



# Driving Transformation in Higher Education



An *Inside Higher Ed* webcast  
Tuesday, May 11, 2021  
2 p.m. Eastern

# Presenters



Doug Lederman  
Editor and co-founder, *Inside Higher Ed*  
[doug.lederman@insidehighered.com](mailto:doug.lederman@insidehighered.com)

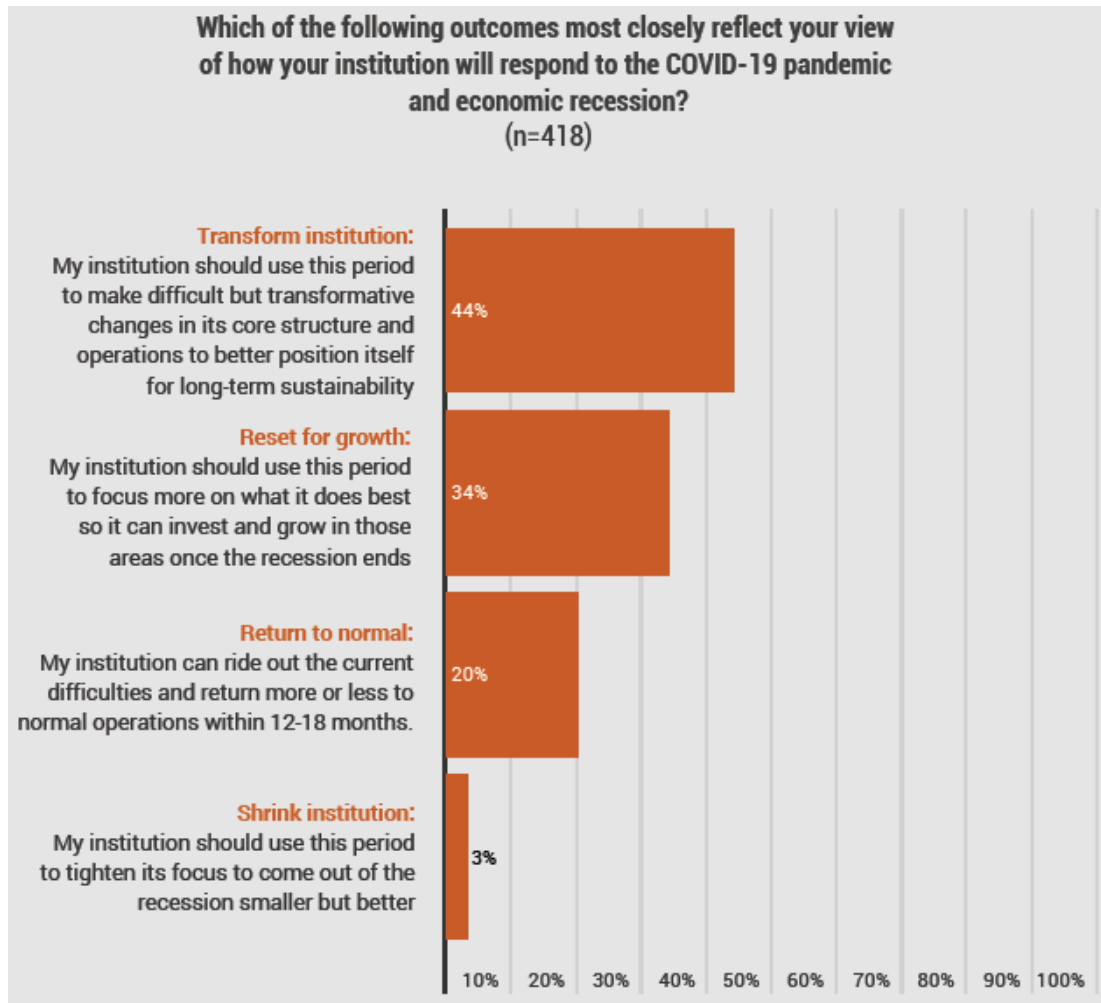


Scott Jaschik  
Editor and co-founder, *Inside Higher Ed*  
[scott.jaschik@insidehighered.com](mailto:scott.jaschik@insidehighered.com)

# What Is 'Transformation,' and Why Might It Be Necessary?



# Is Transformation in the Cards?



# Is Transformation in the Cards? (cont.)

- 97% agree (**62% strongly**) their institution would keep some COVID-19-related changes after the pandemic ends. (*Community college presidents consistently answer higher than their peers on these questions.*)
- 95% agree (**65% strongly**) their college "had been pushed to think outside the box in a way that will benefit the institution in the long run."
- 90% agree (**46% strongly**) that they'd been able to "implement some positive, long-lasting institutional changes during the pandemic."
- 82% agree (**37% strongly**) that "the pandemic, and subsequent necessary changes ... have created an opportunity to make other institutional changes we have been wanting to make anyway."

# Defining the Challenge

- "A majority of presidents believe that the business models and operations of their school are in need of fundamental change. At the same time, many believe that they don't have the structures and governance processes in place to make those changes. This signals what is likely to be a running theme throughout higher ed over the next decade -- the continued pressure for change when many don't feel equipped to successfully navigate that change."

--**Susan Baldrige**, professor at Middlebury College; co-author, with Robert Zemsky, of The College Stress Test

# Types of Possible Transformation

- Business model (pricing, new student types)
- Operational (technology, administrative restructuring)
- Educational/instructional/curricular

**Key:** Very institution-specific; linked to mission

# Examples of Dramatic Change: Mergers, etc.

- Mergers and “deep collaboration”
  - Pennsylvania System of Higher Education (PASSHE): aligning two sets of three public universities each; no campuses closing, but merged leadership and administrative functions; one estimate says 1,500 jobs lost.
  - St. Joseph’s University/University of the Sciences: relatively rare example of 1+1 potentially = 3. Complementary strengths. (Also in tough Pa. market.)
  - Transformational Partnerships Fund: grants to seed meaningful cross-campus work on campuses around the country.





# Examples of Dramatic Change: Sharpening the Mission

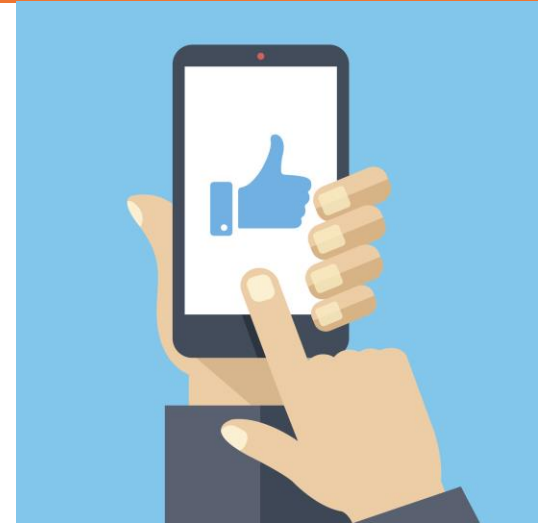
**Salem College:** incorporating health into all academic offerings, to become focused on women in health.

**Notre Dame de Namur:** ending undergrad programs in favor of online graduate programs.

# Examples of Dramatic Change: Rethinking Delivery and Operations

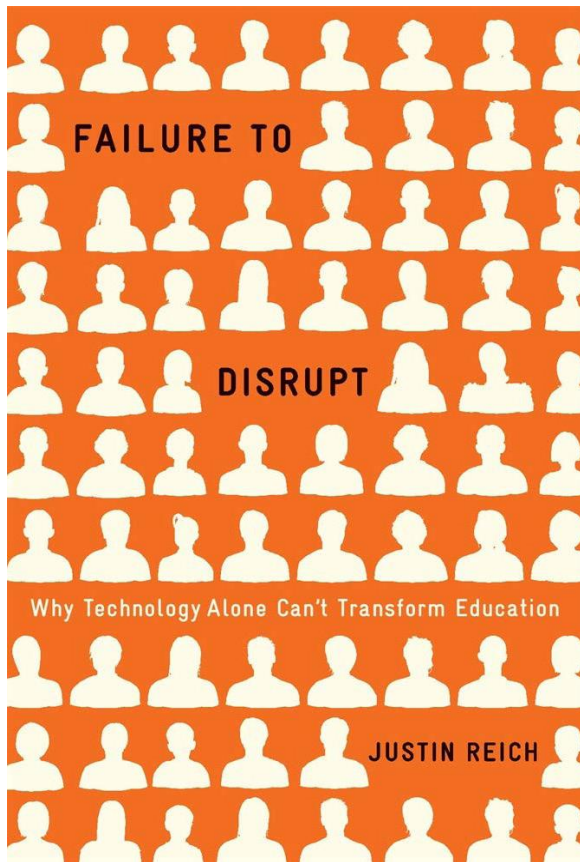
Colleges surprised a lot of people – and perhaps even themselves – by how they pivoted on a dime to remote instructional delivery last spring.

Workflows changed in so many ways – internal (communication became remote, interestingly in ways that appeared to flatten hierarchies); business processes (financial aid, registration, etc., all needed to find new ways to deliver their services); instructional (everything became remote, forcing professors and students alike to engage with technology, experiment with new techniques and tools); student support (tutoring, mental health).



*istockphoto.com*

# The 'Disruption' That Wasn't (or at Least Not As Planned)



“For Reich, the MOOC story is illustrative of the tendency of both techno-enthusiasts and wannabe education reformers to inappropriately apply simplistic business thinking to the complex realities of educational ecosystems. If Amazon can ‘disrupt’ retail and Netflix can ‘disrupt’ theaters, why can’t scaled online learning ‘disrupt’ higher education?”

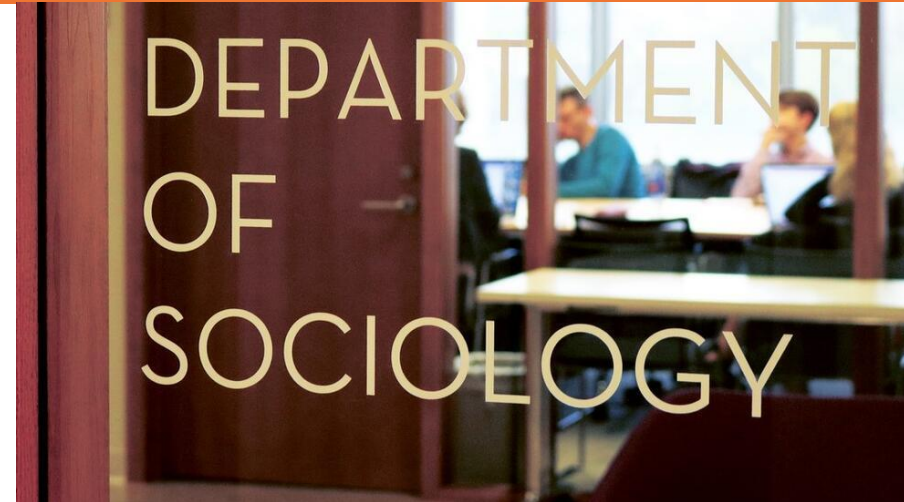
# The Role of the System

- Few institutions can continue to afford to be islands unto themselves.
- Formal systems and quasi-formal networks provide opportunities to extend the reach and marshal the collective resources of their members to address difficult problems.

# Rethinking Academic Structures

“Is the department still the best building block for organizing our work? Or do we inhibit our institutions by our tendency to conflate three central organizational models for our work: the department, the discipline and the program?”

*--David Rosowsky and Bridget Keegan*



# 'The Crisis Higher Education Needs'

“By exposing and intensifying long-standing problems involving access, affordability, equity and quality, the current emergency is forcing colleges and universities to confront problems that higher education has evaded and responsibilities that it has shirked.”

**--Steven Mintz, University of Texas at Austin**

- Controlling costs without sacrificing quality
- Ensuring equity and inclusion across the academic journey
- Increasing student persistence, momentum and completion
- Making the transfer process seamless
- Better preparing students for entry into the job market

With Thanks ...

