

# CFHE Campaign for the Future of Higher Education

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June 24, 2013

Committee on Institutional Cooperation  
1819 South Neil Street, Suite D  
Champaign, IL 61820-7271

Dear Members of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation:

We read with interest your recent paper, "CIC Online Learning Collaboration: A Vision and Framework," and the *Inside Higher Ed* coverage of it.

It is good that a group of chief academic officers have foregrounded educational considerations and called for careful deliberation in the area of MOOCs and distance education.

That is a welcome break from the bandwagon-jumping and rush without judgment that has characterized the actions of too many institutions in this realm, and it marks a welcome administrative analogue to the thoughtful deliberations of faculty at Amherst College, Duke University, and San Jose State University on these matters.

It is good as well that you support a pedagogically-based, mission-driven model for distance education and one that focuses on access for "underserved... groups." That is wise; for in the context of our nation's changing demographics, with the growth student populations being lower-income, first-generation, students of color, and immigrants (both documented and undocumented), we need to be developing educational models that enhance the access and success of these students.

In the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education (CFHE), we have worked for two years to advance the faculty voice in the interests of affordable, quality higher education for all who can benefit; and we have addressed a number of higher education issues, including distance education. At our recent meeting in Columbus in May, we focused on distance education, having Dr. Shanna Smith Jaggars of Columbia University, talk about her recent study out of the Community College Resource Center on the disparate effects of distance education on different student populations in Virginia and Washington.

Finally, we were pleased to see one provost's quote in the *Inside Higher Ed* report, "We don't move without consulting with faculty," as we have seen announcements as recently as last week out of SUNY on Coursera where faculty were not meaningfully involved in deliberations. Academics should be at the center of these conversations, on the inside, not reading about them in *Inside Higher Ed*.

We do note, however, that these words are not reflected in the pages and bullets of the CIC position paper. As you move forward, we encourage you to add that commitment to working with elected faculty bodies. We further encourage you to define “faculty” inclusively to incorporate the input of contingent faculty and graduate teaching assistants who make up a significant proportion of the instructional workforce.

As you can see from our website (<http://futureofhighered.org/supporters/>), CFHE has many signatory groups, representing faculty and academic professionals from around the county. On our campuses, in our systems, and nationally we will be encouraging academically centered, thoughtful deliberations about MOOCs and online education, in which faculty, staff, and students are central players.

We thank you for your contribution, as chief academic officers, to thoughtful consideration of the important issues at hand and for urging careful deliberation surrounding online education.

Sincerely,

Steering Committee  
Campaign for the Future of Higher Education