

May 7, 2013
UA Council Meeting

Presentation on The Task Force by Patrick Hulin and Professor Sanjay Sarma, the Director for Digital Learning (MITx) and Co-Chair for the [Institute-wide Task Force on the Future of MIT Education](#).

Introduction

- The Future of MIT Education is changing
- MITx is a way to enrich our learning experience and get involved in course development and the online educational
 - It will be an open source platform that will allow everyone to develop classes
 - The edX studio allows you to make problems for classes
 - People from all over the world will help develop the classes online
- By getting the lecture/reading/question solving online, we will *enable more interactive and meaningful classroom time*
- Goal: Shifting the balance from passive instruction to interactive instruction with more hands-on learning
- Running experiments now to determine what will work

Implications

How will this affect the curriculum and learning spaces?

- How many classrooms will be needed 10 years from now?
- What will the classrooms of the future look like?
- Visual and performing arts, athletics, holistic education

Structure of the Task Force

- There is a coordinating group in charge of three working groups of 14-18 faculty students, and staff
 - MIT Education and Facilities for the Future
 - Global Implications of edX and the Opportunities it Creates
 - A New Financial Model for Education
- Data team doing analytics for the three working groups
- Advisory Board

Moving Forward

- We want new, non-traditional ideas
- Idea bank at future.mit.edu
 - Currently has ~200 ideas you can rate, comment on, or create

Discussion

Question: MIT is currently renovating large lecture halls. 26-100 is schedule to get renovated in the coming years and will cost upwards of 15 million dollars. It would last for decades, but with

the future of learning changing, is it worth it?

- Is this relatively a lot of money? It is about 1% of the budget.
- Why is it so expensive? If you try and touch just one part of it, you realize you are touching many aspects that need to be up to code (like wiring, access, or general infrastructure).
- Being able to give more interactive classes could be beneficial if the general lectures online gave students the background information and gave the professors the ability to know what the students understand and don't.
- Not all classes have the opportunity for interactive activities. Freshmen taking large information-based lecture classes will still need a lecture hall.
- 26-100 is used for so much more than just classes - for movies, concerts, info sessions, etc. Perhaps it would be better to instead update a smaller room.

Question: What are the secondary and tertiary implications of this?

- By throwing away the already-prepared lectures, professors would need to go through much time and effort getting the activities approved and paid for.
- Some people don't learn well from watching videos and understand information better presented from lectures. It would be important for us that these students don't get left behind.
 - Lectures may not be eliminated but rather more to the point and simplified.
- edX classes have been focused more on the larger introductory classes as opposed to upper-level courses.
 - Look into 14.73 or 2.010 - they are actual advanced classes that are going well.
 - Currently 40,000 people are taking 14.73, and MIT has a weekly recitation to discuss the questions. The hope is that MIT students get special instruction.

Question: What are the costs on faculty time to doing future-based initiatives? If we can free up 10 hours of a lecturer's time every week by moving the classes online, how should the professor's time be spent?

- Students should be excited about the subject material - use the lectures to motivate the students by connecting them with what they are learning

Questions that arose:

- Does moving to this system further de-emphasize teaching?
- Can people still make a connection to the lecturer through a screen?
- What about not allowing new professors to teach large intro classes? Will those classes forever belong to the "rock stars"?
- What are the financial models considered?
 - We can find the marginal cost of adding another student, but what is the marginal cost of adding faculty members? How is space used at MIT?
- Why is the lecture hall still packed in 3.091 for Sadoway's lectures if they're on OCW already? Why not spend a semester polling students asking why they come to lecture

and not got to class?

Other thoughts:

- With having an in-person lecture, you know the lecturer has prepared the material. If the class instructors for online classes are not the same as the lecturers, does this make the classes less interesting or engaging?
 - If the professor isn't interested, that comes through regardless of if the lectures are online or offline.
- Humanities classes are flip classrooms (Sal Khan)
 - Students prepare before coming to class
- Research shows that students in lectures have brain activity that is comparable to sleeping. Great professors electrify their students and get them excited to actively learn. Active learning is better for the average professor to achieve.
- The reason MIT has such a name is because of the research professors who are the leaders on earth. There is an intangible benefit of being around people who *know* their information and know it better than anyone else.

Bexley and Space

- Bexley residents were informed this morning that there would be an emergency meeting this afternoon.
- At the meeting, residents were told that Bexley will be closed in 3 years starting May 25th.
- There is a large amount of deferred maintenance
- A structural group and architectural group were brought in and determined that the building is not currently structurally safe
- Random is *not* being closed
- A new housing lottery will be opened soon for Bexley residents.
- Bexley has been working hard to keep the community together and have been reaching out to FSILGs
- Senior House is the only dorm that cannot take more residents (not enough beds?)
- There's an estimated 45 residents that want to live together
- Presumably, we can handle overcrowding in the dorms, but at this point this is very tentative
- 9th term seniors are concerned about their housing
- Patrick is the rep to the Housing Strategies Group which meets tomorrow - look for a potential update from him to Council tomorrow!

Dining

Division for Student Life started a process for a RFP for 3 different vendors for dining spaces on campus (like Steam Cafe, Cafe Four, etc.). In less than a month, they will be making a decision on these vendors. Jonte sits on the committee and would like to see more student input. If you have views you would like shared with the committee, please get in touch with Jonte.

Final Updates

Additional meeting next week, May 14. Please e-mail ua-secretary@mit.edu if you cannot make it. Since we will be voting, please send a proxy if you cannot make it. All the candidates for officer and committee chairs will be presented. Sid and Devin will speak to smaller groups of Council in the meanwhile to hear any objections or concerns.