The Society for College
and University Planning

Five Ways to Advance Higher Education for Future Viability

Key Insights, Findings, and Questions From the Virtual Pacific Region Fall Series, "COVID + CRUCIBLE: HIGHER EDUCATION FACES FALL 2020"

**About the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP)**

At SCUP, we believe that by uniting higher education leaders, we can meet the rapid pace of change and competition, advancing each institution as it shapes and defines its future.

Through connection, learning, and expanded conversation, we help create integrated planning solutions that will unleash the promise and potential of higher education.

What is Integrated Planning?

Integrated planning is a sustainable approach to planning that builds relationships, aligns the organization, and emphasizes preparedness for change.

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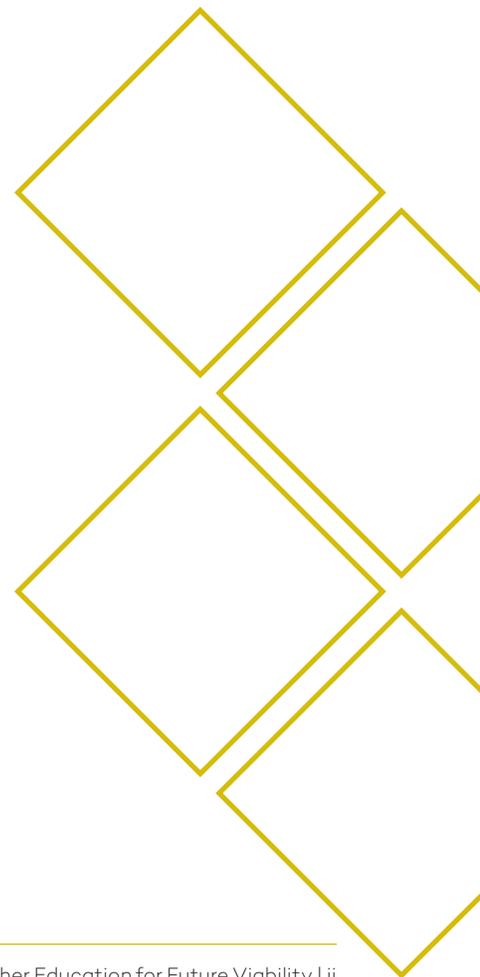
About the Virtual Pacific Region Fall Series

Higher education within the United States is in the midst of an evolutionary change. But colleges and universities were having their moment of reckoning long before COVID-19 disrupted life and accelerated change.

SCUP's Pacific Region held five sessions over eight weeks to explore the core topics shaping higher education as colleges and universities adapted in response to the pandemic. This publication offers key insights, findings, and questions from this Virtual Pacific Region Fall Series.

This report was edited by:

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COVID + CRUCIBLE:
HIGHER EDUCATION FACES FALL 2020 Program

Where are We? Where Do We Go? Moving from Reactivity to Creativity during COVID

Delivered: Friday, August 14, 2020

Presented by: Bryan Alexander, PhD, Internationally-known Futurist, Researcher, Writer, Speaker, Consultant, and Teacher | Elliot Felix, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, brightspot strategy | Wendy Hillis, Assistant Vice Chancellor and Campus Architect, University of California, Berkeley | Diane Stephens, Associate Vice President for Academic Resources and Planning, California State University, Northridge

Moderated by: Kim Patten, Partner and Higher Education Practice Leader, Steinberg Hart

Curriculum Redesign: Evolving Practices for Virtual and Physical Learning

Delivered: Friday, August 28, 2020

Presented by: Jeffrey Ashley, PhD, Professor of Chemistry and SCUP Fellow, Thomas Jefferson University | Leesa Beck, PhD, Director of Summer Sessions, University of California-Santa Barbara | Peter Hendrickson, Associate Vice Chancellor, Design & Construction, University of California-Los Angeles | Scott Montemerlo, National Program Manager, Education, Teknion | Royce Smith, PhD, Dean, Montana State University – Bozeman

Moderated by: Jennifer Milliron, Principal, LMN Architects

Critical Race Theory Workshop: Hurdles and Hopes for Practicing Racial Equity in Design

Delivered: Friday, September 11, 2020

Presented by: Amara H. Pérez, PhD, Social Justice Educator, Community Organizer, Community-Engaged Researcher, and Critical Strategist | Rebecca Ocken, Planning Manager, Office of Planning and Capital Construction, Portland Community College | Derrick McDonald, Practicum Student, Hacker | Rachel Schopmeyer, Architect, Hacker

Moderated by: Nick Hodges, Principal, Hacker

Thoughtful Planning and Reshaping Physical Space in Real Time

Delivered: Friday, September 25, 2020

Presented by: Lakshmi Chilukuri, PhD, Provost, Sixth College, University of California, San Diego | Robert Clossin, Director of Campus Planning, University of California, San Diego | Thom Greving, Principal and Regional Design Director, HKS | Walt Kanzler, Senior Director of Design and Development Services, University of California, San Diego | Upali Nanda, PhD, Principal and Firmwide Director of Research, HKS | Matthew Smith, Architect, Capital Program Management, University of California, San Diego

Moderated by: James Awford, Principal, BNBuilders

Lessons Learned From The Fall 2020 Reopening - What Will Stick?

Delivered: Friday, October 9, 2020

Presented by: Bryan Alexander, PhD, Internationally-known Futurist, Researcher, Writer, Speaker, Consultant, and Teacher | James Awford, Principal, BNBuilders | Nick Hodges, Principal, Hacker | Jennifer Milliron, Principal, LMN Architects | Kim Patten, Partner and Higher Education Practice Leader, Steinberg Hart | Nicholas Santilli, PhD, Senior Director of Learning Strategy, Society for College and University Planning

Moderated by: Lilian Asperin, Partner, WRNS Studio, SCUP Pacific Region Fall 2020 Series Moderator, SCUP Pacific Regional Chair

Five Imperatives as Higher Education Looks to the Future

The key insights, findings, and questions included herein stemmed from conversations that took place during SCUP's Virtual Pacific Region Fall Series.

The series explored many of the challenges facing higher education that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 health crisis, including:

» Funding and revenues

» Curricular changes

» Student, faculty, and staff physical and mental wellbeing

» Systemic racism

» Diversity and inclusion

While colleges and universities address the crisis at hand, they must simultaneously plan for the long term. The sessions revealed five ways to advance higher education for future viability.

Five Ways to Advance Higher Education for Future Viability

1. Racial Equity: Affect Real Change

2. Wellbeing and Student Services: Be Proactive and Engaged

3. Curriculum Redesign: Optimize Student Centric Hybrid Learning

4. Policy and Planning: Shift from Reaction to Strategic, Integrated Planning

5. Funding: Define Value and Innovate

This whitepaper summarizes key lessons within each of these five topics and how they can help institutions deliver on core promises of education: to help students develop what they need to both engage in rewarding careers and become discerning citizens of an equitable and democratic civil society.

1. Racial Equity: Affect Real Change

As institutions of higher education consider ways to affect and sustain real change, Critical Race Theory—a framework for understanding the implications of systemic racism across all aspects of society—offers a lens through which to examine and rethink planning and design.

Key insights that inform an impactful response include:

Space Is Not Neutral

Educational and social settings are not neutral. Planning and design can both reproduce and transform inequities in powerful ways. Likewise, space does not operate independently of race; our understanding of space is shaped by our racial identity and positionality, and varies based on our lived experiences.

The socializing influences of the built environment range from how a campus is planned, to architectural style, scale, transparency, and materials. What may feel welcoming and comfortable to some may feel daunting, imposing, and inaccessible to others. How do people interact with a Jeffersonian-inspired quad campus versus a newer mixed-use campus that meshes living with learning? What makes one person feel welcomed but compels another to pass quickly through? How do students read and experience, for example, classical versus modern buildings?

"Safe Space" Is a Misnomer

One needs only to recall recent tragedies in "safe spaces"—ranging from gay bars to places of worship—to recognize that marginalized people inhabit no true safe space in an inequitable and violent society.

While campus safe spaces—physical or virtual spaces where students are theoretically free from discriminatory behaviors and targeted violence—may offer students the opportunity to connect with others in affirming ways, to some they can feel fabricated, disjointed, cloistered, or separate from the broader campus community.

Our attention needs to shift away from specific "safe spaces" to creating spaces that are welcoming and inclusive throughout the campus. Our definition of "placemaking" needs to include inclusivity. What does an inclusive space look and feel like? What are its characteristics? How do we make sure the spaces we create are truly for everyone?

Colorblind Engagement Doesn't Work

"The predominant emphasis in programming on function, usage, and aesthetics acts to dismiss the socio-spatial realities of diverse communities," said Amara H. Pérez, PhD, social justice educator, community organizer, community-engaged researcher, and critical strategist. "To design for justice, we must understand how racial and other disparities are linked to and reproduced by spatial arrangements. This can only be achieved when people most affected by racism and other social inequities are engaged in a collaborative inquiry effort to expose how space normalizes the status quo and how design can make a difference."

As we plan and design buildings and campuses to be welcoming places for everyone, the lived experiences of the people who will inhabit the spaces become ascendant. While adopting inclusive approaches to planning and design holds the promise of discovering new possibilities, it can also present real challenges when we ignore the social realities facing students.

Who is available to participate, when, and how? What interdisciplinary disciplines, theoretical frameworks, and perspectives might better inform the process? These questions and many more—including questions and considerations formed by the very students who will inhabit the new learning environments—offer a new baseline for just and equitable planning and design.

It can be easy for administrators, planning professionals, and architects to talk about the marginalized identities of the students we serve. But as professionals, we rarely examine or talk openly about our own identities, acknowledge our biases, or consider the ways in which we may be complicit or complacent in reproducing inequities through our work. We conduct outreach that asks people to show us their insides, but we typically present our un-vulnerable, polished exteriors.

What changes when we challenge and broaden the traditional methods for the planning and design of campus spaces? How might lines of questioning better acknowledge the racialized and gendered experiences of communities inhabiting and traversing campus space?

Not Having a Plan Is an Exclusionary Practice

This is a crucial moment for racial equity in the United States. Ideally, national awareness around racial justice will continue to influence all aspects of education, work, politics, and life. In reality, real change will require real, sustained effort.

While the rise of the radical right and pushback from racist power dynamics are real threats, it's growing day-to-day apathy that presents the greatest challenge to progress. Our awareness could wane as other "priorities" become more prominent. As we've seen

throughout history, it's easy to fall back into a pattern or habit once an issue isn't front and center.

> *…not having an outreach plan that aims to engage communities historically excluded is a practice that maintains the status quo. The Black Lives Matter movement is largely ground up; for systemic change to occur, policy and planning need to be enacted.*

When it comes to planning the built environment, not having an outreach plan that aims to engage communities historically excluded is a practice that maintains the status quo. The Black Lives Matter movement is largely ground-up; for systemic change to occur, policy and planning need to be enacted.

How do we make racial justice an ongoing priority? How do we avoid losing the momentum of Black Lives Matter to affect and sustain real change? How do we dismantle structural racism on our college campuses? With effective integrated planning.

QUESTION / PROVOCATION

How do we pick up on the momentum of Black Lives Matter to affect and sustain real change?

2. Wellbeing and Student Services: Be Proactive and Engaged

The troubling, pre-pandemic upward trend in the number of students reporting stress-related illnesses and mental health conditions has been amplified by COVID-19. A recent survey of more than 18,000 students by the American College Health Association (ACHA) found more reported mental health conditions in Spring 2020 than Fall 2019. Students reporting depression increased from 35.7 percent to 40.9 percent. Sixty percent of the students questioned in the same ACHA survey revealed that the pandemic has made it more difficult to access mental health care.[1]

For many, the pandemic is an isolating experience. Studies have shown that the risks of loneliness and isolation can be as detrimental to one's health as smoking and obesity[2]. How might student services, which are traditionally characterized by the ease of "pop-in" access on campuses and face-to-face connections between administrators and students, be transferred effectively to virtual platforms, both during the pandemic and in the future?

Several key insights may inform a long-term response:

Proactive Provision of Student Services

As colleges and universities explore ways to support student wellbeing during COVID-19, the need for proactive outreach is clear. Mental health intersects with many different student needs that may go undetected within the context of the pandemic, from tutoring to food and housing security.

As the people who interface with students the most, many faculty members have become the essential point people in encouraging, monitoring, and supporting student wellbeing. Proactive engagement by faculty, student life, campus health professionals, and other leaders is a current trend that may inform the provision of student services moving forward while helping students to feel less overwhelmed and isolated now.

What are the implications of this approach? Campus agents who are to deliver proactive student services may need professional development to deliver on this promise. While much of this outreach is being conducted virtually right now, in the future, student health and wellness centers, along with other campus facilities that support student services, may need to be expanded and/or updated.

A Holistic Approach Includes Faculty and Staff

If we expect faculty and staff to attend to the needs of students, colleges and universities must attend to the needs of their workforce as well. Faculty and staff may have unmet needs themselves, including mental and physical health issues and work/life balance concerns.

How does the campus create an environment that supports the wellbeing of all stakeholders? Holistic campus health and wellness cares for the whole person and for all members of the campus community. It

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1   "The Impact of Covid-19 on College Student Well-Being" (The Healthy Minds Network & American College Health Association, 2020), https://healthymindsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Healthy_Minds_NCHA_COVID_Survey_Report_FINAL.pdf.

2   Julianne Holt-Lunstad and Timothy B. Smith, "Social Relationships and Mortality Risk: A Meta-Analytic Review," *PLOS Medicine*, July 27, 2010, https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1000316.

requires a disciplined approach to institutional planning—one that is systemic, integrated, and aligned with institutional efforts across planning horizons, i.e., strategic, operational, continuity, contingency, or scenario planning.

Embed Wellness and Community in Planning and Design

How do we put wellness at the forefront of the campus experience? In addition to investing in campus wellness centers, there is opportunity to embed wellness and community into all aspects of campus life and placemaking.

"Campus environments planned and designed with 'wellness' and 'community' as central organizing concepts may be more prepared to accept students for in-person or hybrid learning," says Lilian Asperin, partner, WRNS Studio. "Known best practices, such as easy access to fresh air, connection to nature, dedicated tranquil areas, and strong indoor/outdoor flows, can translate into safe and healthy learning environments for in-person learning. Post-pandemic, these spaces will still serve as wellness amenities and social hubs for the campus community. Moving forward, during formative stages of projects such as programming and planning, use of predictive software will be integral to evaluating cost and operational effectiveness."

Social connection can be fostered by establishing a network of differently scaled gathering spaces for students, faculty, and staff to be alone together or to gather safely in groups while maintaining personal control over one's level of engagement with others. Well-considered one-way circulation, for example, helps to stagger movement, manage density and proximity, and reinforce a sense of health and safety. These physical distancing strategies can be executed by considering the campus as a network of mixed-use neighborhoods, with primacy given to the pedestrian and social experience.

Equity Is Tied to Holistic Wellbeing

The impact of students' lives outside of school—their financial realities, familial contexts, employment responsibilities, and other stressors—on their academic performance and wellbeing have never been more apparent. Likewise, the shift to virtual learning has highlighted the digital divide, and the reality of inequitable access to education and technology.

How are colleges and universities responding to this challenge? Particularly within the context of the digital divide, colleges and universities may need to focus on proactive outreach and strategies that meet students where they are. How might colleges, universities, and private industry, or the purveyors of communications and learning apps, make education more accessible? Can smartphones and other devices help bridge this divide?

Create a Sense of Welcome and Connection

The pandemic has compelled leaders within higher education to ask important questions about how to create or refine memorable experiences at key moments along the student life journey. How do we create a sense of welcome and connection when campuses are closed or only partially open? What are the bookends that shape one's sense of belonging, community, and connection in an academic institution?

An ethos of care at most colleges and universities addresses everything from evolving pedagogies to the digital divide. The pandemic has highlighted the need for an empathetic mindset, with many institutions shifting the focus from content and skills to wellbeing.

One approach has been to prioritize the experiences of incoming and outgoing students, focusing on ways to orient first-year students to their new communities while fostering a sense of closure, pride, and accomplishment that puts a cap on the college experience at graduation. For instance, a rigorous and well-planned welcome experience might include hybrid in-person/virtual introductions to students' residential cohorts, peer groups, and mentors.

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QUESTION / PROVOCATION

How do we combat isolation and create a sense of community that is safe and welcoming, both now and in the future?

3. Curriculum Redesign: Optimize Student-centric Hybrid Learning

As colleges and universities broaden curriculum delivery to include a variety of models—online, in-person, and hybrids of the two—the need to experiment in real-time has become clear. However, complex short-term questions around logistics, pedagogies, prioritization, costs, and other factors can bring long-term implications. As we transition from crisis teaching to the mindful redesign of curriculum, there is opportunity to craft a student-first experience that helps evolve higher education for relevance and value.

The following considerations may offer a path forward:

Mindset Shift: From "Tech When We Need It" to "We Need Tech"

The pandemic accelerated curricular and pedagogical changes that were already underway, the most obvious being online learning. As we play out alternative post-COVID-19 futures, one good bet is that online learning will continue.

In response, there has been a significant shift in mindset across most institutions from "tech when we need it" to "we need tech." As colleges and universities adapt to this reality, those that embrace the long-term goal of optimizing online learning will likely be more competitive. Most institutions will likely use hybrid models moving forward, as students and faculty shift between in-person and virtual modes.

The growth of online learning begs questions about the relevance of certain traditional types of learning environments, such as lecture halls and auditoria. Online learning may present a greater range of options for learning that better serves students, such as recording lectures to be viewed on the student's time.

Digitization also allows for lectures to be transcribed, translated into a variety of languages, and played/replayed at will or as preferred, including speed adjustments and closed captioning.

> *Most institutions will likely use hybrid models moving forward, as students and faculty shift between in-person and virtual modes.*

New Opportunities for Equity and Inclusivity

While the shift to online learning highlighted the digital divide, online learning may offer a broader variety of students—parents, caregivers, working students, English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, and students with disabilities—more flexibility to tailor their schedules and obtain the tools (e.g. transcripts or lecture recordings) to meet their specific needs.

The growing number of online learning options could provide a wider range of students access to free or affordable content from professors and lectures at colleges and universities that were previously inaccessible. When considering this model of opting in for a self-directed educational experience, lessons from previous models (such as MOOCs) include creating a sense of achievement and optimizing the student/faculty and peer-to-peer interactions.

The switch to virtual modes of working may also reveal opportunities for equity and inclusion. For example, online community forums or public meetings may be more accessible to students and community

members who may not have the time or means to participate in-person.

The Campus Matters: Put a Premium on the In-Person Experience

While online learning may offer many advantages relative to scheduling efficiencies and personal learning styles, learning often happens socially—information becomes knowledge when we share new ideas with peers, give and receive feedback, synthesize different perspectives, and apply ideas to real-world situations.

Additionally, pandemic-related shut-downs have shown that people will show up to campuses—viewed by many as spaces that are inherently civic, public, and community-centric—whether or not they're open.

> *Colleges and universities may put a premium on experiences that could only happen in person.*

In response, colleges and universities may put a premium on experiences that could only happen in person. Students may expect the on-campus experience to encourage interaction, intimacy, connection, a sense of belonging, and participation. Planning and design may skew toward campus environments that support learning, socializing, and community activities that require face-to-face engagement—student life activities, protests, work (like scientific research or engineering requiring equipment and tools), and other active, experiential and hands-on learning.

Balance Personal Responsibility With Personalized Service

Online learning put the onus on students to manage their education, with responsibility for self-directed learning and community engagement. While students assume a certain level of autonomy, many may benefit from personalized care.

Likewise, learning spans a variety of activities and modalities—from absorbing new information to applying knowledge in practice—in a variety of individual and group settings (virtual and in-person) that require different scales or experiences of spaces that flex from hour-to-hour, day-to-day, and into the future. Striking the right balance between supporting personal responsibility and personalized service—both in social and physical offerings—may offer new ways to support holistic wellbeing, campus life, and academic success.

"The campus can be organized to be more welcoming, inclusive, and intuitive," says Lilian Asperin, partner at WRNS Studio. "For instance, spaces that students expect to find first may be readily apparent upon entering the campus, after which the campus experience becomes more fluid and rooted in discovery. Level of access to the different spaces and personalized student support become the primary drivers. Flexible, multi-functional, healthy, and welcoming indoor/outdoor learning environments put students first by accommodating a wide spectrum of schedules, learning requirements, and activities."

Innovate and Flex: Upcycle the Campus

During the pandemic, unconventional "classrooms" required educators to rethink their existing approaches to educational delivery and try something new. For instance, a parking structure might serve as an art studio, or hands-on workshops might take place in an under-used lobby that allows for socially distanced engagement.

In the same way that instructors must shake things up and adapt to new modalities and changing expectations, so must space planners adapt in order to put students first. Physical space that has outlived its initial purpose or was built without a focus on wellness, inclusivity, or operational costs might be repurposed to better support how students learn and interact. Older buildings or classrooms dedicated to singular departments might be repositioned as welcoming, interdisciplinary spaces that host myriad students, faculty, staff, and community members. Similarly, real estate practices, like shared use agreements with neighboring organizations, can generate opportunities in the local economy.

QUESTION / PROVOCATION

If hybrid learning becomes the norm, how do we rethink campuses to craft environments that best support learning, community engagement, equity, and inclusion?

4. Policy and Planning: Shift From Reaction to Strategic Integrated Planning

It is difficult to focus on planning while in survival mode—to plan for a multi-year runway while addressing current and urgent challenges. Likewise, policy making and strategic planning are about defining the problem and the problem is very much in flux.

The amount of decision making (and the weight of the decisions) leaders within higher education must make is unprecedented. People whose job it is to think 5-10 years out are being asked to make decisions with time horizons of 5-10 weeks. Leaders within higher education must find a way to respond to the shifting demands of the pandemic in real time—facing complex short-term questions around logistics, pedagogies, prioritization, and costs—while considering long-term implications.

The following insights may inform an approach:

Plan in Collaboration With a Diverse Constituency

Nicholas Santilli, PhD, senior director of learning strategy for SCUP, points out that "shelter in place" provoked a rise in cross-silo conversations on campuses throughout the world. Being physically separate from one another demanded we remain in contact and brought people together across functions to do the kind of quick planning that is required to move forward, one day at a time. The experience has largely shown that the more people at the table, the better—those with expertise across the range of university functions and interests bring insights about short-term decisions that will synthesize into a better whole for long-term policy and planning.

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Reevaluate Policy and Align With Emerging Practices

Institutions implemented a number of operational, pedagogical, financial, and other responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. These potentially long-term shifts in practice could produce lasting changes in institutional functioning. Often, policy is slow to catch up with behavioral changes that occur on campus; this moment provides an opportunity to re-evaluate and revise institutional policies to follow practice.

This rethink requires discontinuing policies that may no longer "fit" in different COVID-19 or post-pandemic scenarios related to parking, office space, admissions, approval/sunsetting of programs, and faculty/staff amenities, to name a few. For example, the pandemic has shown that working from home is possible for many within academia. If and when we do return to the campus or to work in various ways, what are the expectations? Two days per week? And what days? What is the policy on office sharing? Peak demand may come into play, in which case we would still need the same amount of offices if people aren't sharing. These questions just brush the surface relative to the space planning implications of COVID-19, many of which may set policy and inform planning for years to come.

Town/Gown Relationships May Be More Important Than Ever

The relationship between a college or university and civic leaders is more important now than ever. City leaders are in a tough position—in many cases, universities are cities' largest employers and/or tax contributors. Likewise, colleges and universities have a significant impact on the local economy and culture. When universities welcome back students, citizens may be put at risk, as we've seen in upticks in COVID-19 cases where campuses have reopened. Yet, shutting down campuses presents financial risks. The issue is multi-layered, presenting dilemmas like the fact that many retirees, a population with higher COVID-19 mortality rates, live in college towns. As colleges and universities respond in real time to the regulations of their local and state governments, how might we collaborate to identify long-term strategies?

Given the porosity of so many campuses and cities relative to one another, and the need for collaboration between institutional and civic leaders, there may be opportunity to form transformational and long-lasting synergies that leverage funding channels, like public-private partnerships (P3).

QUESTION / PROVOCATION

What decisions and changes, made in this moment, are here to stay?

5. Funding: Define Value and Innovate

COVID-19 put a fine point on the financial reckoning colleges and universities were facing long before the pandemic began, and we are likely to feel its effects in the years to come. With declining enrollment revenues, state funding decreases, and rising expenses (training faculty and staff to deliver online learning, new cleaning protocols, adjustments to building systems and operations, and increased IT infrastructure demands, to name a few), colleges and universities face tough decisions about what to cut. To survive, many institutions must thoughtfully re-visit core values and innovate around funding.

The following insights may inform an approach:

Equity and Access

The funding crisis within education raises questions about core values, access, and equity. What and who gets cut out of higher education? Elite, well-endowed institutions may survive COVID-19 while many public institutions and small private institutions flounder, further widening the income and education inequality gap. Will higher education be just for the gifted and wealthy?

> *New business models will likely emerge, addressing student expectations for equitable access to education.*

"Leaving post-secondary education without a degree or credential is the most serious problem," says Nicholas Santilli, PhD, senior director of learning strategy, Society for College and University Planning. "Some will argue that access has improved, but the resources necessary for persistence and completion to degree is where inequity comes into stark focus. Who does and does not complete is the real tragedy. Students leave institutions without credentials, a lot of debt, and no means of acquiring a job that will help them address their debt and standard of living."

New business models will likely emerge, addressing student expectations for equitable access to education. Can we leverage this moment to impose better, more efficient business processes? Is this an opportunity to clarify the value of higher education by innovating around access and quality?

Life-Course Learning: Workforce Training Versus Traditional Education

As students engage with online learning and grapple with financial challenges in response to the pandemic and recession, there may be an increased interest in skills training and/or certificate programs that translate into viable careers. The pursuit of post-secondary training to fit a specific workforce need may overtake that of a formative education and the full "college experience."

Whether engaged in skills training or more traditional four-year college experiences, students from diverse backgrounds will continue to expect a great deal of choice in their educational offerings, from when and how they learn to what they believe will bring value to their lives.

"The real potential in transforming post-secondary education is to drop the illusion of 'lifelong learning' and recognize that as careers become more complex, people will need 'life-course learning,'" said Nicholas Santilli, PhD, senior director of learning strategy, Society for College and University Planning. This approach would meet people where they are with learning opportunities they need at particular moments in their life

course; the education or training of 20-year-olds is different from that of 38-year-olds. Post-secondary institutions need to recognize what people need given the context of their lives rather than asking people to conform to a relatively rigid menu of educational options that may or may not fit what people need (and when and how they access it).

> *"The real potential in transforming post-secondary education is to drop the illusion of 'lifelong learning' and recognize that as careers become more complex, people will need 'life-course learning.'"*

The Pause

Many colleges and universities are moving forward with planned construction projects for which they'd already obtained funding. At the same time, numerous projects have gone on hold, especially at state institutions dependent upon uncertain state budgets.

The viability of these projects and others is in question. Major considerations include the cost benefits of adaptive reuse against new construction, or new program mixes and scale requirements. How will our experience with social and physical distancing inform planning moving forward? Will housing projects, now opening at half capacity, be re-thought?

QUESTION / PROVOCATION

Funding constraints raise questions about core values, access, and equity. What, and who, gets access to higher education? Is this an opportunity to clarify the value of higher education by innovating around access and quality?

Conclusion

One of the biggest reveals of the Virtual Pacific Region Fall Series, "COVID + CRUCIBLE: HIGHER EDUCATION FACES FALL 2020", was that in this unprecedented and challenging time, our ability to ask the right questions, iterate on possible solutions, and share successes will define what higher education (and many aspects of society) look like moving forward. The following are the core questions that emerged from the series:

» Is higher education up to the challenges of this reckoning?

» How can we leverage integrated planning for the future success of our colleges and universities?

» What role can students play in shaping the future of higher education?

» What does putting a premium on the in-person campus experience look like?

» Where are there opportunities for adaptive re-use of campus real estate?

» What new and innovative business models are emerging?

» What role does higher education play in dismantling systemic racism?

» How do we pick up on the momentum of Black Lives Matter to affect and sustain real change?

» Where and how do we meet students where they are?

» How are institutions responding to students' needs for mental and physical wellbeing and support services?

» How do we combat isolation and create a sense of community that is safe and welcoming, both now and in the future?

As we explore different ways to address these questions, and many more, top of mind is the promise of higher education. What is this promise? Ask ten people and you'll get ten different answers, but common, overlapping themes emerge:

» Access

» Independence

» Exposure

» Workforce readiness

» Expertise

» Innovation

» Equity

» Social justice

» Advanced critical thinking

» The ability to engage in a broad and deep historic, cultural, civic, economic, and social conversations

For many, education is the foundation upon which an equitable democracy either falters or thrives.

Many institutions of higher education are rooted in tradition, with consensus-based and often slow approaches to change. The pandemic forced us to move quickly while bringing together diverse and cross-disciplinary perspectives. Can we pick up on this sense of urgency to help higher education pivot and stay viable as both a business and civic proposition? How do we work together—right now in this liminal moment—to turn the crucible of COVID-19 into an opportunity? How do we transform higher education to deliver on its promise?

The Society for College and University Planning

Where planning comes together.