

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR
AND
OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

MOOC STRATEGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

INTERIM REPORT

NOVEMBER 2013



ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR
OFFICE OF THE PROVOST
MOOC STRATEGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FALL 2013 INTERIM REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
II.	COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP	4
III.	INTRODUCTION.....	4
	A. SOME MOOC BASICS	5
	B. CONTEXT.....	6
	C. EXTENSION	8
IV.	STRATEGIC OPTIONS FOR USING MOOCS.....	9
V.	PLATFORMS AND PARTNERSHIPS	11
	A. SELECTING AMONG PARTNERSHIP OPTIONS.....	11
VI.	POLICY ISSUES.....	12
	A. SHARED GOVERNANCE AND MOOCs	12
	B. FACULTY INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS FOR COURSE MATERIALS.....	13
	C. FACULTY COMPENSATION FOR COURSE DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUCTION	14
	D. WHO CAN TEACH AN ILLINOIS MOOC?.....	16
	E. STUDENT PRIVACY AND FERPA.....	17
	F. COURSE CREDIT.....	18
VII.	COURSE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY AND NEXT STEPS	19
VIII.	RECOMMENDATIONS	20
IX.	ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	21

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The MOOC Strategy Advisory Committee was appointed on April 1, 2013 and charged with advising the campus on strategic and policy issues related to massive open online courses. The committee has met almost weekly since its inception, exploring a wide range of issues and tracking a rapidly evolving situation. This interim report summarizes our discussions and recommendations to date. The committee will continue to meet, monitor developments, and formulate recommendations.

While a great deal of enthusiasm, hype, and anxiety have accompanied the development of MOOCs, the committee found it helpful to focus on how MOOCs or other large-scale online initiatives might advance our institutional character and mission, and how they relate to our fundamental values and priorities as a public land-grant university.

Our current strategy for our Coursera MOOCs is one of exploration. This strategy has served us well so far, positioning Illinois as a leader in this area, providing international visibility for our campus and its programs, deepening our understanding of pedagogical and policy issues, and allowing us to develop online course materials that are enhancing our traditional online and face-to-face courses.

We will continue to benefit from a policy on MOOC use that encourages exploration and enrichment of our for-credit courses, but it is necessary to begin to bring more focus into our MOOC strategy planning. As our campus begins to identify particular targeted uses of MOOCs, we must consider a wide range of MOOC and other online course models, which vary according to such factors as the number of students enrolled, the amount and type of interaction with teaching staff, requirements for enrollment, amount of course fees or tuition, and awarding of course credit or other credentials.

The committee discussed a number of different strategic options for using MOOCs. Some of these enhance the quality of our educational offerings to populations we already serve; others serve new audiences with new programmatic offerings. We recognize that proposals for academic programs on our campus are normally initiated from within academic units, and we encourage units to consider strategic options like the ones listed in our report. We also provide criteria for assessing proposals for these options.

Any discussion of MOOCs raises many policy issues, and we discussed shared governance issues, intellectual property rights, faculty compensation, how we decide who can teach a MOOC, student privacy rights, and course credit.

Regarding the faculty role in shaping policies and strategy, the committee believes we have done well so far. We have respected shared governance principles and have followed existing governance and approvals processes whenever possible. Going forward it is critical that we maintain transparency and open communication between the offices of the Chancellor and Provost and faculty governance bodies, both in the shaping of policy and in the mapping of our campus strategies.

A number of other policy questions are addressed by existing policies and practices, and there is no need to develop new policies in these areas. Examples include faculty intellectual property rights to course materials, evaluation of external courses for transfer credit, and approval processes for new and substantially revised courses and educational programs.

To date, Illinois faculty who have taught Coursera MOOCs have not been compensated specifically for that effort. Their MOOC teaching should be recognized in their annual reviews as part of their contribution to the university, in terms of educational outreach and public engagement. Looking forward, faculty compensation will need to be part of the plan for any more programmatic (and revenue-generating) use of MOOCs. In this report we offer some guidelines, which include differentiating between course development and course delivery, deciding whether the teaching should be on-load or off-load, and ensuring that the use of state funds to compensate the instructor is justified.

The committee also recommends that the campus:

1. Continue to expand the nature and uses of MOOCs through our partnership with Coursera, at least through the 2014-2015 academic year, focusing that effort on individual, open, non-credit courses. This includes developing new MOOCs as well as re-offering existing MOOCs.
2. Issue the next RFP for Coursera MOOC development early in the Spring 2014 semester, with successful courses to be offered late in 2014 and early in 2015. The basic framework of the current review process should be retained, with specific selection criteria reviewed by MSAC and by the Provost to ensure that they continue to align with the campus strategy for open MOOCs. Requests from deans for off-cycle reviews should also be considered, in cases where timely action offers value and the college or unit is willing to invest its own resources. We continue to support the principle that, because large-scale courses represent the campus, the individual instructor and the unit, and because these courses typically require the allocation of institutional resources, the campus must play a role in deciding which MOOCs best represent our campus and our strategic priorities.
3. Develop a concise document for MOOC instructors, summarizing campus and university policies on issues that have special importance for MOOC course development (copyrights, accessibility, etc.) as well as faculty intellectual property rights and obligations. This document should be posted on the Illinois MOOC web site, and it will be important to ensure that all Illinois Coursera MOOC instructors understand this information. To the extent possible, MOOC course and intellectual property policies should be consistent with policies for courses and instructors generally.
4. Encourage academic units to develop specific proposals for MOOCs and other innovative large-scale course models, possibly building on one of the strategic options in our committee's report, and possibly including for-credit courses and courses that are not free. These proposals should address programmatic goals that go beyond offering a single MOOC. Proposals that involve new degrees or certificates should be reviewed using normal new-program approvals processes, and requests for campus resources should be directed to the Office of the Provost. We continue to favor policies that regard

MOOC development as a platform for building instructional resources that can be reused in a variety of other teaching formats.

5. Continue our policy of not awarding credit for MOOCs as they are currently configured, but be willing to consider credit for "MOOC-plus" courses that meet our criteria for the student learning experience, course learning outcomes, verification of student identity, and assurance of academic integrity. These alternative course models may or may not carry the label "MOOC" and they may or may not be offered for free.
6. Increase campus-level staff capacity for online and blended course development, including MOOCs, moving quickly to a level that will meet current and projected unit and campus needs. Simultaneously, develop technologies and training programs that would make it easier for faculty and units to develop materials for blended and online instruction without extensive professional staff help.
7. Actively explore options for additional MOOC or MOOC-like software platforms that will enable Illinois faculty to experiment with, or create new forms of, online instruction that are not feasible under our current agreement with Coursera. This may include partnering with another provider besides Coursera, or adapting an open-source platform.
8. Expand our efforts to conduct research on our MOOCs, taking advantage of the data generated during the administration of MOOCs to learn more about pedagogy, learning, and other aspects of education in online environments, so as to position Illinois as a leader in the emerging research field of learning analytics.
9. Continue to rely on data-supported decisions as we develop campus policy in this area. Charge MSAC to monitor developments in MOOCs and online education, and to make additional strategy and policy recommendations as warranted.

II. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

James Anderson, College of Education
Michael Andrechak, Offices of the Chancellor and the Provost
Nicholas Burbules, College of Education
William Buttlar, Graduate College
Starla Carpenter, Office of University Counsel
Virginia Dominguez, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Adam Fein, Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning
Paul Hixson, CITES
Wen-Mei Hwu, College of Engineering
Jason Kosovski, Office of the Provost, *Staff*
Laurie Kramer, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, *Co-Chair*
Gay Miller, College of Veterinary Medicine
Jeffrey Moore, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Deanna Raineri, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Scott Rice, Office of University Counsel
Rob Rutenbar, College of Engineering
Norma Scagnoli, College of Business
Spencer Schaffner, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Joseph Squier, College of Fine and Applied Arts
Joyce Tolliver, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Jonathan Tomkin, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Charles Tucker, Office of the Provost, *Co-Chair*
Jose Vazquez, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

III. INTRODUCTION

Chancellor Wise and Provost Adesida appointed the MOOC Strategy Advisory Committee (MSAC) on April 1, 2013. Our charge was to advise the campus on strategic and policy issues related to massive open online courses, including, but not necessarily limited to, advice on:

1. Our status as a Coursera partner institution,
2. Any other MOOC-related partnerships we might enter into,
3. Types of courses we should have in our MOOC portfolio¹,
4. How we should respond to requests to accept MOOC experiences for course credit,
5. The appropriate level of campus investment in MOOC courses,
6. How best to organize the services needed to develop and deliver high-quality MOOC courses,

¹ Proposals to teach specific courses will continue to be solicited, reviewed, and evaluated by the MOOC Review Committee (<http://mooc.illinois.edu/contact/>).

7. How the development and teaching of MOOCs should be reflected in faculty compensation and promotion, and
8. How our MOOC strategy fits into our wider online course and program strategy.

MSAC has met almost weekly since its inception, and will continue its work through the 2013-2014 academic year. This report summarizes the main outcomes of the committee's discussion to date, and points to directions for continuing work. MSAC expects to provide additional reports as its work proceeds.

A. SOME MOOC BASICS

MOOC stands for Massive Open Online Course. It is the first two elements that distinguish MOOCs from other online courses: they are designed to reach very wide audiences, and anyone can sign up for them. Our committee has considered the implications of each of these aspects when thinking about how Illinois might prudently make use of the MOOCs: How "massive" should our projected audience be? How "open" should the courses be?

The University of Illinois has been offering online education for decades, both for-credit courses that our students can take in exchange for tuition, and non-credit courses that are offered as a service to the community. Many for-credit online courses differ from traditional face-to-face solely in terms of the mode of instruction and interaction: students interact with each other and with the instructor online rather than coming to the same room at set times throughout the semester; course content and standards of quality are the same; and courses span the same semester calendar. Other Illinois online courses may be structured around fewer weeks than the sixteen-week semester, and may feature different types of course activity and interaction. For-credit online courses make extensive use of technological support such as video lectures and learning management systems such as Illinois Compass, but many traditional face-to-face courses use these same tools. There is not, then, a clear set of characteristics that define an online course. There is a wide range of formats for online courses, and many options exist between the free, no-credit, hundred-thousand-student MOOC, and the full-tuition, thirty-student, for-credit online course.

However, there are a few characteristics of MOOCs that are not typical of traditional online courses. For example, MOOCs offer:

- A very large audience, with many people we would not normally reach (both geographically and demographically),
- Many course-takers who are highly engaged and self-motivated,
- More detailed (clickstream) data about large numbers of course-takers, which allows for more precise analysis of what works for the course and how people learn that material,
- Pedagogical tools that are not as common in traditional classes, such as peer-to-peer grading,
- Motivation to develop high quality video content that can also be used in traditional online and residential instruction.

Attempts to assess the value of MOOCs inevitably include consideration of both enrollment and completion figures. Enrollments tend to be very high, but the percentage of enrollees who

complete the course tends to be very low (10% or less). In interpreting this information, it is important to remember that enrollment in a MOOC usually involves very little effort – just a few clicks of the mouse. Many people enroll in a MOOC, but never even look at the first lesson. While this would represent a problem for a face-to-face course, the impact of no-show enrollees for MOOCs are minimal: no costs are incurred, no seats are being held for them, and no one else is losing their place in the course because of them.

Further, not “completing” a MOOC does not necessarily mean that the user failed to get what he or she was seeking: some course-takers get exactly what they want by watching just a part of the course – a dip into the subject, a look at what a MOOC is, a taste of the college experience. And many of those who enroll in today’s MOOCs are not motivated by grades or the promise of a certificate, but rather by a desire for a high-quality educational experience.

Our own MOOC instructors unanimously agree that the Illinois MOOCs are high-quality educational experiences, and that real learning takes place in these courses. Our committee devoted most of its attention, then, to considering what role MOOCs should play in our broad educational mission – not whether MOOCs are good or bad.

B. CONTEXT

Our committee sought to track and interpret a rapidly evolving situation, to discuss and evaluate opportunities in which to invest, and to evaluate the risks of action vs. inaction, all within the context of the need to develop a coherent set of policy guidelines. The discussions of our committee have been far ranging and fundamental.

Any conversation about MOOCs necessarily involves questions about our institutional mission, our students, pedagogy and learning, business models, and more. Across public higher education, initiatives in online education, including the latest round of enthusiasm about MOOCs, have frequently been presented in ways that are divorced from considerations of how online education and MOOCs fit into the educational mission of universities: as a chance to make money, as a competitive necessity because peers are doing it, or as a response to the fear that if we do not try to control these “disruptive technologies” they will control us. No doubt, many rapidly conceived initiatives have responded to such motivations, which we consider distracting and, even worse, reactive. Instead of assuming that we *must* develop MOOCs or other online initiatives for their own sake, we should ask how these new initiatives will advance our institutional character and mission, and how they reflect our fundamental values and priorities as a public land-grant university. This will help us stay true to our core institutional mission.

The main reasons for investigating new capabilities and opportunities in MOOCs and other IT-related innovations that can be used to support online or blended instruction should be to:

- Promote learning,
- Evaluate the effectiveness of these new tools and teaching methodologies,
- Expand access, with quality,
- Help students control costs,
- Improve time to completion and student success,

- Innovate in instruction (including using participant learning experiences to derive analytics that can guide course improvement),
- Promote our campus brand and reputation,
- Increase enrollments and revenues in a sustainable way,
- Improve our ability to respond to high-priority societal needs through not-for-credit teaching activities, and
- Determine where these new capabilities best align with and support our land-grant mission of integrated teaching, research, and outreach/extension.

As we have met to review the decision to join Coursera, and to help plan what comes next, we have developed two common themes.

One is that **our MOOC strategy overlaps with, but is not identical to, our Coursera strategy.** Many MOOC platforms are already available, and over time there will be even more. Moreover, Coursera’s educational program and evolving business plan emphasize priorities that may only partially align with our own as a public land-grant university. While continuing to support our existing Coursera initiatives, we have come to realize that we also need to carve out independent MOOC and online priorities of our own.

Second, and relatedly, **we need to weigh the emotion and hype about MOOCs against evidence and research on what actually happens with MOOCs and what they are and are not good for.** The MOOC Revolution has contained overpromise and hyperbole, both positive and negative. While understandable, these are not a proper basis for policy planning. We have expanded our campus efforts to collect data on our MOOCs, who they help and who they do not help, and are carrying out research to produce and understand the analytics that are based in actual performance. As a result, our committee has become more skeptical about the hype, and more focused on strategic planning based on evidence.

At the same time, our discussions about MOOCs have opened up a host of other issues that might not initially be thought of as MOOC-specific. In this sense the innovation truly has been “disruptive,” forcing us to re-examine many assumptions: what counts as a “course,” what the meaning of “credit” is, who is an Illinois “student” and what rights they have, how faculty should be compensated for MOOC development and teaching, what Extension and outreach mean in a land-grant institution in today’s world, and many other questions. All of this is happening quickly, and new issues arise almost daily.

Illinois’ involvement in MOOCs has been, thus far, very positive for the institution. By allowing the institution to experiment with course delivery and recognition, MOOCs have given the university a chance to look into the future of higher education. As one of the first-movers—and the first land-grant adopter— Illinois has burnished its well-deserved reputation as a leader in innovative education. By adapting their pedagogies to scale, faculty have developed and applied techniques that have already been transferred to on-campus courses – a benefit to Illinois degree-seeking students that will continue to spread. The process has also advanced the campus’ understanding of education in the digital age, driving debate, increasing institutional knowledge about accessibility and intellectual property, and accelerating the best-practice adoption of technology in teaching. Educational expectations in higher education are in a period of evolution

and disruption; Illinois' experience with MOOCs has enhanced our ability to adapt and respond to these challenges.

Our participation in MOOCs is contributing to one of our core campus missions, teaching and learning, through online technology, but we also recognize that the on-campus experience contributes to our residential students' development in a myriad of ways that will continue to be valued by students, their parents, and the public. Online technologies complement the educational experience of many residential students, but do not replace that experience. Enhancing how we implement our educational mission is what drives the adoption of educational technology at Illinois, and we are committed to a high standard of education for all of our students. We encourage uses of MOOCs that will support this commitment.

C. EXTENSION

We also recognize the potential that MOOCs offer to enhance other core campus missions – especially our extension and outreach mission. The primary reason participants sign up for our Coursera MOOCs is to satisfy their personal goal for life-long learning. As a public land-grant institution, we see a special opportunity to explore ways this type of new educational delivery platform could be leveraged to support, and possibly even reinvent, how we conduct extension and outreach in the 21st Century.

With its 100th birthday quickly approaching, University of Illinois Extension (funded, in part, by the federal Smith-Lever Act of 1914) has a long history of delivering scientific discoveries, evidence-based findings and other forms of scholarship to the public – translating complex findings into more easily comprehensible forms of information that can be used and applied by wide arrays of consumers and industries. Extension has been the most visible mechanism by which land-grant universities fulfill their outreach commitments to the citizens of their states and the nation.

University of Illinois Extension has also been a leader in taking extension to the digital world, using technology to transmit information critical to advancing our nation's food, energy, natural resource, environmental, and economic systems. For example, the *farmdoc* website (<http://www.farmdoc.illinois.edu/>) hosted by the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, is viewed as an objective and trustworthy source of information “harnessing the power of the Internet for today's farm business.” *Farmdoc* content is constantly updated in accordance with changes in the economic landscape, and leading audiences to consult it daily: farmers regularly report reading *farmdoc* on laptops while operating their combines.

Today, Extension is progressively re-conceptualizing its service mission, looking beyond its traditional audiences of farm, farm family, and agribusiness for ways to serve urban audiences and an ever-increasing range of industries. In this setting, MOOCs are highly attractive as a delivery mechanism of cutting edge information. Thus, we include several ideas for Extension and outreach programs among the strategic options for using MOOCs.

IV. STRATEGIC OPTIONS FOR USING MOOCS

Our current strategy for our Coursera MOOCs is one of exploration. Our first round of courses for Coursera were selected under tight time constraints (so that Illinois could be in the second wave of Coursera university partners) and focused on courses that were already taught online, with enthusiastic faculty early adopters. In January of this year we issued an RFP for a second round of Coursera MOOCs. These were reviewed primarily for their ability to:

- Enhance Illinois' reputation as a leader in online and blended instruction,
- Attract students to existing academic programs (online and residential; undergraduate, advanced certificate, graduate, professional)—and new ones,
- Enhance our traditional credit-bearing (and, thus, revenue-generating) online and blended instruction,
- Diversify our portfolio of MOOCs into fields not represented in the first round, and
- Support research on discipline-specific online teaching and learning involving a diverse, global learning community.

Our strategy was to offer a variety of courses that cut across many disciplines, so that we could learn about teaching different kinds of subjects in this way, while ensuring that all Illinois MOOCs are high quality, and represent our institution well. If an individual traditional class doesn't succeed, a few dozen students are unhappy; if an Illinois MOOC doesn't succeed, tens of thousands of students are unhappy and we end up as a headline in *Inside Higher Ed*.

While this strategy of has served us well so far, we see the need to evaluate other strategic options, and to consider some more focused approaches to targeting areas in which we want to encourage the development of MOOCs. With that in mind the committee has discussed several different options. We considered how each option might advance some aspect of our campus mission, taking into consideration the six areas identified through the Visioning Future Excellence exercise, as well as our broader mission as a top-tier public land-grant research university. We considered target audiences we could serve, the types of courses that might benefit them, and the objectives we could achieve by serving each population. We also took into account the feasibility of the business model that each type of MOOC would require.

In one basic scenario, MOOCs could be designed to **enhance the quality of our educational offerings** to the populations we already serve, or hope to serve in larger numbers. For example, Illinois MOOCs could focus on preparing greater numbers of high school or community college students for success at the University of Illinois. Thus, MOOCs could be offered that address:

- College readiness or bridge courses,
- Low-tuition general education courses or a set of foundational undergraduate courses,
- A lower cost baccalaureate degree in which more course content is delivered online ("flipping the curriculum"),
- Extension education, both short courses and practical knowledge available on demand,
- Lifelong learning,
- Career development needs of Illinois alumni, and
- Subjects that few other institutions can teach at comparable quality.

In a second basic scenario, MOOCs could be designed to **serve new audiences with new programmatic offerings**. For example, Illinois MOOCs could provide:

- Low-tuition graduate or professional degrees,
- Certificate programs for professionals seeking to advance their careers,
- AP teacher preparation courses ,
- High school Advanced Placement courses, or dual-credit courses,
- Training for Extension educators,
- Community college partnerships to teach subjects the community colleges cannot staff by themselves (e.g., agriculture), in a blended or wrap-around mode, and
- A path to connect the results of our faculty’s community-based research and outreach activities back into the host communities.

The committee finds all of these options exciting and valuable and believes that, moving forward, the campus should be guided by how well proposed new uses of MOOCs and similar IT toolsets will advance our campus strategic vision of being a preeminent public research university with a land-grant mission and a global impact in the 21st Century. The campus Strategic Plan (2013) details specific ways to reach this goal, including clear metrics for tracking our progress. The committee strongly recommends that MOOCs be envisioned primarily as a way to help our campus reach both our overarching goal and the specific goals detailed in the Strategic Plan.

Going forward, we recognize that on our campus proposals for new programs are normally initiated from the academic units, rather than from the center. We encourage academic units to consider strategic options like the ones listed above. Then, recognizing that any such program would represent a significant investment of faculty time and campus resources, the campus should decide whether or not to pursue that option by considering the follow questions:

- a. How is the program aligned with the educational mission of the campus? Who does it serve, and in what ways?
- b. What investments are required, both initial and continuing, and who will make them? This includes faculty time, staff time, new positions, technology and infrastructure needs, as well as marketing and communication.
- c. What income will be generated, and how will it be distributed? What size of audience is needed to have a financially sustainable program, and what evidence is there that this audience can be attracted to the program?
- d. What is the likely impact of the activity on existing courses and programs? This could include changes in enrollment and demands on faculty time, among other factors.
- e. What is the likely impact of **not** developing the new program? If there is a risk to inaction, what would be our best alternative to the proposed program?
- f. What would we learn – about educational programs, how to teach, how students learn, etc. – that would help the university in other areas? How will that knowledge be developed and shared?

We recommend that MSAC continue to consider strategic options for the use of MOOCs and other online educational tools, and that academic units be engaged, or encouraged, to develop more specific proposals for such programs.

V. PLATFORMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

A “platform” refers to the software that delivers the MOOC. Building a MOOC platform and maintaining/enhancing the software is a large and expensive task – too big for a single university to do alone. Simply operating a MOOC platform is a large IT operation. As an example of this scale, Coursera purchases \$50,000 of computer time on the Amazon cloud for every course it offers.

At this moment, large-scale MOOC platforms are being built and operated either by venture-funded startup companies (Coursera, Udacity) or by coalitions of universities (edX). Universities must either join an existing partnership or form a new coalition in order to play in this space.

Multiple discussions have occurred over the last year among the CIC Chief Information Officers and, in parallel, the CIC Provosts about the role of online education, MOOCs, platforms, etc. In June 2013 the CIC Provosts issued a report conveying mutual interests in jointly offering MOOC courses to students in CIC institutions. Discussions about a possible CIC-based software platform and alliances to make use of it are ongoing, and MSAC will monitor those discussions and advise the campus as opportunities unfold.

A. SELECTING AMONG PARTNERSHIP OPTIONS

We recommend that Illinois investigate and pursue other options for MOOC partnerships and platforms, as we continue to work with Coursera. This raises the question of how we should evaluate potential partners, and under what circumstances we should enter into a partnership.

Massive open online courses are, first and foremost, an academic venture. Clearly, decision-making about this form of campus online education falls squarely in the purview of the campus faculty, in keeping with the principles expressed in the University Statutes and General Rules. It is therefore essential that the terms of any MOOC partnership fully invest our faculty with oversight of the academic aspects of the MOOC enterprise, in terms of policy-making, institutional quality control, and the academic freedom and intellectual property rights of the individual MOOC instructors. The composition of MSAC, and of all the committees that have shaped campus MOOC and online policies, reflects this faculty-centered view.

Since professionally informed decisions about the format and structure of course design are integral to teaching, it is important that faculty members have the freedom to adapt and modify the content and the format of their MOOC courses, either while the course is being offered or between offerings. Further, it must be up to our campus to decide how our courses are used, and to whom we offer them. We have consistently maintained these boundaries in our partnership with Coursera, for example.

The determination of academic policy and the oversight of academic quality are processes that are delineated within our system of shared governance. For this reason, the terms of our partnerships must be such that they allow for appropriate consultation with the relevant bodies within the campus shared governance system.

We will form and maintain partnerships only with MOOC platform providers that allow us to enact these principles. The core values that we need to preserve in any partnership agreement include the following:

- Our ownership of the intellectual property of the course and course materials,
- Our control over the intellectual and pedagogical quality of the course,
- Our ability to adapt and modify the course, both during an offering and between offerings,
- Our ability to form additional partnerships for MOOCs or online education,
- Control over how our courses are used, and to whom they are offered, and
- Mutual understanding and appreciation of academic culture and values, and an organization whose governance structure has strong university representation.

VI. POLICY ISSUES

Our discussion of MOOCs has raised many policy issues. Here we discuss shared governance, intellectual property rights, faculty compensation for teaching MOOCs, how we decide who can teach a MOOC, student privacy rights, and course credit.

A. SHARED GOVERNANCE AND MOOCs

When considering MOOC-related policy issues, it is helpful to think about two aspects of shared governance: the faculty role in approving new and revised courses and programs, and the faculty role in shaping institutional policy and strategy.

Regarding the first aspect, course and program approvals, we affirm that all new or revised for-credit courses, certificates, degrees, or other academic programs should continue to follow our normal approval processes², regardless of the style in which the course is taught and regardless of any technology used. (Note that our current Coursera MOOCs are not for credit, and so do not require the same approvals as credit-bearing courses). Whether it is a MOOC or a small, face-to-face seminar, an Illinois course that leads to an Illinois degree requires the same review.

Nonetheless, the committee is quite concerned about the speed (or lack thereof) of our approval processes. It is not unusual to take two years or more to move a new degree from initial proposal to implementation. This kind of timeline may well place Illinois at a competitive disadvantage in developing innovative educational programs. Could we accomplish the same review much faster? This topic deserves further study.

² For information about campus processes see <http://www.provost.illinois.edu/programs/cps/courses.html> for courses and <http://www.provost.illinois.edu/programs/cps/curricula.html> for curricula. A table summarizing required approvals appears at <http://www.provost.illinois.edu/programs/cps/UIUC%20Levels%20of%20Governance%209-06.pdf>.

Regarding the faculty role in shaping policies and strategy, the committee believes that we have done well so far. All MOOC-related decisions made at Illinois have, to date, followed our established shared governance processes. Where our existing governance processes have not matched up well to the questions and needs posed by MOOCs, we have adapted our processes in a reasonable way. There has been regular and substantive consultation with faculty governance bodies about MOOCs and MOOC-related issues.

Going forward it is critical that we maintain transparency and open communication between the offices of the Chancellor and Provost and faculty governance bodies.

B. FACULTY INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS FOR COURSE MATERIALS

The *General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*³ govern intellectual property rights for University of Illinois faculty and staff members. The Coursera FAQ page discusses the rules, and how they might apply to faculty-developed MOOCs:

The content in our MOOCs is governed by the same rules of ownership as apply to our on-campus or traditional online courses, i.e., unless otherwise agreed to by the instructor, intellectual property rights to any course content created by the instructor independently and at the instructor's initiative rest with the instructor. Where the course support provided by the University is over and above the University resources usually and customarily provided, as will likely be the case with most MOOCs, course content created by the instructor shall be owned by the instructor and licensed to the University⁴.

This existing policy provides protections to both the faculty members and the university. We view it as sound and applicable to the development of MOOCs at Illinois.

This policy implies that, in most cases, a faculty member who developed a MOOC and who subsequently left Illinois could take that content with them and use it elsewhere. The university would retain the right to continue to use the course materials.

A related question concerns the possibility of an Illinois faculty member creating and teaching a MOOC through some third party, perhaps an open-access web site or a for-profit organization. Would this activity be permitted? Would it be restricted? We believe that existing university policy on non-university activity is the appropriate way to resolve such issues. According to that policy:

All faculty, academic staff members, and postdoctoral research associates must complete the Report of Non-University Activities (RNUA) at least annually, as required by state law, federal regulations, and University policy. While the

³ Available at <http://www.bot.uillinois.edu/general-rules>; see Article III, especially Section 4(b).

⁴ MOOCs @ Illinois: FAQ for Faculty, <http://mooc.illinois.edu/resources/faqfaculty/>.

University encourages active participation in external activities that enhance an employee's professional skills or constitute public service, University policy requires both the reporting and prior approval of all non-university income-producing activities. *Any external relationships that may give rise to a potential conflict of interest must also be reported*⁵.

Teaching a third-party MOOC could be a conflict of interest if the course competed with other courses or programs of the university. It might also represent a conflict of commitment, depending on the amount of time the faculty member devoted to the course. Or it could be "an external activity that enhances an employee's professional skills or constitutes a public service." A faculty members' annual Reports of Non-University Activities are reviewed by their unit executive officers and by their deans. These are appropriate people to determine whether teaching a MOOC through a third party represents a conflict of interest or a conflict of commitment, and to address that question with the faculty member.

C. FACULTY COMPENSATION FOR COURSE DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUCTION

To date, Illinois faculty who have taught Coursera MOOCs have not been compensated specifically for that effort. This is consistent with the way that faculty commit their time to research, to outreach activities, and to excellence in their teaching. For example, a professor who becomes interested in a new research topic may spend many hours studying that topic, attending related meetings and conferences, and doing their own original work. Similarly, a faculty member may choose to spend part of her or his time developing and executing an outreach program, or go well beyond the norm in course development and delivery. Departments and colleges do not regulate that activity, and they usually do not provide additional compensation for the activity. Units do view that activity as part of the faculty member's contribution to the university's mission.

In a similar way, our Coursera instructors are faculty members who are interested in MOOCs, their potential impact on higher education, and/or what MOOCs can teach us about how students learn. They have volunteered for this service, in some cases aggressively seeking it. For these Coursera instructors, teaching a MOOC is an activity that enriches their professional development, supporting specific research agendas and/or helping them become more creative teachers.

While their MOOC teaching may not have generated any directly related income, that activity is an integral and visible part of their work as Illinois faculty members. Great MOOC teaching serves the larger community and brings credit to the faculty member and to the institution, much as great research or creative work serves a larger community and brings credit. Thus, MOOC teaching deserves specific recognition in annual reviews of faculty activity, and in promotion and tenure reviews.

⁵ RNUA Guidelines for New Faculty, Office of the Vice President for Research, <http://research.uillinois.edu/rnua/new-employees>. Emphasis added.

This “volunteer” model was appropriate for the initial, exploratory phase of our involvement with MOOCs. Note that this phase has not generated significant revenue, and in fact the net cost has been covered by the campus and colleges. We would classify this activity as educational outreach and public engagement, given the audience reached by our MOOCs.

Looking forward, however, one compensation model will not fit all situations. As we explore different ways to use MOOCs and other online educational tools, we will find that other models for faculty compensation become more appropriate. This will certainly be true if our campus offers MOOC-like courses that are more closely tied to our academic programs, and/or courses that generate significant revenue. For those future situations we offer some guiding principles:

- Compensation models should differentiate between MOOC/online course *development* on one hand, and the *delivery* of a developed course on the other. Developing a MOOC can require extensive planning, video creation, as well as creation and programming of learning assessments. Once developed, these materials can be re-used in subsequent course offerings. Still, a skilled course instructor is needed to interact with students and guide the day-to-day delivery of the course. These two roles should be differentiated in a compensation scheme, which should recognize the time and effort required for each of these roles.
- Careful consideration should be given to whether MOOC/online teaching is an *on-load* activity (i.e., a part of a faculty member’s regular teaching duties) as compared to an *off-load* assignment (i.e., “service in excess” of regular duties, accompanied by additional compensation). The on-load model is appropriate when the MOOC/online courses are part of an education program; in this case the on-load model encourages unit ownership of the program, which supports the quality of the program in the long term. On-load compensation is also the norm when the MOOC/online activity is part of an Extension program conducted by faculty with Extension appointments. There may be other instances where the nature of the activity or the needs of the unit point to the off-load model.
- If state funds are to be used to compensate a MOOC or online instructor, then the course must be aligned with the mission of the university in a way that justifies the use of state funds. This is particularly important for courses that do not generate enough revenue to offset the costs of development and delivery. Many university activities do not generate revenue but do benefit the public through enhanced knowledge, creative works, or outreach. Some MOOCs will fall into this category too. A planned Coursera MOOC on financial literacy is a good example. It is also common that course development effort for a MOOC is, at the same time, development for a traditional online or on-campus course, so there is a direct tie to revenue-generating programs. This guideline should not be an insurmountable hurdle, but it does point out the importance of articulating the value of any state-funded activity.

Whatever the compensation model, it is always good practice to have a clear agreement about compensation between the unit and the faculty member before the course (or the development process) begins.

D. WHO CAN TEACH AN ILLINOIS MOOC?

Currently, a campus-wide process that includes faculty from a diverse collection of colleges approves all MOOC courses and instructors. MOOCs, because of their scale and public visibility, uniquely represent the campus as a whole, not just the faculty member or the department that sponsors them. Thus, we continue to support the principle that the campus must play a role in deciding which MOOCs best represent our campus and our strategic priorities.

To date, responding to the campus-wide request for proposals has been the only way to offer a Coursera MOOC. This RFP process should continue on a regular basis, with the expectation that the campus will support development of these MOOCs. In addition, we should also offer off-cycle reviews for individual cases where timing is of strategic importance. A request for an off-cycle review should be made by the college dean, and should explain why an off-cycle review is warranted. In addition, the college or unit should be prepared to invest its own resources toward developing and offering the MOOC. Any off-cycle request should be reviewed using the same campus-level criteria as on-cycle proposals.

Our emerging policies have sought to reconcile the importance of supporting innovation, creativity, and enthusiasm, particularly around faculty teaching, on one hand, and on the other hand ensuring the reputation of the institution. At this moment developing a MOOC requires substantial institutional help, both with course development as well as with interfacing with our platform partner. One benefit of this arrangement is that Illinois has been able to offer a set of consistently high quality course offerings that highlight and enhance the Illinois identity. In the future, technological advances might make it possible for any faculty member to mount a MOOC-like course without institutional assistance. When that occurs, it will be important to provide faculty with guidance on how to ensure quality in this unique teaching and learning medium.

Currently, there is a strong need to help faculty members learn more about the risks and challenges that accompany the teaching of a MOOC. Even very experienced instructors encounter unexpected difficulties in this rapidly changing domain. Potential issues that must be addressed include: adherence with copyright laws for use of all images, figures, journal articles, etc.; licensing agreements for any software that is used by course-takers; export control over any software or other technology that course-takers might have access to; complaints or suits from course-takers who experience damages to their computers as a result of downloading course software; accessibility issues (e.g., closed captioning, translation); and culturally-related concerns about course content (e.g., sexual, religious, or politically-related language or images). These issues are all present to some extent in our other teaching, so there are no new policies here. However, the scope and scale of MOOCs can require much more attention to these issues than in an on-campus course.

The *MOOCs@Illinois* website (<http://mooc.illinois.edu>) contains a detailed guide for teaching Coursera MOOCs⁶, as well as other valuable resources (<http://mooc.illinois.edu/resources/>). This could usefully be supplemented with a concise document summarizing the rights and responsibilities of MOOC instructors. This document should be posted to the site, and we should ensure that every MOOC instructor has a clear understanding of these issues.

E. STUDENT PRIVACY AND FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) details the obligations of the university to guard the privacy of its students and their educational information. Briefly, FERPA requires us to maintain the confidentiality of students' grades and other academic records. Because general users of our Coursera courses ("Courserians") are not registered Illinois students, we do not have FERPA obligations towards them. However, FERPA issues arise as we begin to explore the use of the Coursera platform to teach regular Illinois courses, either in whole or in part. The committee has discussed two potential uses of Coursera for registered students:

- Using the Coursera platform to deliver an Illinois course for credit. This is allowed under the Registered Student Model of the university's agreement with Coursera. Students would authenticate using the university network services before being granted access to the course, and only registered university students would participate in the course. In this mode we would be using Coursera as a learning management system, in place of Illinois Compass, Moodle, etc.
- Asking, or requiring, students in a regular campus course to participate in an open MOOC already being delivered over Coursera. This would both allow the instructor to take advantage of previously developed materials, and could also be used to expose students, through the Coursera class forums, to the insights and perspectives of non-university learners.

Both models would use MOOCs to enhance the education of registered university students. However, each model presents some challenges in complying with our FERPA obligations.

In the registered-student model, we need assurance that Coursera would safeguard the security of our students' information, and that they would only use it in ways that are consistent with FERPA. As this report is being written, Illinois has a course like this under development. We are exploring whether a supplemental course development agreement can suitably address this issue, so that the course can go forward.

The second model, using open MOOCs, can be problematic if registered Illinois students are required to agree to an End-User License Agreement with a third party (Coursera) in order to take a University of Illinois course. Maintaining the privacy of our students' educational information is also an issue here. There are no quick solutions to these issues at present. Using a MOOC (whether an Illinois MOOC or anyone else's) in a regular course is less of an issue if

⁶ *Guide to Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) at Illinois*, <http://mooc.illinois.edu/docs/moocs-at-illinois-guide.pdf>.

participation in the MOOC is optional, if the course is not required for a degree, or if alternative sections or courses are available. This issue is also evolving rapidly.

In all of these situations we support solutions that respect our students FERPA rights while enabling faculty members to develop and teach the best courses possible.

F. COURSE CREDIT

While much has been written in the popular press about whether or not MOOCs should receive college credit, we believe that the important question is: **What types of courses or experiences should be granted credit toward an Illinois degree?**

All colleges and universities, including our own, address the credit question daily in the articulation of transfer courses. On our campus the course articulation process relies heavily on recommendations from colleges and departments that teach the corresponding subjects. Our committee discussions point to four criteria that are implicitly used when a course is evaluated for credit:

1. Input: What is the academic background and experience level of students entering the course?
2. Process: What types of experiences, and in what amounts, does the course provide to students?
3. Outcomes: What learning outcomes have students achieved and demonstrated by the end of the course?
4. Integrity: Are we confident that the student applying for credit has done the work and achieved the learning objectives of the course?

At this time, **we recommend that we not award credit for MOOCs as they are currently configured**, particularly if it remains difficult to assess the degree to which a MOOC satisfies the outcomes and integrity criteria outlined above.

Students who have achieved learning objectives through a credit-bearing course (including a MOOC) at another accredited institution may receive Illinois course credit if that course “articulates” and is judged to be equivalent with a University of Illinois course. Current University of Illinois policy requires that we only accept transfer credit from accredited institutions⁷.

⁷ “Policy for the Acceptance of Transfer Credit for Admissions Purposes,” Minutes of the Board of Trustees, University of Illinois, April 20, 1977, pp. 253-254.
<http://www.trustees.illinois.edu/trustees/minutes/1978/1978.pdf>.

Students who believe that they have achieved the learning objectives of a University of Illinois course offering through a non-credit bearing MOOC, and who would like to earn University of Illinois credit, are able to demonstrate their knowledge through a proficiency examination⁸.

Going forward, we do encourage consideration of awarding credit to courses that follow a "MOOC-plus" model in which the criteria listed above are satisfied. We imagine that "MOOC-plus" courses might include enhancements to the student experience compared to open MOOCs. These enhancements might include access to faculty and/or teaching assistants through placements into course discussion sections, verification of students' identity and completion of course assignments, and comprehensive assessment of student learning objectives along with meaningful feedback. Of course the content of the course and what students learn from it are just as important for a "MOOC-plus" course as for any other evaluation of a course for transfer credit.

VII. COURSE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY AND NEXT STEPS

Our entrance into the world of MOOCs has generated substantial excitement among our faculty, as well as from around the globe. There is clear interest in expanding the number and scope of our offerings. However, strategic approaches are needed to broaden and stretch our capacity to ensure quality instruction and superior student learning.

Developing a MOOC requires not only an instructor and a delivery platform, but also the services of a professional production staff. The production staff captures audio and video for the course; helps the instructor decide how to interweave slides, video, and quizzes in each lesson; produces graphics, slides, and videos; obtains copyright clearances for images and other course elements; ensures that each course session will run properly on the platform; and uploads those sessions to the platform. Creating a MOOC with the high academic and high production values of an Illinois Coursera course is a team effort, and Illinois Coursera courses are known for their excellent quality. We note that this quality has been achieved at a cost that is far below what other institutions have reportedly spent to develop their MOOCs. This is largely due to our creative deployment of existing resources in faculty, instructional design and production staff, and to the hard work of many talented individuals. However, it is now clear that existing resources are not sufficient to meet all of our goals for online course delivery.

The professionals who have produced our Coursera MOOCs are the same people who develop and update our traditional online courses. Illinois was able to enter the MOOC world on short notice in Fall 2012 by drawing on this talented staff. As we have produced and delivered our first round of Coursera MOOCs, the pressure for development of traditional online courses for our own academic units has continued to grow. Our current online course production staff, whether located centrally in the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning or in the colleges, does not have the capacity to meet all of our campus needs for traditional online and MOOC course development. The growing use of online elements in on-campus courses –

⁸ See Section § 3-203 Proficiency Examinations in the *Student Code*, http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/article3_part2_3-203.html.

blended learning or flipped classes – will only place additional demands on our online course development staff.

We recommend that the campus begin immediately to build up our staff capacity for developing online courses. This build-up of professional staff and student interns should be sized to meet academic units' needs for traditional online course development and allow for a modest number of Coursera-style MOOCs to be added to our portfolio each year. We also need greater capacity to respond to emerging needs, such as a campus decision to develop a non-traditional online program or a surge in demand for blended-style classes on campus.

In addition to bringing on more staff, we recommend that we explore ways to expand our production capacity by making more user-oriented technology directly available to faculty and sharing with them what we have learned about producing effective MOOCs. This would enable interested faculty to prepare a more diverse set of quality offerings, both for traditional online courses and for blended on-campus courses, with streamlined staff support.

In order to maintain momentum in our online developments, we recommend that we issue an RFP for a new round of Coursera MOOCs early in the Spring 2014 semester, with the successful MOOCs beginning to be offered late in Fall 2014 and early Spring 2015. The basic framework of the current review process should be retained, and the selection criteria should be reviewed to make sure they still align with our campus strategy for open MOOCs and with the campus' strategic goals. The number of proposals selected in the first round of that review should be aligned with the production capacity that exists at that time. By then we may also have other partnership and platform options, besides Coursera, available to faculty.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, we recommend that the campus:

1. Continue to expand the nature and uses of MOOCs through our partnership with Coursera, at least through the 2014-2015 academic year, focusing that effort on individual, open, non-credit courses. This includes developing new MOOCs as well as re-offering existing MOOCs.
2. Issue the next RFP for Coursera MOOC development early in the Spring 2014 semester, with successful courses to be offered late in 2014 and early in 2015. The basic framework of the current review process should be retained, with specific selection criteria reviewed by MSAC and by the Provost to ensure that they continue to align with the campus strategy for open MOOCs. Requests from deans for off-cycle reviews should also be considered, in cases where timely action offers value and the college or unit is willing to invest its own resources. We continue to support the principle that, because large-scale courses represent the campus, the individual instructor and the unit, and because these courses typically require the allocation of institutional resources, the campus must play a role in deciding which MOOCs best represent our campus and our strategic priorities.

3. Develop a concise document for MOOC instructors, summarizing campus and university policies on issues that have special importance for MOOC course development (copyrights, accessibility, etc.) as well as faculty intellectual property rights and obligations. This document should be posted on the Illinois MOOC web site, and it will be important to ensure that all Illinois Coursera MOOC instructors understand this information. To the extent possible, MOOC course and intellectual property policies should be consistent with policies for courses and instructors generally.
4. Encourage academic units to develop specific proposals for MOOCs and other innovative large-scale course models, possibly building on one of the strategic options in our committee's report, and possibly including for-credit courses and courses that are not free. These proposals should address programmatic goals that go beyond offering a single MOOC. Proposals that involve new degrees or certificates should be reviewed using normal new-program approvals processes, and requests for campus resources should be directed to the Office of the Provost. We continue to favor policies that regard MOOC development as a platform for building instructional resources that can be reused in a variety of other teaching formats.
5. Continue our policy of not awarding credit for MOOCs as they are currently configured, but be willing to consider credit for "MOOC-plus" courses that meet our criteria for the student learning experience, course learning outcomes, verification of student identity, and assurance of academic integrity. These alternative course models may or may not carry the label "MOOC" and they may or may not be offered for free.
6. Increase campus-level staff capacity for online and blended course development, including MOOCs, moving quickly to a level that will meet current and projected unit and campus needs. Simultaneously, develop technologies and training programs that would make it easier for faculty and units to develop materials for blended and online instruction without extensive professional staff help.
7. Actively explore options for additional MOOC or MOOC-like software platforms that will enable Illinois faculty to experiment with, or create new forms of, online instruction that are not feasible under our current agreement with Coursera. This may include partnering with another provider besides Coursera, or adapting an open-source platform.
8. Expand our efforts to conduct research on our MOOCs, taking advantage of the data generated during the administration of MOOCs to learn more about pedagogy, learning, and other aspects of education in online environments, so as to position Illinois as a leader in the emerging research field of learning analytics.
9. Continue to rely on data-supported decisions as we develop campus policy in this area. Charge MSAC to monitor developments in MOOCs and online education and to make additional strategy and policy recommendations as warranted.

IX. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Some additional materials related to MOOCs and the work of our committee are available at <http://mooc.illinois.edu>.