

Trends for Higher Education

SPRING 2018
Evolution of
Higher Education

From demographics and social change to politics and technology, many trends impact planning in higher education. SCUP's *Trends for Higher Education* is designed to help you and your institution make sense of the most significant evolutionary forces.

This edition focuses broadly on change in higher education. We look through an array of different lenses to gain some perspective on issues and opportunities that appear to be on the horizon—or at our doors.



About Trends

Demographic shifts. Political changes. Social movements. The evolution of technology. These all affect your institution. SCUP's *Trends for Higher Education* helps you and your institution stay on top of the major changes in the world around you. How?

- » We scan a wide range of sources and identify significant trends and movements outside of higher education.
- » We help you anticipate how these trends might affect your institution.

How can you use Trends?

- » Inform your environmental scanning or SWOT analysis
- » Support strategic planning efforts
- » Discuss the future of higher education
- » Serve as evidence to support your budget requests
- » Assist in program prioritization
- » Help develop new curricula

We've organized Trends using STEEP:

- Social:** How people work internally (psychology) and with each other (sociology)
- Technology:** How people use technology (including hardware and software), how society relies on technology, and how technology affects society
- Economic:** Macro- or microeconomics, including global trends, anything related to jobs and skills needed for jobs, and industry shifts
- Environmental:** Our external surroundings, including sustainability and our evolving workplaces, cities, and living spaces
- Political:** Public policy, governmental systems, the people within them, and the effects of government decisions on our citizens and communities

Each trend includes a brief trend summary, a footnoted source, and discussion questions to help you analyze and act on the trend.

Join the Conversation

It's impossible for us to identify every issue you may need to consider. What did we miss? What did we get wrong? Tell us!

E-mail trends@scup.org or Tweet @[Plan4HigherEd](#) with the hashtag [#scuptrends](#)



Social Trends

As society evolves, how well is higher education serving transgender students? Can planners gain from listening to student voices? Is it time for a new model of Greek life? Should universities share staff? And is it time to rethink teams?

Listening to the Student Voice in Planning

A post in the American Council on Education (ACE) blog discussed how Old Dominion University involved students in developing a strategic plan for campus internationalization. Apart from helping to keep student interests at the heart of the enterprise, the work gave students practical experience in organizational dynamics and opportunities to develop their communication and interpersonal skills.¹

For discussion

Students are the heart and soul of higher education, but how well do planners include their perspectives in the planning process? How might your institution better weave student perspectives into planning? What would be gained? What might be some potential downsides? How might planners help students benefit from being involved in the planning experience?

Supporting Transgender Students Online

A potential lesson for how to best serve transgender students virtually comes from the Indiana Connections Academy (ICA), an online charter school. Enabling transgender students to use a name and gender other than the one on their birth certificate proved more than just a technical challenge. Weighing moral, legal, and political questions, the school changed not just its software but also its policies for supporting vulnerable students and related protocols for training staff.²

For discussion

While many campuses have wrestled with issues like bathroom access and other supports for transgender students in physical learning spaces, has your institution fully thought about how to support non-binary students *online*? How can your institution ensure that virtual classrooms are friendly, safe, and supportive for all? What technical changes might be needed? What kinds of changes in policies and staff training could also help?

When Greek Life Runs Amok

Fall 2017 saw a raft of disturbing stories about misconduct, some fatal, at fraternities. Penn State was one of several institutions that suspended Greek life. Florida State University went further, banning fraternities and sororities after a student died following a frat party. In a news conference, FSU president John Thrasher acknowledged, “we’ve got a serious problem” and said, “for this suspension to end, there will need to be a new normal for Greek life.”³

For discussion

Fraternities run amok raise serious legal, political, and public relations issues. Recently, more university leaders are saying “enough” and backing their talk with actions like sanctions and suspensions. At your institution, does Greek life detract from campus life? Are current policies about fraternities and sororities robust enough to meet the kinds of challenges that many institutions have recently experienced? What further steps can and should your institution take to mitigate risks related to fraternities and sororities?

Got (Inner) Game?

To compete in the digital age, organizations may need more than the right products and technological infrastructure. Experts at Bain & Company say what's also needed is a polished "inner game." Elements include having a clear vision for where the organization should head as well as a focus on building an adaptive, agile, and innovative culture that enables the organization to react quickly to market changes.⁴

For discussion

Particularly as they seek to grow and scale online programs, traditional universities may need to develop new skills that sharpen their "inner game." But in an era when disruptive change is buffeting higher education, such skills may also be necessary across a university's operations. How could your institution make itself more agile, innovative, and adaptive? How can it develop and internalize a culture that sparks productive and focused change?

Apprenticeships Get a New Push

In a rare alignment with Obama-era policies, the Trump administration believes apprenticeships should be a priority for higher education.⁷ A recent report from Harvard Business School and analysts at Burning Glass Technologies argued that the types of apprenticeships that higher education offers could be greatly expanded beyond typical jobs like the construction trades to roles like claims adjusters, database administrators, and graphic designers.⁸

For discussion

The push for apprenticeships can be viewed as part of an expanding discussion about the value of college, whether all students need college degrees, and how well higher education aligns with the needs of employers. Could or should your institution expand the number of apprenticeships it offers (or start an apprenticeship program)? More broadly, is your institution truly engaged in assessing how well its programs prepare future employees for the 21st-century workplace?

The HR Chatbot Will See You Now ... or Anytime You Want

IBM believes that artificial intelligence is an integral cog in an emerging new digital model for human resources. HR chatbots can provide one-on-one, personalized employee service. Benefits include automating routine tasks and saving money. Three steps for a better chatbot? Make it available wherever employees are, design conversations to accurately meet employee needs, and use employee feedback to make sure chatbots do what they are intended to do.⁵

For discussion

To accelerate what it calls the "reinvention" of human resources, IBM says chatbots can answer frequently asked questions, direct staff to appropriate policies and other resources, walk them through standard procedures, and even nudge them to meet organizational goals.⁶ How might your institution develop such a service for employees? What would be the potential upsides? Potential disadvantages? Could chatbots be developed in other areas—such as student services?

Can Eight Universities Share a CISO?

Cyberthreats are real, but how many institutions can afford to hire a chief information security officer (CISO)? Responding creatively to this challenge, five universities and three community colleges in Canada partnered to jointly share a single CISO. As part of a two-year pilot initiative, the CISO will help all eight partner institutions improve their cybersecurity practices and bolster protection of their digital networks.⁹

For discussion

Apart from underscoring the need for universities to proactively combat cybercrime and other digital threats, this pilot study shows institutions willing to partner in creative ways. From shared purchasing to joint academic programs and even mergers, we're seeing more evidence of partnerships in higher education. Is your institution willing to draw outside the lines to craft creative partnerships? What would it take for your school to be more open to those kinds of possibilities?

Syncing Up with Internships

Gallup found that it takes nearly a quarter (22 percent) of bachelor's degree graduates up to a year to find a good job. Analysts there declared, "higher education institutions and accreditors are out of sync with what the public and students want most from a college degree." One key answer to that conundrum? Internships. Gallup argues that making internships a requirement for graduation can be a lever to helping alumni find meaningful work.¹⁰

For discussion

Students, parents, legislators, and other key stakeholders are asking increasingly more pointed questions about the value of a college degree. Could internships help students transition between college and the workplace—and help institutions articulate the value of college? How effective or extensive are your institution's internships? Could you extend your internship programs? Might such a tack help your institution better understand industry needs for talent?

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Renée Graham, *Boston Globe*
www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2017/11/10/suspending-fraternities-isn-enough-colleges-should-ban-them/cVPxjWqlum7p5FQiCQss3H/story.html?event=event25
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- 8 **Room to Grow: Identifying New Frontiers for Apprenticeships**
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<http://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/222497/why-colleges-internships-requirement.aspx>

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Conceptualizing Teamwork

Organizations like colleges and universities rely on teams to deliver much of what they do. But how often do we stop to think about that dynamic—and how it might be improved? A recent blog posting by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) reminds us to take time to think about the value of teams as a fundamental building block in the way we work today.^a

The blog reported that a Gallup survey of the workplace found that 84 percent of employees are "matrixed" or work across multiple teams. Teams have abundant benefits. They help employees work effectively across departmental and organizational silos and are invaluable for information sharing within complex organizations. A 2015 study in the *Harvard Business Review* found that teamwork fosters familiarity among members, which in turn bolsters productivity and faster problem solving.

Ways to get the most value from teams include making sure every team member understands the team's goals and each

person's role on the team. Good communication is key, as is having a strategy for both allowing conflict and managing it when it gets out of control. Effective teams are structured in ways that bring everyone's best talents forward—and have strategies for ensuring participation even from the most introverted in the group. Employees at small institutions may have to be creative in finding opportunities to work across different functions and departments.

For discussion

How can your institution inject new energy and productivity into its teams and get better value from them? Would restructuring existing teams help? Is it time to sunset teams that have been in existence for a long time—or at least clarify their purpose? Are new teams needed to address emerging challenges and to innovate?

^a **Why Team Time Is Good for the Organization**
Sissy Meredith, *The Higher Ed Workplace Blog*
www.cupahr.org/team-time-good-organization/



Technology Trends

As technology accelerates, is higher education practice and policy keeping pace? Are we fully ready for drones, cyberattacks, and maybe even “noninvasive brain interface technologies”? Is the registrar ready for blockchain transcripts? How might voice command technology transform the classroom? And what do CAOs think about technology?

Data Analytics vs. Student Privacy

The growing tension between data analytics and student privacy was a recurring theme at the 2017 EDUCAUSE meeting. As they increase their use of student success tools, many universities find that collecting and using more data about student learning conflicts with the imperative of protecting student privacy. One example: faculty using the free course tool Piazza, whose parent company sells student data to job recruiters. Another concern: students getting stereotyped via data.¹¹

For discussion

As institutions become more engaged in data analytics, expect more discussion about how such tools impact student privacy. An EDUCAUSE speaker calls this a “wicked” problem, meaning that it has no direct or easy answer. Every institution will have to negotiate these challenges for itself. How well does your institution know what data it collects, how the data is used, who has control over the data, and how collected data might impact student privacy?

For discussion

Has your institution talked about how it might adopt blockchain technology? Could you envision a virtual version of your institution’s degrees and credentials delivered by blockchain? How would that work? What would be the benefits and potential pitfalls?

Deeper dive

Also exploring this space, The University of Texas at Austin is using blockchain to potentially create a way for a learner to bypass the registrar to curate earned academic and professional certifications into one unique, verifiable virtual record. UT is investigating whether this channel might allow learners to collect all their credentials in one place over a lifetime of learning. One potential downside: colleges would lose fees they collect for transcripts.¹³

Send in the Drones

As the technology gets more sophisticated, colleges and universities are finding new ways to deploy drones. Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), as drones are known, are being used to map campuses, take marketing photos, track traffic at major events, document progress on construction projects, and assess damage after hurricanes. Another potential use: security, such as helping first responders find their way around buildings during emergencies.¹⁴

Farewell to Transcript Requests?

MIT is pilot testing blockchain-based virtual student credentials—described as a “verifiable, tamper-proof” version of its diploma that learners can share at will with employers and others. Encrypted and timestamped, blockchain transactions cannot be modified once recorded. One benefit is protecting against diploma fraud. In the future, students might use the technology to stack credentials earned from multiple universities in one meta-record.¹²

For discussion

As drones have become more commonplace, the Federal Aviation Administration has been issuing regulations on their use. Colleges and universities need to know those rules—and have their own policies for using drones. Has your institution developed a broad set of policies and regulations governing multiple uses of drones by campus offices and departments?

Deeper dive

Apart from administrative uses, drones have spawned academic programs. For example, Kansas State Polytechnic, known for aviation education, now offers a bachelor's degree in unmanned aircraft systems.¹⁵ Scores of other schools offer similar majors or minors. The programs teach students how to develop drone technology, pilot UAVs, and prepare for careers in the burgeoning UAV industry.

For discussion

Research published by EDUCAUSE suggests that data breaches in colleges and universities may be on the decline. Still, every institution wants to ensure that it doesn't end up being the exception that gets hacked. Is your institution adequately protected against that possibility? Could cyberliability insurance add another layer of protection? What kind of coverage might best suit your institution?

Supporting the (Expanding) Digital Humanities

The body of work under the umbrella of “digital humanities” took root more than a decade ago. Once the province of faculty and select graduate students, digital humanities have since shown themselves to offer critical learning opportunities for undergraduates—such as learning how to analyze large datasets, visualize data, mine text, and conduct statistical analyses. But that means institutions have had to be more intentional about supporting pathways for undergraduates to engage in such work.¹⁸

For discussion

Campus support for helping undergraduates engage in the digital humanities includes making sure the right technology and policies are in place, along with accessible expertise. Providing this kind of access may require substantive changes in how resources are allocated and learning spaces are designed. Has your institution thought in a concerted way about how it can best support undergraduates in the digital humanities?

Get Ready for “Ed-Neurotech”

A growing number of researchers are exploring the new field of “ed-neurotech,” which has been described as how “noninvasive brain interface technologies” might enhance human capabilities for learning. Specifically, researchers are experimenting with “neurofeedback learning” software for brain training, “neurostimulators” that might improve cognition, and “neuro-adaptive” software that could enhance personalized education.¹⁹

Beyond Books: Libraries Pioneer Data Visualization

Four years ago, University of Michigan library employee Justin Joque saw his title change from “spatial and numeric data librarian” to “visualization librarian.” That shift reflects what has been a sea change in campus library services. Library staff are fielding more requests from students, faculty, and staff who want help with visualizing data to make sense of the reams of information they have. That’s all part and parcel of the librarian’s evolving role.¹⁶

For discussion

User demand has led many libraries to develop consulting services, workshops, and access to technology to support data visualization for learners and researchers. Have the libraries at your institution evolved to provide those key services? How could librarians at your institution better serve campus needs for data visualization?

Insights About Cyberinsurance

Housing a raft of confidential information about students, staff, and even parents, college and university databases make enticing targets for cyberthieves. To help fight against cyberattacks, EDUCAUSE and the University Risk Management and Insurance Association (URMIA) teamed to produce guidelines for purchasing cyberliability insurance—an evolving market that so far lacks common standards.¹⁷

For discussion

BrainCo, started at the Harvard Innovation Lab, is marketing a headband that can send data about student attentiveness to teachers in real time.²⁰ If this is the leading edge of a new set of tools for the classroom, what implications might that have for teaching and learning at your institution in the future? How might such tools affect classroom design? What about student privacy—would current institutional policies adequately cover applications of ed-neurotech?

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Kate Roddy, EdScoop
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“Alexa, What’s For Dinner Tonight?”

This past fall, Amazon gave 1,600 Amazon Echo Dots to engineering students who live in Tooker House, a residence hall at Arizona State University. Students immediately started tailoring new capabilities for the technology, like menus for dining halls and notifications of when washing machines were free. EdScoop reports that campus administrators want to encourage students to explore how the technology could be used in the classroom and integrated into curricula.²¹

For discussion

Apart from helping students navigate campus life, we’re just beginning to find out how voice command technology like Amazon Echo, Google Home, or Microsoft Invoke can have a place in the classroom. Is your institution exploring this space? How might voice command technology be used in your institution’s courses? What are some of the implications for factors like cost, classroom design, and tech support? What are the implications for student privacy?

CAOs and Campus Technology

What do chief academic officers hope their institutions can gain from technology? Results of a survey conducted by the Campus Computing Project for the Association of Chief Academic Officers help answer that question.^b According to the survey, CAOs' priorities for the use of technology on campus start with helping faculty integrate IT into instruction, which was cited by 79 percent of respondents. Other top priorities include IT training and support for faculty (76 percent), leveraging IT for student success (69 percent), and online education (66 percent).

While CAOs believe IT has the potential to enhance teaching and learning, most feel that their institutions are not there yet. Only a fifth of respondents say they are “very satisfied” with how IT analytic tools support student success, for example, and only a fourth are “very satisfied” with their institution’s student information system. About half of CAOs are “very satisfied” with their institution’s learning management system. Two notable discoveries: 60 percent of respondents say their institution does not have a plan for “going digital,” and just over 40 percent say a major stumbling block to wider adoption of IT on campus is the digital divide—many students do not own the devices they need to fully access IT tools.

For discussion

How well do you understand your CAO’s perspectives on campus IT? Do they align with the perspectives of your president, faculty, and CIO? If there is a disconnect, how can those key players come to better agreement about campus aspirations for IT? How well is your institution supporting faculty engagement in IT?

- b** *Provosts, Pedagogy and Digital Learning: The 2017 ACAO Survey of Provosts and Chief Academic Officers*

Kenneth C. Green

www.acao.org/assets/caosurveysummary.pdf



Economic Trends

With more institutions relying on revenues from international students, how can we best recruit those learners—and verify their credentials? As more states adopt performance-based funding, what do we know about how well that works as an incentive? In terms of meaningful business analytics, how can we stop “paving the cow paths” and instead find ways to innovate and reengineer business practices?

Beware Academic Cheaters

Academic fraud, an endemic problem, is getting worse—particularly as higher education gets more international. No one seems to have yet quantified the problem, but anecdotal evidence points to growing cheating in college admissions and testing, fake degrees, and even phony research results. While much of this fraudulent activity takes place outside North America, some U.S. institutions have been burned, especially by shady college admissions agents.²²

For discussion

As part of your institution’s international enrollment strategy, has it developed failsafe systems for ensuring the validity of student applications? If your institution uses recruiting agents, how does it confirm their honesty? Going deeper, does your institution have processes for certifying the validity of academic credentials of job applicants and new hires? How can you assess whether research partnerships, particularly with institutions abroad, are with legitimate and honest players?

For discussion

Today’s economic pressures make fundraising all the more important. But is your institution still using yesterday’s techniques to seek funds from tomorrow’s graduates? How can you help your institution’s fund-raisers get the support they need to try new ways to target younger alumni? If your institution is behind the curve, how can it step into the 21st century to try tools like crowdfunding?

Does Performance-Based Funding Work?

Nearly two-thirds of states use some form of performance-based funding.²⁴ But do such policies work? Research offers mixed perspectives. One study of outcomes-based funding in Tennessee and Indiana found a strong, positive impact on a range of student outcomes.²⁵ But a different study in Indiana found that performance-based funding did not increase the number of graduates and “led to declining admission rates and increased selectivity at Indiana’s public universities.”²⁶

For discussion

Further study may clarify the impact of performance-based funding. But don’t expect legislators to suddenly shun this incentive: 32 states currently allocate part of funding for higher education based on performance indicators and five more are considering it.²⁷ Is your institution doing all it can to make improvements in student outcomes in alignment with state funding algorithms? Can experts at your institution help legislators understand relevant research about performance-based funding?

Asking Millennials for Donations

Many university fund-raisers have found that techniques for soliciting funds from Baby Boomers don’t necessarily work for Millennials. So it’s surprising that a recent survey found 80 percent of higher education fund-raisers do not have a communications campaign targeted at younger alumni. What strategies work for donations from Millennials? Survey respondents had success with new digital tactics like crowdfunding, giving days, and targeted digital advertising.²⁸

Deeper dive

Two additional studies have also cast a shadow on the efficacy of performance-based funding. Finding that “awarding more short-term certificates is a relatively quick and cost-effective way to capture performance funds,” one study suggests that performance-based funding can create a disincentive to the pursuit of more advanced academic credentials. The other study found that minority-serving institutions lag others in the ability to collect performance-based funding.²⁸

For discussion

The Pew findings strongly suggest that after the recession of 2008, U.S. colleges and universities, particularly public institutions, doubled down on their search for international students—and the tuition revenues they bring. As that market becomes more competitive, how creative is your institution in finding new channels to recruit international students? Could it increase its brand recognition internationally? And is your institution doing all it can to ensure that the international students it has recruited stay at your institution?

Trustees Want Change

We might think of university trustees as wanting to preserve the status quo, but a recent survey by the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) found that board members at private institutions have a growing appetite for systemic change. With 71 percent concurring that the price of college is too expensive compared to the value of a degree, 96 percent said their institution needs to change its business model.²⁹

For discussion

While perceiving the need for reform, only 39 percent of trustees believe colleges are willing to change. In the face of today’s significant economic challenges, how prepared is your institution to change? How can you help your institution embrace practices that will help it change? Are there incremental steps that could help your institution build a culture of innovation? Whether you are at a private or public institution, could trustees help push your university to change?

Post-Traditional Strategies for Post-Traditional Learners

Nearly 60 percent of undergraduate students today are “post-traditional” learners: over 25, working full-time, financially independent, or connected with the military. A report from the American Council on Education argues that colleges need better ways to serve these students. How? One approach is to improve recognition of learning that occurs outside higher education. Another idea: use data and policies to shape “the right delivery models and services” for post-traditional students.³¹

For discussion

As cohorts of traditional students erode, many institutions now avidly recruit “post-traditional” learners. But how well do they serve those students? If your institution is serving more older and working students, has it intentionally reviewed and updated policies and practices to support them? Or are systems still designed primarily for younger students who live on campus? What changes could your institution make to better serve—and, particularly, retain—post-traditional learners?

Behind the Curve

In a recent survey, nearly two-thirds (59 percent) of college and university chief information officers ranked business intelligence and analytics and enterprise resource planning (ERP) as the top two digital technologies that will change institutional business models. An analyst said the mention of ERP was surprising because higher education does not have a history of using that tool well to improve operations and decision making—opting too often to “pave the cow paths,” as one CIO said, rather than innovate and customize improvements.³²

For discussion

Digital tools are transforming teaching, learning, and research, but in general have not yet transformed institutional business practices. What would it take for your institution to fully use data to find opportunities for change in its business practices and make evidence-based decisions in support of change? Could your institution retool its ERP practices to get beyond tinkering to instead advance substantive reform in its business model?

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Cost of Benefits Is Ticking Up

Commonfund, an asset-management firm well known for tracking trends in university endowments, recently noted that increases in college salaries are holding relatively close to the rate of inflation. But it sounded a warning about fringe benefits such as health care. Benefit costs rose by an “already high” 4.1 percent in 2016 and then by 5.9 percent in 2017. Calling this trend “significant,” analysts said such upticks could strain college budgets and may signal that labor costs are starting to accelerate in the economy overall.³³

For discussion

Commonfund analysts suggest that colleges and universities need to account for faster-rising benefits costs in both their short-term and long-term plans. They say such trends “should factor into everything from acceptance rates to planned expenditures on the physical plant” and “should be incorporated into strategic plans.”³⁴ Health benefits in particular may rise as university staffs continue to age. In its planning, has your institution fully factored in potentially significant upturns in the costs of benefits?

Moody's Sees Reason for Pessimism

Even as the nation's economy appears to continue its recovery after the Great Recession, higher education as a sector is still struggling to regain its footing. Reflecting that trend, Moody's Investors Service announced this past December that it had revised its 2018 outlook for overall business conditions in U.S. higher education from "stable" to "negative."^c That finding could be ominous for institutions pursuing funding in the bond market.

Moody's predicted operating revenue for four-year colleges and universities would not be robust enough to keep pace with the predicted growth in expenses, which was forecast at some four percent. It said that at least 15 percent of universities will be "forced to cut costs in response to stagnant or weak revenue growth." Moody's also expects growth in tuition revenue, research funding, and state appropriations to "remain subdued." Another concern: higher education's vulnerability to "looming changes in federal policy or funding," including potential changes to Pell grants and direct student lending as part of the anticipated reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

For discussion

While many institutions may have seen signs of recovery after the Great Recession, the Moody's assessment suggests that the sector as a whole may still continue to experience some financial woes. Is your institution candid in its assessment of how well it is doing today and what the prognosis is for its financial health going forward? Has your institution honestly anticipated the possible impact of potentially significant changes in federal policy for higher education? In terms of revenue projections and goals, is your institution's planning built on honest assessments of current and near-future prospects?

- c **Moody's: US Higher Education Sector Outlook Revised to Negative as Revenue Growth Prospects Soften**

Moody's Investors Service

www.moodys.com/research/Moodys-US-higher-education-sector-outlook-revised-to-negative-as--PR_376587



Environmental Trends

In terms of environmental concerns, is there still work to be done regarding investments in endowment funds? Should we rethink animal research? Will we still need buildings when mobile devices can serve as classrooms? In the wake of 2017's formidable storm season, how can institutions best prepare for hurricanes and other major weather events? And what new thinking can help us work through the buildup of deferred maintenance?

Eschewing Coal and Oil

Citing health and environmental concerns, trustees at Johns Hopkins University voted to stop investing in companies that produce thermal coal for electric power as a major part of their business. The university will sell any such investments it currently owns.³⁵ Meanwhile, trustees at Barnard College decided to divest endowment funds from companies “that dispute evidence of climate science or otherwise seek to thwart efforts to mitigate the impact of climate change.”³⁶

For discussion

Ethics-based divestments can be difficult—Johns Hopkins had voted to divest funds only twice before, in regard to tobacco and South Africa. Barnard acted to be “consistent with its mission as an academic institution supporting the open exchange of scientific information.”³⁷ Has your institution fully considered such issues? Particularly given today’s economic constraints, is your institution positioned to make financial decisions based on ethical principles? How might such decisions align with your institution’s mission?

Rethinking Animal Research

Many colleges and universities maintain facilities for animal research that can be both expensive and controversial. Innovative thinking at the University of Windsor may change that paradigm. After recognizing a disconnect between information gained from animal experiments and results in humans, Charu Chandrasekera founded a center at the University of Windsor, reportedly the first of its kind in Canada, that seeks to replace animals in biomedical research with research that instead uses human cells, biomaterials, and other methods.³⁸

For discussion

Animal rights activists continue to draw unwanted attention to research on animals at colleges and universities. If Dr. Chandrasekera is right, there may be a wholly different way to conduct human-related biomedical research. Might researchers at your institution consider her approach as an alternative to animal research? How might the model she is testing help your institution ameliorate some of the expenses of animal research, to say nothing of the political and social controversy it can spark?

Honey, I Shrunk the Campus

Speculating about the campus of the future, a recent report suggested that trends like online learning, modular learning, competency-based credentialing, and learning on demand will upend the way we design campuses. “Classrooms” will be handheld devices. Services will be outsourced to the cloud. Physical learning space may become the exception rather than the rule. Some universities may get out of the real estate business—perhaps keeping “Old Main” so it can illustrate a website.³⁹

For discussion

Fond memories of college life may engender a lot of love for college campuses, but is your institution preparing for an era when “college” may mean teaching, learning, and research without today’s typically huge physical footprint? To what extent does that kind of future-focused thinking inform current plans to repurpose existing buildings and bring new facilities online? Should your next master plan show consolidation rather than growth?

Waste Not, Want Not

Research shows that on average students waste about 142 pounds of food per year—or 22 million pounds at colleges collectively.⁴¹ Ursinus College found that smaller plates got students to take food portions they would actually finish. For bagel lovers, the college now offers cream cheese and butter in vats rather than individual portions. Student volunteers take extra prepared food to community organizations. Recycling and composting help keep food waste out of local landfills.⁴²

For discussion

Ursinus College’s multipronged strategy for addressing food waste helps the environment, may trim food service costs, and gets food that otherwise might be trashed to people in need. Are there ways your institution might reap similar benefits? How comprehensive are your institution’s efforts to cut down on food waste? What further steps might help address this challenge?

Prepping for the Next Cat 5

Built after Hurricane Andrew’s record destruction in 1992, the headquarters building of the National Hurricane Center, located on the campus of Florida International University in Miami, was constructed specifically to withstand Category 5-level winds of up to 185 mph. The building has 10-inch thick, steel-reinforced walls as well as a “central safe zone” protected by a roof of poured concrete that is separate from the building’s main roof.⁴³

For discussion

Affecting colleges and universities across the South and in the Caribbean, hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria prompted many college administrators to think anew about “hardening” buildings to be more storm resistant. Apart from personal safety, preserving research data and other intellectual property is top of mind. Is your institution fully prepared for business continuity after a major natural disaster? Is it time to review and test your disaster preparedness plans?

Deeper dive

Prepping for what experts say is an overdue major earthquake on the West Coast, engineers at the University of Washington recently got funding to develop a building that can withstand waves from a tsunami. The concept is for a structure with “breakaway” walls on lower floors that could be wiped out by strong waves with the effect of strengthening the overall building to protect its higher floors.⁴⁴

Scaling Sustainability

In the United Kingdom, The University of Manchester recently won a Green Gown award for two very large-scale sustainability projects. The “Sustainability Challenge,” given to more than 8,000 first-year students, engages learners in a simulation focused on designing a sustainable campus for a fictitious university. The other program, “10,000 Actions,” educates university staff on sustainability issues; participants create their own individual action plan.⁴⁰

For discussion

For some colleges and universities, sustainability may still involve incremental actions around the edges of campus life. But what if your institution undertook a large-scale effort to engage all students and staff? What campus goals for sustainability might benefit from such large-scale initiatives? How might such initiatives be structured and funded? What might be some metrics for success?

In British Columbia, Campus Real Estate Development is Hot

Real estate development at universities in western Canada has proven interesting enough to warrant visits from officials from institutions as far away as Australia and Israel. In the midst of long-term development that includes much-needed student housing, the University of British Columbia reaped some \$675 million in profits in 2017. Proceeds from a development project at Simon Fraser University, which help support teaching and research, surpassed original goals.⁴⁵

For discussion

With virtually every college and university looking for new revenue, many are moving more avidly into real estate development. Not without controversy—development can irritate community members and some faculty—real estate projects can be profitable. Is your institution taking full advantage of the value inherent in its land holdings? Are there yet-untapped opportunities worth pursuing? Can development projects be structured in ways that appease critics?

Environment-Based Deep Thinking

At a time when many colleges and universities seek curricular niches that can set them apart, Mary Baldwin University in Virginia has started one of the nation's first master's programs designed around environment-based learning (EBL). The program trains K-12 teachers to use their local communities and environment to help students develop critical thinking skills, become better problem solvers, learn "deep" content knowledge, and become more environmentally literate.⁴⁶

For discussion

The new EBL master's is interesting, not just as a relatively new approach to environmental studies but as an example of curricular creativity. Could your institution learn from Mary Baldwin University's innovation? As more institutions seek ways to differentiate their curricula in a crowded marketplace, what options for unique programs could your institution exploit?

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Rethinking Deferred Maintenance

The 2016 survey of the state of facilities in higher education from the consulting firm Sightlines suggests some ways to rethink deferred maintenance.^d

The report notes that at many colleges and universities, capital investments to renew older buildings have taken a back seat to dollars committed for new construction. One result: “maintenance backlogs are reaching a level that keep campus facilities managers on a reactive footing—addressing critical building envelope and mechanical system problems and responding to daily emergencies.”

The report suggests, though, that some facilities managers have found a way to cope with this cascade of challenges by “changing the rules of the game.” Among other strategies, Sightlines suggests reducing capital and operational demands by improving space planning and policies, creating a more balanced “building age profile,” and enhancing space utilization. Another idea: rather than burden campus leaders with a long laundry list of campus infrastructure problems, frame the challenge in terms of rolling investments than can be made in a

portfolio of buildings over time. To make the most of capital funding, Sightlines suggests creating a multiple-year capital plan, increasing capital investment from the annual operating budget, prioritizing the way capital is targeted, and carefully tracking results to build the case for more funding. Successful campuses also prioritize service and maintenance time on given buildings and get better performance from staff through careful communication of “standards for new service levels.”

For discussion

Is your institution stuck in tired thinking about deferred maintenance? Or worse, is it ducking key decisions about aging facilities because the scale of the challenges is too daunting? Especially when on-campus enrollments may be declining (and more students may be online) and finances are tighter than ever, it may be time to think in fresh ways about tackling the persistent challenges of maintaining the physical plant.

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Sightlines

www.sightlines.com/insight/state-of-facilities-2016/



Political Trends

A new administration in the White House has sparked considerable change across higher education policy. What do colleges and universities need to know and do? How should institutions respond to state legislator interest in merging campuses, making some colleges free, and even challenging the tradition of faculty tenure? From a policy standpoint, does higher education have an image problem?

Tax Bill: Not Great for Higher Ed

While the landmark Republican tax bill that Congress passed in December “could have been worse” for higher education, as one leading lobbyist said, it still dings colleges and universities. The bill ended up not including provisions in early drafts that would have taxed graduate student tuition, eliminated student loan interest deductions, and taxed tuition benefits for relatives of campus employees. But an estimated 30 colleges with large endowments will now have to pay a 1.4 percent excise tax on those funds. The law also mandates changes in deductions that could reduce charitable donations and potentially impact state appropriations for higher education. College leaders who make more than \$1 million per year may now have to pay a 21 percent tax on income above that threshold.⁴⁷ The bill repeals advance refunding bonds, which institutions use to help fund large infrastructure projects. New rules for calculating unrelated business income tax (UBIT) will likely mean higher taxes for some institutions. The act eliminates a deduction that helps many institutions sell seats at athletic events. Provisions in the law may lead to more taxes for international students.⁴⁸

For discussion

As we went to press with this issue of *Trends*, experts were still trying to figure out the full impact of the new tax bill. We don’t yet know exactly how it will affect higher education. But we can assume that every college and university in the United States will be affected by at least one provision of the legislation—and likely by many of its mandates. Make sure that leaders, administrators, and counsel at your institution engage in careful analysis to determine what effect the bill will have on your business practices.

Reauthorization Advances

Congress is moving closer to reauthorizing the Higher Education Act (HEA). Last reauthorized in 2008, the HEA frames the federal government’s involvement in higher education, including its substantial investment in student aid. Congress will look broadly at how student aid is disbursed. Look for a push to better align student aid with the needs of adult and online learners. Also up for debate: accreditation, access, college costs and quality, for-profit higher education, regulations, apprenticeships, and workforce training.⁴⁹

For discussion

Because the HEA is so far-reaching, colleges and universities should closely watch as Congress moves toward reauthorization. The realities of partisan politics on Capitol Hill may prod changes in the HEA that could have significant impact on individual institutions—on student financial aid, for example, and perhaps on requirements for institutional disclosure of student outcomes data. Is your institution geared up to anticipate and act on changes that reauthorization might demand? Are leaders at your institution in a position to influence this legislation?

Deeper dive

As this issue of *Trends* went to press, the House version of the HEA reauthorization seemed fairly far apart from what was being discussed in the Senate. The House proposal announced in December includes potentially sweeping changes that align with conservative priorities. The Senate, meanwhile, seems to be taking a more bipartisan approach to its own plans for reauthorization; hints of those discussions suggest more incremental change that might be more palatable to Democrats. As is often the case, any eventual legislation will come after both Houses determine a version on which they can agree.

Deeper dive

Not mentioned in many discussions of “free” college are some important caveats. One, of course, is that someone, somewhere, has to pay for it. If higher education is not financed via tuition revenue, it might be paid for through increased taxes. And students may find themselves obligated to stay in the state that offered them free tuition—a proviso to that end was enacted in New York State.⁵²

International Students Find Open Doors in Canada

A recent study found that enrollments of first-time international students in the United States are down by seven percent. A different study showed an uptick of 10.7 percent in international students in Canada.⁵⁴ The difference may be due to politics. U.S. immigration policies may keep international students away. Canada, meanwhile, is seeking to bolster an aging population and has adopted robust national policies to bring in more foreign talent, including fast-tracking Canadian citizenship for international students.

For discussion

Universities worldwide are relying increasingly on international students for tuition revenues. Countries like Canada, with national policies that encourage international students, have an edge on the United States, where the current political climate is seen as having the opposite effect. If you are in the United States, how can your institution compete to recruit and retain international students? Can leaders at your institution help influence U.S. policy to make it more welcoming to students?

The Urge to Merge

Since 2011, Georgia has merged 14 state colleges into seven.⁵⁵ Vermont merged two colleges into a university.⁵⁶ Now, systems in Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and other states are also considering mergers and consolidations. The idea, yet to be tested by research, is to save money while helping students complete degrees.⁵⁷ Private institutions are merging, too: Wheeck College becoming part of Boston University is one example among several.⁵⁸

Downsides of Free College

As momentum builds in support of free college, we’re learning more about its potential downsides. In the first year that New York State offered free tuition to many students at public institutions, private universities with a healthy proportion of in-state students saw a drop in those enrollments.⁵⁰ And two researchers recently found that increased institutional spending works better than tuition price cuts to increase postsecondary attainment.⁵¹

For discussion

While policy makers are likely to continue to be intrigued by the notion of free public college, expect pushback, especially from private universities. Meanwhile, research like that cited in the paragraph above might help universities make the case for more state and federal support for higher education.⁵³ In an era when public coffers are strained and legislators view higher education with increasing skepticism, colleges and universities will have to redouble their efforts to lobby for public support.

For discussion

As financial pressures in higher education intensify, the urge to merge may also gain strength. Expect more openness to this kind of cross-institutional collaboration. Could your institution benefit from merging with or acquiring another institution? What would it gain? What might be some of the downsides? Are there steps short of a full merger—such as sharing a program—through which your institution could collaborate in new ways with another college or university?

For discussion

As U.S. higher education looks for ways to innovate, could similar networks be created between institutions in different states? What might be some benefits of such partnerships? Alternatively, there might be openings in the proposed “European universities” for participation by U.S. institutions. How might your institution benefit from that kind of partnership? Might multi-country universities compete with your institution—and if so, to what effect?

Tenure in the Crosshairs

Tenure, long a principle for upholding academic freedom in higher education, is under fire. In 2017, legislators in Iowa and Missouri introduced bills that would end tenure at public universities in those states.⁵⁹ Lawmakers in North Dakota voted to make it easier to dismiss tenured professors, a move that some saw as a step toward killing tenure.⁶⁰ In 2015, Wisconsin legislators erased tenure protections from state law, after which regents at the University of Wisconsin voted to weaken tenure protections.⁶¹

For discussion

Threats to tenure erode faculty morale, challenge the viability of shared governance, and may make it more challenging for certain universities to recruit new faculty talent. Nonetheless, some experts believe the end of tenure is a matter of when, not if. Has your institution had frank conversations about trends in tenure and the possibility that it might soon disappear? What impact would that have on your institution? Has your institution explored the full range of alternative faculty models that are emerging?

Shifts in State Governance

Some states are changing the governing structures that set policy and determine spending for higher education. One trend has been institutions seeking more autonomy. Tennessee, for example, let six state universities separate from the Tennessee Board of Regents and establish their own boards of trustees. After failing once, a group of four-year institutions in West Virginia gained exemptions from certain state oversight provisions.⁶³ In recent years, Oregon has shifted more control to its seven public universities.⁶⁴

For discussion

Apart from allowing institutions to nudge themselves toward some degree of privatization, Connecticut and Wisconsin have changed their governance systems to find cost savings and streamline student transfers.⁶⁵ Has your institution been affected by governance changes—or could it be affected by such changes in the near future? What does an institution stand to lose with less state control—and more importantly, what does it stand to gain? How might changes in state governance affect private institutions in the state?

Toward the Multi-Country University

Partnerships between colleges and universities are not limited to the United States. French president Emmanuel Macron recently urged the European Union to accelerate work to create 20 “European universities” by 2024. These entities would network four to six institutions in at least three EU countries to develop joint programs and research projects. The proposal links to broader efforts to create a “European Education Area” by 2025.⁶²

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Higher Ed's Image Problem(s)

Higher education once commanded considerable stature on Capitol Hill. Colleges and universities wouldn't always get everything they asked for, of course, but in general federal support was substantial and steady. Moreover, legislators in both the Senate and House often extolled higher education as a pillar of American society. Today, though, a political schism seems to have claimed some of higher education's traditional support among lawmakers.

In that regard, for example, a leading analyst at Gallup recently stated that "Republicans have soured on higher education."^e That unequivocal observation is supported by polling. Gallup recently found that 67 percent of Republicans in the United States have "some" to "very little" confidence in colleges and universities. That finding was corroborated by a 2017 survey by the Pew Research Center that found that 58 percent of Republicans say colleges and universities have a negative effect on United States. That's almost a direct reversal of a 2015 Pew survey, when 54 percent of Republicans were positive about higher education. In particular, perceptions of how institutions have handled recent campus strife over free speech and related news coverage have spawned a growing sense among some that colleges are too liberal.

Given today's political divide, it seems unlikely that higher education will soon regain the luster it has lost with legislators. Colleges and universities need to expect more scrutiny from law makers and legislation that might pointedly try to steer higher education in particular social directions. The most direct impact may be on funding for higher education, as legislators feel more emboldened to tighten their purse strings when it comes to things like financial aid and research at colleges and universities.

For discussion

Colleges and universities need to analyze how the recent shift in the political climate will affect them directly. Specific implications may be that students have less money for college, institutions garner reduced support for research, and infrastructure projects may not be fully funded. How should your institution respond in the face of such trends? More broadly, how can your institution and its leaders sway political opinion so that it reverses its current course and begins again to look on higher education with more favor?

e The Political Divide Over Higher Education in America

Brandon Busteed, *Gallup Blog*

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