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Academia to produce Bitcoin alumni as two US universities launch Bitcoin courses

Andrew Saks-McLeod on Thursday, 09.04.14

The interest in virtual currencies by top academics continues as three North American professors establish Bitcoin courses at top universities



Going one step further than [Zurich University's two week trial](#) of a Bitcoin payment system, two of North America's most recognized universities are adding virtual currency to their list of courses, rendering widely held images of brown tweed jackets with shoulder patches a thing of the past, and academic interest in cutting edge currency technology the order of the day.

Academics in Switzerland this week demonstrated their interest in conducting research on the potential future development of virtual currencies by installing a pioneering touchless payment system at Zurich's 25,000-strong university for a

two week test period.

In the United States, a nation which is showing as much proponency toward Bitcoin as Switzerland, students at New York University and Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, prepare to be offered the opportunity to graduate with first class honors in the study of virtual currency.

Professor Geoffrey Miller has already commenced his lectures which were received by the first class of New York University's new course, The Law and Business of Bitcoin and Other Cryptocurrencies, yesterday.

35 students attended the session which was the first in a series of 14, which covered the fundamentals of money.

Professor Miller, a faculty member at New York University's law school, teaches the course with Professor David Yermack, who is on the faculty of the university's business school.

According to Professor Yermack, this particular course intends to examine the impact of cryptocurrencies on the fundamental principles that underpin current notions of law and finance.

Indeed, that the subject of virtual currency is infiltrating some of the most respected learning institutions in the world is testimony to its potential longevity as well as the United States' universal acceptance of Bitcoin, which has manifested itself in such events this year as the [US Marshal Office having a Bitcoin auction](#), and New York's state financial regulator setting about [establishing a regulatory framework](#) for virtual currencies.

“The course is not so much about teaching a knowledge of Bitcoin, but it’s to show how some of the issues about property, finance and contracts are going to change very quickly in the next century. The technology is forcing people to reexamine long-held assumptions” Professor Yermack [explained to CoinDesk](#) today.

At North Carolina’s Duke University, Professor Campbell Harvey is in hte process of preparing a course on virtual currency which will be added to the prospectus in the spring of 2015.

Professor Yermack explained to Coinbase that coming up with a syllabus for his course was challenging, due to the small number of published peer-reviewed articles on Bitcoin. Professor Harvey has a specific interest in the technological advancements which Bitcoin continues to bring to the financial world, and seeks to dissect these in hi courses. He considers that the block chain’s potential is stifled by a lack of basic understanding of its potential uses, and that it is up to academics to “step up” and present the information.

With the learning institutions future plans firmly ensconsed in virtual currency, it could be that the undergraduates of today may progress to be the financial technology innovators of tomorrow.

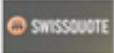
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