

# Memorandum

**To:** Lee Teitelbaum

**From:** Peter W. Martin

**Date:** 1/20/2000

**Subject:** Launching Two Distance Learning Courses Next Year

---

The attached memorandum on the LII and distance learning is part of the planning document Tom and I have been laboring over. I am breaking it out of that more comprehensive plan because of an immediate need to secure your approval on some next steps.

As I have previously reported, I am working on a schedule designed to produce two distance learning courses ready for initial delivery next year (Copyright Law in the fall, Social Security Law in the spring). My plan is to start out by offering them within the same sort of administrative and fiscal structure I developed for the LII's earlier Internet-based course. That is, I want to offer the courses next year to upperclass students enrolled at participating law schools through their home institutions who would contract with LII/Cornell for one or both of them. Offering the same material reconfigured to be attractive to and appropriate for other populations -- such as, lawyers seeking CLE, undergraduate students at Cornell and elsewhere, and the general populace -- would follow.

During the same time that I would be running these courses for distant students I would expect to teach classroom-anchored versions here at Cornell.

To proceed with this plan on schedule I need to circulate a prospectus to potential participating schools quite soon. Given the high profile of distance learning I don't think I shall have to talk to very many before lining up enough schools and students for this first year's run but I need to begin that process. (As before, one attraction for all potential participating schools will be the opportunity to scrutinize a functioning model of distance learning up close.) With my new course design I would be prepared to have as many as 50 students at other schools and have no need to cap the enrollment per school as before.

## *Proposed terms and conditions*

On what terms and conditions should the LII offer this course to other schools? I propose a fee to participating schools equal to \$500 per student per course (with a per school per course minimum of \$5,000). I would be inclined to go a bit higher but for the element of experimentation involved. This tentative figure rests on the following considerations and associated conditions. To begin, it is premised on the home school's

Jan. 20, 2000

assuming all the registration, course credit, and related administrative burden. As with our earlier venture, the participating schools would need to provide us with an administrative contact who would supply a list of the students enrolled in the course including an e-mail address for each, notify of any changes, and handle all exam and grade report logistics. Each school would be invoiced for all students enrolled in the course at the end of its regular drop-add period. Participating schools would also be responsible for front-line technical support for their own students (with LII back-up), for assuring that its students have adequate computer resources and Internet connection, and for providing a meeting room suitable for local discussions among its students enrolled in the course. They could each, if they wished, designate a faculty member on premises to be included in all course communications. For my part, I would, within reasonable limits, be prepared to make a site visit at the school's expense to hold a "get acquainted and deal with any issues" meeting with its students, a briefing for faculty members on the technology and pedagogy involved or both.

This proposed fee structure is close to that for our prior course. Then we charged a flat \$5,000 per school for a maximum of 8 students. The \$500 per student figure also falls within the envelope set by the nation's only on-line law school, Concord (of which more below). Concord's fee is \$800 per student per course, which in its case must cover all the administrative costs that we'll be pushing back on the participating schools.

Depending on the numbers I would hire one or more TAs to assure quick turn around on all student work. Working with a ratio of up to 25 students per TA, the net return would, I think, still be reasonable but a year's experience should cast useful light on that as so many other issues.

#### *Potential participants*

What schools would we invite to participate? Since the yield is unpredictable and we are talking about two courses with very different appeal, my intent would be to cast a fairly wide net while being clear that I will haul it in as soon as we have, in my judgment, hit a reasonable outer limit (five schools maximum I think for each course). I would want to invite all three schools that were part of the earlier experiment (Colorado, Kansas, and Chicago-Kent). Concord definitely wants the copyright course. The other schools on the invite list would be selected on the basis of my relationship with their dean or a key faculty member and past indications of interest. They are all likely to be below Cornell in the law school food chain but well above the bottom. Concord, of course, sits in a special class, all its own. I want to include it so as to see how our model works with students whose other courses are also online and to observe, at close hand, how their program functions.

*Jan. 20, 2000*

*A variant to think about and discuss*

Both courses I am working on have potential for undergraduate delivery, but the plan laid out here would hold off testing that potential until 2001-2002. That year my thought would be to try an undergraduate version of one or the other here at Cornell. However, should you believe that the law school's relationship with the university would be significantly advanced by putting a technology-delivered copyright course for Cornell's potential software engineers, journalists, media persons, entrepreneurs, and poets ahead of the law school version I might be so incautious as to reverse the sequence with that course.