



OpenContent for Education:

Utah State University's
Opencourseware Initiative

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Learning is expanding.

Overview

- What & Why?
- Utah State's Approach and Strengths
- Process
 - Recruiting
 - Workflow
- Challenges

What is an opencourseware initiative?

- Promotes free and open access to knowledge
- Publishes substantially complete set of course materials created by faculty used in the course
- Contains intellectual property cleared materials
- Offers the materials free of charge for non-commercial use and is universally accessible via the Web
- Permits use, reuse, adaptation and redistribution

Pioneered by MIT, Hewlett Foundation and Mellon Foundation

MIT' s OpenCourseWare Initiative

- University-wide commitment to open access to material for all on-campus courses
 - 727 courses available to date, 33 academic subjects (8/16/04)
- Major foundation funding (over \$45M)
- ocw.mit.edu

Why?

Why should Utah State, or any university, develop an opencourseware project?

Answer:

- Promotes free and open access to knowledge
- Supports public service and teaching missions of the university
- Provides diversity of perspectives
- Build on the groundwork of MIT

Why at Utah State?

- Showcase high quality of education at Utah State
 - Complementary content to MIT, especially content of greater interest to underserved populations
- Partner with like-minded institutions, co-marketing activities
 - MIT, USU, others?
- Maintain leadership position in online courses, outreach and extension

Our Approach

OpenContent for Education

- Build upon MIT's OpenCourseWare (OCW) Initiative
 - Model documents, concepts, process
- Build upon strengths of Utah State
- Develop model processes that other universities can follow
- Develop open source infrastructure to enable opencourseware projects—Educommons

Utah State's Strengths

- Grassroots effort with administration support
 - Cooperate with faculty, all-volunteer participation
- Focuses on content that is unique to Utah State
 - Biological & Irrigation Engineering, Agriculture, etc.

What's Different?

- Begin with readily available digital content from online courses, not creating new digital content
- Uses research assistants—building heavily on MIT's documents and process—to do copyright checking
- Focuses on materials created by faculty—leaving out other 3rd-party materials
- Uses (developing) open source software to manage workflow

Support


- William and Flora Hewlett Foundation support
 - Currently \$450K/year for startup phase
 - Est. at \$600K/year for production phase
- Estimated* cost per course is 1/5 of MIT's (when in production mode)

What is OpenContent for Education Not?

- It's not a replacement for existing classes
 - Users don't get course credit or other certification
- It's not a university-wide initiative
 - Participation by faculty is voluntary
- It's not about creating new content, but repurposing existing digital content
- It's not about putting courses and course materials in the public domain—all materials are licensed via Creative Commons

License

- Licenses users to use materials per Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-ShareAlike 2.0
- Faculty license Utah State to make their courses and course materials available in this manner (MIT License)




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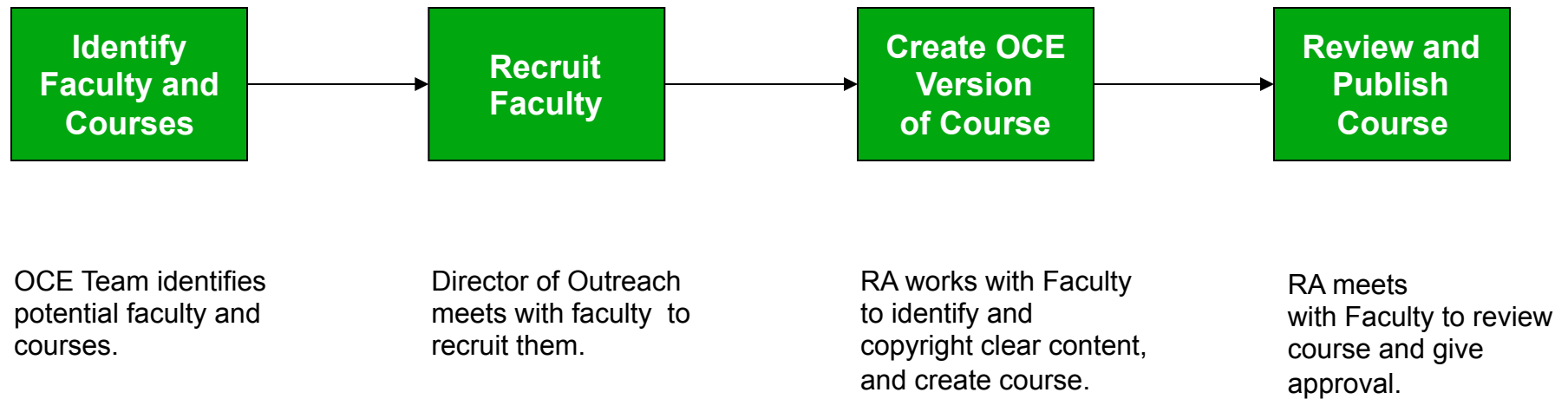
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Process





OCE “Evangelism”

Learning is expanding.

Our first engagement...

“I want you to continue, and I’ m keeping an open mind, but I just want to let you know up front that based on what you have told me so far, there’ s no way in HELL that I’ m going to be interested in participating in this initiative”

--Our 1st OCE Candidate

By end of discussion, he had given verbal consent (for part of his course, at least) :)

By the numbers....

- 41 -- Professors contacted
- 13 -- No response
- 28 -- Interested/willing to meet
- 14 -- Have provided verbal consent
- 5 -- Have actually provided us access to their courses (4 are IT faculty :))
- 1 -- Outright rejection

Their concerns...

- “Won’ t this destroy the University?”
- “What about enrollment in my for-credit classes?”
- “This is my Intellectual Property, d\$#@ it!!!”
- “My courses are very textbook-centered”
- “I’ m not sure I WANT the world to see my courses” or “My courses aren’ t ‘ready’ yet-- I’ m updating them”
- “What’ s this gonna cost me?”
- What’ s in it for me?”

Our selling points....

- Good for the university
 - Partner ship with top universities, great PR
- Good for enrollment
 - The more people know about your course, the more that will enroll
- Good for professor
 - Increased visibility will lead to more awareness, reputation, and consulting contracts :)
- Good for the world
 - The “Warm and fuzzy” argument

Our biggest evangelism risk

The politeness factor...

Getting from “Yes” to
“Here’s my course”

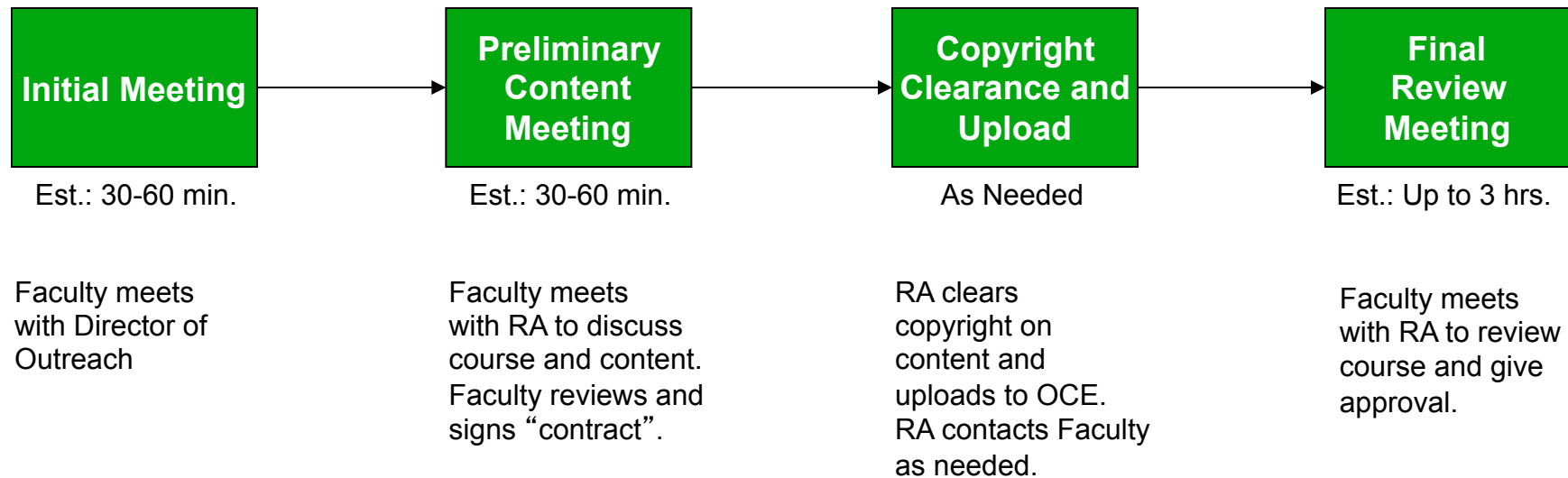
Potential Courses

- **Biological and Irrigation Engineering**
 - Biochemical engineering
 - Hazardous Waste Management
 - Biomaterials
 - Bioinstrumentation
 - Surface Irrigation Systems Design
- **Sociology**
 - Introductory Sociology
 - Cultural Anthropology
 - Anthropology of Religion
 - Juvenile Delinquency
 - Criminology
- **Instructional Technology**
 - Learn and apply HTML
 - Learning and communication theory in IT
 - International IT
 - Social interaction on the Internet
- **Distance Education**
 - Adult Spanish/English literacy
- **College of Agriculture**
 - Humanity and the Food Web

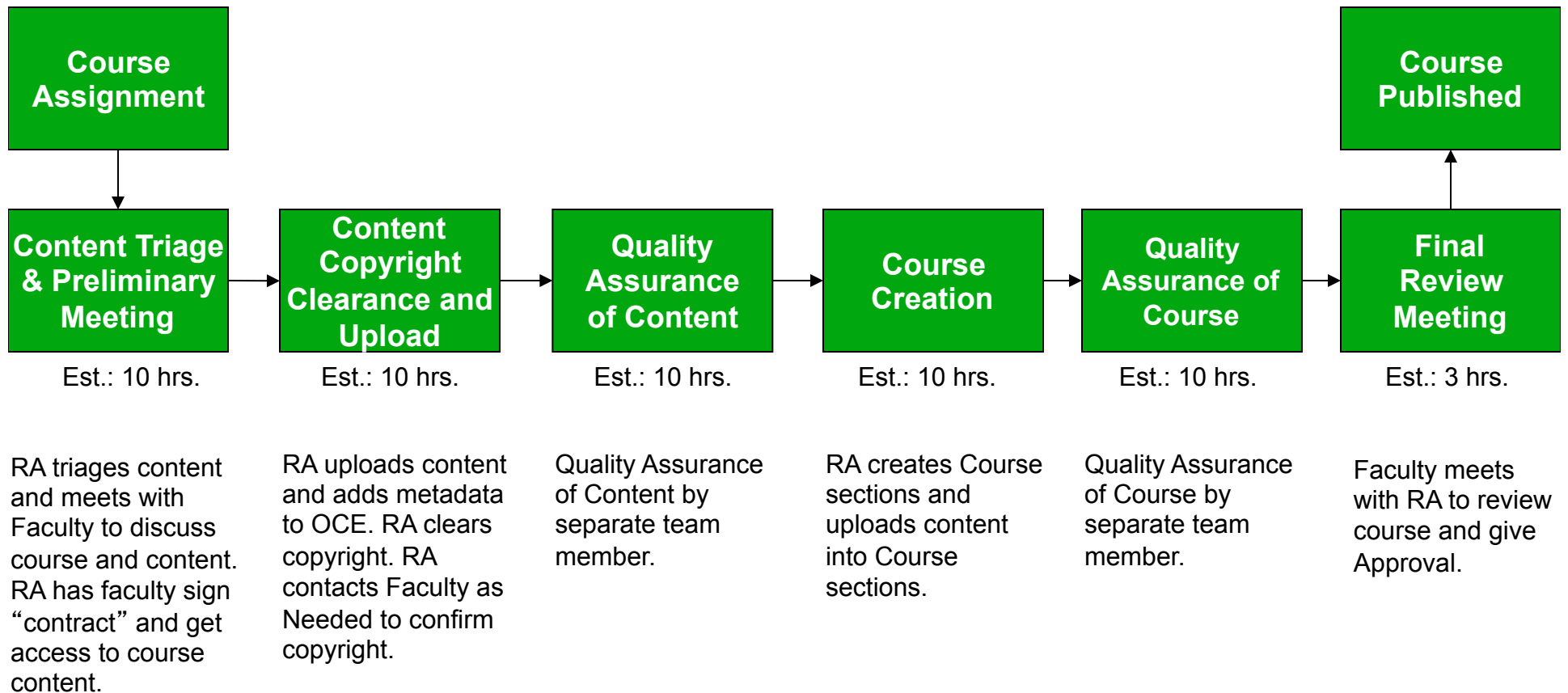
Evangelism Lessons Learned

- Do lots of background reading on professor before 1st meeting
- Come with a prepared “deck”, but be very willing to deviate/adapt
- Don’t just “make the pitch”, but build the relationship as well
- As you progress, aggregate questions/concerns into a Q&A doc for organizational memory/web use
- Personal relationships always much more effective than “cold calling”
- Departmental support can be quite helpful
- “Experienced” professors seem to be most amenable

Workflow for Faculty



Workflow for Research Assistants



Educommons

- Open source infrastructure for open content
 - Priority goal: To make content available for educational purposes.
 - Not an Learning Management System (e.g., not a WebCT, SAKAI)
- Supports workflow to create opencourseware projects

OCE Challenges

- Continuing to generate faculty interest and overcoming concerns
- Converting faculty from “yes” to “here’s my content”
- Getting content uploaded and made available in cost-effective manner
- IP clearance may become problematic
- Quality of materials
- Evangelizing use of OCE
- Long-term sustainability

Summary

- What & Why?
- Utah State's Approach and Strengths
- Recruiting
- Workflow
- Challenges

Links

- MIT's OCW site: ocw.mit.edu
 - “How To”:
ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/HowTo/
- Creative Commons: creativecommons.org
- OSLO Research Group: oslo.usu.edu



For More Information:

oslo.usu.edu

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Thank You!

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