Comments on Distributed Learning
http://cornell-magazine.cornell.edu/
CurrentIssue/LetterFromIthaca.html

• Distributed learning should and will become an important dimension of higher education, including at Cornell, even if we do not have clarity at this time.

• Although individual initiative will remain the hallmark of innovation at Cornell, we should attempt to develop a common vision of the general direction of change that we wish to embrace, i.e., try to develop a widely held strategic intent to guide our collective efforts (without impairing individual initiatives)

• This strategic intent, when we define it, should reflect our basic values and our dynamically evolving mission as a research university that is actively engaged with society.
• We must develop our on-campus infrastructure, but we must also provide technical assistance to faculty wishing to participate in this revolution.

• We should assure that our efforts complement – not compromise – our commitment to residential education.

• We should decide that our residential students are our primary audience. In most cases in the near future this will consist of components of courses – rather than entire courses.

• As a major, but secondary audience, we should make components of our courses available to our alumni, and Cornell faculty, staff and families (and then to a broader audience) on a not for credit basis.
• As soon as possible, our existing formal outreach programs should re-focus their human resources to participate fully in this revolution.

• The faculty should focus its attention upon content and appropriate pedagogy for this paradigm – and only as necessary upon the technology.

• The faculty should organize its own educational efforts – probably on a college-by-college basis.

• We should decide upon financial models only after we have agreed upon a strategic intent.