# Proposed Project Description

**Overview**

As cloud computing has become more predominant in business’ information infrastructure, there is still services that West Texas A&M University hosts locally to students to provide 24/7 access and support. Blackboard, the service WT uses to connect teachers and students online for assignments, meetings, and information, has a high annual cost to maintain and secure locally which could be lowered by moving to a cloud host.

**High-level description**

My project proposal is to move Blackboard’s host from WT to the cloud to reduce IT infrastructure costs and provide protection and security from cybercriminals. Currently, WT’s mitigates Blackboard for classes and is hosted on premises with help from Amazon Web Services (AWS) providing online for student’s access. Although hosting locally is easier for accessibility, there can be downturns with an ever-changing environment of products and services being moved to the cloud and an increase in cybersecurity threats.

**Expected Benefits**

The high speed and quick deployment of cloud computing services would be beneficial to WT Students to access and submit lesson assignments to their teachers, as well as server administrators being able to test new ideas for design application architecture without being limited to the on-site hardware WT has. Moving Blackboard to the cloud would also limit the costs of purchasing and maintaining equipment on campus and saving space for other utilities that can be provided. Cloud also offers the most advanced security with access management and granular permissions with federated roles to limit who, what, and when they can access sensitive data. Cloud security also provides encryption and authentication to add to security measures that might already be in place locally.

**Project Costs**

More information is required from 3rd parties and vendors, as well as obtaining more information from the university on usage, costs, and control to have an accurate understanding of the cost comparison hosting locally versus the cloud. There are multiple different options of different qualities and uptimes, so there are a lot of variables to comb through on a yearly contract, especially with a large-scale client such as a university with thousands of end users.

**Project Risks**

The risks of moving Blackboard to the cloud would be downtime, security and privacy, and limited control. When moving an intranet service from WT to a 3rd party cloud computing, there would need to be a scheduled downtime (preferably during low traffic of summer or school breaks), as well as putting trust in the 3rd party to keep their services running 24/7 with their other clients because downtime costs money and late homework for WT students. With security and privacy, you’re putting your trust in the 3rd party to handle and protect sensitive data and information of your business. Lastly, the limited control of a 3rd party would be a risk since administration would have less control over function and execution for services with the cloud-hosted infrastructure, compared to the intranet availability we currently have on campus to maintain and analyze whenever we want.