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Colgate University and Hamilton College announce joint membership in edX

Non-profit online learning community offers new opportunities for both institutions

Hamilton/Clinton, N.Y. – Colgate University and Hamilton College jointly announced today their partnership as new contributing members in the nonprofit, online learning platform edX. Founded by Harvard University and MIT, edX currently offers more than 150 courses in many areas of study, including the arts and humanities, public health, law, math and computer science. Its focus is to create access to the world’s best education globally, improve on-campus education and conduct research to enhance teaching and learning.

Colgate and Hamilton are joining edX along with several major foundations and other global organizations. Among those are Osaka University (Japan), Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (Spain), International Monetary Fund, Learning by Giving Foundation (Buffet family philanthropy), The Linux Foundation and The Smithsonian Institution.

With charter edX members Davidson and Wellesley Colleges, Colgate and Hamilton bring to four the number of liberal arts college edX members. As partners, Colgate and Hamilton will offer four online courses within the first year of their engagement with edX.

According to Colgate’s Provost and Dean of Faculty Douglas Hicks, “We are enthusiastic about joining the first wave of edX contributing members. The opportunity to partner with Hamilton College was timely.

“The edX courses and modules we develop will not try to duplicate what we do best: face-to-face, in-class instruction. Yet this platform makes possible a host of new ways to interact and learn. I envision that future courses on the edX platform can increase Colgate’s visibility with prospective students, and our faculty’s exciting scholarship and teaching will reach broader audiences.”

Pat Reynolds, Hamilton’s vice president for academic affairs and dean of faculty, said, “We consider it essential that we help shape the national discussion about online learning and advocate the role of the liberal arts within this developing arena. At the same time, we will engage and share pedagogical innovations with other institutions similarly involved in delivering offerings via various MOOC platforms.”

Hamilton Vice President for Libraries and Information Technology Dave Smallen reflected on other joint Colgate and Hamilton partnerships, “We have a tradition of partnering with Colgate in the application of technology to our academic program. In the 1990s we jointly received a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to focus on technology and language learning. This led to the implementation of videoconferencing on both campuses and a shared course in Italian taught via that technology. Through the years our libraries and IT organizations have continued to partner in support of teaching and learning. The edX partnership will further working relationships between our faculty and educational support staffs.”

Kevin Lynch, chief information officer at Colgate, said he is looking forward to having access to data collected by edX that could provide insights into the effectiveness of online and other types of learning.

“This membership in edX provides yet another avenue for Colgate and Hamilton to innovate and learn about the art and science of teaching, and our partnership provides an ideal platform to share with colleagues about what might work best pedagogically,” said Lynch.

In announcing its new members, edX said that, “The expansion comes in response to increasing demand from edX students for a broader array of courses, along with growing interest from academic and non-academic institutions to offer a diverse set of high quality courses to a global audience on edx.org and through the expanding network of edX universal access partners.”

“Improving the quality of global education and student success remains at the core of the edX mission, and we are continuing to grow and expand as we build the next-generation of online learning,” said Anant Agarwal, president of edX. “We are energized by the increasing interest from leaders in academia, non-profits, NGO’s, countries and industry to join the edX community, with many also using our universal access technology. Through our new membership structure, we are opening up edx.org to a wider pool of quality course providers, while offering both our global learners and our open-source adopters additional diversity and richness in our course offerings.”

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