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FROM THE PRESIDENT

A different worldview?

It's the start of another year and the students are arriving back in droves. Although the campus here does get a bit quieter over the summer, when the students arrive back for the start of the year it is very noticeable – particularly as the first few weeks are always those where everyone shows up eager to start their studies. You notice it even more if you try and move around campus when classes are changing, or when you try and buy your morning coffee. I have to admit that every year when the students arrive, I really enjoy seeing all the fresh faces even though they seem to be getting younger each year as I couldn't possibly be getting any older, could I?

This led me to think about what was different about these students and what they have known over their lifetime. I then remembered the [Beloit College Mindset List](#). Beloit is a small, liberal arts college founded in 1846 in Beloit, Wisconsin. It is most famous for the Mindset List, which it started in 1997 as a list of things that shape the worldview of students who are about to embark on tertiary education and are generally 18 years of age.

I thought that it might be interesting to enumerate a few of the items from the [most recent list](#) as a reminder about the worldview of some students – albeit from a US viewpoint. Here are a few of my favourites (the number indicates its position on the list):

'Among the iconic figures who have never been alive in their (the current students) lifetimes are Joe DiMaggio, John F. Kennedy Jr., Walter Payton, and Dusty Springfield.

3. They are the first generation for whom a "phone" has been primarily a video game, direction finder, electronic telegraph, and research library.

8. They have largely grown up in a floppy-less world.

10. There have always been emojis to cheer us up.

14. Donald Trump has always been a political figure, as a Democrat, an Independent, and a Republican.

19. In their lifetimes, Blackberry has gone from being a wild fruit to being a

communications device to becoming a wild fruit again.

23. The seat of Germany's government has always been back in Berlin.

29. An ophthalmologist named Bashar al-Assad has always provided vision for the Syrian military.

41. As toddlers, they may have taught their grandparents how to Skype.

50. Wikipedia has steadily gained acceptance by their teachers.'

I hope your year has started well, and that the next time you see a first-year student you might think a bit differently about their 'worldview'.



Kathie Rabel, AAIR President



EDITORIAL

Again, there has been much discussion this month on the value placed on higher education. More than 1,000 leaders from universities, industry and politics, descended on Canberra on February 28 for the [Universities Australia Higher Education Conference](#). This year's theme, Future Fundamentals, showcased how Australian universities are innovating to prepare students, graduates, teachers and researchers for the machine era.

As well, Australia's Labor Party has affirmed its commitment to a concerted effort to review post-secondary education if successful in the next Federal election.

But this month, your Editor was particularly taken with a [Wonkhe blog piece from Liz Austen](#) (Sheffield Hallam University, UK) who provided a comprehensive overview of 'student voice' in the institutional data producing what she refers to as an 'emerging typology'.

Finally, the University of Queensland's Director of Planning & Business Intelligence [Clare Hourigan](#) is in the Institutional Researcher's Corner this month with some reflection and sage advice on working in a big data environment. Clare reminds us that "it's easy to slip into focussing on the data or the solution before clearly articulating the question or problem".

Happy reading – Tracy

SECTOR NEWS AND VIEWS

Universities Australia Conference

Universities Australia Chair Professor Margaret Gardner spoke at the National Press Club on the first day of the UA Conference telling business leaders that Australian universities are equipped to help them solve some of their most complex business challenges (full transcript [here](#) and edited version in [The Conversation](#)).

Also at the Conference, Education Minister Simon Birmingham [announced](#) the release of a new website to provide prospective students with all relevant admissions information. The new site will include course entry requirements, ATAR spreads, details of special consideration for entry presented consistently by all universities and other higher education providers. It expands on the common terminology and transparent entry score scheme now in place. Minister Birmingham's address to the UA Conference was also published as an extract in [Campus Review](#).

Bruce Reed, co-chair of the Aspen Institute Future of Work Initiative, opened his Universities Australia 2018 Conference presentation with [sobering facts](#) related to automation and the era of AI.

Launched at the UA Conference Universities – the Australia Executive Women's Group (UAEW) new best practice recruitment guide to advance women in university leadership. Universities Australia Chief Executive Belinda Robinson [said](#) the guide was a terrific new resource to accelerate the progress made on lifting leadership appointments of women. UAW Co-Chair Professor Kerri-Lee Krause said the work of advancing women in leadership roles was everyone's business.

Other news

In mid-February a full bench of the Fair Work Commission decided on a long list of changes to the higher education award, variously supported or opposed by unions and employment groups. Stephen Matchett (*Campus Morning Mail*, February 22) [reported](#) that the main issues relates to workload and working hours. Among the outcomes, the Commission has opposed the NTEU claim for an overtime award.

Deputy leader of the Australian Labor Party, Tanya Plibersek has announced the party will convene a 'once in a generation' inquiry into post-secondary education within 100 days of it winning the next election. The Party has also set up a [website](#) to collect feedback and are convening panels to assist in advising on

the scope of the report. [Universities Australia's](#) response was swift saying such an inquiry would be a significant and substantial piece of work involving many complex issues in governance, structures and public investment. Professor Peter Noonan (Mitchell Institute and co-author of the Bradley Review) spoke to the issues that required redress in [Campus Morning Mail](#) (February 26).

The value of higher education continues to be discussed across the sector internationally. From Times Higher Education (THE) [What does 'value for money' mean for English higher education?](#)

In late February and early March, *The Conversation* published a series of articles exploring ideas for reforming higher education in Australia. These included: [How universities can make graduates employable with connections to industry](#) by DVC of Swinburne University of Technology, Duncan Bentley; [Four ideas for reforming higher education policy-making](#) by Gavin Moodie; [How philanthropy could change higher education funding](#), and; [No, university is not a waste of time and money](#) by Glenn Withers from ANU.

Glenn Withers was also interviewed in [Campus Morning Mail](#) about the value of universities noting they must reaffirm their role as sources for reflection on the nature of our world – 'and that means to be free to do so as a community of scholars because it's the scholars interacting with each other through their exchange of ideas that advances understanding and creates new knowledge'.

New figures show that 2017 was indeed the year of the international student, with a record number of people seeking out Australia as their place of study. In a [statement on March 9](#), minister for education and training Simon Birmingham said the latest international education data recorded 624,000 international students in Australia last year – an increase of 13 per cent from the previous year. Not only is this the most international students Australia has hosted, but the size of the increase between 2016 and 2017 has been unprecedented.

Campus news

Funding has been confirmed for USC's new Petrie campus. In last month's newsletter we reported VC Greg Hill's concerns that the plan could be undone by the federal government's two-year freeze on undergraduate places. However, government MPs with effected electorates (Peter Dutton and Luke Howarth) have [announced \\$69m in](#)



[federal funding](#) will mean the campus will be able to enrol students when it opens in 2020.

The University of Wollongong's [new health and wellbeing precinct](#) will include Australia's first patient-centred health clinic to offer aged care, retirement living, research facilities and teaching programs. Details about the plan confirmed that Lendlease would lead the project, with construction to commence in 2020. Vice-chancellor Paul Wellings said the facility was expected to be operational by 2022.

Murdoch University is [building a new \\$2.6 million computer gaming and networking facility](#) for its IT students which will include 24/7 access for night owl game developers. The university says that the new area, which will include computer labs and an 'industry-scale data centre', will be open in semester two of this year.

Recommended reading this month:

['It ain't what we do, it's the way that we do it' – researching student voices](#). Liz Austen from Sheffield Hallam University in the UK, has noted that recent movements within HE policy have increased the pressure on institutions to capture the 'student voice' for regulatory measures and quality assurance/enhancement. Austen provides a comprehensive overview of 'student voice' in the institutional data producing an emerging typology.

A [survey](#) of university students in Japan (A joint initiative between the Australian Council for Educational Research [ACER] and the Kawaijuku Group, the Japanese Universities Experience Survey [JUES]) reveals high levels of satisfaction with skills development but shows more work needs to be done in key areas that can significantly affect students' higher education experience.

In an Australian first, the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) has released an [interactive timeline](#) of Australia's VET policies, programs and initiatives over the past two decades. The 20-year-snapshot of the nation's vocational training history was developed to lend an 'economic context' to the changing VET landscape.

Rankings

In the new edition of the [QS Subject Rankings](#) the University of Queensland appears on 44 of the 48 lists of the top 50 discipline based university departments in the world. University of Queensland also has a department in the world top five, for sports-related subjects. Australian universities rating number two in the world

are: Monash University (pharmacy), Curtin University (mining engineering) and University of Sydney (sports-related). All eight New Zealand universities were ranked in the 2018 QS World University Rankings by subject, placing in the [top 50 institutions for 32 subjects](#) – compared with 28 in 2017.

Brendan O'Malley in [University World News](#) noted that Asian countries' improvement has decelerated for the first time and the supremacy of United States' universities has slipped further. The United Kingdom, China, Switzerland and Australia are rising, but France is falling. Also in [University World News](#), Angel Calderon provided a comprehensive international analysis of the results, tracking the key features of this year's outcomes.

Meanwhile in New Zealand

[Sharp rise in international students, but mobility falls](#). All eight of New Zealand's universities reported growth in international student numbers in 2016 and in revenue generated from international students' fees, the second international benchmark study for New Zealand reveals. But the reported data suggests a sharp drop of more than 25% in the number of undergraduate students participating in outbound mobility programs, although there are question marks about the completeness of that data.

[Government seeks grand conversation on education reform](#). The new NZ government has announced its three-year education work program for the first major reform of the entire education system since 1989. It will include developing strategies to support strong research, changing the institute of technology and polytechnic subsector, and a long-term approach to fee-free tertiary education. It will also involve work on the tertiary education strategy for 2019-24 and the international education strategy, which is being launched in June.

Universities have warned that fee-free study could push some students to apply for courses they are unlikely to pass, as tension between the sector and the Labour-led government over the flagship scheme has been revealed in letters sent to Education Minister Chris Hipkins, writes Nicholas Jones for the [NZ Herald](#).

A [new web platform](#) to match casual academics to jobs is being used by nearly a quarter of Australian universities, and soon will expand to New Zealand. The [mysessions](#) platform, created by education consultant and former academic David Bowser, has just formally launched after two years in beta phase and has about 13,000 casual academics registered.

Around the world

[University drop-out rates in UK rise for third successive year](#). Drop-out rates among university students who give up their studies within 12 months have gone up for the third year in a row, according to official statistics. Figures released by the [Higher Education Statistics Agency](#) (HESA) show that 26,000 students in England who began studying for their first degree in 2015 did not make it beyond the first year.

[Prime minister announces review of tertiary education](#) Announcing a year-long review of tertiary education PM Teresa May said: 'Making university truly accessible to young people from every background is not made easier by a funding system which leaves students from the lowest-income households bearing the highest levels of debt, with many graduates left questioning the return they get for their investment.' May has hinted that variable fees, dependent on the cost of running the course, may be an option on the agenda.

[Foreign students' tuition fees are a double-edged sword](#). The existence and level of tuition fees are among the most hotly debated issues in current higher education policy discussions. At least 10 OECD countries have implemented reforms in this area since 2010. However, striking the right balance is not easy. (Perspective from [University World News](#), 23 February)

Germany has held on to the [top spot](#) as the most attractive European country for international students, the 2018 edition of the [Study.EU Country Ranking](#) has revealed. Germany's combination of world-class higher education institutions and a tuition-free public university system made it the first choice for many students ahead of the UK and France.

BIG DATA, ONLINE LEARNING, ANALYTICS & TECHNOLOGY

[From FOCUS to Artificial Intelligence: How Data Has Changed in Higher Education](#)

Kristin Kennedy, Director of Business Intelligence, Arizona State University reflects on big data's role in higher education. As access to data, and expectations around its availability, have evolved in higher education, so too have the role and responsibilities of professionals charged with managing and analysing the information.

[Lucy](#) is the University of Canberra's new student information service. Lucy is a streamlined service interface designed to



answer students' questions in a timely manner. By scanning support content like the University's AskUC websites, Lucy can assist students with queries ranging from enrolment and class schedules to car parking and student services.

From [Campus Morning Mail](#) (March 6): Digital consultants [Ignia](#) are working on chatbot for the University of Sydney, 'to remove the administrative burden on the finance department,' by dealing with orders and invoice inquiries. The bot is now in 'production-polished' pilot stage and Ignia is 'exploring other use cases.'

[5 tips to empower users with data visualization](#). An overview of Sinclair Community College's (US) approach to the use of data and analytics and the work of Karl Konsdorf, Sinclair's director of research, analytics, and reporting. Konsdorf leads a team responsible for database administration, institutional research, report development, and data quality. Enrolment managers, department heads, deans, and advisers can interact with reports, collaborate on insights, and slice and dice data to make proactive decisions about enrolment, retention, performance, and degree completion.

[Leveraging Technology to Simplify the Back-End and Improve the Front-End](#). From *The Evollution*, an examination of using technology to improve the student experience: Today, postsecondary institutions—and especially divisions that serve non-traditional students—must meet all these expectations while also delivering a customer experience that matches what individuals are used to receiving from companies like Amazon. Bringing in technological tools and systems to address this gap is becoming increasingly common and, at UC Berkeley Extension (UCBX), they turned to the Destiny One Customer Lifecycle Management (CLM) system. In this interview, Patty Maciel, Rebecca Roos and Robin Sease discuss the impact Destiny One has had on operations, staff workloads and the student experience at UCBX.

Student success early-alert systems have become more common in institutions and *EdSurge* reported on the experience of Tallahassee Community College in the US, which, after [two failed attempts and more than a decade of trying to make the tool work](#), is redesigning its early-alert platform.

[I Know How You Felt This Semester](#). Sentiment analysis software is set for trial use later this semester at the University of St. Thomas, in Minnesota. Instructors will be able to glance at their computer screen at a particular point or stretch of time in the session and observe an aggregate of the

emotions students are displaying on their faces: happiness, anger, contempt, disgust, fear, neutrality, sadness and surprise. The project team hopes the software will help instructors tailor their teaching approaches to levels of student interest.

A [new app](#) seeks to shake up student ratings of instruction by promoting open-ended feedback in the moment, throughout the semester, so that the feedback becomes more constructive than punitive. Enter [ClassPulse](#). Part of a [growing market of products](#) that allow students to offer anonymous, instantaneous feedback on instruction, ClassPulse is a free application students and professors download to their phones.

[The top 7 programming languages to learn in 2018](#). *eCampus News* analysed data from job website [Indeed.com](#) on 25 programming languages, stacks, and frameworks to determine the top seven most in-demand coding languages as we move into 2018. This analysis is based on the number of job postings for each language. Java, Python and JavaScript are top of the list.

[How to harness the predictive power of e-learning platforms](#). Universities are partnering with companies to get access to a whole new suite of tools for tracking and analysing what happens between the initial login and the final exam.

Don't be complacent about data security. *eCampus News* explores how local software can be vulnerable to external threats, particularly those that use open source code.

[#DLNchat: What Is the Role of Libraries in Digital Learning Innovation?](#) A summary of the recent #DLNchat community event of February 27. The conversation was guided by special guest [Steven Bell](#), Associate Librarian at Temple University Libraries, where he works with colleagues on a number of digital learning initiatives. His work has shown him that 'it will definitely be a more sustainable initiative if it is collaborative—whether it's OER, open access journals, etc...if the library wants to go alone it will go fast but if it goes with others it will go much further.'

GRADUATE OUTCOMES AND EMPLOYABILITY

DeakinCo has [announced](#) an expansion for its micro-credentials; 'to include direct to consumers (and partnering with other higher education providers to license our micro-credential model and platform.'

What skills are talent developers focused on the most for 2018? According to [LinkedIn](#) research the number one priority is training for soft skills, specifically leadership, communication and collaboration.

LEARNING & TEACHING

Swinburne University is launching a MOOC (via [Canvas](#)) for first-time university teachers. The self-paced, eleven module program will be especially useful for starting teachers at universities which leave them to learn as they go along.

Murdoch University will [offer full degrees via digital delivery](#), in partnership with the UK Open University's MOOC platform FutureLearn. In May Murdoch will commence free 'taster' courses that give students a sense of what proceeding to a full degree would involve. Those inclined could then take on the fee-paying units needed to complete a postgraduate degree. Murdoch's first course will be a graduate certificate in health administration.

[Symbiotic Benefits: How Improving Strategic Student Engagement Impacts Institutions and Students Alike](#). James Wiley from the National Research Centre for College and University Admissions (US) explores institutional approaches to student engagement.

RESEARCH

[Ksenia Sawczak](#), Director of Research Services at the University of Canberra gives her perspective on the upcoming [ARC Engagement and Impact Assessment](#) exercise later this year. Sawczak adds: 'Assessment exercises are, of course, nothing new. What is curious about Australia is that ERA functions in a vacuum, conducted by government but playing no role in informing federal research policy or funding allocations to universities. Above all, its role is to provide the government and public assurance of the quality of research being undertaken in Australian universities, with the guiding principles being accountability, transparency, and openness'.

Publisher Taylor & Francis has [dropped plans](#) to charge extra for access to older research papers online, after more than 110 universities signed a letter of protest. The latest renewal of British universities' deal with Taylor & Francis, which was agreed in principle at the end of January but is yet to be signed, for the first time covered papers published only in the past 20 years.



The journal and research information division of RELX (Elsevier) [reports](#) 2017 revenues of £2.47bn (A\$4.37bn), up 7 per cent on 2016. Adjusted operating profit was also up 7 per cent to £.913bn (\$A1.616bn). Underlying growth was 3 per cent.

Elsevier, one of the world's largest publishers of scientific journals, [has announced a partnership](#) with a non-profit named [Hypothesis](#), which makes annotation software that lets readers make margin notes on online articles. Hypothesis is free to anyone, and even before the partnership professors could have used the annotation service to mark up Elsevier articles (or any other page on the web). But the new arrangement will mean that scholars can make the annotations to Elsevier articles using their Elsevier login and password, without having to setup an account on Hypothesis.

In [Campus Morning Mail](#) (February 22), Susie Robinson, CEO of Higher Education Consulting Group (HECG) examined the potential values and challenges in the ARC's new engagement and impact and notes: 'Forward-thinking universities should be minded not to sit and await developments, but to drive and shape them...Consortiums such as the Australian Technology Network of Universities, representing a key segment of the sector that stands to benefit, should be proactive here'.

(MORE) REPORTS AND RESOURCES

International survey on quality management in higher education

The UNESCO Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP-UNESCO), in collaboration with the [International Association of Universities](#) (IAU), has published [Quality Management in higher education: Developments and drivers](#).

This book fills a knowledge gap on the state of quality management in higher education institutions today.

Author Michaela Martin, with Shreya Parikh, draw from the responses of over 300 institutions worldwide to map recent developments, external and internal drivers, and obstacles around the implementation of quality management policies. As the first truly global survey of its kind, it provides primary data and analysis on this salient issue in higher education reform.

[Infographic also available](#)



Latest issue: [NCSHE eNews – Equity insights: new developments in higher education](#)

ON THE MOVE

CQU VC **Scott Bowman**, who previously accepted a contract extension through to 2022 has announced he will leave the university at the end of 2018.

Iain Watt will join UTS as DVC International in June. He is now PVC International at UWA.

Peter Draper is the new executive director of the University of Adelaide's Institute for International Trade. He is now managing director of the Tutwa Consulting Group, in South Africa.

Bernie Fisher is the new president of the ACT branch of the National Tertiary Education Union.

Fiona Nash is joining Charles Sturt University and will become strategic advisor for regional development. Fiona was the former National Party deputy leader.

CSU has also hired **Laura Dan**, chief program officer at the Australian Research Council, to become Director of Knowledge Exchange and Engagement.

Lorelle Frazer moves from Griffith University to become head of the business school at University of the Sunshine Coast.

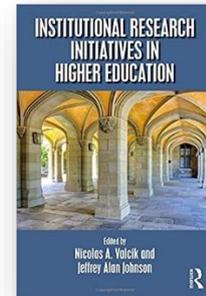
Ken Greenwood also joins USC, to lead social sciences. He moves from James Cook University.

Nick Bisley from the La Trobe University Asia Institute moves up to lead the university's School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

CQU DVC **Andy Bridges** will leave the university in June. His replacement in the strategic development portfolio will be recruited internally.

Ian Narev is named advisory board chair for the UNSW Gonski Institute for Education. Mr Narev will stand down as CEO of the Commonwealth Bank in April. The GIE is led by former NSW education minister Adrian Piccoli.

BOOK REVIEWS



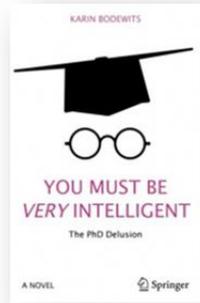
[Institutional Research Initiatives in Higher Education](#)

Nicolas A. Valcik, Jeffrey Alan Johnson

American higher education faces a challenging environment. Decreasing state appropriations, rising costs, and tightening budgets have left American colleges and universities scrambling to achieve their missions with ever more limited resources. Campus leaders have therefore increasingly relied upon institutional research and strategic planning departments to make transparent and rational decisions and to promote good stewardship of critical but finite resources. *Institutional Research Initiatives in Higher Education* illustrates the wealth of institutional research activities occurring in American higher education.

(For a free download, try <http://it-book.org/pdf/institutional-research-initiatives-in-higher-education>)



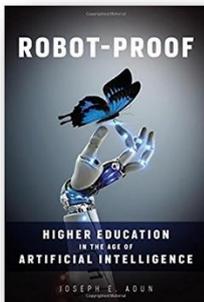


[You must be very intelligent. The PhD Delusion](#)

Karin Bodewits

This witty, warts-and-all account of Bodewits' years as a PhD student at the University of Edinburgh is full of success and failure, passion and pathos, insight, farce and warm-hearted disillusionment. She describes a world of collaboration and backstabbing; nefarious financing and wasted genius; cosmopolitan dreamers and discoveries that might just change the world.

Interview with author in [Inside HigherEd](#)

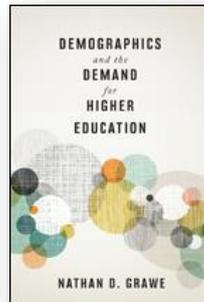


[Robot-Proof: Higher Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence](#)

Joseph E. Aoun

A 'robot-proof' education, Aoun argues, is not concerned solely with topping up students' minds with high-octane facts. Rather, it calibrates them with a creative mindset and the mental elasticity to invent, discover, or create something valuable to society—a scientific proof, a hip-hop recording, a web comic, a cure for cancer. Aoun lays out the framework for a new discipline, humanics, which builds on our innate strengths and prepares students to compete in a labor market in which smart machines work alongside human professionals. The new literacies of **Aoun's humanics are data**

literacy, technological literacy, and human literacy. Students will need data literacy to manage the flow of big data, and technological literacy to know how their machines work, but human literacy—the humanities, communication, and design—to function as a human being. Life-long learning opportunities will support their ability to adapt to change.



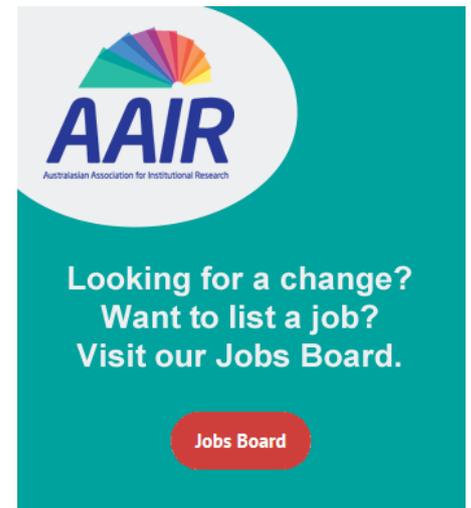
[Demographics and the Demand for Higher Education](#)

Nathan D. Grawe

In *Demographics and the Demand for Higher Education*, Nathan D. Grawe has developed the Higher Education Demand Index (HEDI), which relies on data from the 2002 US Education Longitudinal Study (ELS) to estimate the probability of college-going using basic demographic variables. The future demand for college attendance, he argues, depends critically on institution type. While many schools face painful contractions, for example, demand for elite schools is expected to grow by more than 15 percent in future years. Essential for administrators and trustees who are responsible for recruitment, admissions, student support, tenure practices, facilities construction, and strategic planning, this book is a practical guide for navigating coming enrolment challenges.

The demographic shift to attracting older students and the information presented in this book is discussed further in [Declining College Enrollment from Traditional-Age Students Will Hit Hard: Are Adult Students the Answer?](#)

POSITIONS VACANT



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

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



Higher Education Information Management System (HEIMS).

Visit the HEIMSHelp [Training page](#) with details of the training resources that are available to help you meet reporting and verification deadlines.



HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

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



Association for Tertiary Education Management

ATEM

have released their 2018 event calendar

<https://www.atem.org.au/documents/item/790>

[The Higher Education HR/IR Conference 2018 – Leading the Way](#)



9-11 May, Stamford Plaza, Brisbane, Australia

For any further queries about the conference, please contact [Henry Wong](#), Conference Manager.

This conference will offer an impressive line of speakers, a unique dining experience, combined with invaluable networking opportunities.

[AIR Forum 2018 – Registrations now open](#)



May 29 – June 1, Orlando, Florida, US

The AIR Forum, the Association's annual conference, is the world's largest gathering of higher education professionals working in institutional research, assessment, planning, and related postsecondary education fields.

[EduTECH Australia 2018](#)



6-8 June, International Convention Centre, Sydney, Australia

EduTECH is an annual event where the entire education and training sector gather together to learn, debate, exchange ideas and be inspired by the very latest in education thought leadership.

[Student Services Centre Conference](#)



13-15 June, 2018, Adelaide, South Australia

[HERDSA: \(Re\) Valuing Education](#)

2-5 July 2018, Adelaide, Australia

HERDSA offers an annual international conference on topical teaching and learning issues with opportunities to meet colleagues with similar interests, exchange ideas about teaching and learning and learn about current developments from experienced researchers and practitioners.

[STARS Conference](#)



8-11 July 2018, Auckland, New Zealand

Registrations are now open for the 2018 Conference. The STARS Conference provides the opportunity to disseminate and discuss current research, good practice, emerging initiatives and leading-edge ideas that are aimed at enhancing students' tertiary learning experiences

[40th Annual EAIR Forum 2018 Budapest](#)



26-29 August 2018 Central European University, Hungary

EAIR – The European Higher Education Society. Linking research, policy and practice
Conference Theme: Competition, Collaboration and Complementarity in Higher Education.

HEIRNETWORK

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK

The Higher Education Institutional Research (HEIR) Network is calling for abstracts for its HEIR Conference the [Changing Landscape of Higher Education – Challenges and Opportunities for Institutional Research](#). The Conference is on 20th to 21st of September 2018 in Dublin, Ireland.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The Institutional Researcher Issue 4, April 2018

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 April 2018. Please send your contributions to the editor@aaair.org.au by April 7, 2018.

A reminder about the organisations' social media links to keep you up-to-date and in touch with all the latest news and events.



[AAIR on Twitter @AAIRaustralasia](#)



Tracy Creagh
Editor, *The Institutional Researcher*

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCHER'S CORNER

Five questions with Clare Hourigan, University of Queensland



What is your job title?

Director of Planning & Business Intelligence

Briefly, how would you describe your role in terms of your place in your institution?

Two words come to mind when I think of my role: varied and unpredictable. The joke is that you can rarely plan out the daily work of a Planning Office because you never really know what's going to pop up around the corner. You must be adaptable and comfortable with constantly reprioritising your work. This can be challenging, but also makes things really interesting.

At its core, my job, and the function of my unit, is to provide management and the broader university community with the data and information they need to make both operational and strategic decisions. More specifically, we are responsible for functions such as the development and maintenance of the University's data warehouse and data reporting, student load and income projections, target setting for domestic undergraduate admissions, strategic and operational planning, student data submissions to the Australian Government, management of national student surveys, provision of government policy advice and ad-hoc analytics.

On a day-to-day basis, I spend a lot of my time providing support, advice and analysis to our senior executive. This might include developing the University's response to a Government proposal, providing a market analysis of our student applications, sitting in on budget meetings with our faculties and institutes, preparing a strategy session for a

management retreat, or participating in a committee that guides the University's IT strategy.

From your perspective, what are the emerging areas of interest in institutional research?

Over the last few years our institutional research work (or strategic analysis as I tend to call it) has well and truly moved away from simply describing historical trends and measuring past performance. That work still occurs, but we are now shifting towards analysis that describes what the future might look like in the event of various environmental changes, or if specific decisions are made. We try to predict the likely outcome of future decisions, rather than just examine whether past decisions had the intended effect.

At UQ, the evolution of our student load planning is a key example of this. We started building our student load and income model about five years ago, and its aim was to simply provide income projections for the budget, and to prepare offer targets for coursework admissions. The modelling process, and the data it produces, are now used for a range of different purposes. For example, we regularly use the model to undertake 'what if' scenario modelling to manage the risk of unexpected changes in the external environment (e.g. funding changes, significant shifts in the size of various markets, etc.). We also know that our faculties and schools use the output to better understand student load and income flows, and to plan new courses and programs. In the future, I envisage that we might also build upon the load model to inform timetabling, workforce planning, and to better predict our costs.

Institutional Research (IR) is not just about doing a contained piece of institutional-wide analysis and writing up the results, but it is also about using what you have discovered to provide tools, reports and dashboards, that allow others to interrogate the data for their own purposes. This might be a student administration manager who wants to measure the financial viability of their courses, an academic who wants to understand the background of their students to inform their teaching practice, or an international student recruiter who wants to know more about their student market. For IR to be successful, it is vital that a university's planning and business intelligence functions work closely together. Data reporting and dissemination can only be truly effective if it is informed by a deep understanding of the operating environment and business needs.

What do you believe will be the future priorities for institutional research?

One of the current key challenges and priorities for both my team and our IT Services area is how to deal with the increasing availability of new and complex administrative data, and manage the demand and expectations around that data. As examples, Wi-Fi logs, learning management system clicks, building access logs and customer relationship management systems are new data sources that all have the potential to support analysis that addresses IR and planning questions. There is a lot of excitement around the potential of these data, but we also need to contain some of the hype. In an environment where 'big data' and 'artificial intelligence' have become common lexicon, it's easy to slip into focussing on the data or the solution before clearly articulating the question or problem. When a problem isn't clearly understood, the risk of producing a collection of data or analysis that provides a misleading picture is high.

As Planning and BI specialists, we therefore need to ensure we remain focussed on the questions that need to be answered and apply our knowledge of the university environment to the way we prepare, present and interpret data. It's important that we regularly look to new sources of data and find ways to speed up and automate the dissemination of data and analysis, but the challenge is to do this in a way that maintains data quality and supports accurate interpretation.

Complete this statement: *In my role, I can't operate effectively without ...*

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