



The Society for College
and University Planning

Trends

FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



FALL 2021 Trends Outside Higher Education



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Trends

Outside Higher Education

From the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic to the impacts of climate change, colleges and universities continue to face an environment that is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous—VUCA. Learn the key trends and movements that might become our “new normal.” This issue broadly explores trends outside of higher education.

We’ve organized *Trends* using STEEP:



Social

How people think, behave, and interact, including beliefs, values, culture, and lifestyle



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 and your team analyze and act on the trend.

Social Trends

In This Section:

- Predicting how the pandemic will impact kids
- Watching demographics dip
- Correcting misconceptions of equality
- Listening strategically and ethically
- Considering strategies for DEI
- Preparing for the Great Resignation
- Retraining police
- Arguing strategically
- Sidebar: Raising awareness of transgender individuals

Gen C

Surveyed about what long-term impacts the COVID-19 pandemic might have on youths, school counselors shared some interesting insights. Lost opportunities for learning are one concern. Another is that kids forced to deal with more uncertainty during the pandemic may carry those anxieties forward. Part of the solution may be that schools will have to devote more attention to helping young students learn stronger skills for their social-emotional development.¹

◆ For discussion

- How might more-anxious children impact caregivers who are currently students, faculty, and staff at our institution? What kind of supports can we provide these caregivers?
- Are there supports we can offer to K-12 institutions and community organizations to help mitigate the social-emotional impacts of the pandemic on children?
- In what ways could this affect our learning and research priorities? For example, do we need to update curricula in education or psychology-related programs?



¹ Catherine Pearson, "School Counselors Predict How COVID-19 Will Change Our Kids," *HuffPost*, March 1, 2021, www.huffpost.com/entry/school-counselors-predict-covid-19-impact-children_l_603d0a27c5b6ff75ac3e3c88.

Demographic Canyon

What's beyond the demographic cliff? A growing chasm. Birth rates in the U.S. have declined 50 percent between 1950 and today, with 2020's birth rates setting a record low. Other countries are seeing similar trends. Experts say this pattern has numerous implications. Work, for example, might have to be restructured for fewer employees, with the need for more flexibility around hours and benefits. Housing and health care will have to accommodate an aging population. Education will serve fewer learners, perhaps leading to the closing of educational institutions.²

◆ For discussion

- How else will the demographic cliff impact our institution (beyond enrollment)? How prepared are we to address these other impacts?
- What are we doing to address the demographic cliff? Are those solutions short-term or long-term?
- How will our institution be affected by a population with a higher median age? What opportunities does this present?



2 Ann M. Oberhauser, "Expanding Opportunities for Women and Economic Uncertainty Are Both Factors in Declining US Fertility Rates," *The Conversation*, July 6, 2021, <https://theconversation.com/expanding-opportunities-for-women-and-economic-uncertainty-are-both-factors-in-declining-us-fertility-rates-162494>.

The Tilted Playing Field

Economic inequality between Black Americans and white Americans persists today. But white Americans are largely unaware of racial disparities in income and wealth, and new research suggests that correcting that misperception may be harder than it seems. While white Americans who read an article about the persistence of racism had a slightly more realistic view of overall racial progress (i.e., less optimistic), it "did not improve the accuracy of their estimates of wealth and income equality today."³

◆ For discussion

- As we work toward equity in our institution, how well do our colleagues (in particular, those who are white) fully understand the current impacts of racism?
- What assumptions underpin an ignorance of current racial inequities (for example, the belief that electing a Black president means the US is a post-racism society)? How are we challenging these assumptions in our curricula?
- How can we help the public and policy makers better understand disparities in racial progress?

We're All Ears

Researchers say one reason why some workplaces communicate better than others is that they engage in both "ethical" and "strategic" listening. The first skill means being sincere when you're getting input from an employee and being open to feedback, while the second means using those insights to make better organizational decisions. Scholars link effective organizational listening to employee job commitment, satisfaction, and retention.⁴

◆ For discussion

- How well does our institution listen to its employees?
- How well does our institution apply what it learns from employees to improve operations?
- What steps could our institution take to listen more ethically and strategically?

3 Susie Allen, "White Americans Overestimate Racial Progress. But Certain Attempts to Remedy That Could Backfire," Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, September 2, 2020. <https://insight.kellogg.northwestern.edu/article/racial-progress-misperceptions>.

4 Rasheeda Childress, "How Better Organizational Listening Can Improve the Workplace," *Associations Now*, April 28, 2021, <https://associationsnow.com/2021/04/better-organizational-listening-can-improve-workplace>.



A Lot Less Talk and a Lot More Action

A blue-ribbon panel on racial equity sponsored by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) says that when it comes to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in organizations, “action is all that matters.” The panel noted that “workplace leaders need to change their organizational values to include real, measurable diversity and inclusion across all activities, and then calculate the impact.” Other recommendations include hiring and promoting inclusively—“all the way to the top”; holding open dialogues about “taboo topics”; and rebuilding the organization so that it is “a force for good in matters of social justice.”⁵

◆ For discussion

- What actions are we taking to improve DEI?
- How are we measuring the impact of those actions?
- How inclusive are our hiring and promoting practices?

5 SHRM, “SHRM’s Blue Ribbon Commission Report on Racial Equity,” undated, <https://pages.shrm.org/brcreport>.

The Great Resignation

Post-pandemic, one startling trend is that more people are firing their employers. In a trend that one academic calls “The Great Resignation,” people who may have stayed in their jobs during the start of the pandemic are now starting to leave. Microsoft says well over a third (41 percent) of the global workforce is considering leaving their jobs within a year. As reported in *Fast Company*, Shahar Erez, CEO of the freelance talent platform Stoke, says three factors are at play: different generational attitudes toward work, the impact of the pandemic on changes in the economy, and “the realization people have had that they can have a different social contract [with employers], spending more time with family when they work remote and skip the commute.”⁶

◆ For discussion

- How has the pandemic and its impact changed employee expectations and priorities?
- How is our institution reacting to such changes, perhaps by amending its employment practices and policies or even beefing up its capacity to hire new talent?
- What kinds of academic programs and credentials can our institution deliver to people who may be contemplating a new job or career change?

6 Stephanie Vozza, “The ‘Great Resignation’ Is Here. This Is How Employers Should Prepare,” *Fast Company*, June 15, 2021, www.fastcompany.com/90646274/the-great-resignation-is-here-this-is-how-employers-should-prepare.



Law Enforcement: Reform or Rethink?

In the wake of George Floyd's death and similar incidents, more police departments are looking to training as the way to prevent police brutality against Black people. But is more or different training the right approach? The answer is unclear, largely because, as one expert says, "we have very little evidence of the effectiveness of any kind of officer training." Another challenge: the lack of national standards for such instruction, such as how often it should be offered or how many hours training should be, which means many police departments could be investing in poor quality training.⁷



Deeper Dive:

Another approach is to entirely rethink what police do. City officials in Columbus, Ohio, recently announced the success of a pilot program designed to provide more effective responses to emergency situations that involve social issues like mental health and drug addiction. Teams of social workers, paramedics, and communications dispatchers worked first to triage such situations, frequently resolving the issues without the need for police involvement.⁸

◆ For discussion

- What are we doing locally—with either our campus police and/or local law enforcement—to address police brutality against Black people?
- What kind of training does our law enforcement (campus police, security, and/or local law enforcement) receive? Is it effective? How do we know?
- How might we (or our community) respond more effectively to non-violent situations that require emergency response?

7 David Nather, "The Slow Moves to Improve Police Training," *Axios*, May 18, 2021, www.axios.com/police-training-george-floyd-6ef0c38d-0836-47ba-91a1-43c661c8cf1c.html.

8 Rachel Scully, "Columbus Officials Praise Pilot Program That Uses Social Workers Instead of Police for Drug, Mental Health Emergencies," *The Hill*, July 29, 2021, <https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/565564-columbus-officials-praise-pilot-program-that-uses-social-workers-instead>.

Debating Strategy

Many organizations spend hour after hour seeking consensus about strategic directions and investments. That time might be better spent openly arguing. Writing recently in the *MIT Sloan Management Review*, two professors from Stanford Business School assert that "at their core, all great strategies are arguments." Their idea is not to provoke fights, but rather to explore perspectives (and biases) in what they call "constructive debate"—thoughtfully facilitated discussions where leaders hold back from expressing opinions while others voice theirs—and an appointed devil's advocate challenges assumptions.⁹

◆ For discussion

- Rather than seeking consensus, would it be more productive to structure some campus discussions as debates?
- How do we deliberate during our planning processes? Do we explore different perspectives and acknowledge biases?
- If we embraced "constructive debate," what kind of training would we need for those facilitating the debate? What kind of onboarding would participants need?



9 Mark Athitakis, "Why a Good Argument Is Good for Your Association," *Associations Now*, June 27, 2021, <https://associationsnow.com/2021/06/why-a-good-argument-is-good-for-your-association>.



Food for Thought

Transgender Awareness

Across society, awareness is growing about transgender individuals. The Pew Research Center recently reported that 42 percent of Americans personally know someone who is transgender, up 5 percentage points since 2017.¹⁰

Along with that increased awareness, we are also seeing a surge of anti-transgender legislation. As of March 2021, some 28 states were weighing legislation that would restrict the rights of transgender individuals. Lawmakers are focusing in particular on restricting transgender participation in sports and access to health care. Experts say many of these bills will fail to pass (or will ultimately be blocked in court), but this year five states have passed laws or implemented executive orders that limit the ability of transgender youths to play sports or receive certain medical treatment.¹¹ In June, the US Department of Education said transgender students were protected under Title IX, the federal legislation that bans sex-based discrimination in federally funded schools. That new ruling reversed policy that was put into effect during the Trump administration.¹²

The issue of transgender athletes is more nuanced than it might initially appear, however. While the International Olympic Committee and the NCAA both structure their rules for transgender athletes around hormone therapy, that may only be part of the picture. Joanna Harper, a sports physicist who researches transgender athletes, notes that hormone therapy may only impact an adult athlete's endurance. It may not affect their lean body mass or strength. Unfortunately, due to the dearth of medical and health research about trans people, we don't know the advantages (or disadvantages) trans athletes may have, and whether those inhibit "meaningful competition" in women's sports. That doesn't mean an all-out ban is the answer. Instead, Harper said, "We should be looking sport-by-sport on regulations for trans athletes."¹³

♦ For discussion

- How are transgender individuals reflected in our curriculum? If we do research, how much of that is done about transgender individuals? Are there opportunities to improve in both of these areas?
- What are our policies and practices regarding transgender individuals? Do they need to be reviewed and updated?
- How can we educate the public about transgender individuals?

10 Rachel Minkin and Anna Brown, "Rising Shares of U.S. Adults Know Someone Who Is Transgender or Goes by Gender-Neutral Pronouns," Pew Research Center, July 27, 2021, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/07/27/rising-shares-of-u-s-adults-know-someone-who-is-transgender-or-goes-by-gender-neutral-pronouns.

11 David Crary, "No Big Backlash for States Passing Anti-transgender Laws," *Associated Press*, April 27, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/us-news-health-laws-legislature-bills-5726fdeb8a5e7cf2c89a4a2d176e8a7f>; Lauren Holt, "Transgender Rights in the Spotlight as Arkansas and Tennessee Become Latest States to Pass Anti-trans Legislation," CNN, March 31, 2021, www.cnn.com/2021/03/28/us/transgender-rights-arkansas-tennessee-anti-trans-laws/index.html.

12 Katie Rogers, "Title IX Protections Extend to Transgender Students, Education Dept. Says," *New York Times*, June 16, 2021, www.nytimes.com/2021/06/16/us/politics/title-ix-transgender-students.html.

13 Tricia Ward, "Do Trans Women Athletes Have Advantages?," *WebMD Health News*, July 15, 2021, www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/news/20210715/do-trans-women-athletes-have-advantages.



Technology Trends



In This Section:

- Examining AI's gender problem
- Going mobile (learning) in Africa
- Beating the cyber crooks
- Sifting through unstructured data
- Expanding the role of the CIO
- Returning to wearables
- Enabling biometrics-based security
- Using software to monitor employees
- Sidebar: Bridging the digital divide



Men Are From Mars; AI Is From Venus

The fact that the virtual assistants Siri, Alexa, and Cortana are all female—as is Sophia, the “world’s first robot citizen”—suggests that artificial intelligence (AI) may have gender issues. Researchers say the preponderance of “femininity injected in artificial intelligent objects” could reinforce sexual stereotypes and the objectification of women. Apart from better recognition of this phenomenon, solutions might include development of gender-neutral voices or randomly assigned genders for the personas of artificial intelligence.¹⁴

◆ For discussion

- To what extent does the AI implemented at our institution (examples: chatbots, help desk clients) exhibit gender bias? What other types of AI perpetuate bias or exhibit bias in their design (examples: voice recognition and facial recognition¹⁵)
- How are we educating the next generation of software engineers to ensure biases like this aren’t perpetuated? What steps do we need to take in admissions, student support, hiring, curriculum, research, etc.?
- Can we adjust vetting processes so the equity of a product is considered before making purchasing decisions?

¹⁴ Sylvie Borau, Tobias Otterbring, Sandra Laporte, and Samuel Fosso-Wamba, “Female Robots Are Seen as Being the Most Human. Why?” *The Conversation*, April 14, 2021, <https://theconversation.com/female-robots-are-seen-as-being-the-most-human-why-158666>; Hanson Robotics, “Sophia,” undated, www.hansonrobotics.com/sophia.

¹⁵ Joan Palmiter Bajorek, “Voice Recognition Still Has Significant Race and Gender Biases,” *Harvard Business Review*, May 10, 2019, <https://hbr.org/2019/05/voice-recognition-still-has-significant-race-and-gender-biases>.



Mobile May Be A Game Changer in Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa can't build enough bricks-and-mortar universities to meet the demands of an exploding population. Online education could help, but internet access is uneven from country to country—from as high as 85 percent to under 6 percent. Many rural Sub-Saharan Africans lack the internet access that their urban counterparts have. Mobile may prove a game changer. The number of mobile broadband connections in Africa is projected to more than double between 2017 and 2022. Given that ownership of desktop and laptop computers is relatively rare, experts predict that digital learning in Africa will mostly occur on mobile devices for some years to come.¹⁶

◆ For discussion

- How is our institution assessing the potential for enrolling international students for online education?
- How “international-friendly” are our online programs?
- What is our institution doing to help learners in developing countries access higher education and succeed in their studies?

¹⁶ Stefan Trines, “Educating the Masses: The Rise of Online Education in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia,” *World Education News and Reviews*, August 14, 2018, <https://wenr.wes.org/2018/08/educating-the-masses-the-rise-of-online-education>.

Don't Get Cyberpunked

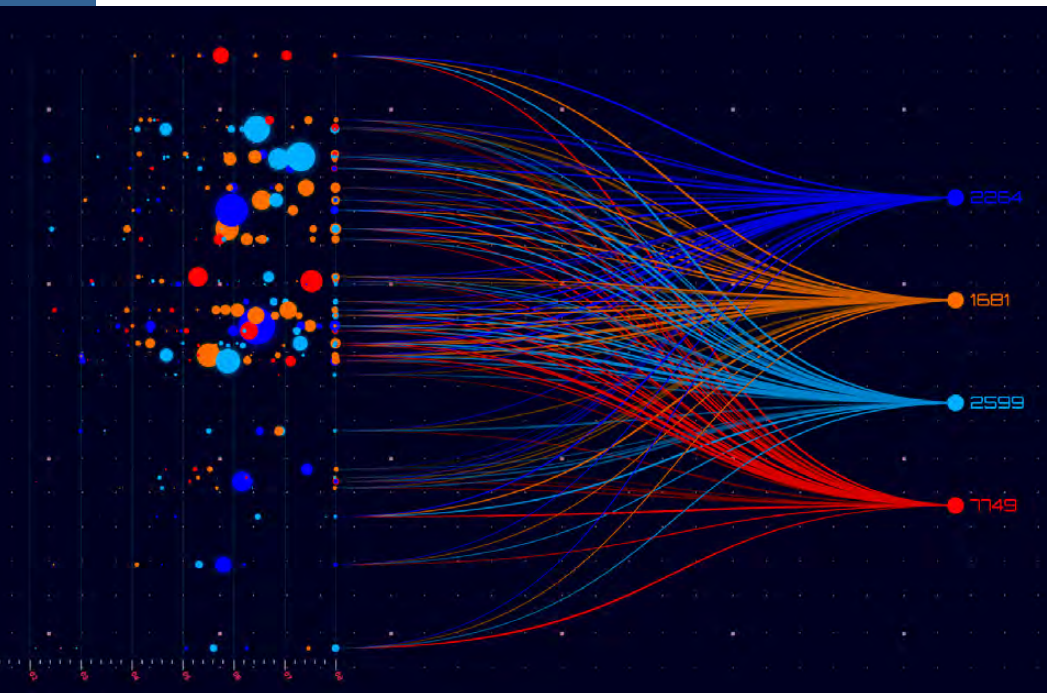
As cyber criminals get craftier, cybersecurity needs to get more sophisticated. One new line of defense is “cybersecurity mesh,” or focusing not on the outside perimeter of an enterprise’s network but on protecting each device and access point. “Identity security”—doing more to manage the identities of system users—is more essential than ever. So is policing the identities of machines in the system. Consolidating vendors can help make systems more secure. Also important: getting more leaders, including board members, to focus on mitigating cyber threats.¹⁷

◆ For discussion

- How robust is cybersecurity at our institution?
- How often do we update our cybersecurity measures?
- How can we help institutional leadership, including board members, focus more productively on cybersecurity?



¹⁷ Kasey Panetta, “Gartner Top Security and Risk Trends for 2021,” *Smarter With Gartner*, April 5, 2021, www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/gartner-top-security-and-risk-trends-for-2021.



From Email to Algorithm

We've known big data's potential for some time. But what about unstructured data—data that isn't "stored in a standard way and meant to be analyzed by a computer"? GE data scientist Sarah Luken develops templates and algorithms to extract valuable insights from the unstructured data found in text documents, audio, video, and many other formats. This allows her to answer questions and streamline processes that at first glance seem too arbitrary or ad hoc to automate.¹⁸

◆ For discussion

- How does our institution use its unstructured data?
- How could unstructured data help us improve student success?
Automate processes? Save time and money?
- What are the privacy concerns around unstructured data?

18 Alyssa Newcomb, "Digging Data: How One GE Scientist Is Exploring a Goldmine of Untapped Industrial Knowledge," General Electric, May 10, 2021, www.ge.com/news/reports/digging-data-how-one-ge-scientist-is-exploring-a-goldmine-of-untapped-industrial-knowledge.

CIOs Need Software Skills

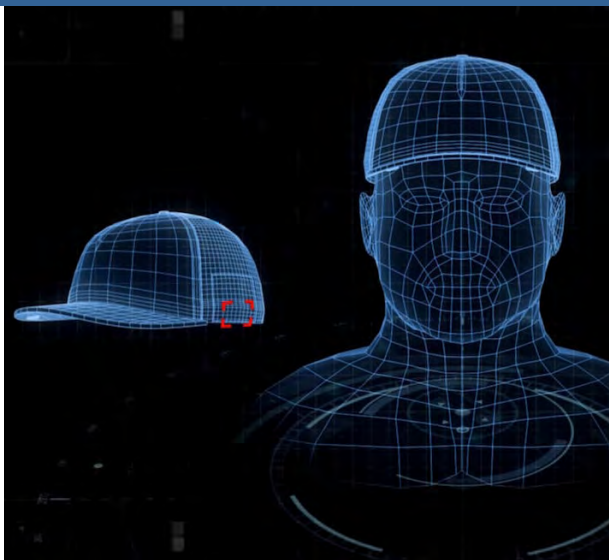
The greatly expanded role of technology in many organizations has also broadened the role of chief information officers (CIO). Consequently, one expert says, today's CIOs need a broad palette of skills that go far beyond cybersecurity and network infrastructure. Essential skills include communication, strategic thinking, project management, and change management. CIOs also need to be adroit diplomats with seasoned leadership skills. Honesty, emotional intelligence, and empathy are also vital, as is the ability to empower employees.¹⁹

◆ For discussion

- What are the essential soft skills IT leaders need at our institution?
- How are these skills reflected in our job descriptions?
Hiring interviews?
Staff evaluations?
- What support do IT leadership and staff need to develop or build on these skills?



19 Jim A. Jorstad, "Unboxing 10 Critical Skills for Today's University CIO," *Government Technology*, June 15, 2021, www.govtech.com/education/higher-ed/unboxing-10-critical-skills-for-todays-university-cio.



Can We Call the Smart Hat a Thinking Cap?

After a long period of hype, wearable technology is finally catching on in a bigger way. Products like Apple Watches and Fitbits are being joined in the marketplace by wearable patches, rings, and several new brands of wearable glasses. Quarter-over-quarter growth in manufacturers' shipments of wearables was recently up 34 percent.²⁰ Facebook is working on a baseball cap with built-in wearable technology.²¹ One timely application: Scientists are developing algorithms that can assess data from wearables to track viruses like COVID-19.²²

◆ For discussion

- What impact are wearables having now on our institution, including adoption by staff and students, and what are the implications if that usage continues to expand?
- How might wearables affect teaching, learning, and research at our institution, and how might they be applied to improve business operations?
- What kinds of privacy concerns do wearables raise, particularly if our institution harvests any data from them?

20 David Nagel, "Wearables See Major Jump as New Form Factors Emerge," *THE Journal*, June 15, 2021, <https://thejournal.com/articles/2021/06/15/wearables-see-major-jump-as-new-form-factors-emerge.aspx>.

21 Sam Rutherford, "Google Glass Was Ugly, but Facebook's AR Baseball Hat Might Actually Be Worse," *Gizmodo*, June 23, 2021, <https://gizmodo.com/google-glass-was-ugly-but-facebooks-ar-baseball-hat-mi-1847157232>.

22 Hanae Armitage, "Stanford Medicine Scientists Hope to Use Data from Wearable Devices to Predict Illness, Including COVID-19," *Stanford Medicine*, April 14, 2020, <https://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2020/04/wearable-devices-for-predicting-illness-.html>.

Eye D

When CLEAR, the biometric security company that helps people speed through airport lines, went public in June, it was betting on more than future fliers. The company is advancing biometric technology that scans eyes and faces to confirm individual identity. "This is about using your eyes as your driver's license or your boarding pass," CLEAR CEO Caryn Seidman-Becker said. Suggesting another application, she also said, "We shouldn't be giving people plastic cards with numbers to go get health care."²³

◆ For discussion

- How do we use biometric technology now?
- How might biometric technology improve the student experience? Inform research? Improve student success?
- How equitable is current biometric technology, particularly when used for security?



23 Erica Pandey, "The Future of IDs Is In Your Eyes," *Axios*, July 1, 2021, www.axios.com/clear-id-company-goes-public-ead353bc-7a2d-438f-8ee5-9f11cd98846b.html.



NSFW: Not Safe for (Boss)Ware

With more employees working remotely, many organizations are tempted to install employee monitoring tools, or “bossware,” on employees’ devices. But doing so can bring some unexpected consequences. A recent report by the Electronic Frontier Foundation suggested that bossware could “go far beyond what is necessary and proportionate to manage a workforce.” Other concerns include the effect it has on trust between the leadership and employees, security risks, and privacy issues.²⁴

◆ For discussion

- How does our institution currently track and monitor employee activity on institutional devices?
- If we use third-party monitoring tools, how much research did we do on the vendor? What information are they collecting, and how exactly do they keep it secure?
- How do our policies for monitoring employee computer use align with our mission and values?

²⁴ Ernie Smith, “Four Ethical Considerations for Using Employee Monitoring Software on Remote Workers,” Associations Now, June 11, 2021, <https://associationsnow.com/2021/06/four-ethical-considerations-for-using-employee-monitoring-software-on-remote-workers>.





Food for Thought

Conquer the Divide

While many of us take internet and smartphone use—and their advantages—for granted, a startling percentage of Americans do not share those benefits. Research in early 2021 by the Pew Research Center showed that a quarter of adults with annual household incomes below \$30,000 (24 percent) do not own a smartphone. Pew also found that 43 percent of adults with lower incomes do not have home broadband services, and 41 percent do not have a desktop or laptop computer. Most lower-income Americans do not own tablets. By contrast, Pew notes, “each of these technologies is nearly ubiquitous” among adults in households that earn \$100,000 or more a year.²⁵

The pandemic emphasized this gap as it affects education. A telling image, for example, was that of a hot-spot-wired school bus parked on a rural street to bring broadband access to K-12 students. Colleges and universities, meanwhile, distributed computers and hot spots to help students with inadequate access to technology stay connected for remote learning. One study of higher education during the pandemic found that up to 19 percent of college students said technology barriers like inadequate computer hardware or poor internet connections inhibited their participation in online learning. That research found higher rates of “technology inadequacy” in lower-income students versus their higher-income peers, among Black and Hispanic students versus white learners, and in rural versus urban students.²⁶

Federal lawmakers are seeking solutions to this divide. President Biden’s proposed infrastructure legislation seeks better, more universal broadband access. Congressional proposals include the Accessible, Affordable Internet for All Act and the HOTSPOTS Act, which would establish a pilot program designed to help improve internet access at libraries in low-income and rural communities.²⁷

◆ For discussion

- From learners paying for internet access and trying to write papers on smartphones, what are the limitations our students face in accessing online learning?
- What more should or could our institution do to help ensure equal access to online learning for all our learners?
- What more could or should our institution be doing to expand internet access to the communities around our campus?



25 Emily A. Vogels, “Digital Divide Persists Even as Americans with Lower Incomes Make Gains in Tech Adoption,” Pew Research Center, June 22, 2021, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/06/22/digital-divide-persists-even-as-americans-with-lower-incomes-make-gains-in-tech-adoption.

26 S. S. Jaggars, B. A. Motz, M. D. Rivera, A. Heckler, J. D. Quick, E. A. Hance & C. Karwischka, “The Digital Divide Among College Students: Lessons Learned from the COVID-19 Emergency Transition,” *Midwestern Higher Education Compact*, 2021, www.mhec.org/sites/default/files/resources/2021The_Digital_Divide_among_College_Students_1.pdf.

27 Jordan McDonald, “The US Digital Divide Is about More than Just Access,” *EmergingTechBrew*, June 17, 2021, www.morningbrew.com/emerging-tech/stories/2021/06/17/uss-digital-divide-just-access.

Economic Trends

Degree Not Required

Under the headline “No Degree, No Problem,” National Public Radio reports that some employers are moving away from requiring college degrees, especially for entry-level positions. Among other fields, the trend can be found in tech companies, publishers, financial firms, and the hotel industry. Some companies have loosened their focus on credentials in order to be more competitive in a tight labor market. Observers note the trend helps make access to jobs more equitable and helps diversify workplaces.²⁸



◆ For discussion

- How are employers deciding which jobs no longer require a degree? Were the job requirements too stringent in the first place, or have employers lost faith in what a college degree signifies?
- If more employers continue to not require college degrees, what implications might that trend have for the credentials and programs that our institution offers?
- If we look at our entry-level positions, how many of them have a degree requirement that is unnecessary?

In This Section:

- Dropping degree requirements
- Accelerating productivity during the pandemic
- Foreseeing better (economic) times
- Learning from outperformers
- Navigating work-from-home rules
- Practicing online procurement
- Customizing for the masses
- Anticipating higher inflation
- Sidebar: The pandemic and workplace culture

²⁸ Kirk Carapezza, “No College, No Problem. Some Employers Drop Degree Requirements to Diversify Staffs,” *All Things Considered*/National Public Radio, April 29, 2021, www.npr.org/2021/04/29/990274681/no-college-no-problem-some-employers-drop-degree-requirements-to-diversify-staff.



2 Fast 2 Laborious

Did COVID speed the overall pace of the workplace? According to McKinsey, business executives say that accelerated use of technology, digitization, and new ways of working during the coronavirus pandemic led them to move “20 to 25 times faster than they thought possible on things like building supply-chain redundancies, improving data security, and increasing the use of advanced technologies in operations.” One result? Productivity in the United States rose 4.6 percent in the third quarter of 2020 after a 10.6 percent increase in the second quarter, the largest six-month improvement since 1965.²⁹

◆ For discussion

- What changes did we have to make in response to the pandemic? What can we learn from the way we implemented those changes?
- What changes do we want to keep post-pandemic?
- What are the potential costs of the sustained pace and workload required of our COVID-19 response? How can we remain agile and responsive without burning out faculty, staff, and administrators?

29 Kevin Sneader and Shubham Singhal, “The Next Normal Arrives: Trends That Will Define 2021—and Beyond,” McKinsey and Company, January 4, 2021, www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/leadership/the-next-normal-arrives-trends-that-will-define-2021-and-beyond.

Will the Virtuous Cycle Be Unbroken?

Scanning the economic horizon, the *New York Times* found “17 Reasons to Let the Economic Optimism Begin.” Investments in innovation will start to pay off significantly, the *Times* reasons. Broader acceptance of remote work will help employers save money on office space and make employees more productive. Further, the *Times* speculates, a fast-paced economic recovery post-pandemic could create a “virtuous cycle” in which both employer hiring and consumer spending increase.³⁰

◆ For discussion

- How will a strong economic recovery change students’ needs? How will that affect our enrollment? Services? Course delivery?
- How might a strong economy change regional employers’ needs? How can we partner with them to fill those needs?
- What strategic financial moves can we make now to take advantage of a strong economic recovery?



30 Neil Irwin, “17 Reasons to Let the Economic Optimism Begin,” *New York Times*, March 13, 2021, www.nytimes.com/2021/03/13/upshot/economy-optimism-boom.html.

In My Day, We Called Them “Overachievers”

For some organizations, the COVID-19 pandemic was a time of success and growth. What sets those organizations apart? From a survey of over 3,000 CEOs, the IBM Institute for Business Value aggregated responses from “outperformers”—those who had successful businesses before and during the pandemic. What characteristics do these outperformers have in common? They focus on fewer priorities and actively respond to changing conditions (rather than waiting for the “dust to settle”); they monitor emerging technologies that might improve their business; they empower employees and invest in their well-being (even if it costs near-term profit); they establish strategic partnerships; and they recognize that cybersecurity is crucial to success.³¹

◆ For discussion

- If we compared our institution to this group of outperformers, which of those five characteristics do we possess? Which are missing?
- What are our institution’s priorities? Are they clear to all faculty, staff, and administrators? Do we have the capability, resources, and bandwidth to achieve all of them?
- How do we evaluate our partnerships?



Work From Home Rules!

Post-pandemic, many organizations have first-generation rules for allowing employees to continue to work from home (WFH). But honing those rules is imperative. One concern: ensuring staff continue to innovate (a slower process when workers are remote). A different challenge is promotion equity. Single men, for example, might be better able to work on-site—and be better recognized for their work contributions—than employees with young children, especially women. One expert says that issue might impede workplace diversity while also posing “a legal time bomb” for employers.³²

◆ For discussion

- What kind of work-from-home expectation will there be post-pandemic? What rules will we adopt?
- How equitable are our institution’s rules for working at home? How do we ensure that those who work from home are recognized for their contributions?
- If more employees continue to work remotely, at least part of the time, how can we ensure the level of collaboration and teamwork that typically produces the best workplace brainstorming, innovation, and planning?

31 IBM Blogs, “IBM Study: Focus on Talent, Technology and Partnerships Can Be Key to Thrive Post-COVID-19 Pandemic, According to Insights from 3,000 CEOs,” IBM, February 10, 2021, www.ibm.com/blogs/southeast-europe/ibm-study-focus-on-talent-technology-and-partnerships-can-be-key-to-thrive-post-covid-19-pandemic-according-to-insights-from-3000-ceos.

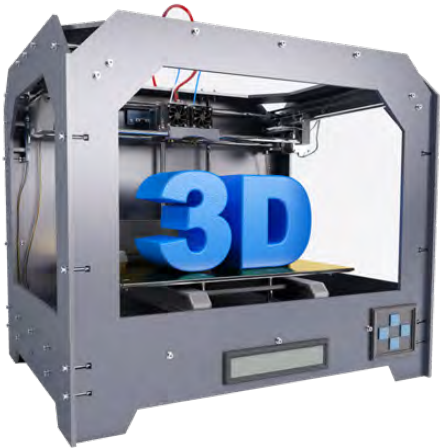
32 Edmund L. Andrews, “The Pandemic Blew Up the American Office—for Better and Worse,” *Stanford Business*, June 3, 2021, www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/pandemic-blew-american-office-better-worse.

Add a New E to Procurement

A survey of buyers and sellers from government, education, health care, and commercial industries shows COVID-19 sparked changes in organizational purchasing practices. In the survey, 85 percent of buyers said the pandemic drove them to move more of their procurement online, and 96 percent said they anticipate doing more purchasing online even after pre-pandemic business functions resume. Most buyers (91 percent) prefer e-procurement over traditional and offline purchasing methods.³³

◆ For discussion

- Has our institution assessed the full impact that the pandemic had on our procurement practices?
- What business transactions and services do we require students to do in-person? Is there an expectation that those will be online?
- Post-pandemic, what kind of adjustments in purchasing policies and procedures and staff training do we need to improve our e-procurement practices?



Customized to Each Customer

As framed in a recent report from RBC Capital Markets, the “calibrated and augmented self” reflects the notion that advancements like big data, artificial intelligence, 3D printing, and CRISPR gene editing make it much easier than ever before to customize products, services, and experiences specifically to an individual. Under this construct, the report posits, marketing to the “average consumer” is being superseded by the development of “hyper-personalized” products and services and “the ability for mass customization.”³⁴

◆ For discussion

- What would mass customization mean for academic programs, the student experience, and student success?
- In what ways are we personalizing programs and services now? In what ways *could* we personalize programs and services?
- How would mass customization affect our institution’s policies and structure?

What Goes Up . . .

With prices for automobiles, gas, and consumer goods on the rise, is runaway inflation on the horizon? Research on public perceptions by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York shows some increases in consumer fear about higher inflation over the next year. At the same time, though, the Fed is more optimistic about job searches and increases in household income. Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell says that recent price increases are responses to recent short-term trends, such as prices that went down during the pandemic and in response to pandemic-related shortages, and do not signal what one of his colleagues labeled as a “persistent material increase in inflation.”³⁵

◆ For discussion

- How might inflation affect our current expenditures and how it might impact future budgeting?
- If wages increase, as they usually do during times of inflation, can our institution compete with other employers for top talent?
- How is inflation affecting our students and staff in terms of basic expenditures like housing and food?



33 Amazon, “2021 Amazon Business B2B E-commerce in Evolution Report Highlights Gaps, Opportunities in E-Procurement Process,” June 14, 2021, www.businesswire.com/news/home/20210614005021/en/2021-Amazon-Business-B2B-E-commerce-in-Evolution-Report-Highlights-Gaps-Opportunities-in-E-Procurement-Process.

34 RBC Capital Markets “Sector Overviews,” undated, www.rbccm.com/en/insights/imagine2025/sector-insights.page.

35 Associated Press, “EXPLAINER: Why Are Fears of High Inflation Getting Worse?,” *U.S. News*, May 12, 2021, www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2021-05-11/explainer-why-are-fears-of-high-inflation-getting-worse.



Food for Thought

Tweaking the Workplace Culture

One of the interesting potential pluses from the pandemic is that it enabled organizations and institutions to make wholesale changes in their culture that otherwise may have taken years to implement. In higher education, for example, one big change was the rapid switch to online remote work. Coming out of the pandemic, institutions have an opportunity to inculcate positive changes they may have reaped from workers working off-site—if they tune into those opportunities and take intentional steps to learn from them.

McKinsey, for example, says that mixing virtual and on-site working “promises greater access to talent, increased productivity for individuals and small teams, lower costs, more individual flexibility, and improved employee experiences.” But making that mode work for most workplaces requires a lot of considered thought. Organizations have to decide what model of hybrid work is best for them. What factors do you want to optimize? (Real-estate costs? Access to talent? Employee productivity? The overall employee experience?) Another major consideration is the physical space that will support hybrid work.

McKinsey also counsels a close look at metrics for worker productivity. Hours at the computer, for example, might not be the best measure of how well hybrid workers are performing. If more work is being conducted through small teams—as is the case in many organizations today—new definitions of outcomes may be needed. Teams need both clear objectives and autonomy. For their part, leaders need to “guide, inspire, and enable” teams, while also running interference to ensure teams are adequately resourced and don’t get bogged down in bureaucratic challenges or organizational silos. Another caution: “When the workforce is hybrid/virtual, leaders need to rely less on hierarchical and more on inspirational forms of leadership.”³⁶

◆ For discussion

- How can we draw on lessons learned during the pandemic to improve our workplace culture, productivity, and employee satisfaction?
- How can we engage the support of our institution’s top leadership in reaping new gains from new ways of working?
- What steps does our institution need to take to improve the way our employees work in teams, particularly if those teams are a hybrid of on-site and remote staff?



³⁶ Andrea Alexander, Aaron De Smet, and Mihir Mysore, “Reimagining the Postpandemic Workforce,” *McKinsey Quarterly*, July 7, 2020, www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/reimagining-the-postpandemic-workforce.

Environmental Trends

In This Section:

- Approaching ESG strategically
- Painting it “cool”
- Clearing the air
- Partnering smart towns and smart gowns
- Making a business case for sustainability
- Allocating municipal office space
- Welcoming EVs and battery charging
- Responding to heatwaves and global warming
- Sidebar: The changing physical plant

Better Extremely, Extremely Late Than Never

In a (potential) sign that corporate America realizes that profits require a functioning planet and society: More companies are taking ESG ratings seriously. Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) ratings have been a way for socially responsible investors to decide where to put their money.³⁷ For many companies, ESG ratings have just been another risk to manage—in other words, “just don’t screw up.” But now, even very profit-driven companies may be taking ESG more seriously. An article in *Chief Executive* notes that companies like Unilever and Dow treat ESG “with a mindset of creating value” and integrate ESG in core strategy development and across their operations.³⁸

◆ For discussion

- When we issue bonds, do we consider obtaining an ESG designation for them? What might be the benefits of doing so? What about pitfalls?
- How do our investments measure up against ESG standards? Is this a priority for our institution when selecting investments?
- How might an emphasis on ESG criteria change the skills and knowledge that employers are looking for in their employees? How can we ensure our curricula develops these skills and knowledge?



³⁷ George Kell, “The Remarkable Rise of ESG,” *Forbes*, July 18, 2018, www.forbes.com/sites/georgkell/2018/07/11/the-remarkable-rise-of-esg/?sh=5731ba6e1695.

³⁸ Peter Bryant and Jessica Long, “Companies Need to Take a Clean Sheet Approach to ESG,” *Chief Executive Magazine*, March 18, 2021, <https://chiefexecutive.net/companies-need-to-take-a-clean-sheet-approach-to-esg>.

“Cool” Paint

To help mitigate the impacts of climate change, researchers at Purdue University have invented a version of white paint that may one day reduce the need for air conditioning. The new ultra-white paint reflects up to 98.1 percent of sunlight while also redirecting infrared heat away from a given surface. The lead researcher on the project said covering a 1,000-square-foot roof with this paint could “get a cooling power of 10 kilowatts. That’s more powerful than the central air conditioners used by most houses.” The paint’s “solar reflectance” is so effective that it even worked in the winter.³⁹



Deeper Dive:

Could we also cool pavement? A company working with researchers at Louisiana State University has created a spray-on treatment for roadways that it says can strengthen aging asphalt while also lowering its temperature. (Technically speaking, it “replaces the depleted maltenes in aging asphalt binders.”) The new product is being touted as a partial solution for reduced budgets, deteriorating infrastructures, and pollution concerns.⁴⁰

◆ For discussion

- Could ultra-white paint and pavement rejuvenators help our institution trim its energy uses and costs?
- In general, how well does our institution stay aware of emerging products like these?
- How can our institution become more intentional—and perhaps more aggressive—in adopting new building and maintenance materials and practices?



39 Kayla Wiles, “The Whitest Paint Is Here—And It’s the Coolest. Literally,” Purdue University, April 15, 2021, www.purdue.edu/newsroom/releases/2021/Q2/the-whitest-paint-is-here-and-its-the-coolest-literally.html.

40 Dharna Noor, “A Sunscreen for Pavement Could Help Keep Cities Cool,” Gizmodo, July 5, 2021, <https://gizmodo.com/a-sunscreen-for-pavement-could-help-keep-cities-cool-1847214621>; Pavement Technology, Inc., “A.R.A.-1 Ti® Asphalt Road Rejuvenator Sealer,” undated, www.pavetechinc.com/asphalt-rejuvenator-sealer.



Let’s Clear the Air

COVID-19’s primary transmission through respiratory droplets has put an unprecedented focus on indoor air quality. Now, a group of scientists has proposed the development of new standards for air quality within buildings—rules that would be akin to regulations now in place for food safety, sanitation, and drinking water. The scientists hope such guidelines will lead to improvements in building ventilation, including how inside air is filtered and infused with clean air.⁴¹

◆ For discussion

- How clean is the air inside our buildings now? How do we measure it?
- Beyond immediate steps to upgrade building HVAC fans and filters, do we have a strategy for incorporating further improvements into building ventilation?
- In the interest of maintaining good quality inside air, how well and how regularly does our institution assess the effectiveness of its existing HVAC infrastructure?

41 Kristin Toussaint, “Before the Next Pandemic, It’s Time to Regulate Indoor Air Quality,” *Fast Company*, May 13, 2021, www.fastcompany.com/90636054/before-the-next-pandemic-its-time-to-regulate-indoor-air-quality.

Smart Towns by Smart Gowns

As cities seek to be savvy about using smart technologies, many are collaborating with university-based researchers. The Digital City Testbed Center, based at Portland State University, anchors a network of universities that helps cities test tech innovations like sensors that track the health of urban trees. Another focus: accessible wayfinding. Researchers at Cornell University are working to close the digital divide by using an Internet of Things network to expand long-range wireless technology from New York City to upstate counties along the Canadian border. The University of Michigan and the city of Ann Arbor collaborate in Mcity, a public-private partnership that develops technologies like driverless vehicles.⁴²



◆ For discussion

- How do we help our community address challenges and improve its environment?
- What opportunities are there for mutually beneficial partnerships between our institution and local governments?
- How can we collaborate with other institutions in these types of endeavors? What networks could we join or form?

AGAIN, Better Extremely, Extremely Late Than Never

Making the case for linking sustainability to corporate strategy, consultants at the Boston Consulting Group use the construct of “Sustainable Business Model Innovation” (SBM-I). SBM-I provides a guiding structure to help businesses create benefits for the environment and society writ large while linking those benefits “to drivers of sustainable business advantage and value creation.” For the for-profit sector, the consultants say, “sustainability is the new competitive advantage.”⁴³

◆ For discussion

- How does our institution’s business model incorporate sustainability?
- How is sustainability a competitive advantage for us? In what ways could it increase our competitive advantage?
- How could our institution be more intentional about linking sustainability practices to our overall mission and business operations?



⁴² Portland State University, “Digital City Testbed Center,” undated, <https://www.pdx.edu/digital-city>; Phil Goldstein, “Cornell Partners with New York Counties to Build IoT Network,” December 2, 2020, *EdTech*, <https://edtechmagazine.com/higher/article/2020/12/cornell-partners-new-york-counties-build-iot-network>; University of Michigan, “Leading the Transformation to Connected and Automated Vehicles,” undated, <https://mcity.umich.edu>.

⁴³ David Young and Martin Reeves, “The Quest for Sustainable Business Model Innovation,” Boston Consulting Group, March 10, 2020, https://ssir.org/articles/entry/reorient_the_business_case_for_corporate_sustainability.

You Can't Blight City Hall

Post-pandemic, municipal leaders are struggling to decide how work, well, works. A big consideration: If more city employees continue to spend more time working remotely, what do we do now with our sometimes big, often expensive physical plants? Assessing telework during COVID-19, Portland, Oregon, found that it worked better than expected and that many employees want to mix in-office hours with work from home. But Portland also found that “the collaboration and support of workplace culture and connection is missing with full-time telework.” As city administrators balance such considerations, many Portland office bureaus are exploring options like reservable shared office space and, ultimately, right-sizing their physical office footprint.⁴⁴

◆ For discussion

- Which components of work-from-home were successful? Which were not? How do we expect work to change after the pandemic?
- What are some of the short-term implications of those changes for our physical plant—in particular, office spaces and parking?
- Longer term, what effect will those changes have on our campus plan, overall physical footprint, and operational economics?



⁴⁴ David Rath, “Will Government Buildings Be Empty After the Pandemic?,” *Government Technology*, June 2021, www.govtech.com/workforce/will-government-buildings-be-empty-after-the-pandemic.



Building Up for the Meltdown

Buckling roads. Melted streetcar cables. Warped siding on houses. These effects—the product of the heatwave that hit the Northwest in June 2021—suggest that engineers may have to rethink future standards. Buildings might need to be designed with more resilience to heat—and perhaps more solar power to keep them operable in the face of blackouts. Infrastructure in general may need stronger protocols designed to withstand global warming’s higher temperatures.⁴⁶

◆ For discussion

- How well do we understand the full extent to which global warming is affecting our institution’s physical plant?
- What are our plans to meet the challenges of an increasingly warmer natural environment?
- When planning new construction or a renovation, how do we factor in building standards designed to better meet the challenges of global warming?

EVs Hit the Gas

Auto manufacturers are beefing up production of electric vehicles (EVs). General Motors has promised to stop selling gas-burning cars by 2035. Car battery prices are dropping and their technology is improving. At the same time, though, there’s a major shortage of the raw materials for batteries like lithium, nickel, cobalt, and graphite, and China controls most mining and processing of such essential ingredients. Another challenge: building enough capacity for charging EVs.⁴⁵

◆ For discussion

- How might more EVs help address our institution’s transportation needs?
- What does our institution need to do to support more EVs on campus, whether they are owned by the university or by staff, students, and visitors?
- How might this switch to EVs impact our curricula and research?



45 Elizabeth Behrmann, “Where We Are on the Road to Electric Vehicles,” *Bloomberg*, June 26, 2121, www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-06-26/where-we-are-on-the-road-to-electric-vehicles-quicktake; Joann Muller, “In EV Era, Batteries Are the New Oil,” *Axios*, June 28, 2121; www.axios.com/batteries-new-oil-electric-vehicles-269fbc77-8ef6-4ae4-896b-0e3b0ed47031.html.

46 Adele Peters, “Extreme Heat Is Becoming More Frequent—and Our Infrastructure Is Going to Need to Adapt,” *Fast Company*, July 2, 2021, www.fastcompany.com/90651986/extreme-heat-is-becoming-more-frequent-and-our-infrastructure-is-going-to-need-to-adapt.



Food for Thought

Lost in Space Management

Based on roundtable discussions and interviews with individuals at dozens of colleges and universities, Elliot Felix, a partner at Buro Happold and the founder of brightspot strategy, says a picture is emerging of how institutions are thinking about changes in their physical plants as higher education comes out of the pandemic.

Learning spaces. Some lecture halls might be kept as-is, but others will be converted to other configurations, such as spaces designed for smaller courses with students studying remotely as well as sitting and working in groups. In classrooms, the emphasis will be on flexible spaces with no fixed seating.

Work spaces. Citing the SCUP 2021 Campus Facilities Inventory (produced in partnership with brightspot strategy), Felix reports that 82 percent of colleges and universities plan to increase the use of remote work for staff; 73 percent have the same goals for faculty. As a result, 62 percent of institutions plan to create flexible administrative workplaces with shared/unassigned seating, with 54 percent planning similar configurations for faculty. (Download your copy of the Inventory at scup.org/cfi2021.)

Meeting spaces. Rooms for learning and work will be designed to accommodate hybrid meetings that have attendees both on-site and remote.

Satellite spaces. Whether for work or learning, universities will sponsor more satellite spaces—sometimes far from the home campus. New York University, for example, serves more than 3,000 students in WeWork space in Shanghai.

In other trends, Felix believes that outdoor spaces and multicultural and other identity centers will be enhanced. We'll see more dorms designed as living/learning spaces. Universities won't lease as much office space off-campus. The need for interim "swing" space to be used during renovations will contract. There will be more centralized booking of learning and study space. And more institutions will consolidate learner support services and resources into hubs like libraries and student success centers.⁴⁷

◆ For discussion

- How are we determining our post-COVID space usage? What is our criteria for activities that will be held on-campus or in-person and those that will be conducted remotely?
- Beyond space, how will post-COVID changes impact technology hardware investments? Software? Furniture?
- How are we determining that these changes are equitable?



⁴⁷ Elliot Felix, "Space Changes on the Post-Pandemic Campus," *brightspot*, June 24, 2021, www.brightspotstrategy.com/space-changes-on-the-post-pandemic-campus.

Political Trends

Putting the Competition Back in Capitalism

The Biden administration has aggressively moved to reform antitrust regulations. President Biden's Executive Order 14036, for example, cited some 72 initiatives where the administration is taking action to address what it sees as problems with competition in the technology, agriculture, health care, and financial industries. Federal and state lawsuits have sought to curb perceived anti-competitive behaviors by leading tech companies. Simultaneously, bipartisan antitrust bills in Congress also seek to encourage more competition in the private sector.⁴⁸

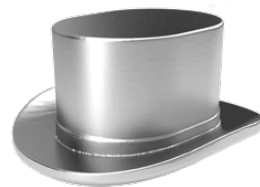


Deeper Dive:

Colleges and universities have been subject recently to more antitrust scrutiny. Two investigations by the US Department of Justice, for example, have explored student recruitment practices. Recent lawsuits, investigations, and new federal regulations have spotlighted antitrust concerns in such areas as financial aid policy, faculty hiring, student athletics, and textbook sales. Another area of focus: sharing of information among leaders of colleges and universities.⁴⁹

◆ For discussion

- How do current and proposed antitrust policies affect our operations?
- What might antitrust legislation mean for our programs related to technology, health care, agriculture, and finance? What might need to change in terms of curricula, research, resources, etc.?
- In particular, has our institution fully assessed any potential antitrust liabilities we might have in such areas as student recruitment, awarding of financial aid, and information sharing?



⁴⁸ Bill Baer, "The Biden Administration Takes an Overdue First Step to Foster Competition," The Brookings Institution, July 10, 2021, www.brookings.edu/blog/techtank/2021/07/10/the-biden-administration-takes-an-overdue-first-step-to-foster-competition/; Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP, "Elevating Antitrust Issues: President Biden's New Executive Order," July 15, 2021, www.bclplaw.com/en-US/insights/biden-builds-on-already-busy-antitrust-year-with-executive-order-promoting-competition-in-the-american-economy.html; Cecilia Kang, "Lawmakers, Taking Aim at Big Tech, Push Sweeping Overhaul of Antitrust," *New York Times*, June 11, 2021, www.nytimes.com/2021/06/11/technology/big-tech-antitrust-bills.html; Ryan Tracy, "Judge Extends Deadline for FTC to Refile Facebook Antitrust Suit," *Wall Street Journal*, July 26, 2021, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/judge-extends-deadline-for-ftc-to-refile-facebook-antitrust-suit-11627320720>.

⁴⁹ Hogan Lovells, "Antitrust Issues in Higher Education," December 18, 2019, accessed September 13, 2021 at www.hoganlovells.com/-/media/hogan-lovells/pdf/2019/2019_12_18_education_alert_antitrust-issues-in-higher-education.pdf?la=en.

In This Section:

- Reforming antitrust regulations
- Recovering state budgets
- Struggling over voting rights
- Enabling student athletes to make money from their NIL
- Extending Pell Grant eligibility
- Debating infrastructure spending
- Crossing borders for education
- Mixing politics and apprenticeships
- Sidebar: Strategies for disruption





From Rags to (Relative) Riches

During the pandemic, many states prepped for a big financial fallout—cutting jobs and services and budgeting for lower future income. But, thanks to federal relief measures, the COVID–19 recession proved short-lived and state economies started to bounce back faster than expected. At the same time, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocated \$193.5 billion for states to help with recovery from the pandemic. The ARPA monies—tantamount to anywhere from 5 percent to more than a fifth of total state spending—mean that states have “extra” cash they can now apply to major investments like broadband and rejuvenated water and sewer systems.⁵⁰

◆ For discussion

- Between state revenue that bounced back faster than expected plus federal aid for pandemic recovery, what is the current status of our state’s budget, for this year and looking ahead?
- If our state has “extra” money to spend, how might higher education and our institution benefit?
- Given that some of the federal stimulus money does not need to be spent until 2026, is there room for our institution to propose ways to spend some of those funds on infrastructure improvements that might help our institution and our institution’s region?

50 Sophie Quinton, “Awash in Cash, State Lawmakers Ask How Long the Boom Will Last,” *Stateline*, Pew Charitable Trusts, July 26, 2021, www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2021/07/26/awash-in-cash-state-lawmakers-ask-how-long-the-boom-will-last; Barb Rosewicz, Mike Maciag, and Melissa Maynard, “How Far American Rescue Plan Dollars Will Stretch Varies by State,” Pew Charitable Trusts, June 28, 2021, www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2021/06/28/how-far-american-rescue-plan-dollars-will-stretch-varies-by-state.

Ballot Boxing

In August, Congressional Democrats were struggling to pass two voting rights laws, including an act named after the late congressman and civil rights activist John Lewis that would restore parts of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that were eliminated in a Supreme Court ruling in 2013. Meanwhile, 18 states have enacted laws that many observers say make it harder to vote. In a statement in support of voting rights, advocates for higher education said “we are particularly concerned with proposals that would . . . [raise] barriers to student voting, including prohibiting students from using their campus addresses to register or qualify for absentee ballots.”⁵¹

◆ For discussion

- If voting rights are restricted in our area, how might that impact us? If they are preserved, how might that impact us?
- How can we ensure students and community members are able to exercise their right to vote? Are there community groups we can partner with on this initiative?
- How might our institution best contribute to the current public discussion about voting and voting rights?



51 Katie Rogers and Nick Corasaniti, “Democrats’ Divide on Voting Rights Widens as Biden Faces Pressure,” *New York Times*, August 3, 2021, www.nytimes.com/2021/07/22/us/politics/biden-voting-rights.html; Fredreka Schouten, “Eighteen States Have Enacted New Laws That Make it Harder to Vote,” CNN, July 22, 2021, www.cnn.com/2021/07/22/politics/voting-restrictions-state-laws/index.html; American Council on Education, “Higher Education Community Statement Strongly Opposes Efforts to Suppress Voting Rights,” April 13, 2021, www.acenet.edu/News-Room/Pages/HE-Community-Opposes-Efforts-to-Suppress-Voting-Rights.aspx.

From Nothing to NIL for Student Athletes

Talk about a sea change: 19 states have passed laws to enable college athletes to make money from their name, image, and likeness (NIL). Meanwhile, members of Congress are pushing their own versions of NIL legislation.⁵² The NCAA, which had long insisted that collegiate athletes be amateurs, voted in late June 2021 to suspend its longstanding ban on athletes selling their NIL rights—a decision that represents a seismic shift in the NCAA's definition of college athletes' amateurism.⁵³ Suggesting state laws are complicating the NIL picture, the NCAA said it will “continue to work with Congress to develop a solution that will provide clarity on a national level.”⁵⁴

◆ For discussion

- How have or will new NIL laws affect athletics at our institution?
- Does our institution need new policies, procedures, and practices to ensure compliance with new NIL rules?
- How might NIL signify new expectations on behalf of students? For example: internships and research?



52 Emily Giambalvo, “What to Know about Name, Image, and Likeness and How it Will Affect the NCAA,” *Washington Post*, June 15, 2021, www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2021/06/15/nll-ncaa-paying-college-athletes.

53 Dan Murphy, “NCAA Clears Student-Athletes to Pursue Name, Image, and Likeness Deals,” *ESPN*, June 30, 2021, www.espn.com/college-sports/story/_/id/31737039/ncaa-clears-student-athletes-pursue-name-image-likeness-deals.

54 Steve Berkowitz, “NCAA Adopts Temporary Policy on Name, Image, and Likeness in Seismic Shift for College Sports,” *USA Today*, June 30, 2021, www.usatoday.com/story/sports/college/2021/06/30/ncaa-adopts-name-image-likeness-policy/7813970002.

For Whom the Pell Tolls

As of June 2021, the US Senate was weighing legislation that would enable students in qualifying short-term workforce education programs to receive Pell Grants. The amendment would extend Pell eligibility to credit and non-credit programs between 150 and 600 clock hours in length, versus current restrictions to programs that are 600 hours or longer. US Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA), who sponsored the act with Senator Rob Portman (R-OH), said, “We need to broaden our definition of higher education to include quality career and technical programs [and] make sure that federal policy supports this kind of learning.”⁵⁵ Separate pending legislation would increase the amount of Pell Grants overall.

◆ For discussion

- What are our short-term, alternative credential, and Career Technical Education (CTE) programs? Are there opportunities for us to develop more of these types of programs?
- How might changes in Pell Grant eligibility affect both learners and academic programs at our institution?
- Should our institution consider revised policies, procedures, and services to better serve our students in CTE, short-term, and alternative credential programs?



55 Jim Hermes, “Washington Watch: Senate Amendment Would Approve Short-Term Pell Eligibility,” *Community College Daily*, May 28, 2021, www.ccdaily.com/2021/05/washington-watch-senate-amendment-would-approve-short-term-pell-eligibility; Office of Sen. Rob Portman, “Portman, Kaine Introduce Bipartisan JOBS Act to Help Workers Access Training for In-Demand Career Fields,” March 14, 2019, www.portman.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/portman-kaine-introduce-bipartisan-jobs-act-help-workers-access-training-o.

Yep, It's Still Infrastructure Weak

Funding for infrastructure is still the subject of political debate in Washington even though US funding for that purpose ranks 18th among countries worldwide. On average, for example, European countries spend 5 percent of GDP on infrastructure, versus 2.4 percent in the United States; China spends about 8 percent. Experts say that puts the US at a competitive disadvantage. Poorly maintained roads, bridges, and airports impede economic productivity. Another concern: the gap in broadband access to the internet. Many economists say investments in infrastructure stimulate the economy and lead to greater economic gains than just the dollars spent.⁵⁶



◆ For discussion

- What is the state of infrastructure in the area around our campus, and to what extent do those conditions affect our ability to pursue our mission?
- How can our institution help make the case for infrastructure investment?
- How might our institution benefit directly from federal legislation related to infrastructure?

⁵⁶ James McBride and Anshu Siripurapu, "The State of U.S. Infrastructure," Council on Foreign Relations, April 8, 2021, www.cfr.org/backgrounders/state-us-infrastructure.



Crossing Fingers on Crossing Borders

As of June 2021, most colleges and universities (86 percent) were planning for some type of in-person study in fall 2021, and 90 percent of those institutions planned to offer in-person study to international students. Applications for study by international students for the 2021-22 academic year were up 43 percent at institutions surveyed. About 50 percent of institutions anticipated an increase in study abroad, versus 97 percent that expected decreases during 2020-21. Still, considerable questions remain about vaccine protocols worldwide and about when international travel will again enable the robust flow of students and scholars across national borders.⁵⁷



Deeper Dive: An analysis of US State Department data by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* showed that in May and June 2021, American consulates approved almost as many (93 percent) F-1 student visas as had been approved in the same months in 2019, before the pandemic.⁵⁸

◆ For discussion

- How are we planning for international student enrollment? What is our contingency plan should international students be unable to travel to the US?
- How are we determining when and where study abroad is safe?
- How well does our institution understand and comply with evolving US policy governing the flow of international students and scholars to the United States?

⁵⁷ Institute of International Education, "IIE Survey: Universities Indicate Optimism, Confidence on International Educational Exchange," June 10, 2021, www.iie.org/en/Why-IIE/Announcements/2021/06/IIE-Survey-Universities-Indicate-Optimism,-Confidence-on-International-Educational-Exchange.

⁵⁸ Karin Fischer and Dan Bauman, "New Student-Visa Data Paint an Optimistic Picture for Fall Enrollments," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 23, 2021, www.chronicle.com/article/new-student-visa-data-paint-an-optimistic-picture-for-fall-enrollments.

The Apprenticeship News

The US Department of Labor says the number of new apprenticeships has grown 70 percent since 2011.⁵⁹ But there's a debate in Washington about oversight for apprenticeships. To simplify a complex set of issues, the Trump administration pushed to give private industry more oversight responsibility for how apprenticeships are conducted while the Biden administration has sought to ensure that the federal government takes the lead in regulating quality standards.⁶⁰ Meanwhile, bills in the Senate and House would expand federal support for apprenticeships.⁶¹

◆ For discussion

- How has the rise in apprenticeships impacted our institution? How could it be in the future?
- What opportunities do the growth of apprenticeships present for our institution?
- What can we learn from successful apprenticeship programs? How might that affect our curricula, student services, career centers, etc.?

59 U.S. Department of Labor, "Registered Apprenticeship National Results Fiscal Year 2020, 10/01/2019 to 9/30/2020," undated, www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/apprenticeship/about/statistics/2020.

60 Sheryl Estrada, "Biden Rescinds Trump-Era Industry Apprenticeship Program," *HR Dive*, February 19, 2021, www.hrdive.com/news/biden-rescinds-trump-era-industry-apprenticeship-program/595370.

61 Ryan Golden, "Senate Bill Would Create National Apprenticeship College Consortium," *Higher Ed Dive*, July 6, 2021, www.highereddive.com/news/senate-bill-would-create-national-apprenticeship-college-consortium/602940/.





Food for Thought

Transformers: Age of Distinction

As reported by higher education futurist Ken Steele, a recent paper by KPMG International suggested that with the COVID-19 pandemic, “the future arrived ahead of schedule, abruptly, and without invitation.”

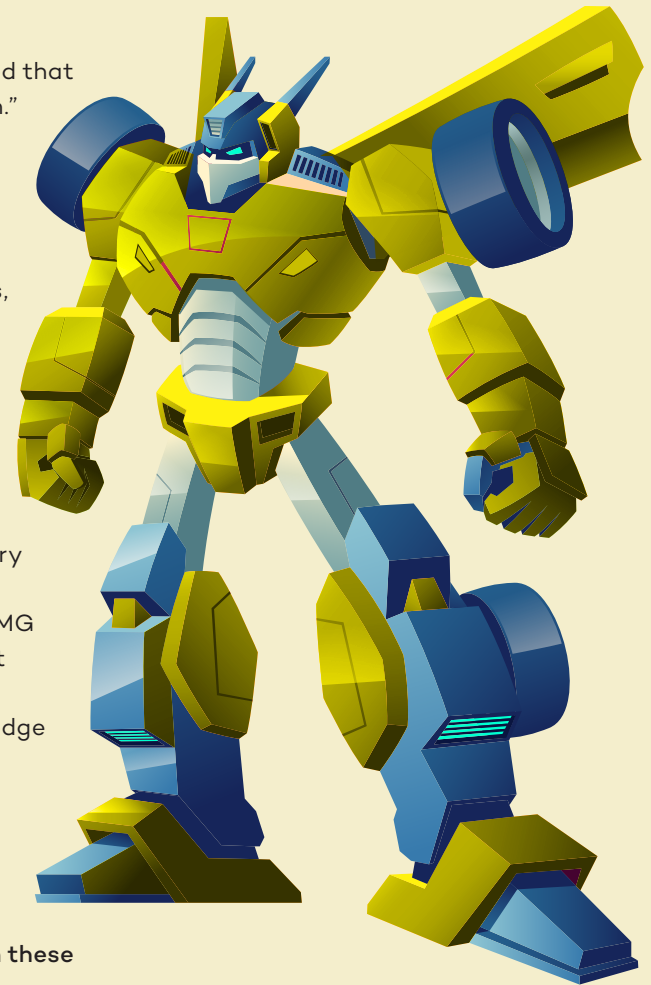
Two significant manifestations of that future include the pivot to online education and constriction of international student mobility. The KPMG paper, as reported by Steele, argues that “the Golden Age of universities” is disappearing in the wake of “converging demographic, financial, political, and technological pressures”—the combination of which will force higher education to reimagine itself. As Steele summarized, KPMG “predicts a proliferation of diverse higher ed providers and approaches, experimentation, and personalization” as well as an environment for higher education that will be “borderless, unbundled, digital, scalable, experiential, lifelong, and part-time.”⁶²

The KPMG report asserts that “deliberate and proactive transformation or optimization” in colleges and universities “will be the means of surviving and thriving in a world that is becoming tougher.” The way forward, KPMG says, is by focusing on four key building blocks: “strategy, capabilities, operating model, and technology.”

KPMG also suggests that institutions ask themselves a range of essential questions. One such inquiry is “How can we operate on a scale that yields productivity gains sufficient to cover our rising salary and other costs?” Another is “Which customers do we want to serve and can do so responsibly?” KPMG also argues for better use of data “to make decisions in real-time that meaningfully improve student experiences and make [an institution’s] operations more responsive.” Among other suggestions, the consulting firm urges institutions to “integrate their ecosystems for education, research, and knowledge exchange” and, similarly, to develop an “integrated partner and alliance ecosystem.”⁶³

◆ For discussion

- What are the demographic, financial, political, and technological pressures facing our institution? How might they impact us?
- What opportunities do these pressures present? What changes would we need to make to act on these opportunities?
- How could those four building blocks—strategy, capabilities, operating model, and technology—help us transform for the future? Would we need to make any changes in these four areas?



⁶² Ken Steele, “Strategic Pivots for PSE,” LinkedIn, July 14, 2021, www.linkedin.com/pulse/strategic-pivots-pse-ken-steele.

⁶³ KPMG International, “The Future of Higher Education in a Disruptive World,” 2020, <https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/xx/pdf/2020/10/future-of-higher-education.pdf>.



One More Thing

You Better Rethink

As institutions seek to transform themselves for the post-pandemic future, they may need to rethink their planning and change processes.

One suggestion is “zero-based prioritization,” or essentially putting every project, program, product, and service on hold and then going through a careful review to justify why every activity tapped for action should be allowed back into a work plan. The website “Smarter with Gartner” says “a zero-based approach provides the most transparent and defensible approach to reprioritize project portfolios in today’s disrupted environment, especially as organizations shift or accelerate strategies, such as digital transformation.”⁶⁴

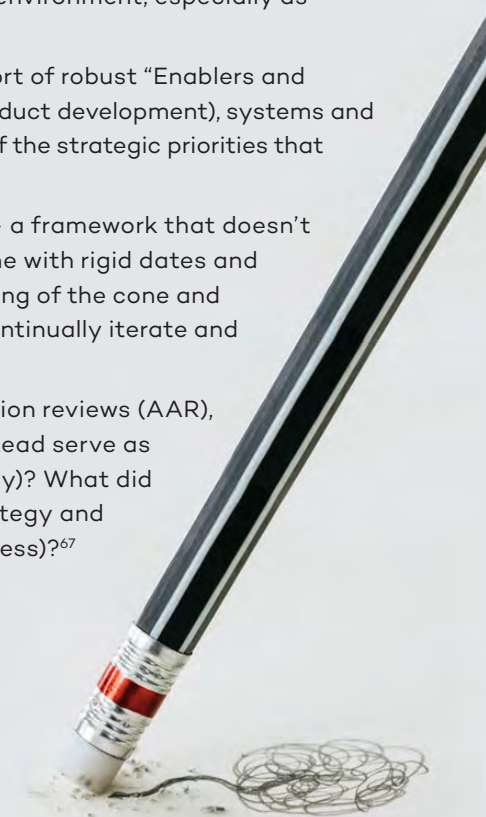
Another perspective comes from *Forbes*, where leadership strategist George Bradt says winning strategies need the support of robust “Enablers and Capabilities”—the right mix of infrastructure (including brand positioning, IT, supply chains, financial compliance, and new product development), systems and processes, cash flow, and people. “Make sure you shore up your foundational enablers and capabilities to enhance execution of the strategic priorities that depend on them,” Bradt says.⁶⁵

Writing in the *Harvard Business Review*, futurist Amy Webb suggests that instead of timelines, planners use “time cones”—a framework that doesn’t rely on linear measures of the passage of time but that measures certainty and charts actions. “Unlike a traditional timeline with rigid dates and check-ins,” Webb writes, “the cone always moves forward. As you gain data and evidence and . . . make progress, the beginning of the cone and your tactical category is always reset in the present day. The result, ideally, is a flexible organization that is positioned to continually iterate and respond to external developments.”⁶⁶

Two collaborators at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania suggest wringing deeper value out of after-action reviews (AAR), a popular tool for performance assessment. Asking four key questions can help transform AARs from rote exercises to instead serve as “a catalyst for cultural change.” The key considerations are these: What did we intend to accomplish (what was our strategy)? What did we do (how did we execute relative to our strategy)? Why did it happen that way (why was there a difference between strategy and execution)? What will we do to adapt our strategy or refine our execution for a better outcome (how do we repeat our success)?⁶⁷

◆ For discussion

- How often does our institution stop to consider whether its approaches to planning need refreshing?
- How well do our planning practices work now? How could they be improved?
- What part of the planning process do we struggle with? How could we try something new instead?



64 Laurence Goasduff, “Use Zero-Based Prioritization to Reevaluate Your Project Portfolio,” Smarter with Gartner, April 16, 2021, www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/use-zero-based-prioritization-to-reevaluate-your-project-portfolio.

65 George Bradt, “Why The Winning Path From Strategies to Plans Runs Through Enablers and Capabilities,” *Forbes*, May 4, 2021, www.forbes.com/sites/georgebradt/2021/05/04/why-the-winning-path-from-strategies-to-plans-runs-through-capabilities-and-enablers.

66 Amy Webb, “How to Do Strategic Planning Like a Futurist,” *Harvard Business Review*, July 30, 2019, <https://hbr.org/2019/07/how-to-do-strategic-planning-like-a-futurist>.

67 Todd Henshaw, “After-Action Reviews: A Simple Yet Powerful Tool,” *Knowledge@Wharton*, July 12, 2021, <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/action-reviews-simple-yet-powerful-tool>.

About 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.



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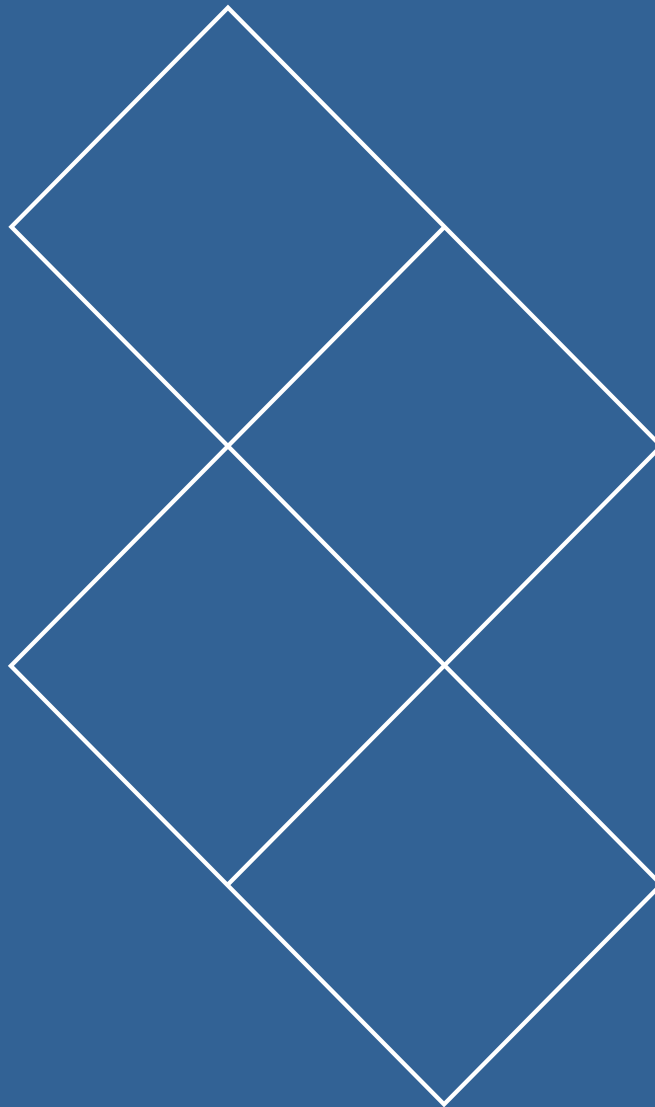
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It's impossible for us to identify every issue you may need to consider.
What did we miss? What did we get wrong? Tell us!

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