

Newsletter Issue 1/2016

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2016



From the President's Desk

by Dave Marr

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Well 2015 was truly another great year for AAIR, and I'm optimistic that 2016 might be even better!

So, what's changing? As you might recall, AAIR sent out a request to tender for our Professional Forum Organiser (PFO) in September. We received responses from three companies, and I'm thrilled to say that Leishman Associates was successful in becoming our PFO for 2016 to 2019.

They will of course continue the great work they've been doing on the annual November Forum, but for the first time, will also manage the mid-year SIG Forum. Assistance with the SIG Forum is something we've been contemplating for some time, and I'm pleased that now we have put this in place, it will definitely take a lot of burden off the Local Organising Committee (LOC). So, we'll be seeing a lot more of Victoria Chapman, as she'll be our conference manager for both forums.

This year's SIG Forum will be held in Adelaide from 16 to 17 June. The venue will be the Flinders University building in Victoria Square. More details to follow in the next month or so. The Annual Forum will be in Sydney possibly in late October or very early November depending on the availability of a venue. Again, more details to follow in the next month or so.

The advantage of the four-year contract with Leishman Associates is that we can plan much further in advance than previously. We've already begun discussions on locations for the next four annual forums. Tentatively, at this stage, we've pencilled in Central Australia for 2017, Melbourne in 2018, and Canberra in 2019. Of course there's a lot more planning to be done before those locations are confirmed, but at least we can start those discussions now. We're less sure of SIG Forum locations, so if anyone is keen to host a SIG Forum in their institution/city, then please let Craig Napier (Craig.Napier@sydney.edu.au) or Don Johnston (Don.Johnston@scu.edu.au) know.

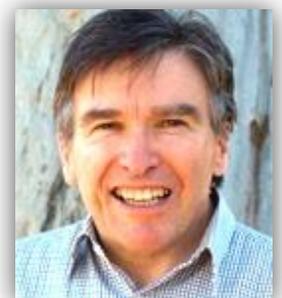
At AAIR headquarters, we're also seeing 2016 as a transition year; a time to refresh the committee. Andrea Jeffreys, as I mentioned in the last Newsletter, has taken over the role of Honorary Secretary from Bruce Guthrie. Malcolm Rees, from Massey University in New Zealand, has agreed to be co-opted onto the Committee for 2016. Malcolm served on the LOC for the forum in Wellington so will be a big asset to the Committee. We were keen to have another kiwi on the Committee to augment Kathie Rabel's role, so I'm very much looking forward to working with Malcolm over the next 12 months.

There's also the chance that a number of the Committee will be standing down at the end of 2016, myself included. So it's important

that we have in place a good succession plan that allows new members to gain some understanding of the workings of the organisation before those 'old' hands depart.

It's also that time of the year when we send out invoices to members whose memberships have lapsed. This year we're trialling PayPal, which will allow members to use credit card facilities previously not available. It's a much more streamlined process than through MYOB, so will save on administration time appreciably. If you're one of those participating in this process, please let us know how you found it. We're always keen to improve our processes, especially if it improves the user experience and also saves on administration costs.

One new activity this year we'll be trialling is an evening dinner talk in Melbourne in March. More details to follow very shortly. If successful, we'll try running these in other cities during the year. This will hopefully allow people to attend AAIR events locally, especially if they're unable to attend an interstate forum. PayPal should also make these events easier for us to manage.



Dave Marr,
President

Higher Education@home

by Louise Hargreaves

Innovation

1. The [National Innovation Science Agenda](#) (NISA) was released on 7 December 2015. Senator Simon Birmingham's press release, *Education and Training a focus for Innovation Agenda* may be accessed [here](#), and an Australian Financial Review summary, *Innovation at a Glance* [here](#).
2. [Borrowing, cutting and boosting: The creative accounting behind innovation plan's \\$1.1b budget](#). The Turnbull government's innovation package was launched on 7 December 2015 with all the trappings of a budget – in a media lock-up accompanied by a blizzard of fact sheets and costings. And, like any budget, some creative accounting.
3. [Inquiry into Australia's Future in Research and Innovation—Invitation to Lodge a Submission](#). The Australian Parliament's Joint Select Committee on Trade and Investment Growth was established to examine measures to further boost Australia's trade and investment performance, including barriers to trade, reduction of red tape, and structural challenges and opportunities for the Australian community. Submissions should be received [by COB Friday, 11 February 2016](#). Guidance on preparing a submission can be found on the Committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/jsctig.
4. [Report compares Australian innovation with OECD figures](#). A massive new scorecard on Australian innovation underlines its strengths and weaknesses, offering the latest international comparisons on almost every aspect of the system's performance. But commentators say the little-noticed [report](#), compiled by the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science's chief economist Mark Cully, highlights the dangers of viewing innovation through a narrow commercial lens.
5. [The Senate Economics Reference Committee releases Australia's Innovation System Report](#). The Report recommends that Government should take action, in collaboration with research organisations and business, to lift innovation performance in five Strategic Action Areas: leadership and

policy direction; building enterprise capability; lifting investment in science and research; supporting local innovation ecosystems; and addressing skills formation through an integrated tertiary education system.

6. [Labor ups the ante on innovation](#). Labor has unveiled its latest [set of innovation policies](#) headlined by a regional development fund and a range of tax relief measures designed to beat Malcolm Turnbull at his own game and invigorate Australia's start-up ecosystem.
7. [Innovation and science agenda 'disastrous' for humanities and creative industries](#). A former member of the Prime Minister's innovation council has labelled as 'disastrous' aspects of the \$1.1 billion national science and innovation agenda, which was broadly welcomed when it was launched last week. Reaction from leading arts and humanities figures on the consequences range from 'disappointing' for their sectors to 'multiplying disadvantage' for public interest research.
8. [Innovation: the test is yet to come](#). Turnbull has made this [his signature initiative](#), and has promised a change in direction for the nation. But the statement is, at best, a first step in the direction of a knowledge-based, innovation-oriented society.

Policy & Regulation Watch

9. [Review of Research Policy and Funding Arrangements \[The Watt Review\]](#). The review aimed at developing options to strengthen Australia's research system and encourage greater collaboration between universities and business and other research end users to enable Australia's high quality research to be translated into economic and social benefits for the nation. [The review](#) recommends the development in 2016 of an 'impact and engagement framework' to align research funding more closely to impact and engagement.



10. [Research universities gain in grant shake-up](#). The federal government's shake-up of research block grants is set to benefit research-intensive universities, setting the scene for intense lobbying over how transitional support funding may be carved up among the rest. The recently released [Innovation Statement](#) allocated \$127 million over four years for transition funding and incentives for engagement, but how that amount is meant to be divided up is unclear.
11. [MYEFO: stalled funding bid still figures](#). Delayed higher education reforms will cost the budget \$371 million over four years, but the government is still banking on its stalled cuts to university funding to achieve long-term savings. Without Senate support for the university funding shake-up, Education Minister Simon Birmingham has announced the reforms will be delayed until 2017 pending further consultations.
12. [ESOS Bills pass but tuition holding rule remains](#). Two bills updating Australia's Educational Services for Overseas Students Act passed both houses in December 2015, promising to reduce administrative costs to institutions and enhance quality assurance. However, an amendment removing the requirement for colleges to place tuition fees paid in advance into a holding account – which providers have labelled costly and unnecessary – failed to pass.

[New Higher Education Standards Framework](#). TEQSA welcomes the news that the updated Threshold Standards have passed through Parliament. The approval of [the Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2015](#) legislative instrument means that TEQSA will ramp up its

support for providers during the transition from the current Threshold Standards to the new. The new Threshold Standards will commence on [1 January 2017](#).

13. [Recovering student loans from overseas residents from 1 January 2016](#). From 1 January 2016, people who have benefited from Australian student loans and now live overseas will pay for them the same way as they would if they lived in Australia. All Australians with current and new HELP and TSL debt who move overseas for six months or more are required to notify the ATO via the myGov website to facilitate repayments.
14. [HECS debts to rise after Labor cuts a deal on legislation](#). Disadvantaged university students will be hit by increased HECS debts after the government and Labor did a deal to pass legislation converting Start Up scholarships worth \$2050 a year into income contingent loans. The measure, first proposed by Labor when it was last in government, will save about \$1.2 billion over four years.
15. [National Register updated for December 2015](#). TEQSA refreshed the National Register of higher education providers on 10 December. You can get more information, see a breakdown of the Register and search for registered providers and/or accredited courses by visiting <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register>.

Higher Education Funding

16. [Birmingham commits to demand driven system and secure research funding](#). In his first major interview of 2016 Education Minister Simon Birmingham has committed to funding certainty for universities in research and teaching this year, but signalled possible changes to the student loan system.

[Lower student loan payback threshold on the cards, education experts say](#). Industry experts believe Education Minister Simon Birmingham is looking at lowering the threshold at which students pay back their loans, after he said he was looking at the sustainability of the system.
17. [Philanthropic renaissance: building on private gifts for universities](#). Philanthropy for Australian universities is undergoing something of a renaissance, said Sue Cunningham, president of Washington-based Council

for Advancement and Support of Education. Its recent Ross-CASE survey of 19 Australian and NZ universities shows that since 2012 annual new funds raised had grown by over 35 per cent since 2012, reaching over \$400m in 2014.

18. [FactCheck: does Australia run one of the most generous student loan schemes in the world?](#) Overall, it is true that many features of Australia's loan schemes for tuition fees make it more [generous than most other countries](#) that charge for higher education. But from a student's perspective, how generous Australia is depends on exactly which aspect of the loan scheme you're looking at.

Research

19. [2015 ERA Results](#). With three rounds of ERA now complete, this unique dataset covers all Australian university research outputs, staffing and activity from 2003 to 2013, and research income and research application data from 2006 to 2013. Over the coming year the ARC will produce additional volumes based on analyses of this longitudinal data, which will provide further insights into the state of Australian university research. Volume 2 is due for release in [April 2016](#).
20. [Are Australian universities getting better at research or at gaming the system?](#) [Opinion] On the surface, it may look like the ERA exercise [has achieved](#) what it set out to do – improve Australia's collective research performance. However, [research](#) over the past five years – examining performance measurement in publicly funded services, including the ERA – suggests that we should be wary about how these results are being produced.

[Will the impact framework fix the problems the research audit found?](#) The results from the latest university research audit indicate that research in Australia is improving. This suggests that the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) exercise is working: ERA has achieved its main aim of boosting the quality of Australian research. However, this headline statement masks a plethora of concerns.
21. [Future Fellows: 50 research awards granted](#). Fifty new research projects can get underway immediately, the Turnbull Government announced on 17 December 2015, as part of \$38.6 million worth of funding through the Australian

Research Council. A funding snapshot may be accessed [here](#).

22. In December 2015, the NTEU released a briefing note, entitled [Changing Australia's Research Agenda: From 'publish or perish' to 'collaborate or crumble'](#), which examines the impact of a number of recent policy announcements on higher education, including: Labor 2013–14 Budget Savings (Measures No.2) Bill 2015, Watt Review of Research Funding, National Innovation and Science Agenda, and 2015–16 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO).

Learning & Teaching

23. The Minister for Education and Training presented the [2015 Australian Awards for University Teaching](#) to 22 recipients at a gala ceremony at Parliament House, Canberra on 8 December 2015. Awards for Teaching Excellence were presented to exceptional teachers who have significantly contributed to the quality of learning and teaching in higher education. The list of recipients is available here: [PDF](#) | [DOC](#).

Sector News and Views

24. [The Australian's 30 most influential people in higher education](#). An annual list of the top 30 most influential people – who and what to watch in higher education in 2016.
25. [2015 in review: innovation rides again, VET madness, and the graduate outcomes challenge](#). 2015 dawned with a shadow looming over the sector from continued pressure on funding and concerns when the potential saviour [fee deregulation was road-blocked in the Senate](#). However, 2015 closed with a wave of positivity – more funding, [increased Government investment in innovation](#), and a focus on the primary reason we are all here – the creation and enhancement of human capital.
26. [How Regional Universities Drive Regional Innovation Report – Office of the Chief Economist](#). This report compiles a catalogue of strategies and mechanisms that are employed by organisations across thirteen focus areas. In doing so, this report highlights directions that might increase the impact of regional universities on regional innovation. Download the report [here](#).

27. [The Australian National University has launched an investigation into an essay farm selling completed assignments to Chinese students in Canberra.](#) Concerns about the cheating service were raised by former students who believed someone within the university community was exploiting international students for profit.

Graduate Outcomes

28. [Graduates in science disciplines hard-pressed to find full-time work.](#) The Turnbull government could be facing an uphill battle in turning the Australian economy into a science and innovation-led nation, with graduate employment figures for maths, chemistry and life sciences competing with visual, performing arts and social sciences for bottom place.
29. [Graduate employment improves a little – but still the second worst outcome ever.](#) The [latest graduate employment data](#) supports [what ABS data suggested recently](#): that the worst of the graduate employment downturn might be behind us. Early this year, the proportion of new graduates seeking full-time work but without work or only working part-time was fractionally lower than it had been at the same time in 2014.

Student Recruitment & Mobility

30. [Young people in education and training 2014.](#) In the 2014 calendar year, there were 324 900 higher education students aged 15 to 19 years. Between 2013 and 2014: the number of higher education students aged 15 to 19 years increased by 4.3%, the greatest growth occurred in Victoria (5.3%).
31. [New Colombo Plan 2016 Scholars announced.](#) In 2016 the New Colombo Plan will support 100 of Australia's best and brightest undergraduates from 26 Australian universities to live, study and work in the Indo-Pacific. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Julie Bishop MP and the Minister for Tourism and International Education, Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck, announced the continued expansion of the New Colombo Plan under the 2016 scholarship round.

International Education

32. [IEAA joins Australia's Future Economy Forum.](#) Australia's international education stakeholder body, [IEAA](#), has taken a seat at the table of the [Future Economy Forum](#), a new Australian coalition of industry bodies intent on pursuing export and economic growth in the next 20 years. It is collaborating with representative bodies in the tourism, transport, agriculture and financial services fields in what it hopes will herald the future of Australia's economy.

Online Learning

33. [MOOCs: international credit transfer system edges closer.](#) Universities are set to pilot a global credit transfer system that will allow students to use courses taken online to count towards their degrees. Six universities from Australia (ANU and UQ), Europe, Canada and the US are seeking to establish a new alliance in which each organisation's massive open online courses (MOOCs) are formally accredited by partner institutions.

Big Data, Analytics & Technology

34. [Analytics give universities tools to drive academic success.](#) In 2013, the University of Technology Sydney embarked on an experiment to motivate students. It used data to produce a 'dashboard' that showed students their level of engagement relative to a top performing student. It was meant to spur them on. It didn't. It was shelved. 'Students didn't use the dashboard'.

Rankings and Ratings & Benchmarking

35. [Australia's universities among the most globally engaged.](#) Australia has come out ahead of North America and just behind the UK to rank an extraordinary second overall in the latest global rankings of universities deemed to be truly international. Over half of Australia's universities (24 institutions) have featured in the globally-regarded rankings published in January 2016 in the [Times Higher Education World's Most International Universities 2016](#).

Who's on the Move (or not)?

36. [Murdoch University names new vice-chancellor](#) (December 2015 announcement). A former vice-principal at King's College, London, has been appointed to the top job at Perth's Murdoch University, which has been shaken for more than a year by power struggles and a probe by the West Australian Corruption and Crime Commission. Eeva Leinonen, deputy vice-chancellor (academic) at Wollongong University, next year will succeed Andrew Taggart, who has been acting vice-chancellor for 14 months.
37. [Livingstone named UTS chancellor](#) (December 2015 announcement). Catherine Livingstone will step into the role of chancellor at the University of Technology Sydney after Vicki Sara retires in February 2016. Ms Livingstone is currently president of the Business Council of Australia and chairwoman of Telstra.
38. [Former PM Department head to oversee innovation changes.](#) Former Prime Minister's Department head Ian Watt has been lured out of retirement to run a 'policy delivery unit' designed to ensure implementation of Malcolm Turnbull's innovation statement. Dr Watt, who retired as secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet last year, has been working with Mr Pyne since June, when he took on a review of university research funding.

Tips and Tricks

39. [Free Business Intelligence Tool.](#) Dashboards and Business Intelligence (BI) have long been part of IR's nomenclature, and have been developed in many institutions, and in many formats. Some solutions are relatively cost-effective while others cost millions and some are implemented in an afternoon while others take years to bear fruit. By *Heather Friesen, Director of Institutional Research & Effectiveness, Abu Dhabi University, United Arab Emirates.*
40. [Two Ways to Hide Field Buttons in a PivotChart.](#) The Field Buttons in a PivotChart are great for exploring data, but they can be ugly or confusing when printed. You can turn them off for printing/presentation. [AIR Tech Tips]

41. [Merging Multiple Reviewer Feedback into One Document](#). Steps for merging revisions, comments, and tracked changes from multiple reviewers into one document. *By Lenore Benefield, Director, Assessment & Accreditation Management Systems, Florida Gulf Coast University.*
46. **Top Three EAIR Articles of 2015**. Gina Johnson, AIR's Strategy Director for IR Capacity Initiatives, was asked to share her perspective on the three most highly viewed eAIR articles from 2015. Read her thoughts on why these three articles may have appealed to eAIR subscribers:

[Avoiding Data Warehouse Pitfalls](#) (May 2015 eAIR)

[Hiring an IR Director: Advice from the Field](#) (October 2015 eAIR)

[Common Data Set: What's your Return on Investment?](#) (March 2015 eAIR)

Frivolous Favourites

42. [The smallest degrees in higher education?](#) Picodegrees: they don't get smaller than this. Get your pico degree here! The qualification everyone in the wonk community is talking about.
43. [Academic Buzzword Bingo](#) can help you get through even the most stupefying workshops, committee meetings, and seminars. When a speaker utters a particularly grating (often meaningless) academic buzzword, it will be an opportunity for scoring rather than a soul-sucking exercise in occupational ennui.
- [5 Out of this World Star Wars Papers](#) posted by Academia Obscura.
- [Course of Thrones – More bonkers/niche courses](#). I've provided regular updates here before on courses which might be described as bonkers or, more generously, a bit niche. For example these strange degrees in [puppetry and bagpiping](#), and, more exotically, [in Beyonce and Ghostbusting](#). There's also this exciting academic offer, [a course on Dr Who](#). So, [here's](#) a few extras for the list covering fantasy, science fiction and period drama.
47. [Improving & Transforming Institutional Research in Postsecondary Education](#). The field of institutional research (IR) has a rich history that spans more than 50 years. IR professionals support campus leaders and policy makers in wise planning, programming, and fiscal decisions covering a broad range of institutional responsibilities. However, the current function of IR is not clearly defined, and the future path of IR is unknown. This initiative, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, seeks to better understand current IR capacity and to help IR evolve to the next level of practice needed to address the future needs of higher education.
48. [Complex Issues and Trends in Institutional Research](#). AIR interview with Craig Abbey, Associate Vice President and Director of Institutional Analysis at the University of Buffalo.

Institutional Researcher's Corner

44. AAIR Tagline Survey Report. Thank you to all who completed the recent AAIR Survey, 'Vote for Your Favourite Hipnotic Tagline'. You can read the results of the survey [here](#).
45. [Austrade launches interactive data visualisation tool](#). MIP Orbis, a world-leading online [data visualisation tool](#), has been developed by Austrade and now enables Australian stakeholders to create interactive dashboards, visualising student enrolments and visa grants for particular markets.

Positions Vacant



Seeking another opportunity in Institutional Research in Australia? Try our [Higher Education Jobs](#) webpage for current vacancies in the profession. If you are seeking an international career change see our American colleagues [AIR Careers](#) page.

Looking for some training and development?

See our [Training and Development](#) webpage, which is focused on training specifically for institutional researchers.

Looking for higher education conferences and events?

Here is a selection of upcoming events that may be of interest. See our [Events/Fora](#) webpage for more national and international events.

[AIEC Conference](#)

18–21 October 2016, Melbourne

The Australian International Education Conference [theme](#) is 'connectivity – at the heart of international education', and the program will feature world leading experts, unique social events and an exhibition, all hosted in and around the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

[Call for proposals](#) is open from 18 January to 28 February 2016.

[25th National Vocational Education and Training Research Conference](#)

6–8 July 2016, Rockhampton

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) and CQUniversity are delighted to co-host the 25th National

Vocational Education and Training Research Conference 'No Frills'. The 2016 conference will highlight (but is not limited to) research across three themes: Equity; Engagement and Evolution.

[2016 AIR Forum](#)

31 May – 3 June, 2016, New Orleans, LA

The AIR Forum, the annual conference of the Association for Institutional Research in the United States, is the world's largest gathering of higher education professionals working in institutional research, assessment, planning, and related postsecondary education fields. This four-day conference includes more than 300 presentations by colleagues representing all sectors of higher education, and an exhibit hall featuring the latest tools and resources to support data use for decision making.

[Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia – The Shape of Higher Education](#)

4–7 July 2016, Fremantle

The theme for the conference is The Shape of Higher Education. This theme provides an opportunity to not only report and reflect upon and to critique and challenge the current shape and direction of higher education, but also to look to the future and engage your colleagues in creative possibilities. Deadline for abstracts/proposals is 5 February 2016.

[EAIR 38th Annual Forum Birmingham 2016](#)

31 August – 3 September 2016, Curzon Building at the City Centre Campus

Theme: Only Connect: Collaboration, Cooperation And Capacity Building Through He Partnerships

Call for proposals is open for the 38th Annual EAIR Forum, which is to be hosted by Birmingham City University, in Birmingham, UK. The deadline for papers submissions is Monday 8 February 2016 (23:59 hrs. CET).

To submit your proposal:

<http://www.eairweb.org/forum2016/proposalform/>

For further information:

<http://www.eairweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/2016-EAIR-Birmingham-FORUM-CALL-FOR-PROPOSALS.pdf>

Also read on the [Call for Special Interest Group Sessions](#) as this is a great opportunity to include new and topical discussions at the Forum.

Enjoy Reading?

Here are a few recent and upcoming releases:

[Data, Analytics and Student Learning](#) is *Inside Higher Ed's* latest print-on-demand compilation of articles. The booklet features articles about trends, debates and strategies of a range of institutions. This compilation is free and [you may download a copy here](#).

[Recruiting International Students](#) is *Inside Higher Ed's* new print-on-demand compilation of articles. The booklet features articles about trends, debates and strategies of a range of institutions. The compilation is free and [you may download a copy here](#).

[Higher Education and Employability New Models for Integrating Study and Work](#) – Peter J Stokes (August, 2015).

Higher Education and Employability makes a crucial contribution to the current reassessment of higher education in the United States by focusing on how colleges and universities can collaborate with businesses in order to serve the educational and professional interests of their students. Drawing on his extensive experience with universities and the business world, Peter J. Stokes argues that the need for closer alignment between the two sectors has never been more critical—and that the opportunities for partnership have never been greater.

[College Disrupted: The Great Unbundling of Higher Education \[podcast\]](#). Author of *College Disrupted*, Ryan Craig, discusses the impact of 'unbundling' on the future of higher education.

[Re-engineering the University](#) by William F. Massy [released date: February, 2016]. Higher education expert William F. Massy's decades as a professor, senior university officer, and consultant have left him with a passionate belief in the need for reform in America's traditional universities. In *Reengineering the University*, he addresses widespread concerns that higher education's costs are too high, learning falls short of objectives, disruptive technology and education models are mounting serious challenges to traditional institutions, and administrators and faculty are too often unwilling or unable to change.

[Higher Education Partnerships for the Future](#) is the first book conceptualised and published by Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's (NMMU) Unit for Higher Education Internationalisation in the Developing World. The book brings together leading, as well as upcoming, global thinkers and practitioners in the field of higher education internationalisation who explore the trends, challenges, potential and prospects of higher education partnerships.

Higher Education Abroad

by Louise Hargreaves

Global News & Views

1. [International Education 2015 in review: The most-read and must-reads from the year.](#) A look back over 2015 with our third annual review of the most-popular items on ICEF Monitor. We certainly saw a lot of growth this year, and, as always, a number of important market trends taking shape. The review features 12 of our most-read posts along with a few other bonus items for good measure.
2. [What will shape international education in 2016?](#) From geopolitical upheaval to marketing innovations, there are a plethora of factors that help to shape the global landscape of international education each year. [Last Year](#) brought with it a boom in the pathway sector, as well as more industry consolidation; [here are some of the trends set to have a big impact on the industry in 2016.](#)
3. [5 higher education trends to watch in 2016 \[US\].](#) We look ahead to 2016 and what college and university administrators should expect from the industry and government regulation. The explosion of competency-based education development that we saw in 2014 is going to reach many new classrooms in 2016. Administrators will find new ways to use predictive analytics to improve student outcomes and a range of other metrics on campus.
4. [Looking forward to 2016.](#) 2015 was an intense year for higher education. What were some of the key issues that dominated the higher education agenda? How much are they related to other global developments? And will they continue to drive the agenda in 2016?
5. [Future perfect: what will universities look like in 2030?](#) We asked several distinguished academics to tell us how they imagine higher education will look in 2030. The responses, however, could hardly be more disparate. While one contributor suggests that the rise of artificial intelligence will consign the university to history within 15 years, others believe that technology will continue to have minimal impact. A variety of shades of opinion in between are also set out.

6. [Exploring the Impact of the Amazon Effect on Higher Education.](#) While commercial businesses are clearly experiencing the changes brought about by the 'Amazon Effect', there are many other sectors of the economy that are being impacted as well. For instance, higher education is beginning to re-evaluate its own value propositions and business models in light of changing customer expectations, new budgetary realities and the explosion in online learning.
7. [Where is studying most expensive?](#) England is the most expensive place to study at undergraduate level, according to research from the OECD. In the [Education at a Glance 2015](#) report, the OECD outlines the nations where students studying at universities in their home countries pay the highest tuition fees.
8. [Gen Z is about to take over higher education—here's what to expect.](#) Educators take note: it's time to make way for Generation Z (Gen Z). In a [recent study by Barnes & Noble College](#), 1,300 middle-school and high school students ages 13–18 from 49 different states shared their attitudes, preferences and expectations regarding their educational and learning experiences. The findings from the study are clear: Gen Z is significantly different than previous generations, and these students will bring both challenges and opportunities for the future of higher education.
9. [Products making a difference on campuses nationwide.](#) The editors of UB magazine proudly present the 2016 Readers' Choice Top Products, chosen from hundreds of nominations. This US annual award programs alerts higher education administrators and staff to the best products their peers use to achieve excellence at institutions throughout the country.
10. [The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Universities and Colleges.](#) One of the problems in higher education is that there's a whole lot of effort expended on 'who's the best' (which, as measured by most rankings, is some function of



money, age, and size), and not a lot of serious effort put into answering the question: 'how can institutions get better?'

11. [Can a coding bootcamp replace a four-year degree?](#) Interest in coding bootcamps is on the rise. Course Report projects the growing sector will produce [more than 16,000 graduates](#) in 2015, up from less than half of that in 2014. The [vast majority](#) of these graduates already had bachelor's degrees. Some were looking for promotions in their current workplaces while others signed up for intensive training to make a career change.
 12. [The Higher Education of Heads of Government.](#) I think you can tell something about a country's social structure just by looking at the clustering of leaders' educational backgrounds. In this exercise, we take a look at the records for Canadian, British, Australian, Japanese, and New Zealand Prime Ministers, German Chancellors, and French and American Presidents.
- [New Zealand launches five-year pathway visa.](#) New Zealand has launched a pilot programme that will enable international students to study for up to three consecutive study programmes under a single, five-year pathway visa. The visa, which was identified as a priority action in the 2014 international education industry strategic roadmap, aims to simplify the visa process for international students and thus make New Zealand more competitive as a study destination.

13. [NZ: strong growth driven by postgrads.](#) New Zealand's education sector is continuing to enjoy strong growth, with [new figures](#) showing 13% year-on-year growth in international student numbers in the first two semesters of 2015. Swelling postgraduate numbers at private and vocational providers have driven growth, pushing overall numbers to break the 100,000 mark for the first recorded time.
14. [US: The trouble with student loans? Low earnings, not high debt.](#) If you even casually follow the news, you have probably heard that Americans owe a record \$1.3 trillion in student loans. Student loans are now second only to mortgages as the largest source of household debt. Seven million borrowers are in default, and millions more are behind on their payments. Readers—and politicians—often connect these two data points: higher debt must lead to increased risk of defaults. But the fact is that default is highest among those with the smallest student debts.
15. [How student completion rates vary across Europe.](#) How do countries across the European Union compare in ensuring that students complete a degree course? A [report](#) released by the European Commission (EC) last month looked in-depth at the issue.
16. [Visions of the Knowledge Future 2050.](#) The Directorate General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission has published a report prepared by a group of experts entitled: [The Knowledge Future: Intelligent Policy Choices for Europe 2050](#). The report highlights the key role that higher education institutions should play in the knowledge future and its review of the appropriate policy opportunities that could be pursued, and the pitfalls that should be avoided.
17. [UK should learn from 'downsides' of US higher education.](#) The UK government should learn from the US' mistakes when looking at ways to reform its higher education system and measure teaching and learning quality, a conference has heard. Richard Garrett, director of the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (OBHE), said that although there is 'often ill-informed reverence for the US system', it would benefit the UK to 'truly understand the details and nuances' rather than to 'assume the elite schools somehow characterise the entire system'.
18. [It is 'delusional' to attempt to measure the success of higher education institutions using data on graduate employment,](#) a leading academic has warned. Employment data are set to be used to compare English universities in the [teaching excellence framework](#), but Simon Marginson, professor of international higher education at the UCL Institute of Education, used his keynote address to the annual conference of the Society for Research into Higher Education to highlight the multiplicity of factors that affect the careers and earnings of graduates.
19. [France proposes easier residence rights, better services.](#) The French President, François Hollande, has recently announced a national plan for student life, *Plan National de Vie Étudiante* (PNVE), in France. Included in the 35 measures of PNVE is a commitment to improving residence rights for international student graduates.
20. [Finnish universities to charge non-EU fees.](#) Universities in Finland will begin charging tuition fees to students from outside the EU and European Economic Area from August 2017, it has been announced. Building on a position paper [published last year](#), the three-party coalition government has stipulated that international students must pay a minimum of €1,500 per year to study on any undergraduate or master's course taught in a language other than Finnish or Swedish.
21. [Russia Creates Plan To Recruit Foreign Researchers.](#) The Russian government plans to create conditions for attracting foreign scientists to national universities, with the aim of improving the quality and raising the image of the national system of higher education in the international arena.
22. [Russia and India aim to build education, STEM research ties.](#) Russia and India have agreed to establish a joint working group on education that will focus on building cooperation in VET, increasing bilateral student mobility, and to work towards mutual degree recognition.
23. [Nepal emerging as an important growth market for international education.](#) Outbound student mobility from Nepal took a sharp turn upward in 2013–14. In 2014–15, most students have applied to study in Japan, Australia, the US, India, and Malaysia. Nepal was one of the top three fastest-growing markets for Australia in 2014, and the second-fastest for Japan in 2013.
24. [China's education minister has vowed to drive 'smart alecks', dissenters and thieves from the country's classrooms](#) as Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign came knocking at some of the country's top universities. Xi launched a major offensive against corruption after taking power three years ago and has so far ordered his investigators into ministries, state-owned companies, provincial governments, media groups and the energy sector.
25. [A world without registrars – Are you leading innovation and change or are you so stuck in the past that you thwart innovation?](#) Not long ago a journal published an article criticising registrars for holding back the tide of innovation and change. While it dawned on me that registrars frequently have to say 'no' to change, I have never thought of my fellow registrars or myself as stodgy curmudgeons seeking to restrain the pace of innovation.
26. [Malaysia: EMGS streamlines visa applications.](#) Malaysia has introduced new measures to streamline international student visa applications by allowing HE students to apply directly through [EMGS](#), rather than through an education institution, as well as extending some study visas to match the length of study programmes.

Online Learning

[MOOC Trends in 2015: The Death of Free Certificates.](#) How Much Do Different MOOC Providers Charge for a Certificate in 2015? This article is just one in our 2015 MOOC Roundup Series. [Find the whole series of articles here](#), and discover everything MOOCs in 2015 — from the most popular classes, to overviews on developments in MOOC platforms, to looking at the MOOC future. It started with Udacity. Udacity stopped offering [free certificates](#) in May 2014. Coursera followed up in November, announcing that they were [phasing out free certificates](#). FutureLearn had never offered a free certificate to begin with. The only MOOC provider that was left offering free certificates was edX. Unfortunately, on 7 December 2015, edX CEO Anant Agrawal [announced](#) that edX would no longer offer free honour code certificates.

27. [MOOC enrolment surpassed 35 million in 2015](#). The user base for MOOCs roughly doubled last year and there are now about 4,200 MOOCs including courses offered by more than 500 universities.
28. [China to Train Teachers through MOOC System](#). According to China Education, the country's education system is the largest in the world, and the teaching profession historically remains a highly respected profession. To improve its education system, the government is planning to train all its teachers on education technology skills through the MOOC Project over the next five years.
29. [Anger at 'stolen' online courses on Udemy](#). Udemy, a platform for experts to sell educational courses, has been accused of not doing enough to remove stolen content from its service. The site allows people to upload training materials and then charge Udemy users, of which there are more than seven million, for access. But several experts and academics have expressed anger at finding their courses uploaded to the site and offered up for sale, without their permission.
30. [7 trends that will revolutionize online learning](#). A look at new tools and new opportunities to create an instructional experience that is not only different, but better, taking online learning in mainstream higher education to the next level.
31. [Online Classes Appeal More to the Affluent](#). Free online educational courses may not be democratising education as much as proponents believe, a new study reports. John D. Hansen, a doctoral student at Harvard University's School of Education, and his colleagues looked at registration and completion patterns in 68 massive open online courses, or MOOCs, offered by Harvard and MIT. The data covered 164,198 participants aged 13 to 69.
32. [Top Ed-Tech Trends of 2015: Credits and Credentialing](#). This is the fourth article in the series [Top Ed-Tech Trends of 2015](#). When author Audrey Watters wrote about '[Competencies and Certificates](#)' as one of the major ed-tech trends of 2014, she noted that, 'Neither competency-based education nor alternative certification efforts have reached [the frenzied hype of MOOCs](#). (Not much in education technology has, with the possible exception of Khan Academy.)' And while there was no frenzy, she did think that these could be poised to become such.
33. [We Don't Need No Stinking Badges... Or Do We?](#) Never have there been so many options available to acquire knowledge at various life stages, nor have there been so many ways to acknowledge the various levels of our learning experiences. Despite this, our existing industrialised education continues to provide a traditional approach to credentialing.

Competency Based Education

34. [Designing a Competency Based Education \(CBE\) Program: Context, Challenges, and Pivots](#). In recent years there is growing attention to competency-based education and training, despite it not being a new concept. Over the years it has changed from the earliest vocational education models to more creative, inclusive and complex paths to attaining knowledge in higher education.
35. [How universities are braving the choppy waters of CBE](#). With non-traditional students far outnumbering the ranks of callow youth entering college straight from high school, CBE appears—at last—to have reached escape velocity. A year ago, fewer than 50 institutions nationwide offered CBE programs. Now that number has exploded to more than 600, with additional initiatives coming online all the time.
36. [Competency Based Education: Moving Adult Students towards Credentials and Degrees](#). The move for colleges and universities towards CBE makes a lot of sense for adult learners.
37. [Higher education competency-based education looks like this](#). According to a new national survey of over 170 diverse institutions across the US, nothing is more important to a competency-based education program than designing 'measurable and meaningful assessments'. And nothing presents

more of a challenge to these programs than needing data systems that are automated and compatible with one another.

38. [US: Public Colleges Lead in Adopting Competency-Based Programs](#). Competency-based education, which measures students' progress according to how well they master material instead of how much time they spend in class, has been growing in popularity. Nearly 600 colleges and universities are offering or developing such programs; this report reflects data from 179 respondents.
39. [Will Unbundling Kill Higher Ed as We Know It?](#) The competency-based education marketplace eschews the bundled approach of traditional degrees, instead promising to produce workers adept in just the right skills employers want. Education expert Ryan Craig believes that unbundling could destroy all but a handful of colleges and universities.

Graduate Outcomes

40. [Does Britain have too many graduates?](#) More 18-year-olds than ever before were accepted into higher education in 2015. Overall, a record 463,700 people from the UK – 235,400 of them aged 18 – entered higher education in 2015, according to [UCAS](#), marking a 2.8% increase on 2014. In England, 42% of today's young people have entered higher education by age 19. But is there an over-supply of graduates in the UK?

Big Data, Analytics & Technology

41. [EDUCAUSE releases the top IT technologies for 2016](#). Higher education IT is in the midst of divesting, reinvesting and differentiating its technologies and strategies for 2016, according to the annual EDUCAUSE report on the 'Top 10 IT Issues and Top 10 Technologies for 2016'.
42. [Choosing a college? Now there's an app for that](#). Boston-based app developer LTG Exam Platform has introduced a new feature to their free adaptive standardised test prep apps, Prep4SAT and Prep4GMAT that aims to match students with their ideal colleges. The new 'School Matcher' feature was recently released on iOS and Android, and is designed to make the search phase of the admissions process as easy and fun as using a modern dating app.

Credentialing

[4 steps to bolstering digital badges in higher education](#). As the demand for digital badges increases, so does the need for policies and processes surrounding them. 'Digital badges allow students to turn competencies and achievements to marketable credentials', said Susan Manning, professor at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Yet, unless clearly defined management processes are put into place, this potential may not be realised.

43. [Blackboard Acquires Emerging Provider of Predictive Analytics for Higher Education](#). Blackboard announced the acquisition of Blue Canary, a higher education predictive analytics company that helps institutions glean powerful data-driven insights and use them to improve student success.
44. [Call for Nominations: Who Are the Top Tech Innovators in Higher Education?](#) Each year The Chronicle profiles key innovators who are tackling big challenges facing campuses with the help of technology. And we're looking for your suggestions. To see what we've done in past years, see our lists from [2015](#), from [2013](#), and from [2012](#).
45. [Higher Education Won't Be Able To Resist The Cloud Much Longer](#). 'The Cloud' is still a conceptual notion in higher education, creating as much confusion as it does comfort for leaders across the postsecondary space. While organisations across other industries have enthusiastically adopted cloud technologies and hosting for central systems and services, colleges and universities across the postsecondary space are lagging behind.
47. [Wikipedia-Mining Algorithm Reveals World's Most Influential Universities](#). Where are the world's most influential universities? That's a question that increasingly dominates the way the public, governments, and funding agencies think about research and higher education. The problem, of course, is that it's hard to produce an objective ranking of almost anything, let alone universities.
48. [China tops latest university rankings for emerging economies](#). The Times Higher Education BRICS & Emerging Economies Rankings 2016 were released on 2 December 2015. The top two universities in the 200-institution ranking are from China. China holds half of the top ten spots and has 39 universities in total in the 2016 table.
49. [US News & World](#) released their [2016 Best Online Programs](#) in January, which ranks what they say is the academic quality of more than 1,200 US-based distance degree programs.
51. [International enrolment targets around the world](#). 2015 was a banner year for many study destinations. But, as much growth as we have seen in international student mobility over the past decade, many countries have pegged their international education strategies on still-more ambitious targets for the future.
52. [The relationship between currency exchange and student mobility](#). It has been a tumultuous year for the world economy, which in many quarters is still recovering from the deep economic shocks of the 2008 global economic crisis. A number of markets, [Greece](#) and [Brazil](#) among them, are struggling with ongoing challenges of declining economic growth, low commodities prices, high inflation, and weak balance sheets.
53. [Myth Busting Admissions: The most influential channels for prospective students](#). For several years, marketers have paid close attention to the latest thinking on social media: which platforms one had to be present on, and which tactics worked the best. But two recent surveys suggest that paying too much attention to social media platforms may distract marketing resources from other important conversion strategies.

Rankings, Ratings and Benchmarking

[Towards a transparent university ranking system](#). For the last few years global university rankings have been getting more complicated and more 'sophisticated'. Data makes its way from branch campuses, research institutes and far flung faculties and departments, and is analysed, decomposed, recomposed, scrutinised for anomalies and outliers and then enters the files of the rankers where it is normalised, standardised, square rooted, weighted and/or subjected to regional modification.

46. [UK tops student satisfaction ranking for undergrad study](#). New research from the UK HE's [International Unit](#) has delivered some good news for the UK: despite policy settings widely considered to be cumbersome, international students rate the UK's teaching and learning outcomes as excellent, and the country enjoys a higher satisfaction rate overall than its competitor countries.

Research

50. The [Thomson Reuters Highly Cited Researchers 2015](#) represents some of world's most influential scientific minds. About three thousand researchers earned this distinction by writing the greatest number of reports officially designated by Essential Science Indicators as Highly Cited Papers — ranking among the top 1% most cited for their subject field and year of publication, earning them the mark of exceptional impact.

Student Recruitment and Mobility

[OECD report summarises global mobility trends](#). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) released its annual report on global education trends last week. [Education at a Glance 2015](#) draws on a wealth of data to map educational attainment, participation rates, outcomes from education, and other key indicators for countries around the world.

54. [Administrators devise 6 ways to boost online course enrolment](#). Researching which [online program](#) is right for you can be a daunting task, especially if you currently reside outside of the US.
55. [New report finds slower growth for US graduate programmes in 2015](#). The latest report from the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) finds that growth in international enrolment in US graduate studies has slowed.
56. [US: community colleges aim to scoop pathway demand](#). Community colleges across the US are stepping up efforts to attract international students amid the flurry of pathway programme growth in the country.
57. [US: What are the latest trends with international student enrolment for master's degree?](#) The latest report from the CGS suggests that the demand for American degrees among international students is strong. Only 1 of 8 international students who applied to study for a master's degree or certificate succeeded in enrolling in US higher education.

58. [The US and the UK will see their market shares of globally mobile students decline over the next decade](#) as provision of education in traditional origin countries increases alongside their own ambitions to attract foreign students, according to a [study](#) by the British Council.
59. [Investing in informed enrolment strategies and adapting to trends in international student mobility](#). US higher education enrolled nearly 975,000 international students in 2014–2015, an increase of 52% since 2007–08 or 350,000 students more in seven years. What are the underlying growth patterns and implications for institutional strategies?
60. [US overtakes India as first year enrolments drop in the UK](#). The number of first-year non-EU enrolments to UK higher education providers has fallen by 3%, according to new [data](#) released by the Higher Education Statistics Agency. The data, from the academic year 2014–15, also shows that for the first time there are now more first-year enrolments from the US than from India.
61. [Canadian pathway growth faces capacity, fragmentation challenges](#). Nearly a third (30%) of all international undergraduates entering Canadian universities come via pathway programmes each year according to first-of-its kind research by the Illuminate Consulting Group. However, despite projected growth, the group says pathway provision lags behind more mature markets in competitor countries.
- [Sweden's international student numbers up for the first time since 2011](#). The Swedish government moved to introduce higher education tuition fees for non-European Union/non-European Economic Area students in 2011, and foreign student enrolment in the country promptly took a sharp downward turn. In the period between fall 2013 and fall 2014, the number of new fee-paying students increased more sharply, by 46%, leading to an overall 30% increase in fee-paying enrolment for fall 2014.
62. [China tightens reins on programs for overseas education](#). China is tightening the reins on popular programs that prepare students to study overseas, in the latest sign that Beijing is worried about the spread of Western values in its education system. In the longer term, China is working to upgrade its

own education system to keep more of its students at home and attract others from abroad.

63. [Overseas study loses allure for South Koreans](#). After years of heading abroad in droves to study, more young South Koreans are opting for education at home as expensive overseas degrees no longer provide an edge in a tough job market – and are even a liability. Recruiters and students say the improving quality of domestic education, including in English, means the premium placed on a foreign education is not what it was in a country known for its intense focus on academic achievement.
64. [What Can Be Learned from the Brazilian Scholarship Cut?](#) Brazil's Scientific Mobility Program (BSMP), the flagship scholarship program of the Brazilian government, is [facing budget cuts next year](#) due to a lack of funds. This could have a large impact on US institutions, which have become heavily reliant on the program to bring in international students.
65. [Brazil: new foreign tuition tax to hit outbound market, agents predict](#). Agents in Brazil have voiced their concern following the announcement of a new tax on overseas payments for study programmes, which they say will raise the cost of study abroad for Brazilian students. Until now, tuition fee payments made to overseas educational institutions have been tax-exempt.
66. [Nigeria proposes free tertiary education in science, technology](#). The President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, has announced plans to make tertiary education in the fields of science, technology and education free, in his speech on the country's budget.

[Nepal emerging as an important growth market for international education](#). Demographic and economic shifts in Nepal, mirroring those occurring in other Asian nations, have resulted in a sharp increase in the country's under-25 population and a rise in middle class incomes. As a result, record numbers of Nepalese students have been opting for foreign education. [A previous market profile](#) touched upon Nepal's higher education system, market potential, and economic challenges. We return for an updated snapshot of a country that has changed drastically in the last two years.

67. [Recruiting in Bolivia](#) – describes a study abroad market in Bolivia that has grown quickly in recent years. About 40% of Bolivian students go to Cuba, often for medical studies and with support from the Bolivian government. However, students that are handled by Bolivian agencies are more likely to go to the US, or to alternate destinations such as New Zealand or Germany that have grown in popularity in recent years.

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A great way to get involved with the AAIR community is to share your thoughts and ideas. Do you have something you would like to share with your IR colleagues? The next AAIR Newsletter will be published in late February. Please send your contributions to the editor@air.org.au by Wednesday February 17.



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AAIR eNewsletter Editor