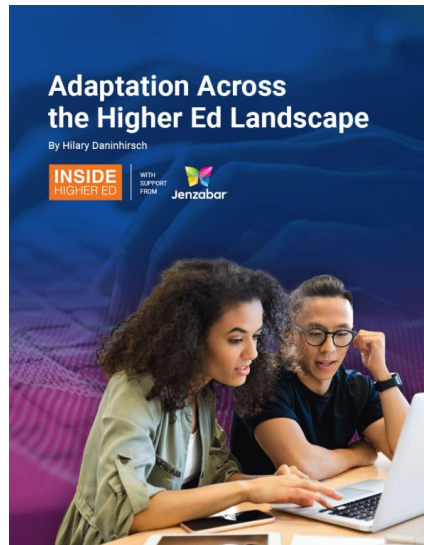


**INSIDE**  
HIGHER ED

# Adaptation Across the Higher Ed Landscape



An *Inside Higher Ed* webcast  
Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2023  
2 p.m. Eastern

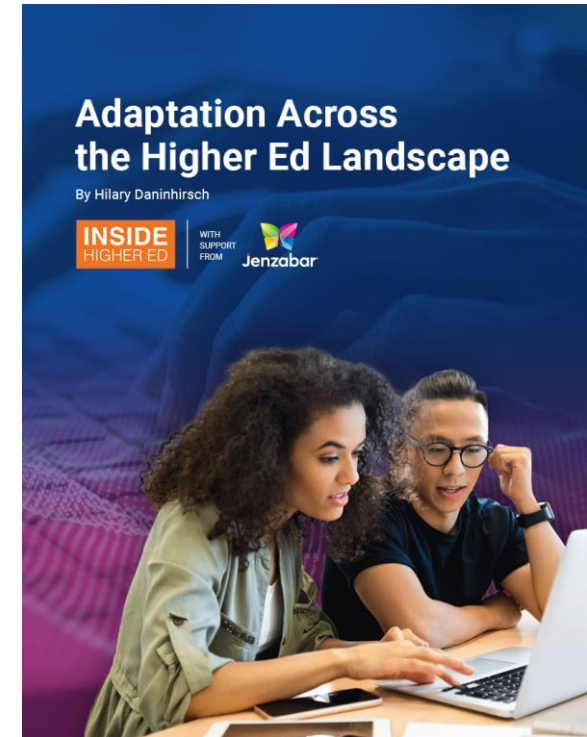
# Presenter



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# Key Themes of the Special Report

- Headwinds for most colleges
- Particular strain for three sectors:
  - Community colleges
  - Regional public universities
  - Nonselective private colleges
- Different strategies for different situations



# Challenges Facing Higher Education

- Flattening or declining enrollments and expected drops in the number of traditional-age college students in the decade ahead.
- Financial strain linked to enrollment, but fueled by inflationary costs and other factors, too.
- Growing societal doubts about the return on investment of a college degree.
- Increasing competition from technology-enabled alternative providers to meet the learning and credentialing needs of traditional and post-traditional students alike.



“There are a lot of storm clouds on the horizon; these storm clouds are darker in different corners of the higher education ecosystem than in others.”

*--Cole Clark, managing director for higher education at Deloitte*

# High-Level Strategies in Response

## **Adaptations vary by sector, but some overarching trends:**

- Expanding pools of prospective students, and changing offerings and delivery modes to attract them.
- Focusing more on developing students' skills to better prepare them for the job market.
- More collaboration with other colleges and use of outside partners to help with key functions.

# Community Colleges

- Have suffered biggest enrollment declines: down by 5.4% since 2020. Over all, drop of a third from 2010 peak of 7.5 million.
- Have fewest alternative sources of funding (state and local support has failed to keep up, little fund raising).
- Responses:
  - Reenrollment of adult learners
  - Skills development
  - Smoother transfer
  - Collaboration and consolidation



# Community College Case Studies

- **Teaming Up, but Not Merging, in New Mexico:**
  - Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services connects 6 community colleges to cooperate on operations while remaining independently governed.
  - Started with common enterprise software system for HR and payroll; expected to expand to student services, government reporting.
- **Preparing Workers for a Digital Economy:**
  - Austin Community College creates stackable noncredit microcredentials around digital fluency for its heavily low-income student population.
  - Embeds core workplace skills (critical and creative thinking) into microskills courses.
- **A Regional Approach to Easing Transfer**
  - New England Board of Higher Education expands a transfer guarantee to improve credit mobility from 3 to 6 states.
  - Improves on standard articulation agreements, boosting flow of underrepresented students to 4-year institutions and improving completion rates at community colleges.





# Regional Public Universities

- Enrollment fell by 6.4% at “competitive” four-year public institutions and by 8.2% at “less selective” four-years, compared to <2% at more competitive publics.
- They lag in state funding compared to their flagship/land-grant peers, and are more tuition-dependent because they lack the research base and fund-raising might.
- Responses:
  - Consolidation and collaboration
  - Promoting value by strengthening employer ties
  - Improving career preparation

# Regional Public University Case Studies

- **In Vermont, Stronger Together Than Apart:**
  - 3 struggling public universities merge in state with shrinking population. The new Vermont State University will offer all classes in hybrid format but retain many physical presences.
  - State is providing start-up funding in exchange for commitment to eliminate \$25M deficit.
- **Expanding Credentials to Meet Learners' Needs:**
  - Utah Tech University is part of growing cadre of "dual mission" institutions that offer a blend of certificates, 2- and 4-year degrees.
  - Its 4-in-4 Initiative gives students in many programs four credentials in four years, creating more possible off-ramps into the workforce.
- **Working With Employers to Train Future Leaders:**
  - East Tennessee State U and BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee develop the BlueSky Tennessee Institute Program, an accelerated B.S. degree with an embedded internship.
  - Students in the 27-month program enroll free and take classes at the insurer's campus.

# Private Nonprofit Colleges

- Hundreds of non-wealthy independent colleges deemed to be at financial risk, due to enrollment woes and expensive residential model.
- Growing gap between haves and have-nots, influenced by rankings and questions about affordability and value.
- Responses:
  - New offerings for new populations
  - Collaboration/cross-institutional partnerships
  - Rethinking operations

# Private Nonprofit College Case Studies

- **Sharing Courses to Expand Offerings Efficiently:**
  - Belhaven U is among the members of the Lower Cost Models Consortium that is working through an outside provider to share online programs.
  - The university has added degrees in actuarial science, supply chain management and more, helping to increase enrollment.
- **Infusing Workplace Experience Into the Liberal Arts:**
  - Mount Holyoke College's Lynk Initiative uses applied learning to link theory to practice. Among other things, the initiative funds internships and embraces assignments that mirror work students will do.
- **Shorter Workweek Boosts Morale and Productivity:**
  - D'Youville College adopts 32-hour, 4-day workweek in response to concerns about turnover and wellness.
  - Shift also drives efficiency through use of technology and increased professional development.

# Thanks

