

Internet opens education

Take advantage of free online courses

The University, along with 32 other leading colleges around the world, is bringing college-level courses to millions of interested individuals for free. Using Coursera as a platform to host nearly 200 interactive massive open online courses, the institution are opening up higher education and making world-class instruction accessible to more than one million students across 196 countries. The University's initiative to participate in this program is commendable, and more universities should follow suit and offer open access to educational resources.

Coursera is a social entrepreneurship company founded in April by two computer science professors at Stanford University hoping to revolutionize the educational landscape through an online network of freely accessible college courses. These courses range from the arts and humanities to engineering and the hard sciences. The online accessibility of higher education has become a significant focal point for institutions and students, as they are accessible to all and serve as a complement to traditional university courses.

As a nation that emphasizes higher education and a globally competitive workforce, the need for affordable and accessible higher education is more important than ever. Unfortunately, college is becoming more expensive, with a growing number of students unable to keep up with rising tuition costs. Now with Coursera and a working Internet connection, anyone can freely take classes from ten of these top universities. The program offers not only high-caliber education to the public, but it's also intended to complement the course-

work of college students by working with partnering institutions to establish accredited certification programs for to incentivize students to complete courses

The certification program is one of two key factors that make Coursera unique amongst other similar programs. The second is Coursera's focus on student interaction with the information through corresponding assignments. This underlying pedagogical philosophy of retrieving, reconstructing and rewarding what has been taught is thought to foster long-term retention and spur further learning. In this way, Coursera is able to bridge the current gap between high-quality education and easy access that has only served to frustrate universities to this point.

With every increased tuition dollar, more and more students are kept from receiving a higher education. Universities should continue to use resources like Coursera to break down such barriers and make higher education a reality for more people around the world.