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# Princeton, Stanford, and Yale Plan Alliance to Offer Online Courses to Alumni

BY SARAH CARR

PRINCETON, Stanford, and Yale Universities will probably collaborate to offer online courses to their alumni, while Harvard University has opted out of talks with the other institutions, campus officials said last month.

The officials were tightlipped about the details of the potential alliance, but Princeton, Stanford, and Yale issued identical statements confirming that the three universities were considering a joint offering.

"Our initial discussions have focused on continuing education for our alumni. The result of these discussions may lead to pilot projects that explore these opportunities," the statement read. "More specifically, the discussions have included consideration of some form of joint effort among our institutions."

University officials would not elaborate on how the collaborative offering would work, but *The Harvard Crimson* last month quoted an anonymous source who said the alliance would be not-for-profit and would allow Princeton, Stanford, and Yale graduates access to online resources at all three universities.

## TRYING OUT NEW OFFERINGS

The source told *The Crimson* that one of the goals of the alliance would be to enhance online resources for undergraduates by trying out certain offerings on the alumni of the universities.

Alumni from the universities would also be able to partici-

ton's provost, said the university's trustees favored collaborative ventures with peer institutions over deals with outside companies.

## 'VERY ATTRACTIVE OFFERS'

"We and our peers have been approached by for-profit companies asking us if we are interested in working with them, and some of them have been very attractive of-

fers," he said. "But our trustees, when consulted, have said that as a first step we should enhance our own activities, and secondly begin to discuss cooperative arrangements with our peers, and we have been doing both."

"Our first audience is in any case our own students," Mr. Ostriker said. "And our second audience is the alums who want to be involved

in online learning." Princeton has offered online courses to its alumni for the past few years, he said.

"Needless to say, the opportunities are enormous in this area," Mr. Ostriker added.

## HARVARD OPTS OUT

Mr. Knowles at Harvard declined to say why his university would not participate. But Joe

Wrinn, the director of news and public affairs, said Harvard has recently been trying to address the issue of distance learning from a university-wide perspective.

Harvard has "a history of not being first in these types of things," Mr. Wrinn said. "We like to kind of hang around and see how it goes for a bit, and then come in on the second wave."

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pate in online, discussion-oriented courses, which would not be offered for credit.

Jeremy R. Knowles, dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard, confirmed that the university had decided not to participate in the alliance, at least for now.

"The matter is, I believe, still confidential," he said. "But I can tell you that while the Faculty of Arts and Sciences has decided not to join the alliance formally at this time, informal discussions about possible future participation will, I'm sure, continue."

The statement issued by the three universities stated that university officials planned to consult with faculty members, administrators, and trustees before undertaking any projects in distance education.

Jeremiah P. Ostriker, Prince-