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Imagine if your campus systems were frictionless... blending perfectly together for a beautiful result.

When you look at your campus systems, what do you see? Inefficiency? Disorganization? Or a blurry collection of unrelated processes? When we look at your operations, we see separate processes coming together like a work of art that inspires administrators and students alike. It’s a vision that propels us to design systems that are efficient, integrated and beautiful. To never settle for less than state-of-the-art. In a word, frictionless.

MAKING HIGHER EDUCATION SMARTER
Filling in the blanks online

The fall semester has begun, and here we are, with more questions than answers. As I write this at the end of August, I can’t pretend to know how your institution is faring with the task of keeping COVID-19 from spreading and getting education done amid unprecedented challenges.

With things changing so rapidly, the editors of University Business are addressing issues as they arise each day and week. The coronavirus has forced us to transform our editorial approach into a digital-first model to better react to the realities on the ground.

So while I hope you find value in this printed magazine, in which we take pride, I also hope you’ll take advantage of our free website and newsletters where we offer news you can use daily.

In addition, you will find regular guest columns that offer insights and perspective, webinars that provide thought leadership and actionable ideas, and the latest on how colleges and universities are adapting to our new normal.

The pace of change is outstripping our print schedule, so keeping up to date online will fill in the blanks between issues.

Thank you, and best wishes for a successful fall semester.
—Eric Weiss, executive editor

Reasons to visit UniversityBusiness.com

Mining for media-worthy pitches

Here’s what higher ed communications teams can do to get strategic about telling pandemic-related campus stories.
UBmag.me/mining

Help students close religious divides

A study shows campus leaders should be more proactive in helping bridge gaps that exist.
UBmag.me/closedivides

College athlete mental health support

University leaders can be proactive in providing strategies to help players deal with uncertainty.
UBmag.me/athletesupport

5 college enrollment messages to send to parents

A parent survey reveals tips for communicating with parents of prospective students.
UBmag.me/messages

6 facts about how student debt is growing

A LendEDU report shows the average borrower in the class of 2019 owes $29,076 in student loan debt.
UBmag.me/debtgrowing
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In an instant, the entire higher ed community had to confront challenges that have been the norm for fully online institutions for decades. The vast majority of colleges and universities have a significant learning curve ahead as online higher ed’s upward trajectory is likely to continue. Higher ed leaders can learn a lot from fully online institutions about navigating our current reality.

I spent years leading institutions that primarily offered face-to-face instruction before leaving to serve as president of Ashford University, a fully online institution. I was surprised to discover how committed the academic and student support units were to student success, academic quality, accountability and continuous improvement.

To address “the elephant in the classroom,” it’s no secret that many online institutions have comparatively low retention and graduation rates. They tend to serve a greater proportion of at-risk students than traditional institutions, and because they often attend part-time and take longer than four years to graduate, it’s far easier for life to get in the way.

But dismissing the work being done by online institutions as a whole will do more harm than good. In many ways, online-first institutions are the “startups” of the education world. These institutions are expert in developing standards for course design. They experiment with technology’s potential to increase student engagement; and they are accustomed to a fast rate of change.

Here’s what traditional higher ed can learn from them.

Data-driven approaches
Teaching via online tools provides a rich dataset. Excelsior College, a nonprofit fully online institution, uses discussion and assignment data, logins and views to help intervene and provide support to students who need it. “We have developed individualized risk scores for each student that can be used to guide coaching and student support for those who need it most,” says Lisa Daniels, AVP for analytics and decision support for Excelsior.

The transparency of data found in online environments can actually support a more empathetic student-instructor relationship. Online discussion platforms like Packback, which focus on student inquiry and autonomy, enable instructors to be a “fly on the wall,” listening to how their students discuss course content and current events, and adjusting instruction accordingly.

Access, equity and community
While remote instruction can negatively impact access if not approached carefully, the medium also provides the potential for unprecedented inclusion and equity. Resources like the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (w3.org) and testing tools like WAVE (wave.webaim.org) can help faculty verify that content can be accessed using assistive technologies for students with disabilities.

CSU Global, for example, approaches accessibility holistically, by providing a variety of options for how students access content and classes—which allows students to customize a course load to suit their schedule. “By intentionally planning out the course experience, we are able to ensure we are meeting all types of learner needs and bringing all students into the fold,” says Karen Ferguson, provost of the online institution.

Intentional course design
Many fully online programs differ most notably from face-to-face institutions on the centralization of course design. Centralization is not a benefit in-and-of-itself, but when done well, it leads to a deep interconnectedness across courses—and an increased focus on students’ holistic learning experience.

IvyOnline, a branch of Ivy Tech Community College, has implemented a “master course” model that ensures a course addresses key objectives and aligns within the degree program.

The lasting cultural residue of the COVID-19 crisis will likely be a greater openness to online learning. This coming fall and beyond, we will see more courses adopting remote and asynchronous approaches. With the right approach, institutions can provide access to and support a much wider range of students. And while all institutions still have much to learn about educating in the digital environment, exemplary online institutions have hard-won lessons to share.

Dismissing the work being done by online institutions as a whole will do more harm than good.
IT SECURITY

COVID-era cybersecurity threats to mitigate

Top challenges leave institutional networks and research vulnerable

The cybersecurity challenges colleges face during the COVID pandemic are growing more in scale than in style, according to a panel of higher ed chief information security officers in a recent webinar hosted by the cybersecurity company Proofpoint.

Here’s how CISOs are leading their institutions in confronting three big threats:

1. Phishing. “We recognize phishing as the single greatest threat to privacy and security today,” said Michael Tran Duff, CISO at Stanford University. In such attacks, users are tricked into sharing passwords so a hacker can access a network, or a user is convinced to click on a link that will download malware and allow access that way.

The Ohio State University regularly phishing students and faculty as a way to train all users to spot threats, said CISO Helen Patton. Stanford also prioritizes phishing its users regularly but Duff said that has limited efficacy. Automating email systems to spot phishing attacks before they ever land in a user’s inbox is the ultimate goal for higher ed CISOs, he added.

2. Remote workers. Securing remote devices is not as easy as protecting on-campus computers. Stanford has launched “Cardinal Key,” an institution-wide initiative to go password-less, Duff said. A Cardinal Key is a digital certificate installed on a device that provides a user’s identity to a remote server.

Ohio State has “doubled down” on security awareness as more students and employees work remotely. These efforts include reminders about not using the same password for multiple sites and regularly updating operating systems.

3. Protecting research. The FBI has warned institutions of attempts to steal COVID research, said Erik Decker, chief security and privacy officer at University of Chicago Medicine. This environment can be jarring to researchers who, by the very nature of the work, share information with other scholars.

“One vigorous cybersecurity technique that is gaining traction in higher ed is called “zero trust,” which strictly limits access to networks and requires extensive verification.

A shift to this level of protection will require user buy-in, Patton said. “In higher ed, we’re all about throwing open doors, sharing our knowledge with work and trusting everybody. To say don’t trust anybody, validate everything, is a message that really clangs.”

—Matt Zalaznick

STUDENT SUCCESS

First-generation student support strategies

First-generation students were more likely than other students to see their college careers disrupted in three key ways during the COVID-19 pandemic and online learning, a study has found. These students have faced more severe financial hardships, more difficult home environments and greater difficulties adapting to distance learning, according to the survey by the Student Experience in the Research University Consortium based at UC Berkeley.

The authors of a related report recommend that colleges and universities provide additional scholarships, grant funding and work-study opportunities by proactively reaching out to first-generation to notify them of these programs. Staff should ensure these students know they are eligible for financial aid and help them complete FAFSA applications.

Consider expanding the hours of campus food pantries, while also offering free, no-touch options for picking up food, the report advises. First-gen students may also need emergency housing, as well as short-term housing options with reduced rates.

Counseling centers should tailor mental health services to the unique challenges of first-generation students, such as those who experience “imposter syndrome,” in which students doubt they belong on a college campus, the report says. Campus career services, meanwhile, could assist students’ family members who have lost jobs.

Course and online meetup time scheduling support could also make a difference in these students’ lives. First-generation students are less likely than other students to be able to meet during scheduled virtual class times.

Access survey results at UBmag.me/firstgensupport. —Matt Zalaznick

Matt Zalaznick

4 | September/October 2020

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NEW DATA:
CAMPUS DINING SERVICES MID-COVID-19
STUDENTS AND PARENTS TELL US WHAT THEY WANT NOW

A recent Aramark survey revealed students’ and parents’ attitudes, preferences and behaviors about returning to campus and on-campus dining.

These findings (plus additional insights from trusted sources), combined with leading technological innovations, will help us successfully design the right dining services for your campus, so you can better meet the evolving wants and needs of your students and their parents.

Q. Will Students Return to Campus this Year?

79% of students did not change their first-choice higher ed institution due to COVID-19

76% are excited about the prospect of returning to campus in the fall

71% are likely to return to campus when it opens

42% will not delay returning under any circumstance

Q. Where Will Students Live?

76% plan to live on campus

Q. How Do Students Want to Receive Meal Plan Options?

42% want clear communications and responsiveness from the campus

For more valuable insights, success stories, and return to campus solutions, visit campusinsights.aramark.com
Q. What Will Entice Students to Participate in Meal Plans?

- **41%** ability to use meal plans to buy groceries
- **38%** dining options open 24/7
- **27%** ability to order food using an online app
- **24%** member rewards like credits
- **20%** delivery to on-campus locations

Q. What New Behaviors Have Students Adopted?

- **74%** wash hands more often
- **41%** disinfect services they dine on
- **50%** order delivery or takeout
- **64%** carry hand sanitizer with them

Q. What Do Parents Think About Campuses Reopening?

- **77%** of their children are likely to return to campus this year
- **67%** of parents still believe college is a good investment for their children
- **53%** say their child’s education plans have also changed as a result of COVID-19
- **53%** would like to see students be able to take classes on campus

Q. What Do Parents Think About Dining Services?

- **58%** would like to receive updates on dining safety on campus
- **32%** expect students to participate in meal plans
- **24%** would like to see more visible cleaning

Campus Dining Services Best Practices

Several best practices emerged from the research including:

- Provide more grab-n-go options and healthy meal options
- Allow students to use their meal plans at on-campus c-stores and coffee shop
- Equip dining personnel with enhanced safety attire
- Inform parents about new dining facility cleaning services by email

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Higher ed employee health

A look at five health benefits and policy areas colleges and universities are managing and communicating about during the pandemic

By Melissa Ezarik

Just one of many coronavirus concerns that cropped up along with campus closures pertains to employee health. As employers, colleges and universities value a healthy workforce and they needed to communicate quickly about what health benefits and policies mean for employees who become ill or need time off for caregiving responsibilities. Messaging evolved from sharing FAQs about current benefits to communicating about preventive physical and mental health care, including new virtual wellness programs for employees. And now, as campuses are reopening, many employees are hearing—or will hear—about health safety measures and policy changes.

As with every other aspect of the pandemic, there’s no instruction manual to consult for managing questions campus HR departments may have in communicating with employees.

Here’s a look at five areas being addressed and what related actions higher ed officials are taking.

1. **Wellness opportunities**

Now more than ever, employers are focused on promoting both physical and emotional health. Although common in higher ed, employee wellness programs have historically focused on in-person activity. Nearly half of respondents to a June UB survey said their institutions had launched new virtual employee wellness programs during campus closures. Several colleges created web portals to make finding wellness opportunities simple for employees—many of whom have always seen the in-person interaction on campus as a benefit of working within higher ed.

“There’s been a huge emphasis on mental health and staying connected,” says Lisa Spinks, higher ed leader of Gallagher’s benefits and HR consulting division.

Andy Brantley, president and CEO of CUPA-HR, the higher ed HR association, expects most virtual wellness programs to continue this academic year.

2. **Sick leave policy changes**

“Stay home if you are sick” is the mantra everywhere. Higher ed sick leave time and accrual options have tended to be generous, and the pandemic has gotten everyone to closely consider how best to manage sick leave on campus, Brantley says. “There’s a heightened level of urgency around employees staying home.”

The months of working remotely have shown that employees are still productive. “Someone can have a minor illness and continue to work from home if they wish,” says Brantley. “This crisis has caused all of us to be much more flexible about how we shape work overall and how we interact with our employees.”

Spinks knows of colleges offering 80 hours or more of time off if an employee needs to be isolated, even if it’s to care for an ill family member. “I’m not seeing unlimited leave, but I am seeing very liberal policies, allowing people to tap into extra sick or vacation time,” she says. In some cases,
When campuses shut down in March and no one knew what the next few months would bring, employees had a lot of questions about their own health—including whether COVID-19-related tests and treatments were covered by insurance and how falling ill or caring for a loved one would be covered by sick leave. UB surveyed readers about their institutions’ coronavirus communication, benefit and policy changes, and future outlook in these areas. (For context, 92% of respondents anticipated either some of all campus offices would be open for the fall.)

**IMPACT ON FUTURE HEALTH BENEFITS**

Likelihood of health care benefits being reduced or employee cost increasing this year
- Very likely: 32%
- Somewhat likely: 29%
- Somewhat unlikely: 24%
- Very unlikely: 16%

**BENEFITS-RELATED COMMUNICATION ABOUT COVID**

- 85% of respondents whose HR departments communicated to employees specifically about COVID-19 as related to sick leave, telehealth options and other employee health benefits.
- 72% of those who recall receiving additional updates for employees since the initial outreach.

**EMPLOYEE INSIGHTS:**
Communication and insights came not just from HR but also from the communications department, via supervisors and in some cases directly from the health insurance providers. The FAQ format was commonly used in messaging, which often included wellness tips.

**SICK LEAVE POLICY EVOLUTION**

- Colleges that have updated employee sick leave policy due to the pandemic:
  - Have not updated it: 10%
  - Have updated it: 42%
  - Have not updated yet but plan to: 40%
  - Not sure: 8%

**HEALTH AND WELLNESS OPTIONS**

- 72% of respondents whose institutions have increased the emphasis on the importance of preventive health care and individual behaviors that can prevent illness.
- 32% of those whose institutions kept an on-campus health care center open throughout campus closures for staff to access care.
- 49% of colleges that launched new employee virtual wellness programs during campus closures.

**EMPLOYEE INSIGHTS:**

- Many respondents commented that they are very concerned about the need for budget cuts in the coming months. Although it’s not clear that telehealth options will continue indefinitely, one respondent noted that the use of telehealth from January to April 2020 had surpassed the use of telehealth by 10 times in all of 2019.

**WELLNESS NOTABLES:**

- **Virginia Tech’s** Hokie Wellness at Home, for anyone in the VT community, offers activities and support covering 12 areas of wellness. A daily wellness challenge helps in building well-being into employees’ daily routines, and the Unwind Offline events support those who have a love-hate relationship with their mobile device and want to learn to put the phone down.
- **Texas State University’s** WellCats program provides structured, remote individual and group wellness activities such as exercise classes, wellness education workshops and health behavior change coaching. On the nutrition front, employees can access 1:1 nutrition consultations or take a cooking class, such as “Founding Fathers’ Favorites: Healthful versions of past presidents’ favorite meals.”

**HEALTH BENEFITS AND POLICIES SURVEY**
Higher ed employee health

she’s hearing about these policies getting major revisions.

In the UB survey, half of respondents’ employers had either updated or planned to update their sick leave policy because of the pandemic.

In terms of health insurance plans in higher ed, explains Spinks, “benefits have always been very rich, relative to other industries.” In the spring she saw some colleges waiving the costs of care related to coronavirus illness.

Detailed communication from campus HR departments about benefits (and staying well) started early, as schools shut down in March, and continued with frequent updates, she says. “Most have been very articulate about it.” More recent communication shared return-to-campus plans and how the college could accommodate employees in high-risk categories.

With a large percentage of higher ed institutions relying on tuition revenue and/or state dollars to operate, this will be a fall of “huge unknowns,” says Brantly. All benefits will be vulnerable to budget cuts. “Maintaining the status quo is a huge challenge for all of our institutions,” he says, adding that many institutions have a January health insurance renewal.

As Spinks notes, the aging higher ed workforce may be more concerned with health benefit details than millennial employees. Overall, she says, analysts are expecting decreases in health-care costs because of the pause on non-critical care for many people this year.

Campus officials have been hesitant in the past to make health benefit changes, but right now “it’s a matter of existing or not for many institutions,” Spinks says. So she can envision both less benefits offered and an increase in employee cost share.

Higher ed leaders needing to cut costs are looking at “strategies and tactics that have the least impact on faculty and staff,” says Scott Nostaja, the national human capital practice leader and a senior vice president at Segal.

But health benefits have always been such “an important part of the compensation mix,” says Nostaja, who formerly served as chief operations officer for the University at Buffalo in New York. “It’ll be challenging to change those—and be dependent on the individual financial situation of each and every college.”

He anticipates more changes to the operational side of the house, such as process and policy redesigns and new organizational structures.

As any type of cut gets communicated, Brantly advises being open and honest, and explaining the full picture—not just, for example, that health insurance may be changing but that cuts have to be made across the board and health insurance is one element of that, which will allow jobs to be saved. Hence, such announcements may best be communicated by the president rather than from HR.

Spinks expects to see continued emphasis on employee resources, particularly information on well-being and related services available. Institutional leaders should aim to be “a voice of reason and compassion,” she says. “You have to balance your tone in terms of trying to reassure people and being clear about the future as you know it.”

For campuses that haven’t yet reopened to faculty and staff, that communication should include explanations of the “new normal” for working on site, which may well involve temperature checks and/or daily self-reporting procedures related to symptoms or exposure. “The CDC has suggested we’re within our range of employer responsibility to require temperature checks,” says Spinks.

Institutions such as the University of Washington have developed a way for employees to complete an “attestation statement” before coming in to work. According to the university, the enterprise-wide tool (available through the Workday system and developed in-house) must be used by all staff, including student employees, academic personnel working on-site, and any contractors and vendors who may be working on campus.

In sharing information and decisions that impact employees over the next several months, Brantly says it’s important for campus leaders to remember that all of it is impacting peoples’ lives. “It doesn’t mean we don’t need to make the decision we need to make. We just have to [take] the extra time to make sure we are carefully considering how things are communicated.”

Melissa Ezarik is senior managing editor of UB.
The key to completing the fall semester at the University of New Haven, and at colleges across the nation, will be holding community COVID infections down.

Even though Connecticut maintained one of the lowest transmission rates in the nation throughout the summer, keeping students on campus still requires strict adherence to all safety precautions, says Summer McGee, the dean of the School of Health Sciences, who is overseeing the university’s reopening as its COVID-19 coordinator.

“With a high level of compliance with mask-wearing and physical distancing, combined with testing, I’m cautiously optimistic we’ll be able to get through the fall semester,” she says. “We have to make sure everybody remains vigilant.”

Here are some snapshots of how efforts to prevent COVID outbreaks will alter campus life across the country in 2020-21.

Self-assessing symptoms

Students, staff and faculty at the University Central Florida will assess COVID-19 symptoms via their school’s mobile app. Students, staff and faculty at the University Central Florida will assess COVID-19 symptoms via their school’s mobile app. Students, staff and faculty at the University Central Florida will assess COVID-19 symptoms via their school’s mobile app.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS—A student at the University of Central Florida self-assesses for COVID-19 symptoms with the school’s mobile app (left). In Texas, a San Jacinto College student receives her degree during a drive-up graduation ceremony this summer (right).
also enlisted student government members and other student leaders to ensure their classmates follow safety precautions such as wearing face coverings, social distancing and other responsible behaviors. “We’ve been trying to emphasize that the semester is in their hands,” McGee says. “How long we’ll be able to operate depends on their behavior and their choices.”

With many university staffers working remotely, large office spaces have been converted into the classrooms. Large dining halls are serving as additional classroom and event space.

Per state of Connecticut regulations, 10% of the campus population are being tested for COVID weekly. These random tests should help identify students or staff who are asymptomatic.

If students have to stay home, course materials are being recorded and provided online. Faculty are asked to record courses should they fall ill and have to stay home.

**Foodservice flexibility**

At the University of Rochester in New York, students can use the Grubhub app to order meals from dining halls and pick up groceries from the campus food market. The market's hours have been expanded and is now open from 7 am to midnight, says Cam Schaaf, the director of Campus Dining Services and Auxiliary Operations.

These added services should take some strain off dining halls and help the university accommodate the reduced number of students on campus this fall, Schaaf says.

Inside the dining halls, self-service meals have been eliminated, seating is limited, and cleaning and sanitizing is

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**3 COVID-era strategies for reopening facilities, including ‘bubbles’**

Reimagining the design of physical and virtual campus spaces is a key strategy for keeping college and university campuses open during the first full semester of the COVID era. Here are some ideas from Safdar Abidi, higher education principal with the international architecture firm, Perkins and Will:

1. **Create family-style COVID ‘bubbles’**

Similar to how families have self-isolated during the coronavirus pandemic, small groups of students can relax safety precautions if they are arranged into ‘bubbles’ that will live and learn together throughout the semester.

2. **Establish waiting rooms**

Administrators should also consider using other spare rooms to allow students to gather and maintain safe physical distance while they’re waiting for the previous class to end and theirs to begin.

3. **Maintain access and equity**

Administrators will also have to ensure students who use wheelchairs or who have other disabilities can safely access de-densified classrooms. For example, signage must also give these students priority use of elevators in residence halls or other facilities while encouraging students without disabilities to use stairways.

Read more online: UBmag.me/bubbles

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rigorous. Supervisors serve as hosts, helping students social distance while waiting in line and directing the traffic flow. Masks are required except when eating. Though menus may be simplified and some recipes modified, dining services is still meeting the dietary need of students with allergies or religious preferences, Shauf says. All food service employees took COVID-safety training during the summer.

A key to getting buy-in from students is being open to listening their ideas for adjusting meal service. Shauf says he responds to students’ emails seven days a week. “They understand the restrictions we’re all under,” Shauf says. “We’ve listened to them and made changes. They appreciate that we’re trying to meet their needs for variety.”

**Research recovers**

By mid-summer, the University of Rochester had reopened about 140 lab spaces, allowing about 675 researchers to go back to work. Before resuming, however, the lead researchers had to go through a rigorous review process to ensure all COVID-safety guidelines—such as use of PPE and social distancing—would be followed, says John Tarduno, the dean of research for arts, sciences and engineering.

One of the biggest challenges was revamping training sessions between faculty researchers and students. Hands-on training involved wearing masks, gloves, face shields and other PPE while other types of training are now done remotely.

Researchers are also more regularly working at night and on weekends to reduce the number of people in the labs at any one time. “Everyone realizes that to continue our research enterprise, we have to keep up this diligence,” Tarduno says.

**Digital literacy during COVID**

College libraries, already a key provider of digital literacy and wellness, are finding new ways to offer guidance to students as online learning continues into the fall on most campuses.

Since the massive shift online in the spring, some students and faculty have experienced “video chat fatigue,” says Julia Feerrar, the head of digital literacy initiatives for University Libraries at Virginia Tech. “It can take a physical toll. It’s hard to make eye contact through a video chat, and we’re sitting more at those screens, not having to walk.”

This situation can leave many craving the social connections that would naturally occur when campuses are open—even the short chats that follow when students and faculty “bump into each” while transitioning between classes and other activities.

Virginia Tech librarians have replicated these interactions by hosting online book clubs and other virtual groups that encourage students to use the internet and social media more productively, Feerrar says.

She and her team have joined online classes, such as first-year writing programs, to share guidance in digital literacy and well-being. “We teach workshops that help students evaluate the places where they spend time online and think about their goals in those places,” she says. “Weeding out some of those places can be really fulfilling.”

**Matt Zalaznick is senior writer of UB.**
New UB survey finds COVID-19 crisis causing higher ed to reexamine its core systems

University Business and Workday partnered to develop and deploy a survey of higher education leaders from campuses around the country in June 2020, asking them how their core operational systems have been able to meet the needs of their institutions during the school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. 410 higher education leaders participated in the survey, from two- and four-year, public and private institutions with a variety of enrollment sizes.

Reexamining core operational systems
Respondents were asked if the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic had caused their institution to reexamine whether its core operational systems (ERP, SIS, Financial Management, Human Capital Management) are capable of meeting the needs of the institution today and in the future. Some 56% said yes, with 20% saying “Yes, significantly” and 36% saying “Yes, somewhat.”

53% of respondents said, “We have managed to maintain business continuity with our current systems, but it has required investments in time, effort and new tools or technologies.”

Has the COVID-19 pandemic caused your institution to reexamine whether your core operational systems are meeting the needs of your institution today, and will be able to meet your needs in the future?

- Yes, significantly: 20%
- Yes, somewhat: 36%
- Very little: 17%
- No, not at all: 13%

Similarly, respondents were also asked if they felt that these same core systems (ERP, SIS, Financial Management and Human Capital Management) had enabled their institution to maintain business continuity during the crisis, without requiring additional investments. While 34% said they had maintained continuity without additional investments, the leading answer by far was “We have managed to maintain continuity with our current systems, but it has required investments in time, effort and new tools or technologies,” selected by 53%. Another 5% said they had “struggled to maintain business continuity using our current systems, which have been inadequate.”
The next question asked respondents if they felt that their current ERP, SIS, Financial Management and Human Capital Management systems offered enough flexibility to allow their institution to adapt in emergencies or times of uncertainty, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The most respondents (62%) described these systems as offering only “some level of flexibility.”

IT infrastructure, and access to data

Respondents were also asked if their institution was required to invest specifically in additional IT infrastructure (i.e. additional VPN licenses) in order to deliver or operate core systems remotely. 9% said “Yes, significantly,” 32% said “Yes, moderately” and 27% said “Yes, but a small amount,” for a total of 68% saying they had been required to make these investments. Only 18% said “Not at all.”

The next question asked respondents how confident they were that they or their institution’s leaders had timely access to all the data required to make strategic decisions, both in the near and long term. Just 26% said they were “extremely confident,” while 54% said they were only “somewhat confident,” 14% had a “low level of confidence” and 4% had “no confidence at all.”

“The COVID-19 pandemic and the sudden move to remote teaching, learning and working have been unprecedented in higher education,” says Robert Steele, Vice President, Higher Education from Workday. “It’s more vital than ever that higher education leaders have core systems that can meet the needs of their institutions, provide adequate insights and offer enough flexibility to adapt to this dramatically changed environment.”

During this volatile time, one thing has become clear: institutions with flexible, cloud-based finance, HR, and student systems are better able to respond to shifting conditions.

As higher education institutions continue to assess the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on their people, students, budget, and learning delivery models, Workday remains committed to helping you respond, recover, and emerge stronger in this rapidly changing world. To learn more, visit [http://www.workday.com](http://www.workday.com)
Survey explores access control at campus facilities during COVID-19

*University Business* partnered with SALTO Systems to develop and deploy a survey of higher education leaders in the UB audience in August 2020. The survey explored issues related to physical access control at campus facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, and a total of 627 higher education leaders with a variety of job titles and from many sizes and types of institutions participated.

**Access control systems**
Respondents were asked to identify which types of systems or technologies their institutions use for access control on campus. The leading answers by far were physical keys (77%), followed by magnetic stripe ID cards (62%). Additional answers included RFID-enabled cards (24%), key fobs (16%), PIN numbers (11%) and mobile credentials (5%). Just 4% of respondents selected “None of the above.”

**Challenges with access control**
All respondents were asked if it was an ongoing challenge for their institution to issue and maintain access control credentials such as traditional brass keys, ID cards and PIN numbers. Some 58% of respondents said this was challenging, with 11% describing this as “significantly” challenging. Similarly, more than half of respondents (52%) indicated that replacing lost or stolen keys and ID cards requires a significant amount of time, money and resources for their institution.

**Which of these does your institution use for access control on campus?**

- **77%** Physical keys
- **62%** ID cards
- **24%** RFID-enabled cards
- **16%** Key fobs
- **11%** PIN numbers
- **5%** Mobile credentials

**Is it an ongoing challenge for your institution to issue and maintain access control credentials such as keys, ID cards, PIN numbers, etc.?**

- **58%** Yes
- **42%** No
Mobile credentials

75% of respondents said they believe that their staff, faculty and students would find more value and convenience in a touchless or mobile-based facilities access system, with 26% of respondents saying they “definitely” would.

When asked if, in light of COVID-19, their institution was considering touchless/contactless building access systems instead of keys or other tools requiring physical interaction, 24% said this was under consideration at their school, while 5% said they were already in the process of implementation.

While 78% of respondents said they do not currently provide mobile credentials, 40% of them said that they believe their institution will provide mobile credentials in the near future. 47% of all respondents said that if their institution had electronic access control with contactless or mobile credentials, these systems would provide a competitive advantage over other institutions when it came to student recruitment and retention.

Those respondents currently using mobile credentials on campus are using them in a variety of ways, including meal plans (14%), point-of-sale or cashless vending (12%), printing (11%), facilities/building access (8%) and student housing (6%).

When asked if their access control system allowed them to gather the necessary data to manage contact tracing if they needed to respond to COVID-19 infections on campus, 28% said no, while 31% said they didn’t know if they had this capability and 11% said they did not have electronic access control systems at all.

“The survey found that the majority of colleges and universities are still using traditional brass keys for campus access control, which is both costly to maintain and poses additional risks to user safety and security in normal times, and a significantly elevated risk in times like during our current pandemic,” says Steve Burk, Director of Marketing at SALTO Systems.

“The survey also showed that college and university leaders understand that contactless mobile-based credentials are the future of campus access control, a trend that may have found its tipping point as a result of the demands for touchless physical environments and contact tracing capabilities in the era of COVID-19.”

SALTO Systems provides state-of-the-art access control technologies that can help to create safe, convenient learning environments on any campus. To learn more, visit www.salto.us.
The relatively recent transition to online learning is evidenced by the growth of online education providers in addition to existing universities expanding their online education efforts. Adding a worldwide pandemic and the declining numbers of high school graduates to the growth of online learning, many traditional universities are at a breaking point.

The coronavirus-caused move to online learning has taught the college-going public much about what actually happens in the classroom. Once the aura of college was stripped down to the 15 credit hours students typically spend in class each week, the reality of some aspects of college teaching emerged. Many students realized that their faculty members were not synchronously interacting with them, but instead operating like correspondence courses of old—sending out readings, assignments and tests.

Although this asynchronous learning is a more equitable approach with regards to students in multiple time zones and without high-speed internet, equity comes at the cost of meaningful faculty-student interaction.

Why haven’t universities, especially during a world crisis, better solved the challenge of effectively using video-based online learning to educate? Here are five reasons higher education should be welcoming the increased adoption of video and online learning.

1. **Learning from video has shown to be just as effective as reading.**
   
   It’s not that learning by video is better than reading. It’s just that research has not come to a clear conclusion on one format being better than another.
   
   The quality of the instruction in the video and the writing of the author matter. The current generation of students has a clear preference for video over reading. If learning from video is equally effective as reading, and students prefer video, why not allow students to watch video of course content, in addition to reading, to prepare for class? Thankfully, instructors no longer need to allocate time in class to show videos.

2. **Student-faculty interaction increases with the use of video in online learning.**

   While still leading classes, faculty can focus on implementing more high-impact practices for learning—discussion, practice by doing, teaching others, etc. Instead of presenting lectures that try to keep everyone listening, professors can engage with students and increase their exploration of the content. In addition to emphasizing students’ learning (versus teaching), this shift should also allow faculty to more meaningfully engage with course content and result in more scholarship (such as research and presentations).

3. **Higher education has been and will continue to constantly adapt.**

   The first 150 years of higher education in America was centered around learning Greek, Latin, the Trivium and the Quadrivium. Students used to start college in their early teens. Before the late 1800s few colleges taught the applied professions. In the 1900s, institutions integrated genders, races, ages, ability-levels, nationalities and much more. In short, higher ed has been adapting to the needs of students and society for centuries.
Instructors are already teaching using online video; they just need to acknowledge that and welcome its use.

A 2019 report from Kaltura, The State of Video in Education, found that 99% of colleges had faculty who were regularly incorporating video into courses. Eight out of 10 classes were using video in the classroom and two-thirds were integrating video for student assignments and flipped classrooms. It leads one to wonder if there is a fear that universities that promote the use of video in learning lessens the quality of the learning experience when in fact it can improve it.

Video of renowned teachers can supplement existing faculty teaching the material.

The current assumption is that in-person teaching is just as good, if not better, than a video of one of the best teachers on the topic. The reality is that this is rarely true. Unfortunately, this is what many students and parents discovered March through May 2020. The fact is, there are probably hundreds, if not thousands, of professors elsewhere who are better at using video to teach.

The use of quality online video and active learning experiences are becoming the future of successful college learning. If colleges do not start making proactive decisions about the future of teaching and learning, students will use their college choices to make those decisions for them.

Since stepping down from his role as Dean at Baylor University in Texas in 2019, Jeff Doyle has worked in Institutional Effectiveness at Baylor. He assists administrative and student support departments in their efforts to plan, assess progress and take action. His blog, Deep Thoughts on Higher Education, can be found at blogs.baylor.edu/jeff_doyle.
Crisis sparks creative problem-solving. Education has responded in real-time to the pandemic, shifting entire campuses online overnight. But in the process, systemic inequity and disparities have been exacerbated, disproportionately affecting Black and brown communities. Learning from home relies not only on tech access but on physical space, family support and emotional bandwidth for learning and working.

How can we take what we have learned during this time to impart positive change for education—one that ultimately shapes healthier, wiser and more equitable communities? Out of the heartbreak and inconvenience of our global situation, education has a rare opportunity to exponentially advance forward.

Gensler’s Education Engagement Index and Learning from Home Survey has shown that if we are to design for all learners, we must design to the edges. Each student has a jagged profile that uniquely describes how he/she best engages with learning. If we can design to extreme users rather than to the average, we ultimately design for everyone.

Each institution must focus on creating spaces and experiences, physical or virtual, that empower every learner and move beyond the mythical “average.” Here are five ways in which the future campus can support this approach:

1. **Personalized learning**
   Integrated platforms and digital environments will allow for personalized learning pathways and pace. Many higher ed leaders are researching the use of AI to analyze student data and personalize learning. Data on virtual student engagement can help in calibrating virtual and physical settings to learner needs. Campus spaces will need to enable a fluid transition between digital and in-person coursework.

2. **Telepresence in education**
   Digitally enhanced settings enrich the learning process by creating remote connections. The normalcy of virtual learning is breaking down barriers of connecting across continents and cultures like never before, and this poses opportunities for contextual learning. Telepresence offers an enhanced way to meet students where they are and address mental health, career and academic counseling and homelife.

3. **Tactile abstractions through augmented and mixed-reality**
   The pandemic has posed a major challenge for disciplines that rely on hands-on learning. Although AR and VR don’t entirely make up for this void, their increasing ubiquity and influence for training and curricula has never been more current. Equitability is a key benefit of this technology. Ease of access is increasing, and each user can engage in ways that meet their individual needs.

   Instructors can offload some learning activities to the virtual space and prioritize classroom use for activities that heavily rely on specialized equipment and in-person interaction.

4. **Future-proof with hyper-flexibility**
   Introducing hyper-flexible spaces that can shift seamlessly between tech-enabled and analog uses will be a key mechanism for supporting personalized learning, telepresence and AR/VR. In tandem, expanding infrastructure—including the technology and staff support—will be a critical investment, providing the ability to expand and contract uses more rapidly.

   Private offices and huddle rooms might become one in the same as working from home impacts spaces needs; classrooms will continue to vary in allowable density due to social distancing and active learning needs; and underutilized spaces may be repurposed for new space types.

5. **Real-time feedback**
   Before the pandemic, machine intelligence and smart tech were emerging in the built environment. Beyond uses for contact tracing in the near-term, they can aid in understanding where people spend time, how they use space and broader patterns of behavior. As campus leaders look to prioritize investment in the face of uncertainty and address groups equitably, this real-time feedback will be invaluable in adapting space to evolving user needs.

   The pandemic has drawn attention to challenges around equity and designing for multiple paths to success with which education and our communities have historically struggled. Leveraging what we have learned can only lead to positive outcomes, evolving campuses to equitably address the user experience and each learner’s abilities and learning process.

   Education was made for this moment. It has all the right resources and people—thinkers, change makers, curious minds, and passionate advocates—to envision and implement what comes next.

Meghan Webster is a principal and global education practice leader at Gensler (gensler.com). A frequent blogger and speaker, she started the Dialogues with Gensler discussion series, covering trends in higher ed.
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