**Afternoon: EAC Q&A Session**

T. Hannigan provided an overview of the EAC at RIT and then Wendy & Kathleen gave introductions before opening the session to the EAC members for questions.

Q: We are trying to get our hands around, “What is that market, who are the consumers, what are their interests?” Do you have any data you can share?

A: Yes, market research in online learning, in the U.S, Brazil, etc. is the same for the edX learner base. We asked who is edX attracting?”. The key takeaways from our latest market research show that online learning is a broad, fragmented market. Most users are interested in lifelong learning. Over 50% do it professionally to get a specific professional outcome for themselves, life improvement, promotion, better salary, etc.

We are happy to share more of the research.

Q: In science, one of the challenges is the lab aspect. What things are out there that we can try for the lab component?

A: This is a tough one and folks talk about it a lot. There are just some things better suited in a laboratory. Some things that have worked include drag and drop assessments, interactive but not actual. There are also kits that can be shipped to students, but it’s tough to make it affordable. Interactive has been positive. Engaging videos. Not a substitute, but beneficial.

One example of an interesting way used to show engagement was an assignment for students to build something using material relevant to where they live. Another was in an architecture course where students were asked to take pictures of architecture near them and send it in. Again, not a lab, but engaging.

Q: Are there some cases in blended?
A: A lot of our partners take 1 of 2 approaches, build blended and turn into a MOOC, or build a MOOC and then turn it into blended. Many partners deliberate in course design on what could be used of those assets on campus and online.

There are 3 parts of edX mission:
1. Access
2. transform learning
3. support research

Many that do blended learning are probably mostly research. Offer more lectures and homework online.

Real-time feedback to students is helpful for them figuring out if they are understanding the content.

Q: I am most interested in behavior, are you seeing major students looking for certificates to attach to something, or are they learning something specific and dropping out?

A: Broadly, completion rate is around 5%, but half of the learners that sign up for a free class don’t even start. If you take those who select a verified certificate, the completion rate is around 60%.

One disconnect, where RIT may be able to have a strength, is where learners are trying to build a masters in a specific area. They want to be a front end developer, for example, so we could put together a small package to draw attention to a specific outcome for that learner.

Users shop for education like they shop on amazon, you only have a few minutes to catch them.

Q: If we can identify milestones in different job families we can identify packages that could help students move in that direction for their career. Do you maintain data on job objectives and goals, how are leveraging career pathing, and how can we be complimentary?

A: We have data we can share. published marketing data.

Q: How do you select which course to invest in?

A: Many members of edX do not have any existing online programs.

Selecting which courses to invest in is typically by who would be excited and actually do it, but these may not be subjects where there would be high exposure. More people now moving to “what are the outcomes we want to get for our learners”. Is it money? Do we want to attract people to this program (applicants=success)?
Then we need to determine how we define success, and this leads to subjects that can help lead to that success.

Sometimes people have habit of doing survey courses and these do not provide enough to give the learner the experience they want and need

Learners are shopping for benefits, not ingredients.

Q: What about high school students?

A: edX has most all AP courses online, but 40% of the students are teachers. We are still trying to figure out what the value is for high schoolers and their parents. It is very competitive to get into universities, so students willing to do even more work to prove they are capable of that schools’ work.

Q: We have a big Project Lead the Way presence at RIT, maybe we can think of that program a bit differently with edX, in a more blended way. This includes high school students taking courses, so if we had them online, or could supplement some online, it may be an indicator for them to apply to other program’s.

W. Cebula: Another piece we got from our market Research, is that students are willing to pay to accumulate credit online for courses in their career field.

Q: As far as course offerings go, which ones are most popular and which ones are lacking? Which do you want to see more of?

A: Most popular ones are in high job demand areas; data sciences, general business courses, etc. We want to see more, and RIT can differentiate here, in research, educating people for careers in health care, engineering, etc.

A series of courses that offer the basics of what it is like to be a doctor or nurse, to help people understand the curriculum, they can try it out and then they can decide if they want to pursue that and come to campus for that education.

Q: Research shows we have primarily adult learners and andragogy (an approach to adult learners, like pedagogy). It would be important for all of us to learn about how we have changed. How to put this learning in to the context of our lives.

A: A lot of our learners are between the ages of 24-34. The vast majority are adults working in or trying to work in population.

Q: Discussion on competencies vs. disciplines. How do we deliver more competency based, the T-shaped person? The essential skills to be successful? Would you see a market built on content of
coursework that is competency focused, either narrow or broader, and what do you know about learners out there?

A: Yes, there is. The more you think of that first, write the course description page first, what will you learn? Frame competencies there. LinkedIn is going in that direction.

Q: We have a close partnership with LinkedIn and the future points to more competency based, is that something that could set us apart a bit?

A: Industry partnerships are tied into that.

Q: We can do that with Cyber Security right away.

A: Yes, and there are different cyber security audiences too. For whom, mid-level manager, IT person, etc.

Q: From a student perspective, a lot of courses I have taken, and done well in, have a very high competency approach. I try to harp on what a faculty’s way of teaching is, the overall theme is that there are topics I have a solid foundation in and some faulty have a set teaching style that offers challenges to some students who have a hard time learning by the way taught. It’s not necessarily that they can’t learn it. How edX drew me, was that I have a wide array of seeing how courses are set up conducive to my learning style and I’d love to see more of that.

A: We often get asked, “if another university already has a course on a specific subject should we not approach it? But, there is more than one way to teach a course, more than one flavor to approach a topic, so there is no reason not to have 2-3 different creations and it is good to describe to learners why yours is different (i.e. solve a specific problem, etc.)

Q: Does edX have a “rate my professor”?

A: Yes, coursetalk.com is a partner site. We do not monitor it, but students rate the classes and professors and provide feedback. Coursetalk.com does this for others, not just edX.

Q: Do you have data on users?

A: We can send you the data, but 25% of our learners are U.S. and 70-75% are non-U.S. 70% of users already have a bachelor’s degree, the people self-selecting in to these courses are those who have found academic helpful.

Q: Back to the market, to get to the next level, self-assessment is the secret sauce. Is edX doing any self-assessment analytic tool? What drives students so they can get a better idea of courses that could help them??? Any effort made to try to help a user identify a path to work toward a desired outcome?
A: No, not at edX, however LinkedIn is trying to build one. Most users browse by subject, next by university. Individual courses are great, but more and more are about programs; XSeries, micro masters, signature track series. Learners are finding they have a purpose above just the course.

We are looking at how the edX shopping experience should change to help people discover rather than browse. Is it better to ask what the purpose is, or something else? Working on getting more data on this.

This data could help us stay ahead of the curve because we will know more about what they are thinking about

Q: How many students come in with some form of disability?

A: We are trying to lead in accessibility, working with the department of justice. We do monitor closely, and a big part of our road map now is increase accessibility

Q: Are you aware of any other universities we could benchmark in process to ensure quality of offerings?

A: Dartmouth is leading in instructional design and seriousness. ASU has one point of view, that to receive edX credit online it should be comparable to their ASU online and they have a great instructional design team also.

Q: Who did it well? Dartmouth, MIT - What in your mind says “does it well”?

A: Goals are clear. They are thinking about the course differently and going back to the classroom to teach differently based on online experience.

Q: We have CIAS here at RIT, unique comparably with intensive iteration with feedback to students.

A: We suggest making feedback experiences only available to paid students. For Julliard, teaching something on vocals and voice, our advice to them is to allow students to submit a voice sample for feedback.

Q: Can/ do students work together?

A: On edX, you can ask students to create teams with the students initiating the teams (because courses are very large). This way they can work within their own time zone, etc. edX supports LTI as a consumer and some courses have used 3rd party collaboration tools also.
Students can submit pdf, video, and other media.

Q: Any data on what students are commenting on, what they would like to see?

A: We can see what they search for and then then if we had a match or not. If you have idea of a course that you want to establish, just ask Kathleen and we can ask the marketing department to somehow test that before putting too much time and effort into it.

Q: We have had an internal announcement, but have not gone out to public yet. Do you have advice on that announcement goal? What would make a good splash?

A: Thinking of first big steps, it is best to have content first “This will help learners accomplish xyz”, and then direct them where to go so they have something they can actually see and sign up for then.

For example, in Australia, there is a large mining industry. The audience was the mining companies. We invited executives from the mining companies and they all got some press!

Also, leverage the connections that faculty have – blogging, vlogging, tweeting - promote the MOOC like you would promote a book. Who is important to know about this?

Depending on the courses, if edX can help get pick up, they will. We have a great marketing department.

Q: Have you had non-typical faculty offer courses?

A: No, most edX partners are very faculty driven.

Q: What do we maybe not realize as our expertise? Student conduct, student development expertise?

A: We would be open to that. This may not be an edX audience? Can RIT find these audiences?

Harvard has relationship with school of blind, they wanted a course on how employers can work with visually impaired.

Q: There is no MOOC on how to do a job search, etc., We have some seminars geared to corporate recruiters. This is a strength area for us. Would this be possible areas if done a certain way?

A: Depends on your objective? Don’t know if we can get a call to action of the necessary people, but it doesn’t mean we should not do it.

Q: Are there any edX partners that are corporations?
A: We are selective in our corporate partners. We want it more academic. When we receive interest from corporations we look at “Are they truly committed to education?”. Microsoft is one of our partners and they are moving over a lot of the Microsoft Academy because of the edX platform. There are also courses that are only for employees and they stay on open edX. Tenaris is a mini company and they are focused on employee education. Their content is open and they are saving money on training by moving training online.

Q: RIT showed interest in edX due to research – what is that like?

A: 10% of schools do 90% of the research. We capture every click and pack it up to do research on the edX research data exchange. If you put in your data, you can access others data.

Q: Have any partners shared successful models for incentivizing faculty?

A: Yes, this varies per institution. Many have found a successful model in thinking of how they think about patents and how they share that revenue. Using that same IP model or MOOCs. They can use patents as one way to guide even if not exactly following that process.