TOP IT ISSUES OF 2021
Emerging from the Pandemic

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Most students believe school re-opening was the wrong choice.
Most students believe school re-opening was the wrong choice

How a Small College Thinks It Can Survive Covid-19

By Scott Carlson  |  AUGUST 4, 2020

Monmouth College, in Illinois
Most students believe school re-opening was the wrong choice

**Felicia Campbell, Professor Who Studied Gambling and Pop Culture, Dies at 89**

Ms. Campbell was the longest-serving professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She died of complications of the novel coronavirus.

**FACING THE FALL**

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*COURTESY OF MONMOUTH COLLEGE*
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**Covid-19 Pushes RAs to the Breaking Point: Some Are Striking. Others Quit.**

A freshman (right) talks with her resident adviser during move-in on one campus. RAs across the country face increased pressures this fall to enforce public-health guidelines and counsel students on Covid-19 risks.
Most students believe school re-opening was the wrong choice

Felicia Campbell, Professor Who Studied Gambling and Pop Culture, Dies at 89
Ms. Campbell was the longest-serving professor at the University of Iowa and was known for her expertise in psychology and the behavioral sciences.

Iowa Universities Are Caught Between Covid-19 and Politics
By Eric Kelderman | SEPTEMBER 7, 2020

A poster promoting a protest last month against in-person classes features a photo of the U. of Iowa’s president, Bruce Harreld, as a “missing person.”

In opening their campuses this fall, the presidents of Iowa State University and the University of Iowa have tried to reassure students, parents, and faculty that returning to in-person instruction is safe and that they have the ability to rapidly respond to new outbreaks of the virus.

By Megan | SEPTEMBER 18, 2020

It talks with her resident adviser during move-in on one campus. RAs across the country are facing increased pressures this fall to enforce public-health guidelines and counsel students about the risks.
The Pandemic will end
What happens next?
Alternative Futures
A new approach for 2021
Assumptions for the 2021 Top Issues

1. The Pandemic will begin to resolve some time in 2021
Assumptions for the 2021 Top Issues

1. The Pandemic will begin to resolve some time in 2021
2. Our scenarios should be high-level views of possible recovery visions
The Scenarios

**Restore:**
Figuring out how to get back to where we were before the pandemic

**Evolve**
Adapting to the new normal

**Transform**
Redefining our institution and taking an active role in creating the innovative future of higher education
Assumptions for the 2021 Top Issues

3. A single scenario would probably fit very few institutions
The Vote: 19 issues *(same as always)*

- Affordability and digital equity
- Agility and change
- Cost management
- Data and analytics
- Digital transformation
- Enrollment and recruitment
- Equitable access to education
- Financial health
- Holistic student experience
- Information security
- Institutional culture
- Institutional innovation
- Online learning
- Risk management
- Student success
- Technology alignment
- Technology strategy
- Technology-enabled curriculum
- Work from anywhere
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Three Paths for Higher Education’s Emergence from the Pandemic

- Restore
- Evolve
- Transform
The Top IT Issues

Restore

What to do to get back to where we were before the pandemic
Restore: Extinction Event?

Percentage of institutions that fit the Restore scenario for each area of institutional focus

- 24% Institutional financial health and business model
- 9% Recruiting and supporting students
- 9% Culture and workforce
- 8% Education and academic work
- 3% Technology and data

EDUCAUSE TOP IT ISSUES, 2021
1. Cost Management

Reducing institutional costs and increasing workforce efficiency through process redesign and automation, data and analytics, and other technology solutions

Panelist Perspective

Melissa Kramer Cresswell
Director of Client Engagement & Planning
Bryn Mawr
2. Online learning

Strengthening online and hybrid education by providing on-demand support for course development and delivery and advocating for processes, policies, and support structures to increase student and institutional readiness.
3. Financial health

Revising budget models and IT governance to preserve critical IT operations and capacities in the face of institutional financial challenges

Panelist Perspective

Cynthia Herrera Lindstrom
Assistant Vice Chancellor & CIO
University of Illinois Chicago
4. Affordability and digital equity

Providing increased support for students’ technology needs and enabling technology availability from anywhere, particularly off campus

Greg Pitter
Director of Application Services
Portland Community College
5. Information security

Providing information security leadership that supports faculty, students, and staff returning to campus, while being budget-conscious and ensuring a safe and secure recovery.

Panelist Perspective

Brian Coats
Associate Vice President,
Technology Operations and Planning
University of Maryland, Baltimore
Evolve
Adapting to the new normal
The Top IT Issues

**Evolve**

*Adaptive Evolution to Meet Post-Pandemic Students Where They Are*

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1. **Student Success**
   - Student support services to help students attain academic & career goals

2. **Equitable Access to Education**
   - Providing technologies, support, and policies for diverse users

3. **Online Learning**
   - Progressing from emergency remote teaching to online learning

4. **Information Security**
   - Developing a cybersecurity operations strategy

5. **Financial Health**
   - Developing new funding sources

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*EDUCAUSE TOP IT ISSUES, 2021*
1. Student Success
Advancing student support services to help students attain their academic and career goals by integrating data systems, user interfaces, policies, and guided pathways

What will evolve?
• Interest in using additional personal and situational data about students

Bottom line
• Student success efforts must be holistic and comprehensive

Challenges
• Affording new investments
• Students’ situations will be more precarious
What if the pandemic continues beyond 2021?

• Financial challenges will increase
• Helping the students at greatest risk will become even harder
• Online services may expand and improve, as reliance on them continues
Panelist Perspective

When I think of the new normal, what I think of opportunities to empower students, and to create more accountability, especially for the adult learner.

As we’ve moved to online, and everything’s become a little bit more trackable and transparent, I’m hoping that we really empower students in the new pathways.

Shannon McCarty
Associate Vice President
Center for Innovation in Learning
National University
2. Equitable Access to Education

Providing technologies, support, and policies for diverse users and equitable access to bridge the digital divide and reduce equity gaps

What will evolve?

• Recognition of institutions’ responsibility for ensuring equitable access to education

Bottom line

• Providing equitable access extends far beyond network connectivity and requires understanding the full range of challenges students face

Challenges

• Institutions’ existential struggles overshadowing making-things-better struggles

• Empathy deficits, induced by pandemic exhaustion

• Diversity of needs and situations
What if the pandemic continues beyond 2021?

• The pandemic reality will become the new normal
• Educational equity initiatives will be incorporated into student success initiatives
• Partnerships and legislative support may increase
Panelist Perspective

What can we do because of this crisis that we wouldn't have otherwise been able to do?

I think that some partnerships are now going to be possible because it's become clear to everybody just how severe these problems are and how much we need to bring people together and make sure that there is a much greater level of equity.

Jay Rozgonyi
Associate Vice Provost for Innovation and Effectiveness
Fairfield University
3. Online Learning
Progressing from emergency remote teaching and learning to online learning by advancing best practices in technology-enabled teaching and learning

What will evolve?
• Applications of technology to teaching and learning will become more connected to pedagogy and more integrated with classroom-based learning

Bottom line
• Teaching and learning will never be the same

Challenges
• Stakeholders pressuring for the primacy of face-to-face learning
• Change management
What if the pandemic continues beyond 2021?

- Financial challenges will put pressure on continuing some academic programs
- More and more learning experiences and scholarly services will move online, but as cheaply as possible
- A wave of faculty and staff retirements
Panelist Perspective

We’re entering the interactive and on-demand era of education. In the 2020+ era, our students are expecting an on-demand interactive multimedia experience.

We need to transform our courses to meet the needs of the current students using the technologies and methodologies that they're used to using.
4. Information Security

Developing a cybersecurity operations strategy that effectively detects, responds to, and mitigates security threats regardless of where students, faculty, and staff are located

What will evolve?

• Completely remote education, research and work will become permanent in many aspects

Bottom line

• Additional leadership, infrastructure and services are needed to support expanded off-campus activities

Challenges

• Rethinking security and privacy strategies
• Continued and expanding data harvesting by solution providers
Panelist Perspective

In 2021, we will be building up the strengths and weaknesses that we observed while rapidly responding to the pandemic in 2020. We will ensure that our operations continue to be secure by employing new techniques that involve dark web tracing or social media accounts, as well as keeping track of where all of our data is, lives, and goes, and ensuring that we have things such as leakage prevention of data.

Niranjan Davray
Chief Information Officer
Colgate University
5. Financial Health

Partnering with advancement, research, and other institutional areas to develop new funding sources and partnerships

What will evolve?
- Financially creative ways to fund technology

Bottom line
- Institutional leaders have increased understanding of the value of technology

Challenges
- Managing the risk of partnerships
- Finding the energy for entrepreneurism
- Intense competition
What if the pandemic continues beyond 2021?

• Financial problems may exceed the capacity of partnerships and new funding sources to make a difference
• Innovation related to financial health will become essential
• Institutions’ local reputations may save – or condemn – them
Panelist Perspective

Whenever we’re partnering with advancement or research, we’re looking for new revenue streams. IT has a lot of assets and knowledge which are leverageable, not only inside the institution, but externally as well. So, by working together, we can create and generate a new revenue stream or reduce costs for other businesses, if they’re willing to share or trade an offer in order to get better offerings for our campus.

Geoffrey Cirullo
Director of Technology Services
California State University, Stanislaus
The Top IT Issues

Transform
Redefining our institution and taking an active role in creating the new future in higher education
The Top IT Issues

Transform

Epigenetic change fueled by technology

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1. Institutional Culture

Contributing to a culture of transformation by modeling agility and future thinking when designing IT programs and services

What will transform?

- Institutions’ ability and commitment to respond to new circumstances and needs

Bottom line

- COVID has primed institutions to become more agile and innovative

Challenges

- Developing a holistic strategy to address today’s numerous disruptive forces
- COVID fatigue
What if the pandemic continues beyond 2021?

• The need for and pace of transformation will accelerate
• Cost reductions will become speed bumps (at best)
• The academic business model will be in need of transformation to retain financially-strapped students
Panelist Perspective

In a lot of ways, COVID was an accelerator. It made us do things that we just weren't getting around to.

Post-COVID that change won't stop. There are other things in our society that are occurring that will continue to keep the momentum on change in higher education. And therefore, the IT culture will be very important to the ability to leverage innovation.

Joe Mancini
Executive Director, IT
Montgomery County Community College
2. Technology Alignment

Identifying and applying digital strategies and innovations that are sustainable, and driven by the institution’s ambitions and transformational goals

What will transform?

• The role of IT as a strategy driver and transformation leader

Bottom line

• COVID put institutions on the path of digital transformation. Now they need to decide whether to stay on that path.

Challenges

• The pace and uncertainties of 2020 will continue in 2021
• Change leadership
• IT governance
What if the pandemic continues beyond 2021?

- 2020’s provisional measures will need to be hardened
- Resistance to transformation and change may diminish as people experience the pandemic as normal life
Panelist Perspective

IT really is like having robust utilities, but ones that can innovate and transform how we do teaching, learning and research at scale. IT shouldn't be just at the table, in some cases we should be leading the discussion, we should be leading the transformation of education and research. IT needs to be ahead of the curve, offering solutions for problems that maybe our faculty, staff and students don't know exist yet.

Sol Bermann
CISO & Executive Director of Information Assurance
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
3. Technology Strategy
Developing an enterprise architecture to enable business outcomes, manage data to enable decision-making and future opportunities, streamline business processes, and enable digital resources to keep pace with strategic change.

What will transform?
• The application of enterprise architecture to advance both strategy and efficiency

Challenges
• New funding will have to show a clear and compelling ROI
• Inability to focus on strategy

Bottom line
• This is enterprise architecture’s moment
What if the pandemic continues beyond 2021?

- Digital transformation efforts will focus on cost reduction and income generation.
- IT spend will need to focus on the most important services, which may require discontinuing less critical services.
Panelist Perspective

We need to be able to create strategies and develop the technologies and architectures that make us even more efficient and more effective.

Where could we remove some of the excess of business processes? How can we automate things to make life a little better, streamline how data flows, things like that?
4. Enrollment and Recruitment

Holistic solutions for recruitment, analytics-based marketing around student career outcomes, technology-enabled transfer agreements and partnerships, and social media to build student communities

What will transform?
• The strategic application of technology and data to enrollment and recruitment

Bottom line
• Enrollment and recruitment practices and strategies are in a great deal of flux

Challenges
• Developing a new playbook
• Finding the best uses of technology
• Adapting to NACAC’s changed Code of Ethics and Professional Practices
What if the pandemic continues beyond 2021?

- Institutions will need to use technology in ways that come closest to the impact of campus visits (which will probably not happen by digitizing a campus visit)
Panelist Perspective

Fundamentally how we recruit—at its very heart—hasn’t changed much in decades. It remains a ‘cast a very big net and see what you can catch’ approach.

There is an opportunity to get creative with much more than just doing what you’ve always done. There is an opportunity to imagine a different strategy entirely and layer those efforts with analytics.

Carrie Rampp
Vice President and Chief Information Officer
Franklin & Marshall College
5. Cost Management

*Digital transformation efforts and IT service delivery, helping the institution maximize value and reduce overhead*

What will transform?

- Digital transformation will transform cost management strategies

Bottom line

- The pandemic has primed institutional stakeholders for digital transformation

Challenges

- Financial struggles may sabotage strategic investments
- Risk aversion may increase, just when institutions most need to take calculated risks
What if the pandemic continues beyond 2021?

- Government support for higher education may become a make-or-break issue
- Technical debt will grow
- Once-revolutionary uses of technology will become standard practice
Panelist Perspective

We’ve got six modes of teaching right now, which is not anything we've ever had before. And the instructor can pick any one of those six.

So maybe our traditional classrooms don’t need to be as equipped as they used to be in the past. We can shift those funds to keep some of those new modes of teaching that are actually the way the students do want to learn.
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Wrap up
Avoid binary thinking
You won’t find your institution within a single scenario

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You won’t find your institution within a single scenario.
Two meta-issues
Panelist Perspective

The marathon question is a big one. I've been telling my staff for three months that we need to treat this like a marathon, but we keep sprinting because we keep running into things that we need to sprint for. And that's going to be really challenging.

We're on month six of incident response. And none of us are prepared for six months of incident response.

David Seidl
Vice President for Information Technology and CIO
Miami University
What role will your institution play in higher education’s new future?

- Restore
- Evolve
- Transform
Thank you

Susan Grajek
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