Fedora Commons

Sandy Payette
Executive Director, Fedora Commons

November 5, 2007
DLF Panel

Brief History of How We Got Here

- In the Beginning… The Fedora Project
  - Joint project of Cornell and UVA
  - Mellon funded 2001-2007
  - Digital Repository and Service Framework in open source
- Transition Planning… devise a model for LT sustainability
  - Who did the strategizing?
    - Co-directors (Payette and Staples)
    - Fedora Advisory Board
    - Inputs from other similarly situated entities in our community
  - What was the recommendation?
    - Start a non-profit organization for Fedora
    - More open project and more participation
- Secured startup funding
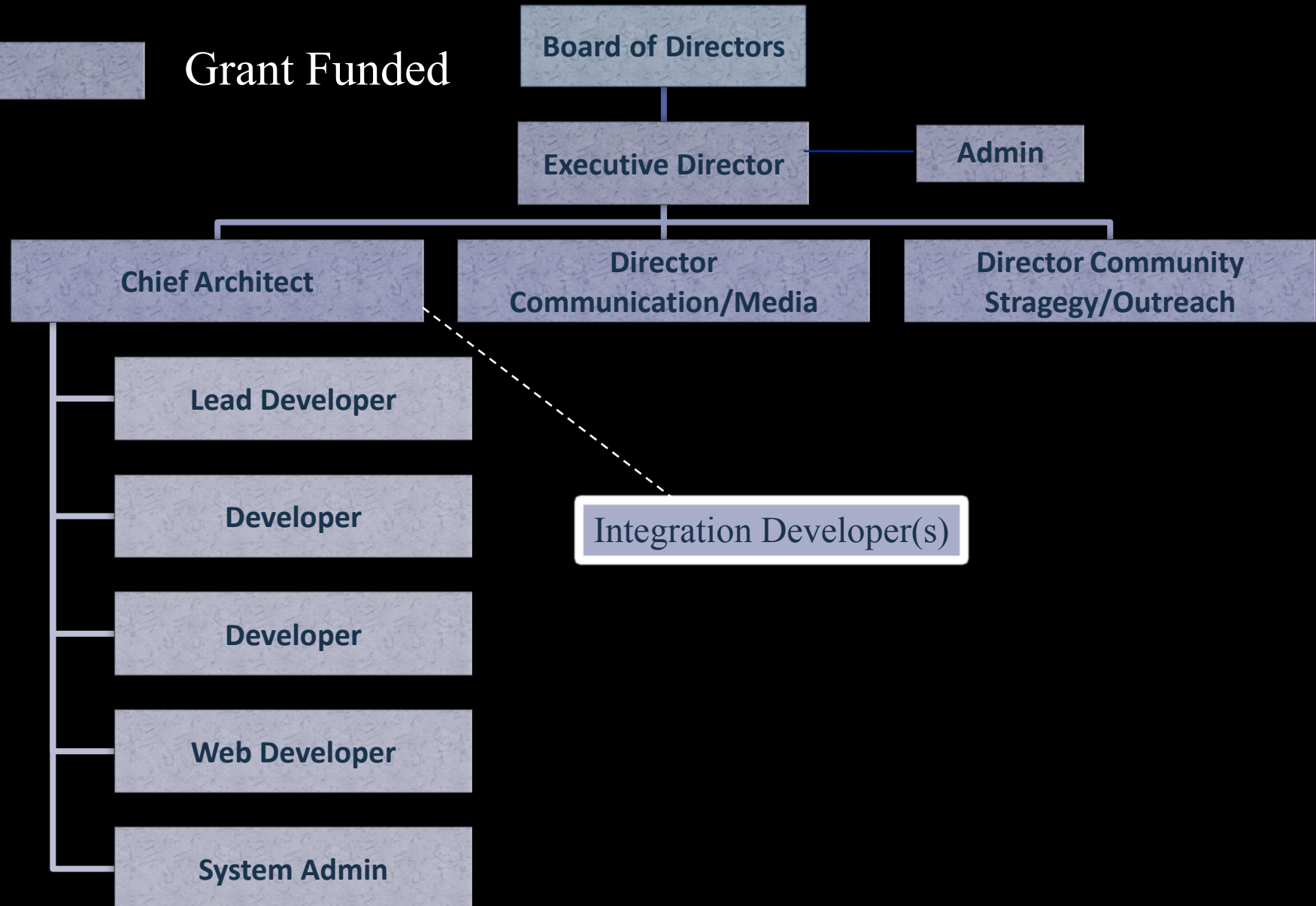 - Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation: $4.9 million over 4 years

Why Fedora Commons?

- Serve the public good : 501(c)(3) Non-Profit
  - Effective date May 22, 2007
  - Advanced ruling as public charity
  - Board of Directors (voting officers)
  - Not a membership organization (no voting members)
  - Accepts gifts, donations, fees, contributions ($$ or in-kind)

- No cult of personality
  - Not just Payette and Staples (beyond the Sandy and Thorny show)
  - Move beyond being a university project (beyond Cornell and Uva)
  - Create governance model to bring in community participants

- Long-Term Sustainability
  - Develop revenue generating models
  - Develop partnerships with commercial, other open-source, other non-profits
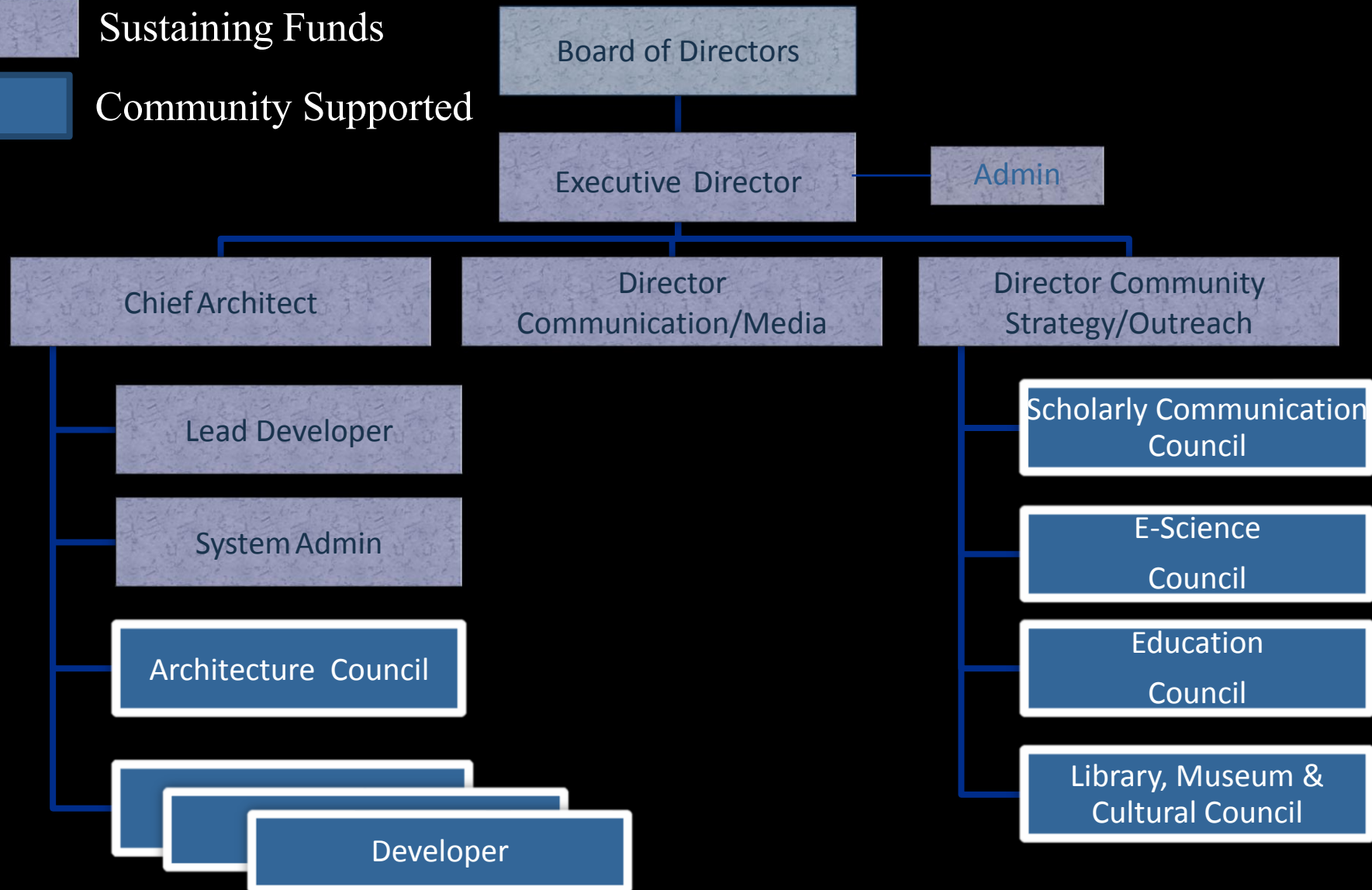
Governance – Initial Organization (2007)

Grant Funded

Board of Directors

Executive Director

Admin

Chief Architect

Director Communication/Media

Director Community Stragegy/Outreach

Lead Developer

Developer

Developer

Web Developer

System Admin

Integration Developer(s)
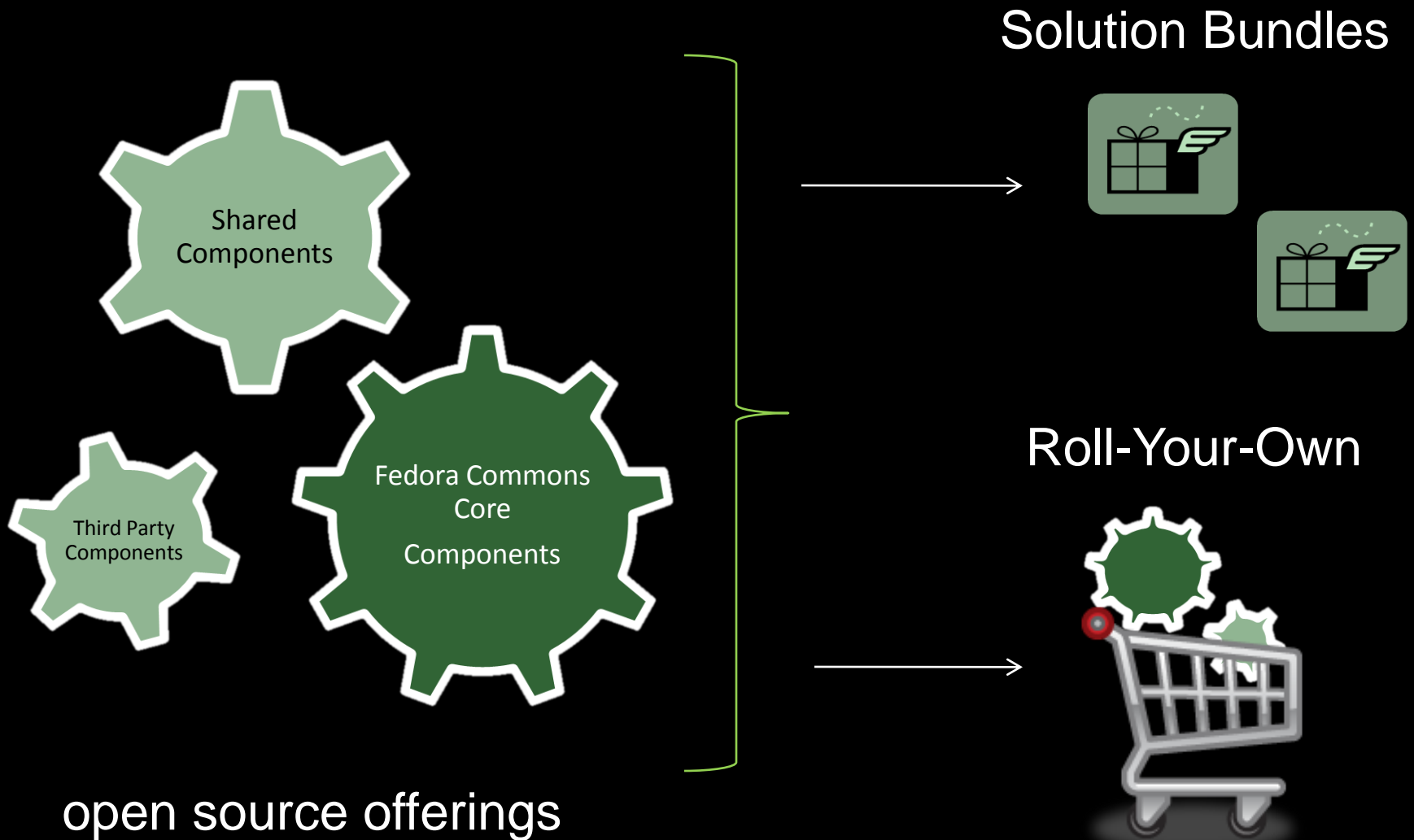
Baseline Steady State (2009-2011)

Fedora Commons Startup Goals
Working towards Sustainability

- Increase Installed Base of Fedora Commons software

- Move toward organizational design that enables more community leadership

- Develop new revenue-generating models

- Evaluate potential of offering consulting services

- Fund-raising strategy (court sponsors/donors based on appeal of mission)

- Developing strategic partnerships and/or value-add mergers with other organizations or open-source projects

Technology Strategy

Solution Bundles

Shared
Components

Fedora Commons
Core
Components

Third Party
Components

Roll-Your-Own

open source offerings

Challenges and Unknowns

- Is it beneficial to our communities to have a proliferation of non-profit organizations, each needing support?
  - Future mergers
  - Future failures ☹
  - Will they pay fees?   Who are they?
- How can organizations plan for the true cost of open source? How can Fedora Commons help?
- Will the revenue-generating strategies keep the non-profit viable?
- Is our "public good" mission compelling to enough donors?
  - Power of open source for public institutions (open source, open communities, open information for public good)
  - Need for open and durable infrastructure components (e.g. cyberinfrastructure)