

No plans for UNC to join with Coursera

Many of UNC's peers are offering free courses on the online platform.

By Samuel Mason
Staff Writer

UNC officials are not ready to log onto the online teaching platform Coursera.

But as more schools start to consider the new online platform — which allows anyone with Internet connection to enroll — some believe the transition may be certain.

Concerns about academic integrity and finances have kept the UNC system from joining many of its peers in offering free online courses through the new platform, said Suzanne Ortega, senior vice president for academic affairs of the UNC system.

Last week, four of UNC-Chapel Hill's peer institutions — including Duke University and the University of Virginia — announced partnerships with the company.

The partnerships will allow anyone with an Internet connection to take certain courses offered by partner universities for free.

Ram Neta, a UNC professor who is co-teaching a Duke course through Coursera, said the online

courses are an inevitability for the future of higher education.

He said online classes are the most affordable way to educate a vast number of people.

With the addition of Duke and UVa., Coursera is now enrolling more than 100 courses from 16 universities worldwide. These courses will feature new instruction methods as an experiment in improving online pedagogy.

Mitchell Green, a UVa. professor of philosophy, is planning to offer a course next year called 'Know Thyself' on Coursera's platform.

"It's not the case that the highest priority for me is trying to tell students around the world about Plato or Confucius," he said. "I see them primarily as means to an end, where the end is cultivation of critical, rigorous, self-reflective thought process."

But despite the benefits offered by Coursera to universities, the UNC system will not be joining the program just yet.

Ortega said there are many unknown variables that have to be factored into joining the initiative.

She said partnering with Coursera would cost a lot of money without the promise of revenue to the UNC system.

"It is money we'll have to spend that we can't spend on something else," she said.

Ortega said Coursera, like any experiment, has some bugs. She said there is no system for ensuring the identity of test-takers, and there are doubts as to how sustainable the platform's funding model will be in the future.

UNC's current online offering is similar in quality to those of Coursera, Ortega said.

"We already do much of this, and the question is whether we need to think about a different platform, a different funding model and exactly what role this plays in the overall portfolio of the institution," she said.

But Neta and Ortega both acknowledged that it would be in the best interest of the University to stay abreast of developments with Coursera and similar initiatives.

Ortega said the new online teaching methods will likely have a positive impact on in-classroom teaching.

"Other universities, like Duke, are thinking of ways of changing the on-campus service that they provide so that it offers a value that's very different from the value of online education, and it's worth paying a lot of money for. I believe that UNC ought to think about that as well," said Neta.

Contact the State & National Editor at state@dailytarheel.com.

Summer festival will showcase art, ice cream

Hillsborough's Last Fridays provide culture and fun for families.

By Rahel Gebremeskel
Staff Writer

Music, art and ice cream will take the stage in Hillsborough's Last Fridays celebration Friday.

The warm-weather festival that showcases artists and musicians is in its 14th season.

Jacob Cooley, a landscape painter who will participate in the festival, said the event is always a cultural celebration.

"It's a big community of people who are interested in culture, art and music," he said.

Last Fridays celebrations always occur at the end of the month and run from April until September. All events are free.

Sarah DeGennaro, a spokeswoman for the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough said people travel from Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Cary and Mebane for Last Fridays.

DeGennaro said she wasn't sure exactly how many attended, but numbers are usually in the hundreds.

"We really run the gamut from young families, older couples, college students and retired folks," she said.

"It's a big community of people who are interested in culture, art and music."

Jacob Cooley,
landscape painter

Gracelee Lawrence, a sculptor whose work will be on the Art Walk, said Last Fridays give people living outside of the greater Triangle area the opportunity to get out, socialize and soak up local culture.

She said that Last Fridays offer a cultural atmosphere closer to home for Hillsborough residents.

"There are people who may not be inclined to go to downtown Raleigh, but they still want those kinds of experiences," Lawrence said.

The biggest part of Last Fridays is the Art Walk, a self-guided tour of Hillsborough artists and their work in studios and galleries around town.

But the festival caters to kids too. At the event, children will be able to make turtle puppets and enjoy a screening of "The Muppets" at 8:30 p.m., at the Burwell School Historic Site.

This Friday, Appalachian soul band Johnson's Crossroad will be the main act on the Old Courthouse lawn.

Other musical acts include indie rockers The Blue Suits, who

will perform on the Tryon Street Stage at Historic Hillsborough Presbyterian Church.

The festival this month will also have an ice cream-making contest as part of its regular themed bake-offs.

Contestants will bring their creations to Cup-A-Joe at 120 W. King St. by 5 p.m. Judging will begin at 6 p.m.

The winner will have samples of their ice cream sold at Cup-A-Joe, with proceeds benefitting the Hillsborough Arts Council.

Cooley said the most important part of the festival is the attention it brings to local artists.

"It's exposure," Cooley said. "So many people come to it and see the work and go from gallery to gallery."

He said that the Last Fridays events are changing the way people view the town.

"Hillsborough used to be a much sleepier community," he said.

"It is positive and growing and keeping its cultural integrity and adding to it with these events."

Contact the City Editor at city@dailytarheel.com.

Sleep science degree to be launched

The degree program is a combined effort with UNC-Charlotte.

By Vinayak Balasubramanian
State & National Editor

The world's first bachelor's degree in sleep studies will be launched this fall — at UNC.

Despite being in its early stages of establishment, the neurodiagnostics and sleep science degree program has already seen demand from students seeking to become managers of sleep labs. The labs study the sleep disorders.

The program is being offered by UNC-Charlotte, although 27 of the program's 38 credit hours will be instructed by UNC-CH faculty, said Mary Wells, the program's

"It is well identified in the nation that we are woefully short of sleep technologists."

Bradley Vaughn,
medical director for the neurodiagnostics and sleep science degree program

director.

While several associate degrees are offered in the field, there are no other sleep studies bachelor's degrees offered in the country.

Wells said a statewide survey found that 73 percent of sleep disorder centers accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine are having difficulty recruiting people with the correct skill sets for management positions.

This shortage has led many students to try the new program in hopes of advancing their careers in the science, she said.

Most of the degree's courses will be taught online, although students will be required to participate in an internship and a practicum. Students are expected to take two years to obtain a degree, Wells said.

Students must have at least an associate degree in order to apply. The deadline to apply for the program was July 15, and admission decisions will be announced in August, Carolyn Salanger, senior program manager for extended academic programs at UNC-C, said.

Salanger said around 50 students applied for the program,

and up to 30 students will receive admission.

While a lot of students are in-state, Salanger said the program has attracted attention from students across the nation and abroad.

"We were very nervous about how many students would actually apply, but we got a tremendous amount of interest immediately," she said.

Bradley Vaughn, the program's medical director and a UNC-CH professor, said the program's concept originated 10 years ago.

"North Carolina actually leads the nation in sleep technological education programs," he said. "It is well identified in the nation that we are woefully short of sleep technologists."

Michael Anderson, who was part of a group of students selected to take elective courses in the subject, said he'd like to become a frontrunner in the field.

"I certainly don't want to have strong beliefs and not be able to practice those and lead in my example."

Contact the State & National Editor at state@dailytarheel.com.

SPORTS BRIEFS

MEN'S LACROSSE

UNC had 3 players on U-19 World Championship team

After dropping two games in the pool play portion of the competition, the U.S. under-19 men's national team bounced back to win the Federation of International Lacrosse's U-19 World Championships.

The U.S. team won the tournament held in Turku, Finland, by beating Canada 10-8 Saturday.

The three members of UNC's 2012-13 men's lacrosse team that played for the U.S. team were Steve Pontrello, Michael Tagliaferri and Brent Armstrong. Rising UNC sophomore Chad Tutton was a key member of the silver medal-winning Canadian team.

Pontrello and Tagliaferri both scored in the title game and Tagliaferri's goal was the final one of the game for the U.S. team.

FOOTBALL

Former UNC, NFL assistant coach died last week at 82

Joseph Popp, an assistant to North Carolina head coach Jim Hickey in 1962-63, died July 19 at his Mooresville home. He was 82 years old.

Popp was a successful high

school coach in the state of North Carolina as he coached at Jonesville High School, which is now Starmount High School, Southwest High School in Forsyth County and Mooresville High School. He led Mooresville to the state championship in 1961 before coming to Chapel Hill.

Popp also spent two seasons with the Cleveland Browns of the National Football League.

Mooresville's football stadium is named in his honor, and Popp was a member of the inaugural class inducted to the Mooresville High School Athletic Hall of Fame.

Popp was a two-sport athlete at Catawba College and is also of member of its athletic Hall of Fame.

WOMEN'S GOLF

Incoming Tar Heel golfer wins AJGA tournament

Samantha Marks, who will join the North Carolina women's golf team in the fall, won the Deutsche Bank Partners for Charity Junior shootout July 20.

The tournament was conducted by the American Junior Golf Association.

Marks won the same event last year though it was held at a different course.

Marks, who participated in the Women's U.S. Open earlier in the month, finished the 54-hole event at 3-over-par to win the title by a single stroke.

She fired a two-under 70 in the third and final round at The Golf Club of Cape Cod in East Falmouth, Mass., to seal the win.

—From staff and wire reports

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