

PLANNING FOR FALL 2020 AND BEYOND

INSIDE
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Introduction

The coronavirus pandemic has led to unprecedented challenges for American colleges and universities. They quickly evacuated most students and employees from their campuses, and finished the spring semester online. But now the real question is how they will come back.

When will they restore on-campus programs? How can they assure safety for those on campus? What will the financial costs be? The articles in this compilation explore how colleges are answering these questions, or trying to.

Inside Higher Ed will continue to cover the COVID-19 pandemic, and we welcome your reactions to this compilation and your ideas for future coverage.

--The Editors

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Planning for the Fall and Beyond



As campus administrators, faculty, and students returned to their campuses in January after the holiday break, the upcoming semester seemed like any other. But six weeks into the new year, the world was suddenly confronted with a global pandemic, the likes of which most of us have never experienced. Life changed suddenly in ways we had never imagined and for which we were not prepared.

We had no playbook for this, and the new reality called for innovative and perhaps even radical thinking. All the scenarios that campus leaders had previously prepared for included events we had seen and dealt with before—hurricanes, blackouts, earthquakes, campus safety emergencies, or an economic downturn with resulting budget cuts, to name a few. But despite this unprecedented event, we've seen leadership on every campus rising to the many challenges, in many ways.

For example, Indian River State College (IRSC), our first Workday Student customer, has now survived two major campus events—Hurricane Dorian in the fall of 2019, and now COVID-19, about which IRSC VP of IT and CIO Paul O'Brien says, "As we moved our employees to work remotely, the Workday platform has allowed us to essentially continue business operations without any delay in service. Workday Human Capital Management, Workday Financial Management, and Workday Student allow us to continue to serve our students and employees remotely. Our students were able to build their schedules and pay for courses, all without stepping foot on campus."

In addition, Point Loma Nazarene University managed to complete the last several weeks of its Workday Student deployment 100 percent remotely in late April. Corey Fling, chief information officer, reports, "Our students just completed registration and reported that the system was very intuitive. Thanks to Workday's simple user interface, our students made a successful transition to the new platform. In addition, our students are enjoying the benefits of being able to use their mobile devices to engage with the system."

None of us in higher education can be sure what the next academic year and beyond holds—all we can do is learn from this pandemic and plan for the changing world of higher education where the need for agility and flexibility in support of business continuity is a certainty. At Workday, we will continue to build agile solutions for higher education, and we look forward to supporting our growing cadre of successful campuses as they move their most critical systems—Workday Human Capital Management, Workday Financial Management, Workday Adaptive Planning, and Workday Student—to the cloud.

Sincerely,

Liz Dietz

Workday Fellow

Decision Points Loom for College Leaders

Scenario planning is getting attention as a tool for navigating an uncertain time. But when will leaders need to make big decisions?

By [Rick Seltzer](#) // April 30, 2020



SOURCE: ISTOCK.COM/MANANYA KAEWTHAWEE

The novel coronavirus pandemic converted many college and university leaders into fans of scenario planning.

It's easy to see why. The fast-shifting landscape and massive changes to core campus operations beg for a mechanism that allows board members, presidents, top administrators and deans to prepare for vastly different futures. Many have attested to scenario planning's usefulness, whether they outline [three](#) or [15 different](#) scenarios for the future.

But at some point, leaders need to switch from planning to making decisions about which scenarios to follow.

Making choices tied to one deci-

sion point doesn't preclude future choices changing as more information comes available. In such an unsettled time, the scenarios are always changing, experts stressed. The decision points are, too.

"Our scenarios must be robust, must be clear as daylight, and we must be willing to make adjustments to decisions that we make in real time," said Benjamin Ola Akande, assistant vice chancellor for international affairs, Africa, and associate director of the Global Health Center at Washington University in St. Louis, who this month was named president of Champlain College in Vermont.

In conversations over the last week, leaders and the consultants

they work with outlined some of the most important decision points they're watching. Those points are explained below, grouped loosely by whether they're tied to a specific date on the calendar or other condition. Many lend themselves to decisions about whether to reopen for the fall or not. But they may still be pertinent even for colleges that have made that decision and must still plot other scenarios, such as whether to shuffle the academic calendar or make major operational restructuring decisions.

Points in Time

[Pre-May 1 Admissions Milestones](#): Early indicators showed the COVID-19 pandemic generating cause for concern as competitive

Decision Points Loom for College Leaders

colleges built their classes for next year.

Recent private polling indicated that one in six students who'd planned to attend four-year colleges [no longer plan to do so](#). Other surveys led a firm to conclude that four-year colleges [may lose](#) as many as a fifth of students. Many families [reported](#) losing income amid the coronavirus, and existing college students [pushed back](#) on the idea of paying full price to traditional in-person colleges for remote instruction should campuses be unable to reopen in the fall.

So it's no surprise that college leaders report making various decisions based on how their spring admissions seasons were taking shape. Those decisions include [pricing actions](#) like freezes or even cuts to tuition. Some changed the way they communicate with prospective students, emphasizing how colleges have supported students who were being sent home for the spring semester or accommodated students with flexible grading policies.

Some may find it too cynical to suggest admissions considerations factored into colleges beginning to [announce plans to reopen](#) for the fall semester this week, during the run-up to deposit day on May 1. But in the last week or so, some colleges have grown much more aggressive about communicating their intention to reopen, and leaders made clear that many campuses need to reopen in the fall to secure their own futures.

"The basic business model for most colleges and universities is simple -- tuition comes due twice a year at the beginning of each semester," wrote Brown University's president, Christina Paxson, in a Sunday [opinion piece](#) for *The New York Times*. "Most colleges and universities are tuition dependent.

Remaining closed in the fall means losing as much as half of our revenue."

And at least one community college in Northern California connected student decisions to an announcement that it will stick with distance learning in the fall.

"We want students to know what they're signing up for," Sierra College spokesperson Josh Morgan said, [according to](#) CBS Sacramento.

May 1 and June 1 Decision Days: Many colleges pushed their decision days -- the dates by which high school seniors committing to attend must submit deposits -- back from the traditional May 1 to June 1. Experts anticipate both dates will be important for colleges and universities that need to count their freshman classes and decide on next steps.

"If we wanted to timeline it, I do think May 1 is still going to be an important milestone," said Peter Stokes, managing director at the consulting firm Huron's education strategy and operations group. "The information we get there will be very telling."



Most colleges and universities are tuition dependent. Remaining closed in the fall means losing as much as half of our revenue.



Mid-June: Once the new, later June 1 decision day has passed, some admissions experts suggested colleges and universities will turn their full attention to retaining rising sophomores, juniors and seniors, as well as avoiding summer melt among incoming freshmen. Feedback they receive could filter into decisions about additional retention actions or even cost-cutting.

Annual board meetings: Most colleges and universities close their fiscal years at the end of June. It would seem to be a natural time for major decisions to be made as boards hold regular meetings at the end of the year.

That may happen in some cases. But in the current crisis, engaged boards aren't always waiting for end-of-the-year meetings to make decisions that are critical.

"Boards are meeting more frequently in order to consider information," said Merrill Schwartz, senior vice president for content strategy and development at the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. "Decision points are very much on every-

Decision Points Loom for College Leaders

one's mind."

Cutoff dates: Major undertakings like reopening campuses for all students come with deadlines driven by logistics. It simply takes time to bring back staff members and prepare campuses for a fall of in-person instruction. For example, Radford University in Virginia said plans to reopen in the fall will require select employees to return before the state is scheduled to lift a shelter-in-place order June 10.

How much time varies from campus to campus. But leaders have likely reverse-engineered a cutoff date by which they'll have to make certain major decisions.

"There's going to come a point where we're going to have to make a decision about when we are going to physically be on campus, because we have to gear up," said Thomas Galligan, interim president at Louisiana State University. "But other than that, our decision points are substantive, and safety is our guidepost."

This type of deadline is more about closing off scenarios. Leaders could move to keep open their options long before it's clear whether in-person classes can actually resume.

"The question becomes, 'What do you think is likely to happen, and given what you think is likely to happen, how achievable is it in the space of May, June, July, August, to be ready?'" Stokes said. "If you want to be there by fall, you've got to be running right now. That's not something you can put off for a couple of weeks."

Government and Regulatory Decisions

Elected officials: One of the biggest decision points comes when elected officials make their own decisions. But the landscape here is highly complex.

When do governors lift stay-at-home orders? Do mayors or local officials ban large gatherings, preventing large lecture classes in the process? Do any health officials place restrictions on dormitory living? What about travel restrictions?

"Think about if you do have residential students," said Nicholas Santilli, senior director for learning strategy at the Society for College and University Planning, who has been developing a scenario planning guide intended to help colleges recover after the pandemic. "You decide to open up on a particular date. But what happens if there is still a quarantine order in place for individuals traveling across state lines?"

Most college leaders appear to be focused more on conditions than dates, Santilli said.

Health-care officials: Guidance from health-care officials and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will play a big part in helping colleges decide whether they can reopen for in-person instruction at any point and how to do so.

Any information about how facilities need to be cleaned will be taken into account. So too will guidelines

for distancing and detailed plans for phased reopening within states.

"We're still on a stay-at-home order," said Galligan, of LSU. "Once our governor lifts that stay-at-home order, in part we'll be coming back in phases, and getting to the next phase is going to depend in part on not only what the governor does and CDC recommends, but on staying safe for two weeks under the previous phase."

Changing Data and Conditions

Watching states open for business: Experts suggested colleges and universities will closely watch the experiences of states that are slowly reopening their economies, like Georgia, Florida and Texas.

Spiking infection rates, or consumers who refuse to go out, would suggest very different courses of action for higher education than would an orderly return to business as usual.

Texas governor Greg Abbott has detailed plans to reopen restaurants and other businesses starting Friday. The state's higher ed leaders will be watching -- likely along with leaders in other states.

"In the timeline that Governor

“

The question becomes, 'What do you think is likely to happen, and given what you think is likely to happen, how achievable is it in the space of May, June, July, August, to be ready?'

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Legal Battle Over Captioning Continues

Abbott laid out, we're all going to be monitoring the next couple of weeks very closely as they start to open up certain kinds of businesses," said Harrison Keller, commissioner of higher education for Texas. "There is going to be a lot of attention around May 18 for updated guidance coming out. It could come out sooner if it's necessary and appropriate. But that will be an important date for us in Texas as we see what happens over the next couple of weeks."

Some higher ed leaders may balk at the idea that decisions about students should be informed in any way by the experiences of, say, reopening restaurants. But economists see some parallels. Some predict more long-term pain if restaurants or colleges reopen too soon, only to have infection rates spike and consumer confidence plunge further.

"Think about it from the standpoint of the student or prospective student," said Roland Rust, a professor at the University of Maryland's school of business, during a Thursday conference call. "Economic problems combined with behavioral problems of students not wanting to be here, those combine to be a very tough problem to solve."

While the experience of one state or region may inform decisions in others, experts caution that wise courses of action will still vary between different areas.

Health care and medical factors: How widespread does testing become? What's the likelihood that a vaccine is developed in a year? What is happening to infection and death rates nationwide? What is happening to infection and death rates within a certain region?

Changing answers to all those questions will trigger different de-



That doesn't just happen.
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to each other for guidance.



isions.

"We'll know a lot more in 30 days," said Galligan, of LSU. "We're just going to try and keep up with the knowledge and public health data."

State finances: The state funding picture will be critical to public institutions and many private institutions across the country.

It's no secret that the economic collapse prompted by the pandemic has slashed state tax revenue while ramping up costs such as unemployment insurance. And as experts at the State Higher Education Executive Officers association have taken to saying, higher education tends to be the wheel upon which state budgets are balanced.

How and when states change their spending plans could have ramifications for the types of spending and tuition decisions public colleges and universities need to make. It will also affect many private institutions in states with financial aid programs for students. Think of private colleges and universities in Illinois, which suffered several years ago when a state budget impasse prevented regular disbursement of grants under the state's Monetary Award Program.

Institutional factors: Scenarios available to colleges will change as various institutional factors and capacities evolve. Such factors include the capacity to quarantine students on campus should an outbreak occur, institutions' ability to maintain a strong online or remote education over time, labor levels and how much of a financial cushion exists, experts said.

For example, if a large number of faculty members who have health concerns balk at the idea of teaching in person in the fall, it becomes much harder to bring students back to campus without making major changes. But if faculty members take the lead in developing strong online or remote options, an institution's decision making may become easier.

When others act: Generally speaking, higher education leaders like to know what everyone else is doing before they make a decision themselves.

"One of the things our members have been asking us for information about is how other institutions are handling the situation," said Schwartz, of AGB. "It isn't the same for a big public university system

Legal Battle Over Captioning Continues

as it is for a small college in a rural area. They want to know how other institutions ‘like us’ are handling a situation. When are they making the decision? What are they doing about tuition? What are their expectations about fall enrollment? How are they handling clinical courses of study?”

Institutions generally follow peers or more prestigious institutions, experts said. They don’t usually follow the lead of an institution considered to be less prestigious.

One [new working paper](#) looks at about 1,400 colleges and universities that decided to transition to online instruction between early March and early April. Six in 10 colleges in the data set closed between March 10 and 13, said one of its authors, Christopher R. Marsicano, a visiting assistant professor in the department of educational studies at Davidson College.

“That doesn’t just happen,” he said in email. “Either there was some

serious coordination, or they are all looking to each other for guidance.”

One decision point is always “when others act,” said Marsicano, who stressed that the paper’s findings are preliminary.

Order of Importance

The above list isn’t meant to be comprehensive.

It doesn’t take into account many factors colleges and universities are weighing, nor does it touch on the wide range of scenarios different types of institution will be planning. State and local funding levels may be more important for community colleges than for elite research institutions, for instance.

The same developments might stress institutions in different ways, as well. It’s possible students will see uncertainty and eschew high-priced private colleges in lieu of a year of taking general education requirements at community colleges. And only some community colleges in well-populated or wealthy areas

may see a surge in student interest. Others in hard-hit parts of the country may see declines in interest.

Still, experts suggest many institutions follow a rough framework as they move from scenario planning to decision point. First, ask what to do in each scenario. Then ask about cutoff dates for making operational decisions. Finally, ask when the market needs to know about a decision, said David Strauss, a principal at Art & Science Group, a Baltimore-based consulting firm.

When thinking about decision points, many experts observed that leaders sometimes fall into wishful thinking. Only time will tell whether they break that pattern during this crisis.

“The knee-jerk or hopeful planning versus the empirically based planning is fascinating,” Strauss said.

“And it mirrors what institutions do on the larger strategic questions when we’re not in the midst of COVID-19.” ■

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<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/04/30/what-are-some-key-decision-points-colleges-face>

How the University of Tampa Went Remote 'Without Missing a Beat'

By Kelli Anderson

This custom content is sponsored by [Workday](#)

A student walks through the center of campus with downtown Tampa buildings in the background

When administrators at the University of Tampa decided to take a leap into the cloud with Workday a few years ago, they wanted to modernize campus business processes, reduce paper use, increase security and make technology more flexible, scalable and user-friendly for everyone from students to Human Resources. Not on their wish list? Creating a Work From Home culture.

But when the COVID-19 pandemic abruptly made campus off limits to all but essential services in March, UT officials realized they could quickly switch to 100% remote operations without missing a beat. "As long as we have internet access, we're good to go," says Tammy Clark, Vice President for Information Technology and Security at the private liberal arts institution on Florida's Gulf

Coast. "Everything we need, we can get to it from anywhere now." In just three days, UT's WFH operation was in full swing.

I spoke with Clark and her colleague Gary Christensen, UT's Managing Director of Enterprise Solutions, about how [Workday](#)—a leading purveyor of cloud ERP systems for finance, HR, planning and student services—has transformed life for the UT community and kept the school functioning smoothly during the COVID crisis. They offered insights into UT's "mock semester" as well as the remote launch of online registration enabled by [Workday Student](#), a native cloud Student Information System that is an all-in-one student hub for everything from registration to advising to financial aid.

Q: What would your main challenges be right now if you didn't have cloud technology?

Tammy Clark: Before we went to the cloud, no one on campus could really work from home because of all the paper-driven processes in human resources, in finance, in really any area of campus. You had to walk around campus, get signatures, wait. Accounts weren't provisioned for weeks. There was no automation. Because Financial Management information and Human Capital Management were in shadow systems, the data didn't live in one place, and it wasn't accurate. There was no integration between the

Student Information System and other systems, so you had to constantly upload information on documents as the information changed. So one department might have a set of data that didn't match another department's.

When Hurricane Irma threatened in 2017, staffing on campus was reduced to essential services only. Work basically stopped because we couldn't back data up. We'd tell people, 'Don't create anything new, because if you do, it's going to get lost.' We knew from that painful experience that we really couldn't keep business continuity going as much as we'd like during a disruption.



Students congregate outside the Sykes College of Business

Clark and Christensen's Top Benefits of Workday Student

- Seamless handling of high student registration volume
- Scalable solution for another 20 years of consecutive growth
- Mobile app and easy to use
- Much more flexible academic requirement rules (date driven), resulting in accurate academic progress (degree audit)
- Secure solution with multi-factor authentication
- Dashboards with real-time statistics permitting data-driven decision making



Tammy Clark
Vice President,
Information Technology
& Security, University
of Tampa



Gary Christensen
Managing Director
of Enterprise Solutions,
University of Tampa

Q: You were in final preparations for taking your new online student registration system live when the COVID crisis hit. How were you able to pull off your Fall 2020 registration just a few weeks later?

Gary Christensen: We had been meeting in person with the Workday consultants who were leading the Student implementation. When the COVID situation came up out of the blue, we continued meeting with them virtually and came up with an online registration support model to go hand-in-hand with the launch of our online registration. We created a new webpage named [UT.edu/register](https://www.ut.edu/register) and gave students topics they might seek help on. Then we could send the students into a private Zoom breakout room with a staff member who could help them. We heard all kinds of positive feedback from students as well as staff using the online registration support.

In previous registrations, we could only have, say, 500 students register in a day. This time, we had 1300 students register in under 10 minutes. Because it's a scalable product, the system didn't even blink.

Q: How were you able to handle problems that popped up during registration?

Christensen: There was a class that was listed



UT's Mock Semester

as a corequisite that should have been a prerequisite, preventing some students from being able to register. In the past, fixing that would have required several days of programming. This time we were able to fix it on the fly and make the update in under a minute. There wasn't even a blip. Workday is a configurable environment that provides the flexibility to change when a customer's needs change.

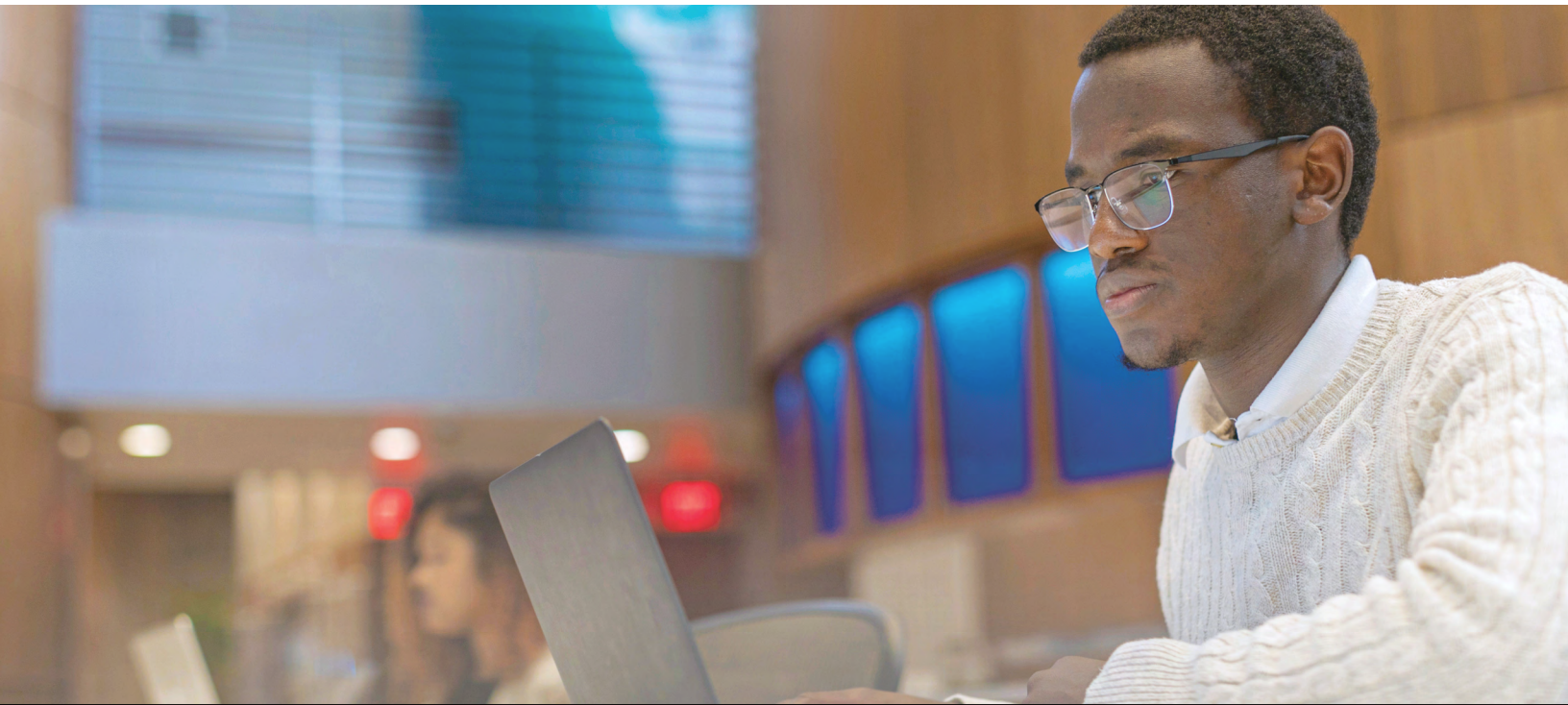
Workday has been very receptive to helping us get functionality that's critical to our operations. Every Friday they roll out new stuff, and they have two big releases every year. That's all really

helpful, because we keep working to improve, enhance and streamline the processes across our entire population.

Q: How did your earlier 'mock semester' work and what did you learn from the experience?

Clark: Mock Semester was held in February 2020. The mock semester was a conference room with stations representing departments on campus that students typically interact with when getting prepared to register for classes. The exercise was to run through all of these typical processes, including having the students access Workday to examine their student information, and practice scheduling and registering for courses.

Christensen: We gave the students a script to follow. 'Go to Financial Aid, change the offered loan to be \$1000 less than what was given to you, and then accept it.' Then, 'Go to the registrar's office and register for some classes.' We wanted to know: Can the students figure out how to do this stuff on their own? How well does the functionality work between offices? Also, we were testing the system from the student perspective. There were some instances where we made changes to the system so it made more sense to the students. It was neat to see the students walk into a system that they'd never seen before and quickly figure out what to click on, where to go and how to do stuff. It was just intuitive for them.



The Lowth Entrepreneurship Center provides a quiet place for students to study

Resources from Workday

- [Workday Podcast: Higher Education and the Future of Skills Development After COVID-19](#)
- [How 3 Higher-Education Institutions Joined Forces to Innovate with Workday Student](#)
- [The Workday Student Experience at Indian River State College](#)
- [Enterprise Case Study: Consolidating the Campus Technology Ecosystem with a Modern SIS](#)
- [Workday Student Financial Planning Demo](#)

Q: Aside from registering, what else can students do with Workday Student?

Christensen: They can check their academic degree progress, which is up-to-date and accurate; they can schedule and carry out meetings with advisors; they can make secure payments on tuition and fees. They can also get automatic packaging of their financial aid, make changes to and accept their awards, and upload their documentation. The Workday request framework is a super powerful functionality available

to them. When there's some kind of approval or form that they need to have routed around to different people, they can create that.

Clark: Everything is in one place for students, and they can get into it through their phones. It's really secure and easy to use. More than 98% of our campus applications are in the cloud, and Workday integrates across all of them, whether it's an application for student housing, athletics recruiting or development.



“Workday positioned us for today’s climate by helping build tools and processes to work remotely and collaboratively at the same time. We have what we need to support our mission.”

Donna Popovich, Executive Director, Human Resources, University of Tampa

Q: How has the cloud impacted the other functions of the university?

Christensen: Timesheets, for example, used to be entirely paper-driven. You'd be paid three weeks after you turned in your timesheet because it took so long to route the paper around for approval. Now you just pull out your phone, pop into the app, tap in the number of hours and hit 'save.' At the end of the week, you submit your timesheet for approval and get paid really fast. Expense reports, which used to involve taping each receipt to a separate piece of paper, are just as easy. When you're at the restaurant

or you're incurring whatever expense, you just snap a photo of it. The app has optical character recognition so it can read things like the name and the amount. It pre-populates that information for the user. As soon as that expense is submitted, it goes for approval. With electronic approval and direct deposit, reimbursement can happen very quickly.

Clark: Another cool feature is dashboarding using the system's built-in, accurate statistics. I've seen Gary throw together dashboards for the deans in just minutes, showing them how they can look at, say, the number of students who

have registered for classes in their colleges— things they've always wanted to know but never could easily see before. The dashboards have become very popular!



“With Workday, our finance and accounting staff were able to work 100% remotely overnight.”

Kevin Lafferty, Vice President, CFO, Administration and Finance, University of Tampa

Q: How has the UT community responded to the move to the cloud?

Christensen: It has been a huge transformation. But people have been really happy about it because it is so much easier. They don't have to worry: 'Oh, gosh. I forgot that piece of paper on my desk, and now I can't do whatever.' All of it is electronic, and it's all inside Workday.

Clark: I've noticed in peer discussions or informal

surveys in the past that many universities don't feel ready to move their ERP/SIS into the cloud, as they still have a number of on-premises solutions and going 'cloud first' is obviously a major shift that requires changing legacy business processes across an institution. However, I know when we look back 10 years from now, we're going to be pleased we did this. It's having a big impact now and will help our university well into the future.

This content was paid for by Workday and produced by Inside Higher Ed's sponsored content team.



20% Enrollment Drop Seen

Survey figures are for four-year public colleges and don't consider international students. Minority students are at greater risk. Plus, details on numerous other studies.

By **Scott Jaschik** // May 4, 2020



SOURCE: ISTOCK.COM/RYAN HERRON

Four-year colleges may face a loss of up to 20 percent in fall enrollment, [SimpsonScarborough](#), a higher education research and marketing company, has predicted on the basis of multiple student surveys it has conducted.

The findings are based on surveys of more than 2,000 college-bound high school seniors and current college students in March, just after the coronavirus began spreading in the United States, and in April, after three weeks of record unemployment claims.

The findings are based on several surveys, [one of which](#) was released previously.

- In April, 10 percent of college-bound seniors who had planned to enroll at a four-year college before the COVID-19

outbreak said they have already made alternative plans.

- Fourteen percent of college students in March said they were unlikely to return to their current college or university in the fall, or it was "too soon to tell." Exactly three weeks later, in mid-April, that figure had gone up to 26 percent.
- Gap years may be gaining in popularity. While hard to track, there are estimates that 3 percent of freshmen take a gap year in normal circumstances. Since the pandemic, internet searches for gap years have skyrocketed.
- College students do not like the online education they have been receiving. To finish their degrees, 85 percent want to go back to campus, but 15 percent want to

finish online.

The numbers are particularly bleak for minority students.

Forty-one percent of minority high school seniors say it's likely they won't go to college at all in the fall or "it's too soon to say." That compares to 24 percent of white high school seniors. With deadlines looming (some colleges expected answers to admissions offer by May 1, although many have delayed the date), 24 percent of minority students say they haven't decided which college to attend. The number for white students is 14 percent. Because of COVID-19, the top choice of college has changed for a third of undecided minority students but only 15 percent of undecided white students.

Minority students who are in col-

20% Enrollment Drop Seen

lege are also feeling the impact of COVID-19 and related matters more than white students are. Thirty-two percent of minority students and 22 percent of white college students said it was unlikely they will return to their college this fall or "it's too soon to say." Nearly two-thirds of minority students (64 percent) said their plans were being affected by COVID-19, compared to 44 percent of white students.

Some colleges will fare better, the SimpsonScarborough report says, based on prestige or location or particularly sensitive administrators. But as a whole, "the effect on higher education enrollment could be catastrophic."

Elizabeth Johnson, chairman of SimpsonScarborough, said, "We felt after our first survey that we couldn't make predictions," because COVID-19 had just spread in the U.S. and most students and more colleges weren't prepared for it. But having surveyed again, after a full month with COVID-19, the results were mostly the same or (from colleges' perspective) worse.

By combining the various factors, she said she came up with the 20 percent figure for decreased enrollment. Obviously, there is a giant what-if to consider. But most of the what-ifs that colleges hope for -- what if a vaccine were developed, for instance -- aren't going to happen by the fall, she said.

She strongly advised colleges to start talking with their students about the various scenarios they face. She noted the blog post "[15 Fall Scenarios](#)," which *Inside Higher Ed* recently published, by bloggers Joshua Kim of Dartmouth College and Edward J. Maloney of Georgetown University. Colleges should try to figure out which of those scenarios they are embracing and talk to students, she said.

“

As we prepare for economic downturn, everyone's wondering about the implications for education -- we don't fully know the impact yet, but we're tracking this closely. What we do know so far, based on this survey and our historic surveys, is that Americans want to see direct career benefits from their education.

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SimpsonScarborough's is not the only recent survey. And the other surveys, while some take different approaches, have the same overall tone.

An estimated 28 million Americans have canceled their education plans due to the coronavirus pandemic, [according to an ongoing Strada Education Network survey](#). And nearly one in five Americans have changed their education plans.

"We expect this is a wide range of formal and informal education activities," Dave Clayton, senior vice president for consumer insights at Strada, said in an email. "As we prepare for economic downturn, everyone's wondering about the implications for education -- we don't fully know the impact yet, but we're tracking this closely. What we do know so far, based on this survey and our historic surveys, is that Americans want to see direct career benefits from their education."

The [longitudinal survey](#) has wrapped up its fifth week and has garnered more than 5,000 responses. Each week Strada, an education and employment research nonprofit, asks respondents about their job security, income and general

feelings of anxiety about the virus. It also includes questions on educational attainment and future education plans.

Tyton Partners recently [surveyed parents](#) and found many of them are dubious of paying full tuition rates for a continuation of online education in the fall.

Lipman Hearne last week released a new survey of parents of high school seniors, conducted in March and in April, which found that the parents surveyed in April were more likely to want their children to go to college close to home (52 percent versus 45 percent). And it found that 56 percent of parents were interested in a delayed January start, and 46 percent said they wanted their child to start at a less expensive institution and then transfer. And 61 percent believe online instruction of the sort started by colleges this spring will reduce the quality of higher education.

Art & Science Group [polled 1,171 high school seniors](#) from April 21-24 and found that one in six students who'd planned to attend four-year colleges full-time no longer plan to do so.

Richard Hesel, a principal with the group, said further numbers

20% Enrollment Drop Seen

showed that 60 percent of students have no interest in online education. And two-thirds of students think they should pay "much less" for tuition if the programs they have been shifted to in recent weeks should continue in the next academic year.

David Hawkins, executive director for educational content and policy at the National Association for College Admission Counseling, said such surveys serve a valuable purpose.

"At a time when information is at a premium, surveys like this can be useful in helping colleges plan for

an uncertain future," he said. "Of course, survey research has limitations, in that it tends to rely on a snapshot in time, so responses today might change substantially based on new information or events in the future. Colleges will have to conduct outreach to their own population of students to assess the pandemic's impact on fall enrollment, as changes are bound to vary by institution. But as a general indicator that times will be difficult moving forward, these surveys are sending a message to colleges and to policy makers that this crisis might put college out of reach for a

large number of students."

What is he looking for? "Over all, the primary effect we're considering, both for students and institutions, is financial. The COVID-19 outbreak seems likely to result in an economic downturn that rivals or outpaces the 2008 recession, absent a significant infusion of public assistance from state and federal governments. That will affect students' ability to enroll and colleges' ability to maintain services for students." ■

-- Emma Whitford contributed to this article.

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<https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/article/2020/05/04/surveys-reveal-bleak-picture-colleges-fall>

| Higher education in a time of social distancing.

By **Edward J. Maloney** and **Joshua Kim** // April 22, 2020

It's difficult to imagine higher education facing a more intense set of challenges than what we are seeing because of the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges will likely be felt for years to come, but fall 2020 will test many of the standards and structures that we have come to associate with higher education.

While no one can foresee what will happen in the fall, most colleges and universities are thinking through a range of options. These options tend to fall along a continuum, with everything being back to normal on one end and fully remote learning on the other. The former is mostly outside the control of most institutions and the latter an option that many would rather not choose, at least not yet. In between is where it gets complicated.

Here are 15 scenarios for the fall that we think schools will be considering.

1. Back to Normal

In this scenario, the fall semester looks like any other fall semester. Residential students return to campus; commuting students participate in classes on campus as usual. All co-curricular and curricular activities pick up as usual. Life is back to normal, perhaps (hopefully) with some lessons learned from the upheaval of the spring about the importance of investments in teaching and learning support.

2. A Late Start

One possibility for the fall is that colleges and universities begin the

semester later than usual, perhaps sometime in October or even early November, whenever the social distancing restrictions can accommodate students gathering together in classes on campus. Schools may choose to start online and then pick up face-to-face slightly later in the semester, or they may postpone the start of the semester until there is a vaccine, better testing or a clear turning point in our fight against the ongoing spread of COVID-19.

3. Moving Fall to Spring

While under the previous scenario the fall semester would start late, it still assumes a fall semester would take place within the boundaries of the normal fall semester. In this scenario, the fall semester would be postponed until January 2021. From there, schools might choose to push back the spring semester to the summer, or push through a modified calendar to make spring and a much shorter summer session possible. This is a drastic step, but it is one that some colleges are actively considering as part of their fall planning.

4. First-Year Intensive

How a student begins their college experience may be the best predictor of how their college experience will end. The ability of a student to persist through the rigors of college life is in part dependent on the quality of the support they receive in orienting to the independence and intensity of college-level work. Recognizing the importance of the first year and the first few



weeks and months of the transition to college, this plan brings only first-year students to campus in the fall. First-year students learn in residential classes, while also participating in a full range of campus-based orientation and social-connecting exercises. Sophomores, juniors and seniors continue to learn remotely for the fall semester.

5. Graduate Students Only

Like the first-year intensive model, this approach would identify select student populations for return to campus. In this model, a smaller population of graduate students might return to campus to continue studies and to help with research continuity. There are other ways of identifying student populations -- by school, by major, by class -- that could also be combined with curricular and administrative considerations such as class size and need for face-to-face interaction.

6. Structured Gap Year

Many colleges and universities have extensive study abroad and

gap year options. While study abroad will still likely be a challenge in the fall, one approach to creating a lower-density model for the fall would be to implement a broader-scale approach to gap year experiences. Students could propose project-based experiences that could be implemented and managed while social distancing rules are still in place. This model would depend heavily on whether options for students to make the gap year a meaningful experience are available given social distancing restrictions.

7. Targeted Curriculum

One approach option for fall is to reduce the number of courses being offered to limit on campus density and to prioritize support resources. Schools are considering a variety of ways of doing this, including focusing on core courses or signature experience courses, eliminating low-enrollment courses, and prioritizing courses that can be more easily adapted to multiple modalities. Courses that are not part of the targeted pool are taught online.

8. Split Curriculum

In a split curriculum scenario, courses are designed as either residential or online. Students who are able to come back to campus (up to the population in which social distancing rules can be enforced) can choose to enroll in either format. Requiring a defined proportion of enrollments to be in online courses for residential students may increase the number of students that can return to campus. This scenario has the advantage of simplifying the course-development process for faculty and the course-selection process for students, while also running the maximum number of residential courses possible while adhering to social



At one institution, students might take five course modules over seven and a half weeks and then switch to a different five courses. Or students might take a semester-long seminar in their major with shorter modules for electives and labs.



distancing guidelines.

9. A Block Plan

This scenario mimics what some colleges already do. Students would take one course at a time during much shorter (three or four weeks) sessions or blocks, run consecutively for the entire semester. The advantage, besides an interesting and intensive pedagogy, is flexibility. If something were to change in the situation related to the pandemic, such as a new second wave of infections, schools could more easily pivot to remote or face-to-face learning at breaks between blocks.

10. Modularity

The block plan is a dramatic departure from the normal curricular structure at most schools. It would likely require a full rethinking of the curriculum, teaching practice and administrative processes. Moving to a more modular course model might be more attractive and more easily implementable within existing structures. Courses could be structured in a variety of ways that would be consistent with the mission and signature strengths of the institution. At one institution, students might take five course modules over seven and a half weeks

and then switch to a different five courses. Or students might take a semester-long seminar in their major with shorter modules for electives and labs.

11. Students in Residence, Learning Virtually

Much like the model of [Minerva Schools at KGI](#), this approach would bring students back to campus, perhaps at a slightly less dense rate, while still teaching courses in a virtual environment. Students would be able to take advantage of many co-curricular activities that were set up for effective social distancing, but classes, where the correct density of students sitting for long periods of time in a room is still a relative unknown, would be taught online.

12. A Low-Residency Model

In this model, similar to how many online and executive programs work now, students would come to campus for intensive face-to-face experiences and then return home to complete the semester online. Students would be brought to campus in iterative waves. This would allow for greater density control. Rich face-to-face pedagogical experiences with peers and faculty could be developed while still

maintaining social distancing. The online part of the semester would be enhanced by student familiarity with each other.

13. A HyFlex model

The *HyFlex model* is perhaps the most flexible and for many will be the most attractive. It is also possibly one of the more difficult approaches for faculty. In this model, courses would be taught both face-to-face and online by the same instructor at the same time. Students could choose to return to campus or stay home. Those on campus could be assigned certain class slots when face-to-face is an option, allowing the schools greater control of social distancing in the classroom. This model tends to privilege synchronous learning, and to do it well often requires real-time in-class help (a TA or course assistant to manage the online students), an intentionally designed classroom and a great deal of patience from both the students and faculty.

14. A Modified Tutorial Model

Another approach that gives students and the university a great deal of flexibility is a modified tutorial model. In this model, students would take a common online lec-

ture session. Faculty and or TAs would then meet with small groups of students in tutorials that would allow for social distancing to be employed. Unlike the HyFlex model, a modified tutorial model does not require additional in-class support to manage the technology. The disadvantage is that it asks more of a faculty member's time to be dedicated to meeting with students.

15. Fully Remote

Perhaps the most obvious option for the fall is to continue doing what we've been doing this spring. Students would be taught in a virtual environment from wherever they happen to be. Successes from this spring could be carried over to the fall, and lessons learned could be employed. Co-curricular activities would be a challenge, but student groups and many activities could be carried forward online, if only temporarily.

These models are not all distinct, and many overlap. Each brings with it nuances and opportunities for modification and creative solutions unique to a specific campus. Many will require highly adaptable faculty committed to marrying synchronous and asynchronous learning in

flexible, dynamic ways.

Additionally, all of these options may not be completely feasible at any one institution, but all may turn out to be necessary thought experiments as schools plan for the unknowns of the coming academic year.

What is clear with any of these models, though, is that support for teaching and learning, advising, student (not to mention faculty and staff) health and well-being, and coordination and logistics will need to be reinforced in all of these 15 scenarios. Adopting any (or any combination) of these scenarios for the fall will also require us to reimagine how we build a supportive learning community. None of this will be easy.

Over the next couple of weeks, we will be working to delve more deeply into as many of these scenarios as possible. Our goal is to synthesize these ideas and to make some recommendations in a concise digital-only book, tentatively titled *The Low-Density University*. We'd love to hear your feedback on scenarios we've missed or how your school is thinking about the scenarios above. ■

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<https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/blogs/learning-innovation/15-fall-scenarios>

How to Help Students and Survive

Colleges cannot resort to business as usual during this crisis, writes Nick Ducoff, who describes six practices they should instead consider.

By [Nick Ducoff](#) // May 4, 2020



SOURCE: ISTOCK.COM/SSHEPARD

The fact that colleges are facing financial straits has been [well covered, even before coronavirus](#). Now some colleges already have made statements that the [fall might continue in a virtual setting](#), and [even potentially the spring 2021 semester](#). And a spate of new class action lawsuits is seeking refunded tuition from colleges that have switched to providing online classes.

Colleges still holding out hope to resume "business as usual" in the fall are doing themselves and their students a disservice. Here's what they should be doing instead.

- **Debt-free degree.** Not all colleges can front tuition, but they should all stand by their product. Purdue is one of the few institutions that offers [income share](#)

[agreements](#) as a way to help pay for college with less debt (though their ISAs are not offered to freshmen). ISAs are typically paid back based on postgraduation earnings, and nothing is owed if a student's income isn't over a threshold amount. One way more colleges could offer this type of program is by having students take on traditional federal and private loans while they're in school. Once a student graduates, the college refinances the student's debt with an ISA. This should be a relatively low-risk investment since most of the risk (graduating) is removed. That way the graduate can enter the workforce and life without debt but still be on the hook for

repaying their education costs in line with their income, which is fair given the positive return on investment for most degrees.

- **Experiential learning.** As Northeastern University's former vice president for new ventures, it still amazes me that Northeastern's experiential learning model -- respected universally -- isn't emulated universally. Yes, it is an expensive undertaking to provide personalized applied work and learning opportunities throughout college. But it is imminently achievable. Colleges would be smart to make that investment now, especially if online learning becomes a lasting part of college education. Even if institutions can't or won't adopt the

co-op model of education, where students take semester-long sabbaticals from college to work full-time, Northeastern's [Experiential Network](#) is an example of a relatively low-cost, scalable way to provide networking and real-world experience in a co-curricular model through project-based learning. Davidson College recently announced a similar "micro-internship" program.

- **Adopting mentor programs.** This crisis is stressful for everyone, and students in particular need to know they're not alone and have access to a support system that can aid them, motivate them, connect them and more. On campus, there are many outlets, often with clear demarcated physical spaces based on the need. But online resources can be hard to find, and studying from home without peers can feel very lonely. Even when colleges reopen, [online mentoring networks](#) are more scalable and can cover a wider range of student services from career services, mental health, tutoring and even just finding someone to talk to.
- **Accepting any credits from anywhere.** More colleges should accept transfer credits from community colleges and pathway programs such as Straighter-Line. This would help them enroll transfer students to help offset lower first-time enrollment. They should also help students reduce their cost by accepting [AP credit](#) and CLEP. Make it easier to transfer credit and there are millions more students to recruit. According to a recent [Christensen Institute paper](#), first-time transfer students lose 43 percent of their credits on average, which effec-



Very few colleges are likely to overenroll this coming academic year. So they should provide the maximum flexibility to prospective students, allowing them to waive their deposit fee or withdraw all the way until drop/add is over.



tively means they have to pay for half their previous college credits twice and increase their time to completion by half the time they've previously spent. Interoperability in college credits so students can graduate without paying for unused credits and spending scarce time and money should be a goal for the higher education community.

- **Varsity athletics should become club sports.** Only 2 percent of NCAA student athletes [go pro](#), and the vast majority of the benefits of competitive sports can be had in club and intramural settings. While the financial costs and benefits of varsity athletics might [vary from college to college](#), some institutions are taking proactive steps to shore up their finances and make tough decisions. For example, the [University of Cincinnati cut its men's soccer program](#). Many colleges should consider a similar move for all sports. That's money that can go to esports, club and intramural sports, dance, and other student programs and services,

not to mention, for some colleges, athletic scholarship money that could be shifted to need-based financial aid.

- **Late enrollment, or waived deposits until census day.** In this confusing and challenging time, students need more flexibility from colleges. Students are trying to make high-stakes decisions about their future [amid all the uncertainty](#) about how long this will last, how much college will cost, how much they'll be able to earn after graduation and, if they're a dependent, their parents' ability to support them if they've lost a job, lost their savings or become sick. Very few colleges are likely to overenroll this coming academic year. So they should provide the maximum flexibility to prospective students, allowing them to waive their deposit fee or withdraw all the way until drop/add is over. [The University of Oregon, Middlebury College](#) and others have taken laudable steps toward this, and the National Association for College Admission Counseling

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has released an [enrollment deposit fee waiver form](#) that could be adopted broadly.

While these are just six things colleges should be doing to help students and survive this particular crisis; they should also be fu-

ture-proofing their model. Even if, miraculously, students can return to campus this fall (“[not likely](#)”), college in America as it existed at the start of the spring 2020 semester will have [forever changed](#). Students will more closely scrutinize cost and

be looking for [more value](#). Colleges would be wise to invest in technology and [professional development](#) so that they are not just [prepared for different scenarios for the fall](#), but are in a better position to leverage technology for the future. ■

Bio

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<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2020/05/04/how-colleges-can-help-students-and-survive-crisis-opinion>

Might This Be the Beginning of Education?

If nothing else, Paul Hanstedt writes, the global pandemic is breaking the boundary between static university learning and the wicked fluidity of the world.

By Paul Hanstedt // April 28, 2020



SOURCE: ISTOCK.COM/SESAME

Just to be clear: I'm not a silver-lining guy. I've been known to bring down whole birthday parties with a single dour observation. I can find the lone cloud in a clear blue sky. My friends once gave me T-shirt bearing a picture of Eeyore. This was not, I soon learned, because I am a fan of *House at Pooh Corner*.

I'm also -- again to be very clear -- not about to pretend we're not going through something awful. We are. As I write this, COVID-19 deaths in the United States have topped 50,000. Our students' lives are being disrupted in terrible ways. As are ours.

Nonetheless -- and I recognize that two short paragraphs might be too few to justify a shift to "nonetheless," but I'm going to, anyway, if for no other reason than I need to cling to *something*. So: nonetheless. We are teachers. What drives us is the desire to see our students grow, to

rise into their best selves, to achieve a sense of their capacity to enter the world as agents of thoughtful, ethical, meaningful change. And that in mind? Yes. Perhaps there's something of a silver lining here.

Consider: for too long, our educational system has been structured in a manner that fails to parallel the flux and flow of life after graduation. There is something artificial about how universities approach disciplines and their work: students choose majors formed around 10 to 15 carefully constructed courses, each of which covers a list of committee-approved topics frequently contained in lowest-common-denominator textbooks -- many of which include at least some of the answers to life's rich problems at the end of each chapter.

Further, in the academy, students generally have a clear sense of where they are and what rules apply

at any given moment: 9:15 means PSYC and its discipline-approved methodologies; 10:45 is when we do CHEM; ENGL occurs Monday, Wednesday, Friday at 1:00. POLI is a three-hour lecture on Tuesday nights. Occasionally disciplines and fields bump into each other in that messy world called gen ed. But otherwise? Each to its own little box. And every box is reinforced by almost every dimension of institutional rhetoric, from the opening question we ask students when they first walk on campus -- "What's your major?" -- to the closing design of the college transcript, with its clear disciplinary designations.

In contrast, the world is a messy place. [I've written elsewhere](#) of the contrast between the static university and a dynamic world filled with "wicked" problems. Arising from city planning before being adopted in engineering, the concept of the wicked

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problem refers to challenges that are dynamic and changing, resistant to simple solutions – even solutions that may have been effective in the past. Think poverty. Think addiction. Think the 2016 election, where fake news, social media, automation and a changing economy created a swirl of misinformation and toxic political dysfunction.

Think COVID-19.

So, first silver lining: if nothing else, the global pandemic is breaking the boundary between static university learning and the wicked fluidity of the world. Students in the sciences now understand that science is helpless without sound public policy. Students studying religion now see the interaction between theology, politics, sociology, economics and health playing out in real time. Ethicists are already exploring the decision-making processes at the national and local levels; poets, painters, photographers and novelists are seeing their words, images and ideas shared as an anxious public seeks both comfort and the capacity to understand the unfolding complexities of daily life. Indeed, were we to design a course proposing solutions to problems related to COVID 19, it would involve every field in the academy, from biology to economics to film to physical education.

If we're wise, we'll use this moment to help our students better understand the complexity of the world beyond the walls of academe, the ways in which our various fields and disciplines not only overlap but also influence and shape and reshape each other in substantive ways. If we're smart, we'll use this moment to foreground those messy interactions, asking students to explore such interrelations, to parse cause and effect, to unfold how data influences poetry and how poetry can

shape our ability to give meaning to data.

If we're smart, we'll find ways to ensure that, when things return to "normal," we rethink our curricula, our project assignments, our day-to-day lectures and conversations in the classroom to ensure that our students understand that the major is a historical construct. And that, further, majors have minimal bearing on where they will go with their lives, the sorts of problems they'll be asked to solve, the sorts of skills and ways of thinking they'll need to bring to the conversation to address problems in ways that are constructive, ethical and equitable.

Yes, fields matter. Yes, content matters. But only to a point. Finally, our college graduates need to be intellectually nimble, capable of pivoting quickly to different methodologies, different ways of thinking, different concepts and modes of problem solving.

Second, this awful moment in time may provide an opportunity for us to help students move beyond a mentality of simple answers. Certainly, at this particular moment in time there are answers that are more right than others – wash your hands, for God's sake! – but the idea of certainty itself, of an answer at the back of the book that simply needs to be memorized, has been shattered. We're on a long, curving road. Our understanding of what's ahead of us is changing daily, sometimes hourly. Before all of this happened, a colleague in biochem explained that what he wanted students to most understand was that failure was part of the process. "My experiments fail 95 percent of the time," he told me. "And that's exciting. Because every time they fail, I learn something that moves me closer to an answer."

While the current pandemic, of

course, prohibits the almost leisurely joy of unfolding implicit in his words, it certainly does illustrate the necessity of failure in our lives and work: we hypothesize; we attempt; we get it wrong; we reconsider; we try again. Captured in the current crisis is so much that we want to teach our students about process, about the answer versus an answer, even about those sometimes cloying buzzwords "grit" and "growth mind-set."

Third, present here is a possibility of agency that often eludes many students. When answers are always perceived as something that only the professor holds, students are essentially in the sidecar to their own education. When, though, we allow that answers can sometimes be fluid and elusive, students become partners in the search for solutions, assuming agency in a shared exploration.

What are the proper policy solutions for flattening the curve? How can those best be communicated to an age group that may see itself as invulnerable? What role does art play in that communication? Social theory? Game theory? Translation?

At a moment that requires out-of-the-box thinking, it helps to engage populations who bring more varied perspectives to the conversation, who are less beholden to the various dogma – read fields – that shapes and limits our own thinking. What are the questions that need to be asked? What are the possibilities we haven't even considered? As productive as it may often be, sometimes scholarly thinking benefits from a dose of irreverence.

Reconsidering Our Identity as Instructors

As is perhaps obvious by now, this whole mess is as much a learning moment for us – that is, faculty and administrators in higher education

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-- as it is for our students. As one colleague put it in a workshop last week, "Now we're finally learning all the things we should have learned years ago." The range of "things" is expansive. It includes tech: Yuja, WebEx, Zoom, Canvas, VoiceThread and on and on and on. It also includes more deliberate ways of approaching our classes on a structural level: more expansive deadlines, more ungraded practice, less worry about covering every chapter in the book and more consideration of our fields' driving concepts, of how those concepts operate in a shifting landscape

Perhaps most important, this moment of turmoil in higher education has caused us to think more carefully about ourselves and our identity as instructors. After all, the image of the all-knowing sage is harder to maintain when we have to condense our 90-minute lectures into 15-minute videos. Or when we can't get the audio to work for our Zoom session. Or when the dog is barking or our children are crying or our son keeps walking up and down the stairs behind us in his boxer shorts as we attempt that once-a-week synchronous class.

Not to be flip, but it's good for us

to struggle with our teaching. Students struggle all the time. They feel vulnerable, at the mercy of fate and institutional structure and socioeconomics and grading policies that seem to be written in an ancient language no one understands anymore. Our own, lesser struggles force us to understand that some of the things we hold dear -- our bell curves, our attendance policies, those research papers we assign but hate to grade, our own wisdom -- are not actually what makes real education happen.

Put another way, this moment -- this horrible, excruciating, eminently shitty moment -- asks us to recognize that education doesn't happen because we have a Ph.D. and can deliver an hourlong lecture without glancing at our notes. Rather, education -- deep, lasting, meaningful education -- takes place when we have the courage to allow our students to be partners in their own learning. I've never been a fan of the term "whole student," but maybe that's what this phrase means: a student is whole when they have agency in their own learning; they are whole when they are helping us figure out what they need to learn, and why; they are whole when their feedback impacts

how we build our courses week to week; they are whole when they understand that they're learning this stuff not to get a grade but to pivot beyond the college walls and participate in finding solutions to pressing problems -- ensuring, perhaps, that situations like this never happen again.

Of course, under normal circumstances, this pivot happens eventually: after graduation, students drift into work and service and citizenship, sifting through all those hours of lectures and labs and readings to determine what does and doesn't matter in realities far more complex than anything we constructed in the classroom.

But these aren't normal circumstances. The walls between academic life and life beyond the academy have crumbled. Which, perhaps, is OK. Because it allows us to be part of the journey students take into a wicked world, to be there as they move beyond memorization and simple answers toward something infinitely more fulfilling: a complexity that engages their curiosity and places profound demands upon their intellect. We can help them on their journey. And they can help us on ours. ■

Bio

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<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2020/04/28/how-pandemic-might-create-better-educational-opportunities-opinion>

Buckle Up for the Next Phase of Planning

Planning to reopen colleges successfully will be much more complicated than shutting them down, write Steve Kloehn, Julie A. Peterson and Lisa M. Rudgers, who provide some guidance for getting started.

By **Steve Kloehn, Julie A. Peterson and Lisa M. Rudgers** // April 21, 2020

For colleges and universities across the country, the past few weeks represented a historic, breathtaking achievement. Faced with the choice to act or be acted upon, higher education institutions took the initiative and led the nation.

In a matter of days, they transformed curricula that would normally take years or decades to reshape. In the face of deep uncertainty, wobbly governmental guidance and no precedent whatsoever, they moved thousands and thousands of students out of harm's way. They made bold choices, and they did so with intelligence, grace and an unfathomable amount of hard work.

And now, even as we counsel our clients to find time for a breather, we know that can be only the briefest of respites. Because if colleges and universities are to recover from this pandemic, leaders must begin now to plan what those institutions will do and be when the crisis ebbs.

It's not as if the immediate needs will go away. Some students are still stranded on campuses; decisions about refunds and student assistance must be made and communicated; and tough choices about keeping workforces healthy, intact and paid are coming due. So there may be a temptation to keep throwing oneself into the need of the moment.

But in many ways, planning to reopen successfully, and building the bridge from here to there, will be much more complicated and precarious than shutting down. It will take college leaders' full attention

over the next several weeks to work out what can return to its pre-pandemic state, what must be abandoned and what innovations of March and April should become a permanent part of the future. It will be intense and difficult work, but it also represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to chart a new course for institutions across every part of the sector.

So how do you get started? How do you begin to plan for a successful future post COVID-19? We've been thinking about this together as well as talking to trusted peers around the country, and here are some initial insights.

The Immediate

- **Appoint the right leader.** Like any strategic planning effort, this one will depend heavily on who leads it and the support they get. Ideally, a president or chancellor needs to appoint a senior leader who has credibility, creativity, strength and complete focus on coordinating and driving forward a plan.
- **Include the right voices.** Unlike other strategic planning work, this one cannot accommodate every single constituency or volunteer who might want representation. That said, a diversity of voices really will make your plan stronger and more creative. You will need many hands and heads.
- **Stair-step deadlines.** You will need critical information along the way, even if the full plan is not ready. Think about how you can set targets that turbocharge the



SOURCE: ISTOCK.COM/ERHUI

process and give the president and trustees the information they need to provide support. For instance, could the first two weeks deliver a decision tree for how and when to open in the fall, with a clear list of questions that need to be answered and voices that need to weigh in?

- **Create parallel plans.** The trajectory of COVID-19 has been marked by constantly shifting information, guidance and realities. The only way to plan ahead in such an uncertain environment is to create scenarios. What if we can offer in-person programming? In contrast, what if we provide it remotely? What if key personnel are ready and able? What if, instead, they are unavailable due to illness or family care? What is the range of financial implications you may

Buckle Up for the Next Phase of Planning

encounter, and what levers can you pull, in each instance?

- Tend to your leadership team. Your top administrators and the next tier down have become first responders. Be aware of the trauma they've experienced and the intense pace at which they are working. Recognize the remarkable efforts they are making on behalf of the institution and support them.

The Medium Term

- **Re-recruit your current students.**

A range of surveys among prospective students suggests that students' college plans may shift in response to COVID-19. There has been plenty of speculation that the rapid shift to online instruction may lead students and families to [question the value](#) of the education they are paying for. Now is the time not only to recruit your incoming class, but also to re-recruit your existing students and their parents: letting them know how much they are valued, showing how you will deliver a high-quality experience and demonstrating the return on investment of their college education.

- **Woo the incoming class.** Admissions teams are struggling with the loss of normal mechanisms like campus visit days. At the same time, colleges and students everywhere are feeling the loss of community. This is a great time to use technology (video messages, social media and the like) to create human connections between your alumni, faculty, staff and students and your admitted students. This work will need to continue over the summer beyond the normal recruitment and decision deadlines.
- **Symbolism matters.** Colleges



There has been plenty of speculation that the rapid shift to online instruction may lead students and families to question the value of the education they are paying for.



thrive on ritual and celebration. Campus communities are keenly feeling the loss of graduation ceremonies, March Madness and other traditions that bind us together and mark key moments. It's important that the current school year not fade into the mist and that the new school year start strong. Look for ways -- through leadership messages, virtual events and crowdsourced activities -- to create substitute rituals and build community. That may involve repurposing existing programs in creative ways. For example, can the original date for graduation become a chance for students to create a digital yearbook experience, sharing their favorite photos and memories of their time on campus? Can your teaching awards program become a chance for students and alumni to praise the faculty who had the biggest impact on their lives?

- **Reinforce your brand.** Johns Hopkins leveraged its medical expertise by establishing the go-

to dashboard for global tracking of the epidemic. The University of Chicago reinforced its urban commitment by supporting communities and businesses on Chicago's South Side. Grand Valley State and Xavier Universities demonstrated their commitment to students by having faculty and staff members personally reach out to check on each student. What actions can you undertake that reinforce your distinctive values and identity?

- **Rethink board engagement.** Moving your board and committee meetings into a virtual space is not sufficient. The nature of discussions with your board should shift. What are the important strategic and business-continuity questions your board should grapple with? How can their experiences and networks help you? And what do they need to be educated about? For example, one campus leader we spoke to discovered the board didn't fully understand the economics of housing and din-

Buckle Up for the Next Phase of Planning

ing as they discussed refunds after the campus closed. Rethink board agendas to include these critical topics and discussions.

The Long Term

■ **Throw out your assumptions.**

Your existing strategic plan may be insufficient or suddenly off target. Your value, to families and society, may not be the same now as five years ago. Your un-touchable premises now can be touched -- and should be examined. It's time to revisit the most basic assumptions of your academic programs and operations.

- **Retain talent.** Wherever you end up going, you will need the best minds and the strongest leaders to succeed against stiff headwinds. Colleges that prioritized retaining and acquiring talent in the Great Recession shot ahead when the economy improved. It's hard to invest in talent in a crisis, but there may be no other single priority that is more important.

- **Decide what to discard.** Pay attention to what you thought you needed before but has proven unnecessary in this new world. Flying to conferences all over the world for professional development and scholarly exchange? Restrictions against flexible work locations? Old-school resistance to online educational components?

- **Decide what to embrace.** What new academic programs emerge as areas of growing student interest? What is working in online teaching that should be a part of your program going forward? What innovations in admissions recruitment should you invest in, even when prospective students can visit in person again? What lessons did you learn about how your administrative structure is most effective?

- **Position yourself as the solution.** The world will be different after this pandemic, and the needs

will be daunting for society and for the next generation. Identify what your institution has to contribute and have the courage to realign your priorities to invest in that.

- **Prioritize communication.** Effective, consistent, clear and empathic communication builds trust and mitigates stakeholder fears. Communicating well -- and humanely -- about decision making is as crucial as the decisions themselves.

We are so proud of what colleges have done over the last four or five weeks. We have seen leaders exhibit tremendous grace under pressure while being laser focused on supporting their students and their communities. What they do over the next 12 months will help set the course for higher education for a generation to come. We are hopeful that many institutions will rise to that challenge and ultimately emerge stronger.

Bio

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