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U. of Illinois at Springfield Offers New 'Massive Open Online Course'

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By Marc Parry

What happens when you invite the whole world to join an online class?

As *The Chronicle* reported last year, a growing number of educators are giving that idea a try by offering free "massive open online courses," or MOOC's, to anyone who wants to learn. Today, that experimental idea gained some more traction in mainstream higher education. The University of Illinois at Springfield announced a new not-for-credit MOOC devoted to examining the state of online education and where e-learning is heading. Nearly 500 people from two dozen countries have registered so far, with 1,000 expected to sign up by the time the course begins next Monday.

These courses are part of a small but expanding push toward "open teaching." Universities such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have offered free educational materials online for years, but the new breed of open teachers—at the University of Florida, Brigham Young University, and the University of Regina, among other places—is now giving away the learning experience, too.

The idea for the Springfield course grew out of a presentation called "The Open Future of Higher Education" delivered at a conference this spring by Ray Schroeder, director of Springfield's Center for Online Learning, Research, and Service.

"The discussions there led me to more deeply consider the path of online learning in this era of a 'higher education bubble,'" Mr. Schroeder said, referring to PayPal co-founder Peter Thiel's recent claim that college is comparable to previously overvalued markets in technology and housing. Another influence was the concept of an "Open Educational Resources University," which, as Mr. Schroeder explains it, involves students learning from freely available materials and then seeking certification of their knowledge from traditional universities.

"I found that many others also were taking stock and questioning where we are headed," Mr. Schroeder added.

Various online-learning leaders are participating in Mr. Schroeder's course, which runs through August 19. Not enough MOOC for you? Stay tuned. Starting in September, another group will organize what the MOOC pioneer George Siemens calls the "Mother of all MOOCs."

In a blog post Monday, Mr. Siemens welcomed the growing interest from traditional universities. And he countered the more skeptical take offered by another open-education leader, David Wiley, who wrote recently that "MOOCs and their like are not the answer to higher-education's problems."

"I don't think I'm overstating it when I say that we are at a similar point to open online learning that we experienced with the growth of the LMS (learning-management system) in the late 90s," Mr. Siemens wrote. "While some have argued that MOOCs are limited in their appeal—mainly for professional development and highly prepared individuals—I believe MOOCs will continue to be easier to develop and deliver as the growing number of institutions develop pedagogies ... and new technologies to run the events."

This entry was posted in Distance Education. Bookmark the permalink.

Chicago Sun-Times
June 22, 2011

Eye-blowing quality comes to Adler via space movie on new projectors

BY KARA SPAK
Staff Reporter/kspak@suntimes.com

Chicago, prepare for an alien invasion.

The Searcher, the extraterrestrial narrator of the new ultra high-definition "Deep Space Adventure" movie, lands July 8 at the Adler Planetarium, guiding earthbound visitors through an outer space journey that planetarium officials think is second only to actual space travel.

While the Searcher is pure sci-fi fantasy, the planets, stars, galaxies and nebula projected in "Deep Space Adventure" are accurate portrayals of the universe. The Adler teamed up with the National Center for Supercomputing Applications at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and NASA's Ames Research Center in California to render astronomical data into precise images of space.

"Unless you have been to space, you'll have the highest quality that's ever been done before," said Doug Roberts, Adler's chief technology officer.

Replacing the 40-year-old Zeiss projector — made famous during a 2008 presidential debate when John McCain ripped a possible replacement as a "$3 million overhead projector" — are 20 individual digital projectors for a screen resolution of more than 8,000-by-8,000 pixels.

The supercomputers were the only way to translate the data gathered through space travel and telescopes into authentic images.

"If you've got a Ph.D. in astrophysics, there are details you've never seen before," said Paul Knappenberger Jr., Adler president.

Knappenberger said eventually the planetarium hopes to customize the solar system experience, bringing up different images based on the group attending the show. The projectors can be controlled by an iPad or an Xbox controller, which also may be part of future interactive experiences.

The Adler Planetarium was built in 1930, and "Deep Space Adventure" will be shown in a completely rebuilt Grainger Sky Theater under the building's iconic dome. In 2012, a space shuttle simulator given to the planetarium by NASA will be transported from Houston to Chicago, Knappenberger said Tuesday. He wasn't sure whether the entire simulator or select pieces such as the cockpit will be displayed.

The planetarium makeover and movie cost $14 million, and planetarium officials earlier this month asked the Chicago Park District board to approve a $2 increase for general admission. They had hoped the fee increase would begin this month, but Ald. Ed Burke (14th) balked, saying he was concerned about affordable options for city children.

Knappenberger said Tuesday he met with Burke and agreed to ask for a fee increase of $2 for everyone except children who live in the City of Chicago. If the fee increase is approved, general admission, which would not include "Deep Space Adventure," would be $12 for adults, $10 for seniors and $8 for children who are not Chicago residents. New rates for Chicago residents would be $10 for adults and $8 for seniors; admission for children ages 3 to 11 would remain at $5.

"Deep Space Adventure Passes," which include the new theater experience and other Adler exhibits, are $28 for adults and $22 for children 3 to 11. Chicago residents receive a $1 discount for children and $2 discount for adults.

Chicago Tribune
June 22, 2011

Authors create worksheet to find lower college costs

By Dan Serra
McClatchy/Tribune news

Traditional planning for college expenses usually consists of estimating tuition and how much to save each year to pay for four years. But once college gets closer, the numbers all change and the options all have different prices, meaning exploring financial aid usually comes into the picture. And that's where college gets complicated.

"Often financial aid is presented in less than a clear way," said Carol Stack, co-author of "The Financial Aid Handbook." "It's not that complicated."

Stack and co-author Ruth Vedvik, both former college admissions directors, try to simplify the process. They believe an informed student and parent can make college more affordable.

For example, the published tuition by each college doesn't mean that's the price the student may pay. Many offer "discounts" to attract students.

"Most scholarships are awarded by institutions so we are showing students how by developing a tool on how to find out what schools will give them the most money," said Vedvik.

Colleges look for the value a student would bring the school, so the more value the student brings, both academically and personally, the more of a discount the college could extend. That discount could be as much as 50 percent off tuition, Vedvik said.

To help match students with a school, Vedvik and Stack created the Merit Aid Profile, or MAP. The worksheet lays out a method for students to find colleges that may be more likely to award aid.

One part of the MAP that could help students reduce the cost for college is to find a match where the student could be in the top 25 percent academically of incoming students, they write. Students can determine how they rank by researching the SAT and ACT scores of accepted students.

The book offers a sampling of smaller colleges and aid programs and shows that even private colleges could compare to the cost of public universities yet provide a more personal experience. (Play the bagpipes? College of Wooster may have an $8,000 scholarship waiting for you.)

The book provides timelines, tips and worksheets on putting together a search, filing applications and shopping according to cost to prevent getting in too much debt.

Once a plan is in place, the book guides students and parents through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form, which must be filed to determine how much aid the student could receive.

"We're really suggesting a paradigm shift in the college search," said Vedvik. "You can control that by doing a college search that is cost-aware.

"It's so important for many students graduating that they are not burdened with debt and so really take control from the beginning, matching resources with talents and what institutions are willing to pay you for it."

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June 22, 2011

TRIBUNE WATCHDOG CAMPUS SEX ASSAULTS

Marquette failed on attack reports

School says oversight led to cases not being sent to police; accuser disagrees

By Ryan Haggerty and Stacy St. Clair
Tribune reporters

MILWAUKEE — On a chilly Sunday morning, a 19-year-old Marquette University student walked into the campus security office and tearfully reported being raped by an athlete just hours earlier.

She says two of the officers on duty that February day dismissed her claim, telling her they didn't know whether it was a crime because she alleged the encounter began as consensual sex and ended as an assault.

No report was taken, and Milwaukee police were not notified by the university, which insists the woman said she did not want authorities involved.

The university now acknowledges that failing to notify police was a violation of state law, which requires campus security departments to report any possible crimes to local authorities. School officials also did not tell police about a sexual attack allegation involving four athletes in October.

In fact, Marquette administrators told the Tribune that they have violated their reporting obligations for the past 10 years. And in at least the two most recent cases, the lapses played a role in prosecutors declining to press charges.

The admission comes amid media inquiries into the Catholic college's handling of those two cases and serves as a backdrop for the woman's account of what happened after she reported being raped on Feb. 27.

Breaking her public silence, the woman described a university determined to

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Marquette lapses on assault reports

Continued from **Page 1**

bury her allegations and eager to insulate itself from criticism once her accusations became known. She has shared the same account with law enforcement, school officials and medical professionals, according to documents and multiple Tribune interviews.

"It has pretty much become my life. I'll never just be able to forget that it happened, because it changed everything," she told the newspaper this week. "I don't trust anyone. I will never again trust the university. I will never again trust anyone in any position of authority because they worked their absolute hardest against me and lied to me."

Media attention to the Marquette cases reflects an increased scrutiny of the way administrators and law enforcement officials handle sex-crime allegations on the nation's college campuses, where nearly 1 in 5 women will be a victim of an attempted or actual sexual assault, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. For the past several months, the Obama administration has been calling attention to the issue with a series of initiatives and investigations aimed at better protecting students from sex crimes.

Last week, a Tribune analysis of several major Midwestern universities found that few students who report sexual violence see their attackers arrested and almost none see them convicted.

The survey of six schools in Illinois and Indiana found that police investigated 171 reported sex crimes since fall 2005, with 12 resulting in arrests and four in convictions. Only one of the convictions stemmed from a student-on-student attack, the most common type of assault claim.

Marquette reported 16 forcible sex offenses on campus from 2001 through 2009 to the U.S. Department of Education, according to the university. The school declined to provide the Tribune with the disposition of those cases.

Fresh injuries

In repeated statements to authorities, the woman in the Feb. 27 case described accepting an invitation to the athlete's campus apartment that day. Though the two had a sexual relationship in the past, he suddenly had stopped calling or spending time with her, she said.

Once there, they began to have consensual sex, she said. However, the woman said, she tried to get off the bed and leave after he made disparaging comments to her and wouldn't explain why he had stopped contacting her.

She said she told him to stop but that he refused. She said she fought back but that he was too strong for her and held her down.

The woman agreed to speak to the Tribune on the condition that her name not be used.

Neither the athlete nor his Milwaukee-based lawyer returned calls seeking comment. The athlete, whom the Tribune is not identifying because he has not been charged with a crime, has told authorities and school administrators the sex was consensual, according to multiple sources.

After leaving the athlete's apartment, the woman said, she returned to her dorm and tried to sleep. After a fitful few hours, she confided in a resident assistant about the previous night's events. The RA sent her directly to the security department, where, the woman says, two on-duty officers told her they were not sure that the encounter could be classified as a crime.

Still, they promised that a security officer would call her within an hour, she said.

The woman then went to the hospital at the resident assistant's urging. Medical reports from that visit show the woman had vaginal abrasions, in addition to fresh injuries on her face, hip, foot, knee and both thighs, according to documents obtained by the Tribune.

The following day, a security officer finally contacted her and asked her to come back to the department and give another statement, the woman said. She did, only to be told that police wouldn't want to investigate her case and that the university's internal discipline process would likely cause her more harm than good, she said. The officer did not take an official report, she said.

However, the officer did offer to report her allegation to the athletic department, she said. She recalled him saying her allegation would have the greatest impact this way.

After hearing little from the security department during the next month, the woman said she believed the message was clear.

"I was so mad at how I was treated by the people who were supposed to be there to protect me," she said. "There were so many secrets."

'It will not happen again'

Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm told the Tribune that the woman has given authorities the same account on several occasions. Once she shared the allegation with Marquette security, the officers were legally bound to call police — regardless of their interpretation of the incident, he said.

"Once they have reason to believe that a crime like a sexual assault has occurred, they have a mandatory obligation to report that to police, and that didn't happen," Chisholm said. "Everyone acknowledges that."

Lt. Paul Mascari of the university's security department disputed the woman's account, saying officers always began their conversations with alleged victims by asking if they wanted police involved.

> ***"I will never again trust anyone in any position of authority because they (university officials) worked their absolute hardest against me and lied to me."***
>
> *— Former Marquette University student who says she was raped in February*

"I can tell you that, having talked to the officers afterward, it was never the intention of anyone in this department to discourage ... victims from contacting the Milwaukee Police Department," Mascari said.

No one, however, disputes that the university broke the law when it failed to report the woman's allegation to city police.

Marquette's security department has been required under Wisconsin law to report all allegations of campus sex crimes to Milwaukee police since it was licensed by the state in 2001, but university administrators acknowledge they historically have forwarded a case only at the complainant's request. They declined to say how many cases went unreported to local law enforcement but said the majority of cases were sent to police at the women's requests.

Marquette officials also contend they did not realize that they were in violation of the law until the woman in the October case went to police on her own.

"We have had a lot of very blunt and very direct conversations about this stuff," said Stephanie Quade, Marquette's dean of students. "There were a lot of things I think we found that we were not proud of, as you can imagine. We have initiated a lot of conversations since then on campus as well as with local law enforcement ... to really help us learn from that. It will not happen again."

By not reporting sexual assaults to police, Marquette opened itself to accusations of trying to keep the attacks out of the public eye, even if that was not the intent, said Roger Canaff, a former prosecutor who now trains and advises military prosecutors on how to handle sex crimes.

"If you're not following that law, if you're attempting to handle sexual assault complaints internally within the university, I think the fair assumption is you're doing that because you don't want to bring outside attention onto this problem on your campus, so I can understand why people are angry about it," Canaff said. "Obviously, I can't get into what the motives of the university (administrators) are — I have no idea — but I think that would be a fair inference that people would draw."

Emotional meeting

Marquette officials first came under fire for their handling of sexual assault cases in late March, when a female student told Milwaukee police she had been sexually attacked by four athletes in a dorm room on Oct. 30. She reported the incident within hours to campus security officers, who informed the athletic department of the accusation but did not tell local law enforcement after she indicated she did not want police involved, officials said.

As reporters and television crews descended on the urban campus to cover that story, the woman in the February case received calls from Milwaukee police and school administrators inquiring about her allegation. It was the first she had heard from school officials in weeks.

The woman said she met with Quade, who encouraged her to focus on her schoolwork and mental health rather than pursuing charges, the woman said. Quade also asked if she had thought about praying about the situation, the woman said. She said she left the meeting in tears.

"I felt like they were trying to get me to be quiet and disappear," she said. "I've never been made to feel so dumb, so stupid and so much like I didn't matter."

Quade said the meeting was held to offer assistance to the woman and to determine whether there was sufficient information to hold an internal disciplinary hearing for the athlete.

"I absolutely understand that the student was upset," Quade said. "Our intent in that meeting was first and foremost to offer resources."

The woman in the October case could not be reached for comment.

The Tribune is not naming the athletes because they have not been charged, and the newspaper is not disclosing their sport to avoid identifying them.

The four athletes accused in the October case were subject to team discipline, Deputy Athletic Director Mike Broeker said. He declined to provide further information about any punishment.

In the February case, the woman filed an official complaint with the university in March and participated in the athlete's conduct hearing in April. She withdrew from classes shortly before the proceeding and plans to attend another college in the fall.

Marquette declined to provide the results of the internal hearing, citing student privacy laws.

The university will not be punished for failing to report the incidents because administrators cooperated with police and prosecutors once authorities learned of the allegations, Chisholm said.

The state Department of Regulation and Licensing, which licenses the campus security department, did not take action against the school because "there was insufficient evidence of criminal wrongdoing," a spokesman said.

The university's mea culpa, however, has done little to pacify some members of the Marquette community.

"I have been told by people that no one had bad motives in all this, that nobody was trying to cover anything up, and I find that hard to believe," said philosophy professor Nancy Snow, who recently chaired a committee to help set up a campus gender resource center. "I find it hard to believe that trained professionals would do this. I'm very disappointed in the way the university handled this."

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TIMELINE OF EVENTS IN 2 CASES

Key dates in two cases of alleged sexual assault at Marquette University:

Oct. 31, 2010: A student reports being sexually assaulted by four athletes to Marquette campus security within 12 hours of alleged incident.

Feb. 27, 2011: Another student reports being sexually assaulted by an athlete to campus security. She then goes to a hospital for a sexual assault exam.

Feb. 28: The woman in the February case meets with another campus officer. She says he discouraged her from making an official report with the police or campus officials.

March 28: The media descend on the campus after news of the October incident breaks. The woman in the February case receives calls from local police and school officials, inquiring about her allegation.

March 29: The woman in the February case meets with a Milwaukee police detective.

March 30: She then meets with school administrators at their request.

March 31: She files an official report about the alleged February assault with campus security.

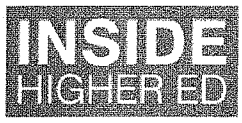
April 5: She meets with the Milwaukee County district attorney's office.

April 14: She withdraws from classes.

April 26: Marquette holds a conduct hearing for the athlete accused in the February case.

May 26: The district attorney announces charges will not be filed in either case.

Sources: Interviews and documents obtained by the Tribune.



News

Motivating the Reluctant Retiree (Singular)

June 22, 2011

When *Inside Higher Ed* asked college presidents last spring about strategies they would use to deal with the economic downturn if they didn't have to worry about political opposition on their campuses, "mandating the retirement of older faculty" led the list at private nonprofit institutions and was near the top for public colleges.

That answer reflected the concern among campus leaders that many of the older professors who are of typical retirement age -- but whose savings were diminished by the stock market implosion -- will opt not to leave, creating a logjam in the hiring of a new generation of instructors at a time when many institutions lack funds to simply add faculty positions.

Many campuses have put in place programs to encourage faculty members (and other employees) to move on, either through staged programs that ease them into retirement over a period of years or through broad early retirement programs that offer incentives to broad groups of professors (typically over a certain age, who have worked some number of years at the institution, etc.). The latter type of program is especially common in bad economic times, as institutions seek either to cut spending or, more commonly, to free up funds to hire new professors or for other purposes.

But a truism among human resources experts is that because such programs are often structured to include significant numbers of people, institutions have little control over who takes the offer and who doesn't -- and in many cases, the "wrong people" (in an employer's eyes) leave.

That's because the most vital scholars and teachers are often those who have the best options outside the institution, while others may be reluctant to leave because they see retirement as a "social death," as University of Virginia President Teresa A. Sullivan put it during a discussion about faculty retirements at the American Council on Education's annual meeting in March.

Those were among the issues with which the University of Colorado System wrestled in the depths of the economic downturn in 2009, when its officials -- who had been accustomed to seeing about 50 professors a year retire from the flagship campus in Boulder -- saw that number plummet to 4. "A lot of them seemed inclined to just step back and wait" for the economy to recover, says E. Jill Pollock, chief human resources officer for the Colorado system.

That sort of stagnation posed a potential problem for Boulder, where the 822 tenured professors had an average age of 52, with 17 years' service and a salary of just over $100,000. Boulder officials wanted to continue recruiting new professors (to build the faculty for the long term) and to have the flexibility to make selected senior hires in key programs, but those tasks would prove difficult without the funds that would have been freed up by the departures of those normally expected to retire. Boulder has more than 100 professors in its phased retirement program, but those people can remain on campus for up to five years.

'What Would It Take?'

University administrators began a series of discussions with faculty leaders about "what would be interesting to them, and what it would take" to get would-be retirees to consider taking the plunge, Pollock says. Since "a lot of them had just lost quite a bit of their savings," money topped the list.

As Colorado officials discussed how to craft a retirement incentive that would be both large enough to attract meaningful numbers of reluctant retirees and targeted enough to focus on those the institution felt most comfortable losing, they opted to take an "individual" rather than a "group" approach, Pollock says.

The traditional approach is to define a set of criteria and make the benefit available to anyone who qualifies. Instead, the university created a program that allowed all deans to identify individual candidates in their schools who met certain criteria (55 or older, with at least 15 years of experience) and whose productivity -- for a variety of reasons, such as changes in student interest or declines in research funding -- was perceived to be waning.

Those individuals were offered an extremely attractive but unusual deal (with non-negotiable terms): two years' pay at their final base salary paid over five years into a 403(b) retirement account (most incentive programs offer a year's pay). In exchange, the faculty member had to relinquish tenure and commit (for tax reasons) to do no work for which he or she received pay from the university for that five-year period, and Colorado would provide retirement planning coaching on both financial and non-financial matters.

The dean of a particular college at Boulder could let the provost pick up the entire cost for a retiring professor -- in which case the university was free to move the budget line for that position elsewhere to a school or department that needed it more -- or the college could split the cost of the two years' pay, in which case the dean would get the budget line after one year or two.

Colorado's president approved the plan in October 2009 and the university rolled it out in the spring of 2010, for retirement dates from May 31, 2010, through the end of 2011. In all, 36 professors were approached, and 31 accepted the arrangement -- 12 in engineering, 13 in arts and sciences, and the rest spread among Boulder's other schools. The 31 professors who accepted their deans' offers -- all but three of whom were men -- averaged 67.8 years of age and 34.1 years of service, and had an average salary of $98,523, says Pollock, who described Colorado's approach to an eager audience of peers from other colleges at **the annual forum sponsored by TIAA-CREF** in April.

One of the participants in Colorado's program, Howard Wachtel, a professor of electrical and computer engineering, just concluded his 50th year in higher education, but said he had been in no hurry to retire. He had cut back sharply on his research -- "I stopped squandering the government's money," he jokes, after years of receiving funds from the National Science Foundation, the Office of Naval Research, and other agencies -- but continued to teach courses in neuro-engineering and neuroscience that were likely to end when he stopped teaching them.

"I figured it would be likely that nobody would take over what I was doing, and in that context, I thought I was still doing things that are better than those things not being done at all," he says.

But when Wachtel got a letter from the university's associate vice provost about the retirement incentive, the timing was right, he says. Because the funds he'll receive are tax-deferred, "the difference [in pay] between working and not working for me would be very small" over the next two years. So after going out "guns blazing" this fall, with more students taking his courses than ever before, Wachtel says, he hopes to teach next year in either Arizona or Singapore, and "might get back into research" through collaborations with colleagues elsewhere.

Can You Single People Out?

Interestingly, Wachtel says that he thought that the offer letter he received had been "sent out to hundreds of faculty who met the eligibility requirement." (That wasn't the case, although the fact that Colorado's engineering school adopted the program so enthusiastically makes his impression that "I can't think of anybody who would have been eligible who didn't get [the letter]" understandable.) Wachtel's sense -- that it "would get [university officials] into all sorts of legal trouble if they singled people out" -- is one many faculty members would probably share, but Colorado examined it carefully, Pollock says.

"Nobody is being forced to take this," she says. "You're offering them a quid pro quo opportunity -- to get something they want in exchange for giving up their tenure. It has to be mutually agreeable."

Pollock acknowledges that the program "wasn't highly visible" on Colorado's campuses (some campus leaders opted not to use the new tool at all), although she did discuss it with the university's Faculty Council.

"I'm not sure how many faculty got the point that it was targeted rather than one that you could ask for -- it kind of went over people's heads," says Joseph Rosse, a professor of management at the Boulder campus and chair of the campus's Faculty Assembly. "I heard virtually no discussion of it this year. One reason it was so low-visibility is because they were so careful to avoid any characterization of it being for 'deadwood' professors."

Mark R. Malone, a professor of science education at the university's Colorado Springs campus and chair of the system's Faculty Council, says that faculty members briefed about the plan saw it as an alternative to other, less appealing options that seemed to be on the table given sharp reductions in state funds, such as closures of academic programs or reductions in retirement benefits. "The university was clearly looking for things to give it more financial flexibility, and this seemed better to us than just closing down a school," he says. (Of course, Colorado has since closed a school, too -- shuttering its journalism school as part of a broader effort to remake its communications curriculum.)

Pollock describes the individualized retirement approach as a success so far, giving Colorado officials another "financial management tool" to deal with both fiscal and staffing issues. It won't work for every campus, she notes -- "it is expensive, and not every place can set aside money upfront to cover the costs" -- but campus officials lined up to talk to her after the TIAA-CREF session, suggesting that many colleges are looking for innovative ways to encourage the reluctant retiree.

— Doug Lederman