructor must follow these guidelines:

- Your Syllabus for the course will mention that students from multiple sections will be in one Canvas online classroom.
- You will add an Announcement in your class so students are aware that two sections have been merged.
- Canvas tools (People, Chat, Collaboration & Conferences) are hidden from student view.
- Change the course settings for Discussions, Announcements and Groups (Do not allow students to create their own Discussion topics, Do not allow students to create their own student groups, Disable comments on Announcements)
- Sending messages using the Canvas Inbox – When composing a message, check the box that says "send an individual message to each recipient" to prevent students from sending a "reply all" response or seeing to whom the message was sent.

The university offers tools via Qwickly in Canvas that allow an instructor to email multiple sections of courses. It is not necessary to merge course sections to have this functionality. For information about using Qwickly course tools please refer here (the part about course tools begins at 1:56 but watch from the beginning if you are new to Qwickly).