

# FINAL REPORT OF THE DISTANCE LEARNING COMMITTEE

INTRODUCTION: RICHARD MILLER

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## MEMBERSHIP OF DLC:

Joseph Burns, Professor, Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering and Astronomy, Dean of Faculty

Jeff Cowie, Professor, ILR, History

David Delchamps, Associate Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering

Michael Fontaine, Associate Professor, Classics, Associate Dean of Faculty

Susan Fussell, Associate Professor, Communication

Thorsten Joachims, Professor, Computer Science

Richard Miller, Professor, Philosophy

Erich Mueller, Professor, Physics

Christina Stark, Senior Extension Associate, Nutritional Sciences

Laura Brown, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, English; chair

Ted Dodds, Vice President for Information Technology

Patricia McClary, Corporation Section Head, University Counsel; non-voting

Theresa Pettit, Director, Center for Teaching Excellence

Oya Rieger, Associate University Librarian

## CONSULTANTS:

Bob Buhrman, Senior Vice Provost for Research, Applied & Engineering Physics

John Siliciano, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Law

# FROM THE DLC CHARGE (4/29/12)

- The DLC will identify broad educational policy issues raised by the electronic delivery of Cornell courses ... the DLC should summarize the perceived benefits and pitfalls, for both the University and individual faculty, of Cornell's participation in MOOCs ... [and] should be conscious of other developments in distance learning, such that the policies are relevant in other contexts.

# THE LIFE OF THE DLC

- May 14: First Meeting
- May 21: Cornell edX Contract Announced
- Sixteen meetings in all, with reports from working groups on resource allocation, credentialing and credit, educational quality, administrative structures, and intellectual property rights
- February 3: Final Report Approved

# THE DIVERSITY OF DISTANCE LEARNING: CONSORTIUM MOOCS

Massive Open Online Courses, offered by edX, Coursera and other consortia, with

- massive enrollments (median around 33K, about 6% completion)
- primary aim at students in institutions of higher education or prospective students (but most enrollees seem outside this target)
- production values, formatting and interaction to increase viewing and engagement

# THE DIVERSITY OF DISTANCE LEARNING: CONSORTIUM MOOCS (con't)

- high production costs, relatively low cost per enrollee
- a special concern: faculty time in production and maintenance
- potential for exclusive use for credit, through massive online discussion and grading
- reputational benefits
- educational benefits in different disciplines

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# A QUESTION ABOUT CONSORTIUM MOOCS

- What are the prospects of improving the fit between consortium MOOCs and teaching goals in areas, such as the humanities, where it is now widely perceived as less than good?

# DIVERSITY OF DISTANCE LEARNING: OTHER TYPES

- Extension and professional development online courses (at Cornell, often large, sometimes viewable for free)
- Summer and winter session courses (at Cornell, kept small, to facilitate instructor-student interaction)
- Open Courses
- Online Learning Modules
- Hybrid vs. exclusively online

# RESOURCE ALLOCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continued expansion of support, with balance between edX MOOCs and other types, concern for resources for classroom teaching
- "Cornell should proceed strategically and carefully in considering whether, and at what rate, Cornell edX offerings should occur after our current two-year commitment of eight courses ends."
- Question: Does this show too little enthusiasm / too little caution about edX MOOCs?

# ACCESS

- Recommendation: enhance outreach, including consideration of a new Cornell portal
- Question: What sort of Cornell portal would be most effective? How comprehensive should it be?

# CREDITS

- At Cornell: recommendation of no credit for exclusively MOOC-based courses in any Cornell degree program.
- Endorsement of currently established bases for credit through online courses, such as Summer Session

The prospect of licensing for credit elsewhere:

- Evidence of inferior outcomes
- Cost-cutting in the expansion of higher education
- Questions: What should Cornell do? What should the prerogatives of MOOC instructors be? What role is there for the faculty in the candidate for licensing?

# MONITORING AND IMPROVING QUALITY

- The potential of MOOCs for data and classroom-teaching improvement
- Quantitative metrics, consultation and mentoring: the need for balance

# INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

- The need to encourage experimentation and inter-university cooperation
- The helpfulness of current practice
- Questions: what are faculty concerns?

# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

A three-part structure for collaboration:

- Distance Learning Committee, mainly faculty, with a faculty chair, shaping policies and best practices and guiding selection for targeted funding
- Distance Learning Administrative Group, with administrators, leaders of support, and the Dean of Faculty, with final authority over initiatives using central funds, allocation of university-wide facilities and over-all direction of future plans
- Distance Learning Implementation Team, designing and managing support for distance learning

Question: Enough independent faculty voice? Too much for effective collaboration? Other, new groups needed?