EDX ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES

GROUP 2 | ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Thursday, April 7, 2016
1:00-2:30 PM
Wallace Center, Carapella Conference Room

PRESENT: Hair, Hannigan, Hochgraf, Myers, Ray, Rosen, Sobieraj

EXCUSED: Tolan

ABSENT: Contomanolis

Last weeks minutes reviewed and approved.

Neil asked if the group feels we should post the group meeting minutes to the provosts edX site and all approved.

Neil scheduled to provide a brief update on the EAC to Staff Council today and will provide the same update to the Directors and Chairs (4/12) and Academic Senate (4/14) meetings next week. All group members are welcome to join.

AGENDA:

• Familiarize yourself with the offerings on edX.org
• How do other universities do their marketing? (Neil to ask edX contacts if they have this information)

Any edX courses being taken by committee?

Yes, Clark is taking an analytics course – Educational Mobile Computing- it is the 3rd course. Amit is taking Synthetic Biology, Jim is taking Intro to Data Science, and Neil is taking Intro to Spanish.

Other university marketing efforts

EdX states that other universities do not usually share their marketing efforts with them, but provided one case study for us to review (provided Harvard Divinity School case study during meeting).
Neil recommends that the group create an account on the edX Partner Portal (partners.edx.org) to access marketing resources and materials that edX provides to its partner universities.

- Access is limited to EAC members at this time. In the future, access will be shared with other members of the RIT community.
- Once in the portal, you will gain access to egde.edx.org and other resources.

Dawn, Therese & Neil will create a benchmark report of our peer institutions. They will research and report back on any marketing efforts they could track down. Expected completion prior to the group meeting on April 21.

- Channels used (web, social media, edX themselves, etc.)
- Features of their campaign strategy (short quick promos, part of a wider release, look of the campaigns, etc.)

Other areas of review as suggested by the group:

- What are the key things, brand, headline, related content in area of expertise etc.
- What is the criteria that causes a course to move from edge.edx.org to edx.org? Group one may have a lot to say about this topic.

Therese provided an update on edge.edx.org

- We want to limit access to people who are trained to use edge. So far, the only people trained at RIT are Ian Webber and Therese Hannigan.
- Will send others for training or we can do 1-1 meetings for the EAC.
- Neil commented that most people who complain about myCourses are the ones who have not taken time for training.
- Need to make sure we include training for our global campuses also, as well as everything else we do.

Q. When someone comes to us (EAC) with an offering, how will we market, or how will we gain attention to the edX presence in general?

A. We need content and faculty before we can talk, then need to find a market. Maybe alumni? Alumni seem to be the main market.
Q. Is there opportunity to promote the platform initially? Perhaps challenge the RIT community to take an edX course?

A. The primary target is to create a great course that we can market to RIT. We need to assess what is out there and do specific draws of those who we want to create great content and reach out to them.

Q. Should we introduce an interactive survey to find out what courses people may be interested in?

A. RIT Online already did a survey to see what courses alumni are interested in taking online.

EdX has also provided Therese with a list (at her request) of subjects that they have identified a need for. This does not mean that we are limited to offering courses in these demand areas. It is just helpful to see where there are gaps in content already offered by edX to see if there are opportunities for RIT to be the first to offer content in an area with which we have expertise.

We should highlight our famous classes and instructors first. It’s important to keep in mind that group 1 is working on coming up with criteria for which an offering can be created for edx.org and edge.edx.org. Ideas from our group should be shared with them.

Q. Jim Myers asks “What are the markets?”, stating that he teaches undergrads at RIT and that edX could be a great tool to help build interaction and create a flipped classroom. He could tell students to go to edX to audit his class, follow the syllabus, and have class with these additional resources.

A. Internal strategy to market- get our alumni hooked here first! We need a friendly market first (RIT Internal) before we market outside.

Q. When we market we need to clarify what the difference is between RIT Online and edX. Is edX another channel? Is it subjective to create awareness of RIT, or to create revenue?

A. Group 1 seems to be struggling to answer these same questions.

RIT Online is a unit that supports online learning at RIT through its demand research, marketing, portfolio development, online student support and tracking and reporting. The online courses and programs belong to the colleges of RIT. RIT Online provides support that is focused on online (vs campus) offerings. RIT Online will support edX effort and offerings in the same way it does for RIT online credit bearing offerings.
Q. How do we make sure our products are brand enhancing? Videogame Design perfect, but what next?

A. One question we seem to be asked a lot is “Are we too late to the game?”. Again, edX has provided a list of where they lack content – this does not mean we need to do these, but this is what they do not have.

EdX encourages RIT to do what is best for us, not just focusing on what they lack.

If there are other offerings already in edX in a specific subject, we can still have offerings in that subject. However, we need to be sure that if we consider developing similar content to what already exists in the edX portfolio of offerings, that we make sure there is a clear differentiator for RIT. And we need to “do it” better than what exists.

Clark suggests that we approach this with “What do we want 10 years from now”, “What is the impact on RIT”, and then look at ways we can get there. “What is the story 10 years from now?”

If we use alumni as a start, there may be a different funding model toward awareness vs. what goes up on edx.org to generate traffic. We need to also do something more about awareness globally.

Hypothetically- if 30% of RIT alumni are taking an edX course per year, RIT or otherwise, is that what we want? Is the end state 10 years from now that RIT has 10 marque courses – brand courses – famous instructor classes, etc., All online for students and to the world?

Then, these courses would have spinoffs, that we could get more benefits from, but what would that look like?

Perhaps we can introduce courses to students that they take before coming to RIT.

Maybe 10 years from now we offer an Intro to RIT edX course for every incoming student featuring Imagine RIT, Brick City, etc.

Additionally, we could offer an intro to every RIT grad course so people can sample the school and get a feel for it.

This could be great because myCourses will not allow us to create tester courses, so we could give students the opportunity to try online and see if they can manage it.

Q. Where does enrollments stand on the whole thing?

A. Diane Ellison & Matt Steve from the Office of Part-time and Graduate Enrollment Services are excited about the opportunity. They see the potential of creating offerings on edX that serve as a funnel to existing campus and online programs at RIT.
Q. Should we tap into Osher? They struggle to fill their classes.
A. Jim Hall should be talking to them

Q. Who are our priority markets? We need to chart out the audience.
A. edx.org:
  • Prospective Undergrad Students (Career Focused)
  • Prospective Graduate Students (Career Focused)
edge.edx.org:
  • Alumni - funnel from base (free but robust) engagement to enrolling in a class
  • Corporate (professional development)
  • Teachers (k-12)?
  • Faculty?
  • Staff?
  • Parents of current students and alums?
  • Rochester Community?
  • Donors?
  • Employee Recruitment?
  • Current Students (Campus)?
  • Current Students(Online)?
  • Study Abroad?

Other opportunities
  • Jim mentioned Craftsy.com, who offers online crafting type classes. Maybe similar to this, we could offer glass blowing, etc.
  • We can find corporate audiences and pull them in to offer industry specific training. Does not have to be credit bearing, etc. (i.e. Xerox, Kodak, etc.)
  • Brand building –leveraging RITs teaching and training brand
  • If multiple institutions offer courses in one specialization, we need to make sure the quality and consistency is reviewed. Some Coursera classes are awful.
  • Maybe offer a collection of classes in specializations that wrap together 4-5 subjects to help someone get a sample.
  • 5 minute chunks of certain things from a variety of classes – sharable pieces offering the learning opportunity for faculty also.
• Therese agrees, an example could be Design Thinking. Design thinking is used throughout several of our colleges (CIAS, GCCIS, KGCOE, CAST, SCOB to name a few) and a diverse range of programs. Having faculty from different areas speak to what design thinking means to them would give students a vast array of perspectives from one university.

• Could also be potential for a variety of colleges at RIT within one specialization area.

• Offer opportunity for students to sample a degree and to allow parents the opportunity to know what their kids are studying.

• Study abroad, RIT life, what are the students doing

• Staff is another audience – campus life aspect!

• College is not what is used to be! Parents need help knowing what kids learning (even at elementary level)

• Something for parents???

• Other courses online for parents and what to expect, look out for, etc.

• About a degree, not just what to learn, but what career opportunities there are in that program.

Q. How many of our grad students were never RIT undergrads?

A. Clark says that 39 of 40 grad students in his program have no undergrad relationship with RIT

Q. Clarify difference between edge.edx.org and edx.org?

A. Edge is a platform that is open source and will be open to use by all faculty and staff (in the future after training). RIT can offer courses that are private on edge.edx.org while edx.org offerings are all open to the public. RIT faculty and staff can create learning experiences that are open to the RIT community or choose to create offerings that are privately offered to a specific list or group. Think of edge as a safe environment to experiment on the platform without having the learning experience exposed to the world. It can be a testing ground. An offering created for edge could be evaluated over time and then potentially move into the edx.org platform.

Q. We have identified a number of markets relative to the two channels. How do these fit in? Let’s describe a little about why each market is significant and what we hope to achieve.

A.

Q. Can we filter down to one goal? So we can give Group 1 some criteria?
A. Multiple goals are ok, per Cornell, the ones offered are differentiators of their university, ones they pride themselves. Example university goals provided by edX include:

- Exploring how large scale and emerging technology can change the face of education
- Recruiting potential students to attend your institution in person.
- Underlining which disciplines at your institution are world-class.
- Focusing attention on the educational goals your institution aspires to.
- Engaging non-traditional learners in ways that most educational institutions struggle to provide.
- Presenting insights in ways and locations that it is simply impossible to do when you have classrooms full of students who need to bodily move from one place to another.
- Radically changing and enhancing on-campus education.

RIT differentiators could include:

- Videogame Design
- Cyber Security
- Photography
- Sustainability
- Design
- Engineering (all)
- Astrophysics
- Imaging science
- NTID- ASL

Q. The Rochester community is struggling with Photonics and what it is. Could we build courses in edX to educate the community on photonics?

A. We do teach photonics, so some sort of intro to Photonics that could also serve the community.

Other subjects:

- Food and wine industry (could be sponsored corporately)
- PhD students working with NYS on many issues
- Drones

When looking at Cornell on edX, we see that their courses are marketed well, they show Snowden, Ethics of Eating, etc. Great attention grabbers.
Maybe we should focus on headlines. Like Photonics, Cyber Security. We could pick & choose things out of the headlines.

It will all come down to funding. We need to establish criteria for RIT offerings on edx.org (group 1) so that the development of offerings can be prioritized. We do not get too many people wanting to develop at once and we want to make sure that the offerings that do get developed, reflect RIT goals on the platform. This also reinforces that we need to make sure people are trained well so they do not become frustrated.

EdX does not have training for edge online available online, likely because the platform changes too often. EdX expects that the university provide up-to-date training and provide resources to “train the trainers” effectively and often.

Back to “What do we want 10 years from now”, a characteristic for these mooc’s is to constantly generate headline based courses, things in the news that we can educate the community about, so we would need a sort of rapid response team to create a course quickly.

- Like Astrophysics, they knew the announcement was coming, so they could have developed something for edX that educates the community and had it ready to release along with the announcement.
- This would be great with significant research initiatives in the headlines as well. Courses specific to the area of research.
- An ideal description for Alumni under edge would include a funnel that goes from basic engagement to enrolling in a graduate level class. The content would need to be in subject areas that we tend to offer but accessible to them in free space, but robust enough that they feel the need to return for a graduate or masters degree.
- Also similar opportunity for potential undergrads, bridge high school students to the university. Transitional programs, camps, outreach (i.e. Robotics, Women in Engineering, etc.).
- Convince women to pursue certain male dominant careers
- Brick City Homecoming in changing some of their programming, “courses without quizzes”. We could see what the topics are that they have identified.

Imagine RIT and Brick City are great ways to promote edX also, but we did not have the bandwidth to do so this year.
How are we going to reach these high school students? Link strategy? YouTube channel that rives them to edX? College & careers online drives them to edX? What are the different pathways to reach different categories?

We need to define what is reachable today, soon, or not at all.

NEXT STEPS:

- **Dawn/Neil/Therese**: Identify descriptions of the categories and report back.
  
  **All group 2 members**: Who are the peer schools we want to research? Who are they marketing to on their splash page, and what message are they sending and to who? Make sure these are schools that are focused on drawing people from around the world. Potential Peer Schools:
  
  o Cornell
  o RPI
  o Clarkson
  o Georgia Tech

- **Dawn/Neil/Therese**: create a benchmark report of our peer institutions and their marketing efforts. Expected completion prior to the group meeting on April 21.

- **All group 2 members**: Review the differences between edge.edx.org and edx.org and identify what YOU feel the biggest difference is to help in articulating their unique features (and opportunities) to the RIT community.

- **All group 2 members**: Begin thinking of questions to ask of Wendy Cebula (COO) and Kathleen Carr (client manager) during the April 22 visit.

NEXT MEETING: April 21st at 1:00 PM

- Describe usefulness of each market identified and set priorities of these markets
- Review differences in edge.edx.org and edx.org