SUSTAINABILITY OF OER INITIATIVES
AN INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION

IOER, July 27, 2021
Introductions

- Who are we? What do we hope to learn from this session?
  - Name, Institution, Goals
  - 1 Member of your team please share:
    Institution & OER Stage
    Beginning | Minimal | Significant | Mature
Welcome and About Me

- Brandon Muramatsu, mura@mit.edu
  - Associate Director, Projects, MIT Open Learning

Brief background on Brandon: Involved with Open Education since 2005

- Initially developing platform software for OpenCourseWare and courses for a university-wide OCW; nurtured OCW community and OER in higher education
- Direct courseware development, supporting faculty, creating repositories of content and assessments, advising/starting new institutions
- Led/leading OER initiatives in K-12 (India, Belize), Community Colleges (U.S.), 4-year Universities (U.S.)
- My day job is large-scale, multi-year education and education technology projects
  - Open source assessment engine to support partially connected secondary schools (478)
  - Building a new international STEAM high school with OER at it’s core; founding board member of a U.S. OER high school
  - Advising on starting new research universities, regional innovation hubs
An OER Journey

Today Your college or university has just started an OER initiative and you’re getting lots of support from students!

In 2 years You just reported that your students have saved hundreds of thousands of dollars on textbooks through your OER initiative!

In 5 years Your OER initiative is at risk of shutting down. What happened?
An OER Journey of Change

**Today**
Your college or university has **just started** an OER initiative and you’re getting lots of support from students!

**In 2 years**
You just reported that your **students have saved hundreds of thousands of dollars** on textbooks through your OER initiative!

**In 5 years**
Your OER initiative is at **risk of shutting down**. What happened?
Change

- Is your OER initiative fundamentally about change?
  - Are you trying to convince faculty and staff from multiple units or departments to support it? <- It’s a change initiative
  - Are you trying to implement OER outside of one program or department? Is it university wide? <- It’s a change initiative of potentially medium or large scale

- Does your institution change bottom up or top down?
  - What does this mean for the success of your initiative?
  - What leadership support do you need regardless?
Examples of change of the scale you’re considering at your institution, or you’ve experienced?

- MIT Task Forces -> Curricular Change
  - Undergraduate Educational Commons (2004-2006) -> Revisions to core curriculum (GIR)
  - Future of Education (2013-2014) -> Engaging MIT community with world; K-12 strategy; certification options
  - Task Force 2021 (2020) -> (Not) fully online degrees
In 2000, a MIT faculty committee was charged to develop a proposal for financially sustainable online course dissemination.

Era of Dot Coms; University-led Fathom, UNext, etc.

Diverging MIT committee reports, more study identifies:

- “[s]trategic themes for possible implementation. It chose the banner of lifelong learning and recommended that MIT undertake a study to launch “Knowledge Updates,” minicourses based on MIT’s strength in cutting-edge science and technology, designed for MIT alumni.”

- Aspirations of a “unique opportunity for MIT to exert leadership, set an example for its peers, and make a truly significant impact. In contrast, the Knowledge Updates struck them as underwhelming.”
In 2000, a faculty committee was charged to develop a proposal for financially sustainable online course dissemination.

April 4, 2001, MIT President Charles Vest announced that the Institute would make course material from virtually all undergraduate and graduate courses “accessible to anyone anywhere in the world, through our OpenCourseWare initiative.”

- Mission alignment: The Institute is committed to generating, disseminating, and preserving knowledge, and to working with others to bring this knowledge to bear on the world’s great challenges.

Elements of MIT Education Shared with the World

Course Content = MIT OCW

MITx, OCW Educator

Courses
- Advanced Standing Exam
- MicroMasters

MIT Bootcamps

Experiences

Cambridge MA

How we Teach
What are MIT’s courses like?

In-person Experiences
Poll: Your Participation in Change

- Led moderate scale change: 5, 33%
- Participated in moderate scale change: 4, 27%
- Led smaller scale change: 3, 20%
- Participated in smaller scale change: 2, 13%
- No Answer: 1, 7%
Elements of Your Program

- Curriculum development and publishing, curation?
- Professional development?
  - Authoring
  - Pedagogy and use with students
  - Assessments
- Student involvement
  - As learners?
  - As creators?
Sustainability Issues You Might Consider

- **Content**
  - Static or interactive
  - Course materials, textbooks
  - Assessments

- **Platform**
  - Authoring
  - Use
  - Repository

- **Professional Development**
- **Maintenance**
- **Funding Lifecycle & Business Model**
- **Student learning outcomes**
- **Champions, Institutional Sponsor, Labor of Love**
OER: Content

- What’s the existing relationship between faculty and course materials?
  - Do they author and maintain a significant portion of their own material? Or are they using primarily publisher provided materials?
- Are you focusing on open textbooks -> ZTC courses?
  - What about teacher’s guides, assessments?
  - Primarily static? Interactive platforms?
- How much curricular content are you creating or using from others?
  - How often are the materials updated?
  - Who does the updating? Publisher or faculty member?
  - How often will faculty need to review the OER they use?
- Are 3rd party materials reliably accessible and stable?
OER: Courseware / Interactive Platforms

- Are you planning on using courseware or an interactive platform?
  - What happens *when* you change your LMS?
  - Can you migrate from the courseware to another platform? ("Standards" for this are essentially non-existent)
OER: Assessments

- Typical Quiz and Test?
- Authentic Assessment?

- Who creates the assessments?
- How often are they updated?
- Migration to future platforms?
Initiative Funding

- How is the initiative being funded?
  - External or internal grants or other one time funding? What happens after the one-time funding ends?
  - Does the initiative assume or require a fundamental change in work expectations? For example, will faculty be expected to write and maintain their own course materials?