Fostering a Culture of Academic Innovation in a Time of Crisis

MJ Bishop[a], Nancy O'Neill[b], and Paul Walsh[c]

Abstract

COVID-19 has thrust much of higher education into a liminal space, where norms and conventional wisdom no longer operate as they once did. While recognizing the devastating societal effects wrought by the pandemic, viewing higher education's ongoing response in this way invites us to consider how we can embrace this moment as an opportunity for transformational change. This chapter addresses how institutions can leverage the massive and sudden move to remote teaching sparked by COVID-19 to foster a culture of academic innovation. It highlights one university system's efforts to help a diverse, decentralized, and differentially resourced set of institutions pivot from a crisis response to robust, technology-enhanced teaching and learning that is sustained past the crisis period.

Keywords: Academic innovation, change management, crisis, organizational culture, university system

Introduction

COVID-19 has thrust much of higher education into a disorienting liminal space, where norms and conventional wisdom no longer operate as they once did, and many are yearning for the time when things "just get back to normal." While recognizing the devastating societal effects and deep challenges wrought by the pandemic, viewing higher education's ongoing response to COVID-19 as the initial stage of a transitional process invites us to consider how we can embrace this moment as an opportunity to explore academic innovations that promise to improve student success. What would it mean for higher education institutions to pivot from crisis response—in the form of emergency remote teaching—to something much more transformative? And how might a system-level center for academic innovation help to make that happen?

A System-level Center for Academic Innovation

The University System of Maryland (USM) includes 12 of the state's 14 four-year public universities as well as three regional centers that expand access to high-demand degree programs across the state. USM is decentralized. It is a federated system, as opposed to flagship driven, and includes research-intensive and comprehensive institutions, historically

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[a] University System of Maryland, mjbishop@usmd.edu, ORCID: 0000-0002-6085-4804
[b] University System of Maryland, noneill@usmd.edu, ORCID: 0000-0002-3664-8445
[c] University System of Maryland, pwalsh@usmd.edu, ORCID: 0000-0001-9181-3848

black universities, specialty graduate institutions, a degree-granting environmental research center, and a fully online institution. The system universities are diverse in mission, academic offerings, and student populations and differentially resourced.

In 2013, the USM Board of Regents established the Center for Innovation and Excellence in Learning and Teaching, signaling a new role for the system as a focal point for catalyzing new ways of thinking about student success, translating ideas into action, and scaling and sustaining promising practices. Renamed in 2015 in recognition of former Chancellor William E. "Brit" Kirwan's commitment to access, affordability, and achievement of high-quality credentials for Maryland students, the Kirwan Center for Academic Innovation (hereafter, the Kirwan Center) has been creating a culture of academic innovation aimed at addressing practical problems by leveraging the affordances of technology and our collaborative strengths—our "systemness" (Zimpher, 2012).

Innovating to Address Practical Problems

The Kirwan Center's activities are guided by thoughtful experimentation, grounded in the problems we're trying to solve, not in rushing to adopt the next new digital device or "best practice" simply for the sake of being innovative. We believe that that "innovation" involves seeing the world in a different way and challenging assumptions. Unlike "change," which tinkers within an existing structure and view of the world, innovation involves new ways of doing things, questioning values and goals, and likely making structural change in current processes and systems. This level of transformation requires a human-centered perspective, a diverse team, experimentation and iteration, a willingness to learn even while failing, and the investment of time and resources.

Leveraging the Affordances of Technology

We believe that "innovation" and "technology" are not the same thing. Technology can be used to implement innovation—and sometimes even inspire innovation—but the technology itself doesn't produce innovation. As seen repeatedly over the history of technology use in education, when "teaching with technology" involves simply inserting some new device into the mix without first understanding how to capitalize on its affordances in the solution of an educational problem, we will never realize the promise of technology to support meaningful transformation. We think about technologies, therefore, in terms of their affordances—the actions they make possible. We believe the most promising affordances of emerging educational technologies are those that help us to be:

- learning centered: makes learning visible and easily communicated;

- data informed: identifies where the problems are and whether our interventions are making a difference; and
- continuously improving: facilitates adaptation when we have identified problems.

The initiatives supported out of the Kirwan Center are focused on the application of these three categories of affordances in the solution of practical problems faced by higher education today.

Advancing Systemness

We believe there are things that higher education institutions can accomplish by working together that would be more difficult or even impossible to accomplish independently. Central to our work, therefore, is building connections across USM institutions and leveraging our collaborative strengths—our systemness—to accelerate and streamline the sharing of promising practices. The Kirwan Center organizes cross-institutional collaborative projects, resource sharing, affinity group networking, and capacity-building across USM institutions and increasingly, statewide. Within each USM institution and regional center, one or more individuals have been tasked with overseeing academic innovation as part of their portfolios. These individuals comprise the Kirwan Center's Academic Transformation Advisory Council (ATAC), which has been meeting once a month since Fall 2013. We also regularly convene teaching and learning center directors, instructional designers and technologists, and project teams from across the institutions. These existing networks provided the launch pad for a coordinated response to the massive move to emergency remote teaching brought on by COVID-19 in Spring 2020.

Coordinated Support for the USM Response to COVID-19

By Friday the 13th of March 2020, the day before Spring Break began, all of the USM institutions had announced their students would not return to campus after the break and classes would be taught remotely for the foreseeable future. This disruption presented an opportunity for USM leadership to tap into our systemness to support each other through the crisis and ensure academic continuity for our students. Within the broader response, the Kirwan Center was charged with supporting the institutions as they shifted to emergency remote teaching.

Supporting the Shift to Emergency Remote Teaching During Spring 2020

From March until May 2020, the Kirwan Center consolidated its existing networks to facilitate communication among institutional leaders involved in the sudden shift to remote teaching—ATAC, centers for teaching and learning, and instructional design units. This "all-hands-on-deck" approach was further strengthened by including representatives from

Maryland's two independent public four-year institutions, Morgan State University and St. Mary's College of Maryland. We convened this newly constituted group, ATAC "Plus" (ATAC+), using existing standing meetings that allowed us to maximize participation while minimizing the impact on people's time.

We began by discussing where the institutions stood on a variety of immediate issues, including equity concerns related to remote access/connectivity as well as communication plans for faculty, staff, and students. This was followed by a survey-based needs assessment to identify and prioritize supports. As professional development materials from Quality Matters, the Online Learning Consortium, and other organizations became available, the Kirwan Center developed a web-based list of resources as well as links to the internally focused sites that institutions were creating. This site was continually revised to respond to the institutions as their needs evolved week to week. When ATAC+ members expressed their interest in surveying faculty, students, and staff about their COVID-19 experiences, the Kirwan Center staff compiled local and national surveys, including instruments from HEDS and Ithaka S+R.

"Supporting the supporters" became shorthand for the Kirwan Center's work with our institutional counterparts who were directly supporting faculty. Based on our needs analysis, this support evolved into a series of capacity-building topical meetings that focused on helping colleagues engage faculty in topics such as authentic assessments, digital accessibility, and high-impact practices in online courses. A number of these topical meetings spun out subsequent activity. For example, as privacy issues with webinar platforms and proctoring became a concern, we worked with the Maryland Office of the Attorney General and accessibility experts at our institutions to create a "best practices" guide on balancing issues of privacy and accessibility. This was shared with the ATAC+ group as well as with the institutions' provosts. Similarly, our discussion about students' readiness to learn in the fall after a difficult spring semester resulted in a working group that created a guide with simple activities to gauge students' prerequisite knowledge, motivation, and feelings so faculty might adjust instruction to address gaps/difficulties. These resources were well received by our counterparts at the institutions and widely distributed.

By the middle of April, it was becoming evident that COVID-19 would be impacting our institutions, at least to some degree, through the rest of the calendar year. So, with the immediate need to support academic continuity for the Spring 2020 semester covered to the extent possible, we began shifting our attention to Fall 2020.

Partnering to Support More Robust Online Education for Fall 2020

Among the USM institutions, we are fortunate to include the University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC), our open-access, online institution. While UMGC has always been a significant contributor to the Kirwan Center's system-wide conversations around academic innovation, senior leaders across our institutions began turning to UMGC for guidance and support more than ever as they made the overnight pivot to "emergency remote teaching." By April, it was clear that a more coordinated effort was needed to support the campuses through a closer partnership between UMGC and the Kirwan Center. The "USM *OnTrack*" initiative, led by the Kirwan Center and funded through a $2.6M grant from UMGC made possible from CARES Act funding, has capitalized on UMGC's expertise and the Kirwan Center's existing network of colleagues, stakeholders, and trusted partners in order to coordinate system-level support for optimally effective learning—be it online, face-to-face, or some combination of both.

Over the summer, USM *OnTrack* provided immediate support for the Fall 2020 semester, with special attention to ensuring quality in the online teaching and learning experience. We determined that addressing this need would be best accomplished by leveraging our existing capacity for online instruction at UMGC as well as by sharing resources, providing faculty/staff professional development, and increasing learning design and instructional technology capacity. This translated into four major components of work (see Table 1).

Table 1

Major Components of USM OnTrack (Summer 2020)

OnTrack Component	Hallmarks
Professional Development Workshops	Purchased a pool of interactive, facilitated online teaching workshops from a training provider. Prepaid workshops were made available generally or allocated to institutions so they could then decide within their local context which topics to offer faculty.
Technology Solutions for High-enrollment and Lab-based Courses	Contracted with adaptive courseware and virtual lab simulation providers to provide up-front training and support throughout the semester both for incorporating the tools into pedagogy and for use of the platform and learning analytics dashboards.
"Do-it-Yourself" Instructional Design Support Services	Contracted with a provider to retain 750 hours of instructional design support for each institution that their teaching and learning centers and/or instructional design units could use as needed. The provider worked with the institutions to make available a series of instructional resources for faculty on best practices for online pedagogy as well as student orientation materials for online learning.
"Ready-to-Adopt" Online Courses from UMGC	Created a process for USM institutions to identify candidate courses to temporarily adopt from UMGC catalog for delivery to their students. Institutions had option to have either UMGC faculty or their own faculty teach these courses. Students register at the host institution as usual, while details on tuition reconciliation, assignment of credit, etc., would be implemented by back-office operations rather than transfer of credit.

The USM *OnTrack* offerings were embraced by a significant number of faculty across USM who engaged in fall semester preparation throughout the summer, even while off contract. In terms of professional development, in a span of seven weeks over the summer, nearly 300 faculty from across the 11 institutions participated in 57 workshops, with a total of more than 1,100 unique registrations. Faculty from a number of institutions emerged as "super users"—10 individuals completed ten or more workshops and 86 individuals completed three or more workshops. More than 400 faculty expressed interest in learning more about adaptive courseware to support their high-enrollment online classes. The virtual reality lab simulations generated enough interest within a few weeks that we upgraded to a system-wide site license, which then enabled costs to be absorbed by Kirwan Center funds rather than passed on to students in the form of a lab fee. Removing this cost barrier for students, in turn, generated significant additional interest on the part of faculty, especially those at institutions with high populations of Pell Grant recipients. Overall, prior to the start of the fall semester, more than 200 faculty inquired about the use of these virtual simulations for their labs, with 72 course adoptions for the fall semester impacting over 1500 students to date.

Nine of the USM institutions availed themselves of the 750 hours of additional instructional design support offered to each campus. Individual use cases attest to the varied ways in which uptake has occurred, which we anticipated going into the process. For example, this "expanded bench" of instructional designers reviewed LMS course sites and settings and offered feedback to instructors; helped instructors to complete course reviews using a design matrix to align activities with learning objectives; helped instructors to transition face-to-face courses to fully online as well as hybrid formats, and consulted with faculty as they began teaching in these new modalities. Additionally, faculty hubs, student "quick start" modules, and LMS course template development was well received by the participating institutions. By the start of the fall semester, a total of 238 hours were used and 61 support tickets were generated. While this usage is lower than we had hoped, we expect requests to pick up as faculty get into the fall semester.

Of the services that USM *OnTrack* made available over the summer months, the least popular option turned out to be the "ready-to-adopt" courses offered by UMGC. Only one of the USM's nine candidate institutions explored the opportunity further and, in the end, advised only a handful of students to register independently for UMGC courses utilizing existing interinstitutional registration processes, rather than to explore a larger MOU arrangement. Kirwan Center staff inquired with institutional points of contact about what made this a less-than-attractive option. While some of the institutions simply decided that this alternative was not

needed, others noted faculty concerns about the applicability/quality of courses coming from an "online institution," difficulties with coordination across units (such as the registrar's office), as well as concerns that this would open the door to ongoing competition from UMGC.

That said, overall the USM *OnTrack* initiative has been well received—particularly by our less well-resourced institutions—and will continue through the Fall and into the Spring 2021 semester to find ways to support the USM institutions as they manage the fallout from the global pandemic. But even as we have been working to overcome the immediate challenges, the need for more transformational change has become clear.

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A New Role for Academic Innovation

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Tragically, events in the first half of 2020 sparked a renewed urgency to address structural racism across our institutions and surfaced just how much work remains to increase access, affordability, and achievement for all students who seek a postsecondary education. But, while the crisis certainly produced losses and hardships, there appears to be a new openness to embracing innovative solutions to the problems higher education faces moving forward (Burnett, 1998). Yet the question remains: How do we capitalize on that momentum to drive deeper culture change related to improved educational experiences for all students?
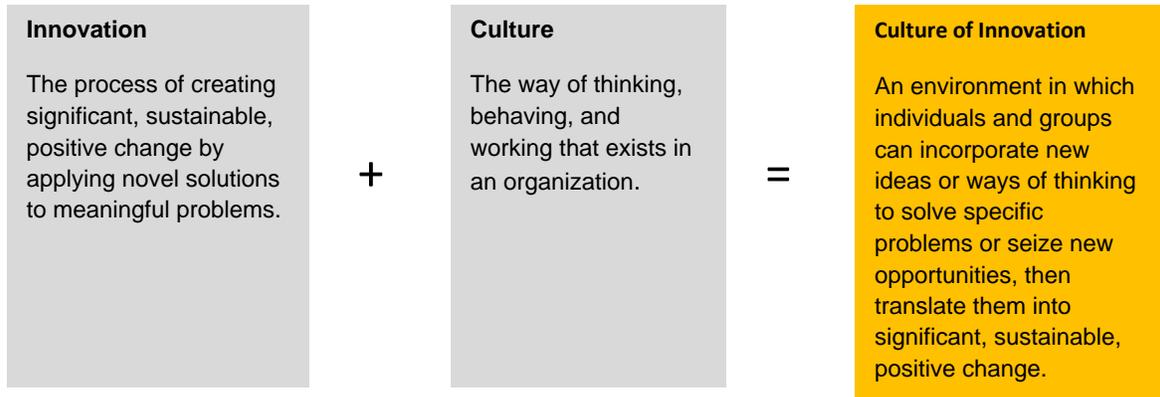
The Role of Culture in Innovation

As described, above, we view *innovation* as something much more transformative than just making a few adjustments to pedagogy or introducing a new technology into the classroom. Innovation is, instead, the process of creating significant, sustainable, positive change by applying novel solutions to meaningful problems (Eckel, Hill, & Green, 1998). We've all seen pockets of innovation on our campuses… pilot projects, often led by a "champion," that yield some success but aren't easily reincorporated into the daily operations of the institution and then fade away after the champion leaves or the funding dries up. The issue is that, while the pilot may have generated some temporary, localized changes, the innovation has not fundamentally altered the *culture*—the way of thinking, behaving, and working that exists within the organization.

According to Setser and Morris (2015), "culture is the water your organization swims in"; culture is both the organization's policies and practices as well as the "habits, values, and mindset" of the people who make up that organization (p. 7). When combined, the *culture of innovation* we are striving to achieve is a hospitable environment in which individuals and groups can incorporate new ways of thinking in the service of solving specific problems, or seize new opportunities and then translate them into significant, sustainable, positive change (see

Figure 1, below). Each innovative action, in turn, reinforces the environment for future innovation.

Figure 1

A Culture of Innovation. Adapted from Setser and Morris (2015), p. 8.

Innovation		**Culture**		**Culture of Innovation**
The process of creating significant, sustainable, positive change by applying novel solutions to meaningful problems.	**+**	The way of thinking, behaving, and working that exists in an organization.	**=**	An environment in which individuals and groups can incorporate new ideas or ways of thinking to solve specific problems or seize new opportunities, then translate them into significant, sustainable, positive change.

With respect to *academic innovation*, the problems we're trying to solve are specific to increasing student success through initiatives that remove barriers to access, affordability, and achievement of high-quality degrees for our students. Stated differently, meaningful and lasting change from academic innovation cannot be achieved simply by scaling educational technology implementations. True transformation in higher education can only come from a change in culture (Kezar & Eckel, 2002a, 2002b).

Creating a Culture of Academic Innovation

Just prior to COVID-19 becoming a global pandemic, the Kirwan Center concluded a year-long process to develop our 2020-2025 plan. While our work continues to be squarely focused on collaborative efforts to increase access, affordability, and achievement, this new plan acknowledges for the first time that accomplishing our mission will require "creating a collaborative culture of academic innovation that catalyzes new ways of thinking about student success, translates ideas into action, and scales and sustains promising practices" (Kirwan Center, n.d., para. 4). To achieve this culture change, the Kirwan Center's new, three-part goal is to: 1) develop statewide academic innovation initiatives that both leverage our systemness and allow key stakeholders to see themselves in the work; 2) build institutional capacity to scale and sustain transformative academic innovation models; and 3) reconceptualize the role of academic innovation from peripheral activity to mission critical for student success.

Helping Key Stakeholders to See Themselves in the Work

Reimagination and transformation of teaching and learning can only happen when others see themselves in the work, can meaningfully shape its direction, and are positioned to

sustain the efforts. We have come to realize that our job is to help the institutional stakeholders come to their own conclusions about the need to frame student success in terms of problems of practice (versus a problem of students) and to approach problems differently by exploring data, options, and available strategies.

We sometimes jokingly refer to this approach as "hiding the broccoli in the mashed potatoes," given the fact that we frequently design opportunities for important insights or new learnings to occur as an objective of our initiatives. For example, we've been known to use conversations about open educational resource (OER) adoptions as an opportunity to work with faculty on developing learning objectives and aligned assessments or make a systemwide inventory of "closing the achievement gap" initiatives a springboard for discussions around being more thorough about collecting data to know what's working and what's not. As we work to build a culture of academic innovation, the Kirwan Center will continue to empower institutional leaders to implement academic innovation in ways that resonate with their local contexts. We will support this transformation by providing guidance and resources for adopting, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining changes in policy and practice.

Focusing on Transformational Academic Innovation Models

To be truly transformational, academic innovation requires more than just sheer numbers of faculty and student participants in the initiative. Instead, as Coburn (2003) has suggested, scaling an innovation should be predicated on other, less quantifiable factors including depth, sustainability, spread, and shift in ownership of the need for change. Stated differently, to be "at scale," reforms must affect deep and consequential change in practice—measured qualitatively as well as quantitatively. According to Coburn, this means digging below surface measures of implementation to capture a more nuanced understanding of how the innovation is impacting changes to beliefs, norms, and pedagogical principles as enacted in practice. It means exploring institutional organization and structures to understand how existing business models, policies, and environments are impeding or supporting transformation. It involves watching for the spread of innovation both across institutions as well as within an institution. And, perhaps most importantly, to be at scale the reform must finally become self-generative through a shift in ownership of the innovation from the external driver (such as the funder, state agency, or a system office) to the institutional stakeholders.

As illustrated in Figure 2, below, we have begun framing our innovation work by exploring what "scale" looks like in terms of the quantitative piece or the *integration level* (x-axis) juxtaposed against how we are qualitatively engaging with the new tool, system, or process or the *implementation model* (y-axis). Truly transformative scale involves both high levels of

integration as well as optimally effective implementation that capitalizes on the affordances of the technology to optimize student success.

Figure 2

A Framework for Thinking About "Scale" of Academic Innovations.
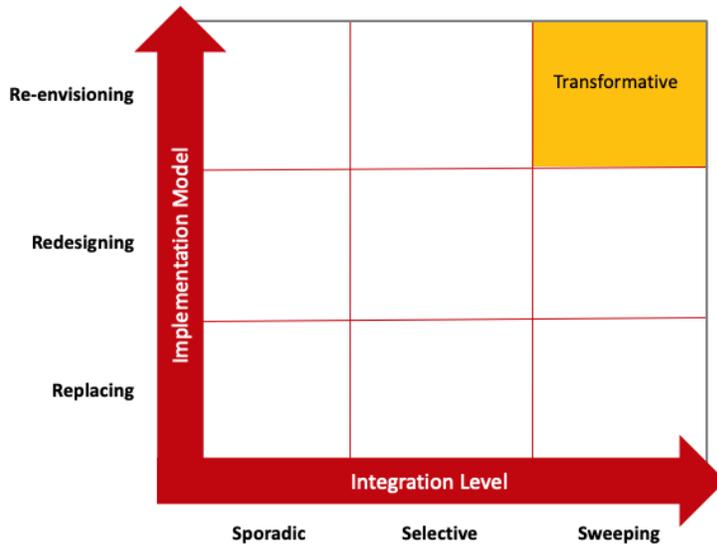
For example, with respect to our work leading the Maryland Open Source Textbook (M.O.S.T.) initiative to support faculty adoptions of OER, we've seen integration slowly advance from a few interested faculty (sporadic) to targeted programs (selective) and, at least in the case of UMGC, to institution-wide adoption (sweeping). However, as we have explored the nature of many of these OER adoptions, we have discovered that a large majority of the implementations have been only at the level of replacing the existing textbook with OER. Using this framework, we have begun making a much more concerted push toward helping faculty adopting OER to think beyond merely swapping out their textbook toward teaching differently with OER (redesigning) and even exploring how the fact these materials are openly licensed allows for continuous improvement of instructional materials (re-envisioning). Similarly, we hope to guide institutions' recent implementation of online instruction up the y-axis from simply moving traditional courses online to support academic continuity in Spring 2020 (replacing) toward more effective online education (redesigning) and, eventually, a willingness to explore new pedagogical and curricular modules such as modular, competency-based, and stackable approaches (re-envisioning).

Moving from Peripheral to "Mission Critical"

While the Kirwan Center's existing networks have worked well for supporting initiatives and disseminating best practices, we need to begin working more directly with senior leaders at our institutions to help them understand the critical role academic innovation will play in the success of their institutions and their students. When the Kirwan Center was established in 2013, many institutions across the country were exploring organizational changes intended to advance student success through improved teaching and learning and other academic innovation. It appeared we were seeing a shift in thinking about the role academic affairs could and should play in institutional efforts to increase effectiveness and affordability, particularly in relation to student success. Further, those efforts were taking on a highly collaborative tone, bridging traditional higher education silos and—in some cases—even bringing multiple units together under one "umbrella" position (Bishop & Keehn, 2014).

Fast-forward five years, however, and we're discovering this work is hard, takes time, and is not just about inserting technologies and hoping something will stick. Budgets were being slashed, which resulted in already under-resourced academic innovation offices either being cut, not growing, or relying heavily on externally funded projects. And, while faculty are key in helping advance this work, they have not always been entirely aware of the pressures on the institution to change, and the academic innovation leaders were often not in a position to influence faculty thinking (Bishop, 2018). Instead of being viewed as "mission critical," by Fall of 2019 these academic innovation units were increasingly viewed as "nice to haves," "peripheral," and/or "expendable."

This contrasts with the 15 to 25 percent of revenue that other major industries—such as the automobile, computing/electronics, and healthcare industries—spend annually on research and development as part of continuous quality improvement and investment in future capabilities. These organizations know that innovation is crucial to their growth and survival in a competitive marketplace. Like these other industries, higher education also needs to make a similar investment of resources and commitment to innovating to address the economic, demographic, and political pressures coming from its external environment. The potential for more disruption looms on the horizon. Acting in ways that maintain the status quo appears to be riskier than taking bigger chances on the innovation units many of our institutions have already stood up.

In these ways, the Kirwan Center's new plan reflects some fairly significant shifts based on lessons learned from the last seven years of leading academic innovation across a diverse,

federated higher education system. The need for these changes in our approach has only been further substantiated by our experiences so far in 2020.

Key Takeaways from Our 2020 Experiences So Far

COVID-19 is more than a public health crisis. The pandemic and its aftermath are likely to have significant impact on people's behavior on a variety of fronts, including how they access educational opportunities. It also amplifies larger calls for economic parity, social justice, and governmental reform. Here, we offer some key takeaways from our experiences while acknowledging that, as of this writing, this work is still in progress. As such, we also offer a candid assessment on areas that we recognize need to be improved.

Take stock and share what has already changed. When faced with the practical problem of campuses closing, higher education faculty all over the world capitalized on the affordances of online communications tools to maintain academic continuity. We've already demonstrated we can innovate and there are many successes among the stories about our shift to emergency remote teaching—like the science professor at one of our historically black universities whose students' actually did *better* this spring than they had in recent years. Collecting and sharing empirical data as part of open and objective conversations about what has already changed can create those "ah-ha" moments necessary to help your institutional stakeholders come to their own conclusions about the need to innovate.

Consider how the "post-pandemic" is being framed. In many ways, and for many of our students, the "pre-pandemic" context was not working optimally. Consider whether the rhetoric being used to talk about the future—as a "return to normal," for example—helps or hinders academic innovation toward important goals. This insight came from the USM Chancellor, Dr. Jay Perman, who realized mid-summer that referring to fall preparations as our "return to campus" wrongly conveyed certain expectations that could discourage more innovative thinking about our best path forward.

Lead with the practical problems you're trying to solve, not the technologies. Despite the fact this is a central tenet of the Kirwan Center, in the rush of this summer we found it was easy to slip into sending mass emails about joining an "adopting adaptive courseware summit," for example, rather than to frame the invitation around the problems faculty might be facing keeping up and/or making the online learning experience more interactive for their students. In fact, we suspect simply communicating there is available "instructional design support" for faculty might be part of the issue with the low usage of instructional design hours to date. We are currently re-messaging the availability of those services to lead with the educational problems faculty are facing that this support can help to solve.

Determine what is broccoli, and what is mashed potatoes. Some of the problems we're trying to address can be difficult or contentious topics—redesigning courses with high failure rates, addressing structural racism, or scaling faculty professional development, to name a few. As system leaders, we often provide "cover" to our institutional counterparts by embedding activities that tackle these issues within a shared, collaborative project that generates interest and excitement. Likewise, senior institutional leaders can provide this kind of cover to deans and department chairs or cross-departmental academic committees, such as a general education council, a faculty technology council, or a faculty group focused on the use of open educational resources.

Provide a "safe space" for failing and reflecting on lessons learned. Fear of failure is one of the main adversaries of innovation. But now, more than ever, we can't be afraid of trying to improve. Fostering a culture of academic innovation requires that our leaders make clear from the start that it's okay to fail as long as we capitalize on that as an opportunity to learn from our mistakes—essentially embracing uncertainty and liminal spaces as opportunities to unmoor people from day-to-day routines in ways that can allow for new and novel thinking and action to emerge.

Negotiate the "hand off" for successes from the start. In the same way we need to manage the failure of risky new ideas, we also need to prepare for our successes. As discussed earlier, many successful innovations die on the vine because there was never a discussion about how to move them from pilot to mainstream adoption within the institution. Address this from the start of a project by making clear, in writing, the definition of success and how adoption of the innovation will be supported in terms of resources, time, and ownership if successful.

Develop a holistic evaluation framework and assess along the way. As the Kirwan Center looks toward ensuring sustainability of academic innovation, we will need metrics to measure the climate for innovation periodically so we can chart changes in the environment and adjust as needed. Establishing and implementing evaluation protocols will be critical both to determining the long-term impact of our initiatives and to demonstrating the return on our investments for future funding requests.

Concluding Thoughts

While the Kirwan Center has generated a great deal of momentum around academic innovation within the USM—particularly in the wake of COVID-19—there is still much left to do. We have learned that change takes time and is often contingent on garnering additional and sustained support, which state higher education systems are often in a unique position to request from the state or other potential funders. But we have also discovered that by fostering

a culture of academic innovation, the Kirwan Center can play a key role in creating lasting and meaningful transformation through active leadership, initiatives, and strategies aimed at student success.

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