Open SUNY and Coursera FAQ

Introduction
SUNY was one of ten public university systems that announced an agreement with Coursera (May 2013) that enables use of their platform to deliver massive, open, online courses (MOOCs).
Under the terms of this agreement, SUNY campuses have the opportunity to work with Coursera to deliver courses to students within SUNY or across the globe.

MOOCs are not entirely new to SUNY, and in addition to a new course delivery option, this partnership enables SUNY faculty to join a community of researchers to investigate and assess the impact MOOCs may have on education and student learning. SUNY recognizes that MOOCs are a tool that may play an important role in learning opportunities of our students, alumni, and others, in response to our common mission of access, completion and success.

Several questions have arisen concerning the Coursera announcement and the role it plays in Open SUNY. Your feedback is welcome, and we will continue to expand the FAQ in response to questions received. If you would like to submit a question or concern via email, please direct your message to contactopensuny@suny.edu

What is the relationship between SUNY and Coursera?
The SUNY-Coursera relationship is part of a broader state university systems initiative that enables US State Institutions access to Coursera's delivery platform (portal) and support services. As part of these agreements, system offices are required to ensure course quality, coordinate activities of their campuses utilizing the Coursera platform, and coordinate with other State Systems where appropriate. Within SUNY, this will provide the necessary institutional flexibility and access, while also providing opportunities for System level collaboration.

What is the difference between Coursera, Blackboard or Moodle to deliver online courses?
Just as major media content providers deliver programs to millions of people simultaneously, Coursera's technology platform enables distribution of course materials at a global scale that would not be feasible for any single campus LMS platform to provide.

Coursera is the first of what we hope will be several new tools in the Open SUNY toolbox to enhance SUNY's online environment. This platform offers a new mechanism:

- to deliver instruction to global students on a non-credit basis,
- for faculty to "flip classroom content" for students regularly enrolled in credit bearing courses,
- to encourage collaborations with other educational partners to develop and deliver unique learning opportunities.

Will credit be awarded or available to students taking a class delivered on Coursera?
Campuses will determine what credits will (or will not) be awarded for a MOOC that they offer.   The Open SUNY initiative is carefully monitoring this landscape, including outcomes from other university systems that have elected to experiment with offering credit-bearing general education courses through Coursera to their students.

Is my campus required to make a course internationally available if using Coursera?
No. Several state systems are using Coursera to provide flipped-classroom course content within their systems, and in some cases licensing content from institutions that have courses available on Coursera.   When a course is offered in this manner, there may be additional support costs depending on the services utilized from Coursera (e.g., lecture transcription and captioning).

If a faculty member wishes to offer a course within SUNY and does not desire to make the content available globally, it is recommended that the course be listed and delivered through the campus (not Coursera) to allow for proprietary authentication.

Who owns the course content?
Faculty delivering courses on the Coursera platform are required to sign an "Instructor Agreement". By signing the agreement the faculty member agrees to:

- Give your university the right to use the content produced for this course;
- Give your university the right to use any new features (e.g. software, interfaces or assessment features) that you create for the course;
- Give Coursera the right to use these same features, but only in connection with the course and only as long as the course is running;
- Make reasonable efforts to ensure that information you provide in the class accommodates people with disabilities and does not include inappropriate content;
- Not hold Coursera responsible for any legal claims - either yours or someone else's - related to your use of the site.

By default, course content is protected by an "All Rights Reserved" license under which the content owner has full rights to ownership and access to the material. If you wish

others to be allowed to reuse or repost your content, you may license your content through a [Creative Commons license.](#) Faculty control whether their course is listed on Coursera, and although repeating the course offering is encouraged in this environment, it is not required.

I understand MOOCs are very expensive to produce. What resources are being provided to campuses to develop a course?
The cost of MOOC production varies considerably depending on the course design. As with any course on any platform, it is up to faculty members to work with their campuses to ensure that the course is designed as a quality student learning experience. As one option, a campus may apply for [Innovative Instruction Technology Grant](#) support to assist with content development that is openly shared throughout SUNY.

What is the cost to use the Coursera platform?
The originating campus is responsible for a one-time $3,000 course development fee that covers the cost of instructional consultation with Coursera, transcription and captioning of course content, and use of the Coursera platform and related resources. Once this development fee is paid, the same course can continue to be offered without any additional development cost.

Is there a revenue stream provided back to the campus or the instructor from Coursera?
The contract includes a revenue share model that provides for the portion of the revenue generated from a course to go back to the delivering institution. The exact percentage is determined as part of the Course Development Agreement to be established between the campus and Coursera at the time the course is accepted.

Can I use other instructor's Coursera content to augment or supplement my regular in-class material in a "[flipped classroom](#)" model (and can that content be used as modules or "mashed up"?)
Yes, as long as the originating instructor offering the course agrees in advance to a third party use. Coursera will assist in creating new instances of course content to ensure that courses are not interrupted by different campus scheduling or instructional needs. Third party agreements are very similar to a Creative Commons license, where the author determines how content can be used.

Coursera is currently encouraging use of content and is not charging partner institutions for creating new instances of courses as long as there are no significant content changes. If, however, a course is used in new ways that involve substantial changes in how the course is delivered, a new course development agreement (and charge) may be involved. This outcome is negotiated and depends on the individual circumstances of the course and agreement among the instructors and SUNY.

How is Coursera delivered content designed to be pedagogically sound?
Any content considered for MOOC distribution under Open SUNY should follow local campus support processes and procedures that ensure solid course design and pedagogical soundness.
The same principles used to ensure quality course design in online environments guide MOOC course creation, but there are some design differences that are outlined in the faculty support section of the "About Coursera" materials. The Course Development Fee for each course includes consultation time with Coursera's instructional design staff to ensure that content under production will be effective in a MOOC environment.

Institutions experienced in MOOC delivery describe how significant attention is drawn to a campus offering this content. The new SUNY Center for Online Teaching Excellence will assist faculty interested in MOOC development and support the sharing of best practices. As we work to learn more, it is imperative that local campus processes be followed to ensure all concerns are well aligned. The Course Development Agreement outlines minimum quality standards, but the campus may have content development standards that exceed those required by Coursera.

How is assessment managed and student identity verified through Coursera?
The Coursera platform includes options for gathering analytics, and provides an option called "Signature Track" where students pay a fee for identity verification using proprietary Coursera methods. A portion of the revenue generated through signature track is returned to the campus. Details on how facial identity is connected with keyboard use patterns are described in the course development materials. At this time, any student electing to use the Signature Track certification option is required to use a computer with a physical keyboard (not an touchscreen keyboard) and use of a web camera (either built in or connected).

What types of courses does SUNY expect to offer through Coursera?
Campuses will determine which courses they believe are appropriate to offer on the Coursera platform. Due to the contractual requirement for the System office to coordinate campus proposals, and to ensure Coursera's quality standards, campus requests to utilize the platform may need to be prioritized based on resources, the technical ability of a campus to deliver content, and strategic alignment of the proposed course with Open SUNY goals.

Delivering a MOOC requires extensive advance planning. How are those efforts coordinated between SUNY and a participating campus?
A faculty member who is interested is delivering a MOOC should first work with departmental and campus governance to gain approval through the existing campus procedures. But a MOOC may also require additional campuses personnel and material resources such as course design (including assessment) expertise, quality video production support, and teaching assistants sufficient to meet the course demands.

Once a course is identified, a meeting takes is scheduled between the campus stakeholders and the SUNY-Coursera Project Manager for a production review with Coursera's instructional support team. These conversations begin with a course description that must be submitted a minimum of one semester in advance of the desired course launch date in order to ensure adequate preparation time.

A formal consultation process, including sign off on a course development agreement (CDA) ensures that Coursera and the campus agree that key elements are in place for a successful outcome (this includes identification of campus stakeholders such as faculty, instructional designers, and possibly others such as media content specialists and student assistants) to participate in a series of planning and support meetings.

Resources provided by SUNY include a Coursera Learning Commons site, facilitation of conference calls and listserv support, as well as advocacy for any issues that arise during normal production circumstances.