



 **AAIR Newsletter June 2020**



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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### Oh What A Year! ...and other conversations

As we started a new decade at the start of 2020, I don't expect any of us would have considered how much our worlds would have changed six months later. The seismic shock and jolt from COVID-19 has impacted on almost all parts of our lives.



For many of us across our region we are emerging from a long period of lockdown, and life is returning to relative normality. However, the impact of COVID-19 will be felt by us all for quite some time yet, and especially in our working lives. Virtually every tertiary institution is under financial stress with many forecasting large financial losses for 2020 and even through to 2022. I know many institutions are looking at a full range of cost savings that will have an impact on each and every one of us. In times of financial stress, severe cuts usually mean a loss to support for professional development activities.

At AAIR, the Executive Committee has been looking at how we can best support our members, and to continue to provide affordable professional development opportunities. As a Committee, we are also exploring how we can continue to engage and network with our colleagues doing similar roles across our vast region in an effort for us all to stay informed and supported.

One way that AAIR is giving back to our members and supporting you through this time is through our Conversations During Series of free online webinars. Starting in early May, we initiated these Open-AAIR Discussions, and have been hosting webinars on a range of topics related to the broad field of institutional research. So far, the sessions on load planning, addressing QILT and surveys, as well as business intelligence during times of COVID, have been really well subscribed. The feedback I have had is that everyone attending the webinars valued the opportunity to not only learn and share practice, but also to connect with colleagues in similar roles. Our next webinar in the series is focusing on [Australian Federal Government](#) reporting requirements and will be held on 30 June 2020.

I know that for the rest of 2020 and into 2021 institutional research activities will accelerate, creating more demands on time and resources. Please remember to take time out and make use the learning and networking opportunities our webinars offer. Make use of the connection with your colleagues working across all institutions in our region. If you want to learn or share a practice with others tell us and we can make that happen.

**We are here for you.**



Stuart Terry  
AAIR President



## EDITORIAL

*It is with great pleasure that I interviewed Angel Calderon, Principal Advisor at RMIT University, in our [Institutional Researchers' Corner](#) in this issue! Angel has extensive experience in the higher education sector, and contributed many commentaries and publications on planning, research, and policy.*

*In this issue, Angel shares his views on ranking, looking at QS, the Centre for World University Rankings, and Nature Index, in Campus Morning Mail. His other piece published in [University World News](#), focuses on how citations per faculty, and the academic and employer reputation surveys, impact the rise and fall of the placing of institutions worldwide, in particular Australian universities.*

*Whether you are already back at work on campus, or are continuing to work-from-home, please keep safe and warm. Hope Always!*

*Enjoy reading*

*Lizzie*

## AAIR ANNOUNCEMENT

AAIR Committee has decided to change the format of the SIG Forum this year. We will make a more detailed announcement shortly. Keep your eyes on this section!

## SECTOR NEWS AND VIEWS

Last week, the federal government said it would fund an extra 39,000 university places by 2023 by restructuring the course fees students pay for to encourage them to "make more job-relevant choices". Fees for teaching, nursing, clinical psychology, and languages will reduce 46%; that for law and commerce (by 28%) and the humanities (by 113%) will increase. This [course funding structure package](#) has triggered debates from different perspectives in the Higher Education sector.

[One million VET students to be surveyed about training](#): Close to one million people who completed vocational education and training (VET) in 2019 will be contacted about their employment outcomes, satisfaction, and training relevance when the annual National Student Outcomes Survey starts tomorrow. The results of the survey, which is managed by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), are used to help future students make decisions about training, and to assist governments and training providers to ensure VET is of high quality and relevant to Australian workplaces (NCVER, 22 June).

[University fees hiked to provide 40,000 new places](#): Australia's federal government plans to double university fees for arts students and also raise them for those in commerce and law to pay for an expansion of nearly 40,000 places for new students. As well as increasing university places by 39,000 in the next three years, Tehan said the government would add to this by 100,000 places in the years up to 2030. Federal grants to universities would maintain their real value by being indexed to inflation. According to government figures, demand for university places from students in their last year of school is set to increase from 133,000 in 2019 to 154,000 in 2021. (Geoff Maslen, UWN, 19 June).

[ATAR admissions: unjust and obsolete Our school leavers deserve better – and for all the trauma it has caused, COVID-19 is bringing change](#). There hasn't been a

year in recent memory when domestic enrolment growth and market share has mattered so much. At the same time, there hasn't been such a fragmented, ineffective approach to engaging with school leavers in recent memory. Physical expos and open days are largely cancelled, with digital channels becoming crowded with on-line events of varying effectiveness. Allowing students to secure an offer early, in one of the most disrupted and uncertain years in recent memory, offers a tremendous opportunity to lock in domestic enrolments and indeed grow numbers within whatever cap flexibility can be negotiated with the Federal Government between now and Christmas. (Tim Winkler, CMM, 18 June).

[Record expenditure for university R&D but basic research funding declined. Near 50% of university research should be at the basic end of the research spectrum, rather than the present 41%](#). The Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes biennially the Research and Experimental Development Performance of Australian Higher Education Organisations, (commonly referred to as HERD). There is always a two-year delay in reporting, so the latest data, released on 20 May 2020, is for activities in 2018. The compilation has been prepared on a consistent basis since 1992. It provides a valuable longitudinal reference of trends in higher education R&D expenditure activities. The next R&D data set, for 2020, will not be released by the ABS until 2022. We can expect significant changes due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. (Frank P. Larkins, CMM, 18 June).

[Making the unethical illegal](#): The House of Reps passed the academic integrity bill on 12 June. The legislation targets commercial providers of essay-writing services for students, which "undermines the integrity of Australia's higher education system." The government and TEQSA have made it clear that commercial providers are the target but the debate will roll-on after the legislation is rolled-out (CMM, 15 June).

[New Zealand's Victoria University of Wellington is making access easier for students wanting to study at the university in 2021](#), reports 1News. The university agreed to remove grade entry requirements, meaning any student who successfully completes 'University Entrance' will be guaranteed entry to undergraduate study if they apply (UWN, 14 June).



[Responding to Industry 4.0: implications for VET](#): Frameworks for how best to incorporate essential digital skills into VET delivery and how to upskill VET educators are the subject of two new 'good practice guides' released today by NCVET. The guides highlight how critical it is for VET educators to use technology in their teaching practice, as is their ability to assist learners in developing their own digital skills (10 June).

[COVID-19: a "hard lesson" on financial risk management](#)-Australia's public universities finances are in turmoil, illuminating inadequate risk management. However, this experience should contribute to Australian universities, as public institutions, adopting new approaches to assessing and managing the financial risks associated with strategies on international student fees income streams and investments in the share market (Garry Carnegie & James Guthrie, 9 June).

[Needed next: new international ed strategy](#). The Committee for Sydney calls for three long-term visa changes to make Australia attractive: \* a year studying on-line with an Australian provider counts for a post-study work visa; \* completing a degree here guaranteeing a four-year post-graduation work visa; \* grads who use their four years to work in "key industries," – advanced manufacturing, computer science – have a pathway to permanent residence (CMM, 3 June).

[Dual-sector private providers have to meet rules set by the Australian Skills Quality Authority plus the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency](#). Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia thinks this is way too much regulation and argues ASQA and TEQSA should come up with a common code for issues and areas they both cover. With the federal government keen on its new national regulator – the National Skills Commission getting to work, it can't hurt to remind all officials of the demands they impose on people who are teaching rather than regulating (CMM, 1 June).

[50% drop in foreign student enrolment in Australia by 2021 predicted](#): In their report\*, Dr Bob Birrell and Dr Katharine Betts, respectively president and vice president of the Australian Population Research Institute, say the crisis will deepen because normally about half of the foreign students taking up higher education student visas do so in the second half of the calendar year, but it is

likely few will do so this year and that the numbers are also likely to drop in the first half of 2021, with the result that the number of overseas students enrolled in higher education could fall by up to 50%. The universities most likely to take the biggest hit will be the leading institutions in the Group of Eight (Go8) research universities (Geoff Maslen, UWN, 1 June).

[Data delights deferred: The Commonwealth's department of education announces bon information collections](#), "in order to reduce the administrative burden on higher education providers while they respond to the COVID-19 situation." Projects delayed include: April HELP data (now due October), 2019 HE data reconciliation (no due date). Consultation on changes to research block grant data collections is now on last quarter. This month's start on the 2021 research data roadmap is delayed until August – but there are limits to the department's generosity – the August '21 deadline is unchanged (CMM, 29 May).

[IDP chief warns: 12-months max to revive international education appeal](#): IDP Education's Andrew Barkla calls for urgent action to stop international students choosing the UK or Canada over Australia. Mr Barkla points to research with prospective international students showing Australia is "well behind" Canada and New Zealand in their perceptions of how we care for the welfare of international students. He sets out three steps to save the industry which need to be taken – urgently. (CMM, 27 May).

[International students-talking isn't arriving](#): International education advocates talk-up how students could soon arrive (and start paying fees). But advocacy will not overcome practical problems. Talking-up early arrivals in the hope that optimism can make it so does no good. What international education needs now is cool headed pragmatic-problem solving that puts students at the centre of the decision-making process. There's not much point allowing them into the country if the border is not open (Dirk Mulder, CMM, 22 May).

[Universities propose 'secure corridor' rules for international students](#): International student arrivals would recommence from countries deemed safe and be subject to self-funded quarantine requirements under a plan put to federal and state governments by the elite Group of Eight universities. The "secure corridor"

framework could allow for students to return en masse subject to strict health checks and with the co-operation of government agencies and the aviation industry, according to the proposal being considered by federal and state leaders. The first step of the framework – which could see students currently overseas commencing or renewing their studies by first semester 2021 – would be a "rigorous protocol for selecting eligible source countries" that had contained the spread of COVID-19. (Fergus Hunter, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 May).



[First Undergraduate Certificate courses accredited by TEQSA](#): the agency has implemented a streamlined approach for the assessment of new Graduate and Undergraduate Certificate courses, which form part of the Australian Government's recently announced Higher Education Support Package. The Undergraduate Certificate is a formal qualification recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework. All higher education providers (with the appropriate accreditation), can issue Undergraduate Certificates until at least December 2021 (TEQSA, 20 May).

[Universities demand government reinvestment post-pandemic](#): Australia's 37 public universities have urged the federal government to follow the example of a state government and invest millions more dollars in the country's higher education system to counter the impacts of the coronavirus. This follows a decision by the Victorian state government to allocate AU\$350 million (US\$230 million) to the state's universities as part of efforts to boost economic recovery by creating more local jobs. (Geoff Maslen, UWN, 20 May)

[When will New Zealand open its borders to international students again?](#) New Zealand's borders remain closed to non-citizens; international students, however, could be exempt from this restriction in the future, New Zealand education minister Chris Hipkins last week suggested. Up to one-third of international students in New Zealand universities are unable to enter the country this year. In April, only 75



international students entered New Zealand, according to The PIE News; at the same time last year, over 6,000 student visa holders entered the country (Study International Staff, 15 May 15).

Massey University's Provost Professor Giselle Byrnes discussed [Universities and COVID-19: the role of the expert](#): While elsewhere in the world other nations' leaders are being guided by political advisors (and possibly financial soothsayers), here in New Zealand public health experts, epidemiologists, statisticians, mathematicians, economists have been thrust into the media. Psychologists, social scientists and philosophers have also been offering advice on how to cope with living in isolation, the importance of community resilience and, most importantly, how kindness and tolerance is so critical at this time. It is noticeable that most of these experts come from the nation's eight publicly-funded universities.

### International News

[Can International Higher Education Survive Covid-19?](#) The global higher education market has become a huge industry that was valued at USD 65.4 billion in 2019, and projected to reach USD 117.95 billion by 2027. But in a world where students either cannot – or will not – leave their home country due to health concerns – can such startling growth continue? The unprecedented challenges presented by Covid-19 will not be dealt with successfully by any one, individual player, but by the whole sector coming together in mutually supportive networks. Never has the adage that we are stronger together had such real meaning for the international education community than now. (Matt Symonds, Forbes, 22 June).



[How to secure recovery of international student mobility](#): COVID-19 pandemic, has also exposed how fragile the current transactional higher education model is, in Australia and in other major destination countries like the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand. The pandemic has made it clear that innovations to the Australian higher education business model are inevitable if

it is to be sustainable. Therefore, sustaining international student flows to Australia is vital, not only for economic motives, but also because of the professional, educational, cultural and social benefits it can bring to Australia post-pandemic and in the long term (Ly Tran, UWN, 20 June).

[Reinventing a university: 5 lessons learned](#): How Metropolitan State University of Denver reinvented itself during a time of change and uncertainty. University business has not exactly been "business as usual." So how does a university reinvent itself during a time of change and uncertainty? Lesson #1: Research and observe your reputation qualities over time. Lesson #2: Evaluate that information. Lesson #3: Compare how others see your university vs. how you see your university. Lesson #4: Reinvent for your students and community through branding and ongoing dialog. Lesson #5: Make sure your brand is adaptable—and then reinvent again! (Catherine B. Lucas, UB, 16 June).

[Harvard drops standardized test requirements for class of 2025](#): The university joins most of the rest of the Ivy League in making SAT and ACT test scores optional this year because of the difficulty of taking and possibly retaking tests amid shutdowns caused by the coronavirus. Out of the eight Ivies, only Princeton is still requiring scores be submitted in the coming application cycle (Rachel Clarke, CNN, 16 June).

[3 universities making big diversity investments](#): Universities public and private are offering substantial new scholarship programs in efforts to diversify their campuses in the wake of nationwide anti-racist protests and the financial impacts of coronavirus. Texas A&M launches \$100 million fund to help its 11 campuses better reflect the state demographics. The scholarship will become a top fundraising priority for the universities (Matt Zalaznick, UB, 16 June).

[A severe risk of growing inequality between universities](#): In order to better understand the disruption caused by COVID-19 on higher education and to investigate the first measures undertaken by higher education institutions around the world to respond to the crisis, the International Association of Universities (IAU) launched the IAU Global Survey on the Impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education around the World. The survey investigated the impact of COVID-19 on all aspects of higher education, teaching and learning, research and community

engagement. The data on partnerships and community engagements suggest a severe risk of growing inequality among higher education institutions. (Giorgio Marinoni and Hans de Wit, UWN, 8 June).

[Leveraging alumni power to adapt to COVID-19 disruption](#): For some institutions COVID-19 has made the inevitable more obvious: the current education model needs to adapt to a rapidly changing world and it will require expertise, flexibility and resources. Where will they come from? Alumni. So how do you leverage this able and willing group now and into the future to support your institution way beyond the value of the money that they might contribute? (Kathy Edersheim, UWN, 6 June).



Today's graduates, tomorrow's alumni.  
Photo: iStock

[A Post-Pandemic Strategy for U.S. Higher Ed](#): University leaders must use what they are learning in crisis now to position their institutions for greatest impact in the decades to come. That means using data now from the current forced online learning experiment and initiating small pilots during the next academic year to test future higher education models. This article is intended to set the agenda for university leaders to develop a point of view about the future which can guide short-term action. They must choose between the three paths. The coming semesters/years are a great opportunity to build on that momentum and transform higher education into something that is customizable and affordable to the vast majority of people. The time to act is now. (Vijay Govindarajan and Anup Srivastava, HBR, 2 June).

[Student number controls are back in UK – with deadly penalties for over-recruitment](#): Controls on student numbers are returning for what is billed as a one year, one-off reappearance. The policy is broadly following the lines set out by Universities UK's proposed "gentlemen's agreement" cap – last year's recruitment of English domiciled undergraduate full-time students, plus the forecasted addition for this year, plus



5 per cent. But there numerous curious additions and tweaks to unpick. David Kernohan finds the devils in the detail (Wonkhe, 1 June).



[Towards a flexible and adaptable HE after COVID-19:](#) The global higher education architecture has been developing over many years within interrelated regionalisation and globalisation projects. However, such developments linked to the future of higher education need to be anchored in the basic issues and pillars I have outlined above. Blue sky thinking centred on envisioning and developing a future higher education that addresses these, needs to be encouraged and funded. I argued that higher education should be seen as a public good and advanced a vision for a flexible and adaptable education for the fourth industrial revolution anchored in UNESCO's 'Learning to do', 'Learning to be', 'Learning to know', and 'Learning to live together'. (Roger Chao Jr, UWN, 30 May)



Photo: iStock

[One in five undergraduates have said they would not enrol at university in the next academic year as a result of the Covid-19 crisis, according to a survey released by the University and College Union:](#) A number of universities including Cambridge have said they will conduct all lectures online throughout the 2020-21 academic year, offering "blended learning" that mixes online teaching with tutorials and in-person seminars where possible. Based on the survey data, the consultancy London Economics estimated that about 17% of prospective UK students would not enrol in September if coronavirus restrictions remained, costing the sector £763m in lost tuition fees and teaching grants (Richard Adams, the Guardian, 21 May).

[Time for campus leaders to reflect on and learn from pandemic: College officials are still determining how to reopen—but they can also consider future operational changes based on lessons learned during closures.](#) In phase one of the crisis, the primary focus was on making sure everyone was safe, closing down campuses and moving to online education. Phase two, which occurred almost simultaneously, involved preserving the financial health of the institution came into play. And phase three, for close to 70% of colleges and universities, is looking at resuming operations. The fourth phase—which will include asking questions such as "What have we learned about technology?" and "How can we use that to think about reimagining our operations in the future?"—should really be starting now, he says. Besides technology, changes are expected to occur with process, policy and organizational design. (Melissa Ezarik, UB, 20 May).



[Refocusing institutional research on university needs:](#) To navigate this difficult path, universities need to intensify their institutional data collection and analysis. Yet most universities have limited formal policies and strategies for gathering institutional data and for employing trained staff to generate the information and analysis required for competent, informed and innovative management, with or without the world-changing circumstance of a pandemic. (John Aubrey Douglass and Igor Chirikov, UWN, 18 May).

[Higher ed leader communication: An evolution is underway:](#) Presenting our ideas more thoughtfully, and interacting with our colleagues, students and communities in new ways are key for leaders in the COVID-19 era. Good leadership and effective communication in the era of COVID-19 requires us to present our ideas more thoughtfully and interact with our colleagues, students and communities in new ways. It also means providing greater transparency and sometimes admitting that we don't have all the answers at a time when our understanding of the virus and how it affects our campuses and programs

continues to evolve. (Kim Mooney, UB, 18 May).



[Is this the crisis higher education needs to have?](#) The Covid-19 pandemic offers universities a once-in-a-generation opportunity to put their dysfunctional strategies behind them. Like it or not, universities are in for some major renovations. The big question is whether their senior managers and governance committees will be up to the task. Although most of our research has been on Australia and the UK, we believe that its lessons apply right across the leading English-speaking countries and beyond. For us, the Covid-19 pandemic represents an opportunity to undo many of the strategic mistakes universities and policymakers have made in the past. (Timothy Devinney and Grahame Dowling, Times Higher Education, 14 May).

[Why engaging students in problem-solving is needed now:](#) Mobilizing students' inquisitiveness, energy and desire to effect change improves communities—and universities. Most universities participate in improving quality of life in their communities on some level. As their respective communities thrive (or languish), so do they—and vice versa. Engaging in this symbiotic dance exemplifies the American Association of State Colleges and Universities' call for its members to be "stewards of place." (Eric Skipper, UB, 14 May).



### Ranking & Rating

[What rankings report – and can reveal over time:](#) It's rankings season, which means high-scores for hyperbole as



universities promote their outcomes. Angel Calderon looks at what makes three league tables, namely QS, Centre for World University Rankings, and Nature Index (CMM, 16 June).

**New rankings results show how some are gaming the system:** the QS World University Rankings released on 10 June includes 1,002 institutions spread across 80 countries. It shows the number of ranked universities in 2020 is unchanged compared to last year's edition. Four universities (British Columbia, Shanghai Jiao Tong, City University of Hong Kong and the Technische Universität München) moved up from the 51-100 band. Carnegie Mellon, University of California San Diego, Delft and Bristol. The decline in standing for these universities can be attributed to a combination of factors which include lower scores in the academic reputation survey and citations per faculty. Australian universities show a relative downward trend in both the academic and employer reputation surveys (Angel Calderon, UWN, 12 June).

**WUR Rankings promoted quietly:** Compared to QS, Australian universities rate lower in the WUR, but the pattern is similar. This year Uni Melbourne is 63rd in the world (64th last year and 71st in 2018), Uni Sydney is 98th (100th and 71st), Uni Queensland is 106th (115th and 74th), UNSW is 112th (113th and 119th), ANU is 123rd (108th and 82nd), Monash U is 130th (102nd and 124th), UWA is 151st (126th and 145th). Uni Adelaide is way back at 221st (217th, 229th), Curtin U is 361st (360th and 400th) and Macquarie U is 378th (371st and 324th). The rankings appear to have settled down this year and last, with no more big swings. This might have something to do with a change methodologies for last year's issue (CMM 11 June).

**2021 QS ranking released:** The QS rankings are much the same as last year – with seven of the Group of Eight in the world top 100, generally within two or three places of where they were last year (except UWA which dropped six spots to 92nd). Uni Adelaide is just outside the golden century, unchanged at =106th. Only three other institutions make the second 100, UTS at =133rd (up seven places from last year), Uni Wollongong at 196th (well up from =212 in '19) and Uni Newcastle at =197th (=207th). (CMM, 10 June).

**What India's performance in the Impact Rankings tells us:** Notwithstanding the significant increase in the number of

institutions between the rankings of 2019 and 2020, India is moving upwards. Compared to 2019 when India had 2.8% of ranked institutions in the Impact Rankings (13 out of 467), in 2020 this has reached 3.4% (26 out of 767). The improvement in both rankings for India, when allied with its emerging strong position in the Global Innovation rankings – it ranked 52nd in the world out of 129 countries, including seventh position for graduates in science and engineering, 15th for research expenditure by globally listed companies and 23rd for industry and university collaboration – suggests that India is becoming a player in the global knowledge economy. (Anand Kulkarni, UWN, 23 May).

## LEARNING & TEACHING

**Institutional cultural maturity: the five team functions that influence L&T success.** Culture runs deep in institutional DNA but how it impacts learner success is rarely discussed. The future of higher education learning and teaching (L&T) is rapidly changing. Best practice frameworks in transition pedagogy, online environment, first year experience and regional context are readily accessible to learning leadership. Leveraging Patrick Lencioni's The Five Dysfunctions of a Team, L&T leaders might therefore consider the transformational potential of developing trust, conflict strategies, commitment, accountability, and results (Nina Fotinatos, CMM, 21 June).

**Renewed sense of urgency for 'adulting' courses:** Meeting the need for life skills lessons for young adults in the age of COVID-19, with financial management and other topics being more important than ever. The University of Kentucky is the latest higher ed institution to launch a life skills course for teens—covering everything from what to put on a resume. More broadly, "Adulting 101" covers financial management, online safety, cooking and nutrition, etiquette and more. The need for such courses may be greater than ever before in a country impacted heavily by the pandemic. (Melissa Ezarik, UB, 12 June).

**How the line between online and face-to-face instruction is blurring:** The pandemic experience will likely convince more colleges and universities to develop a "distributed campus" where students and faculty can connect no matter where they are in the world, said Matt Willmore, senior director at app developer Modo Labs and formerly the MobileND program

manager at University of Notre Dame. 'The new normal is not going to allow us to ever go back to two separate experiences'. (Matt Zalaznick, UB, 5 June).

**It's not rocket science: English language communication and international students.** The challenge for universities is that communication skills are not explicitly assessed in many disciplinary subjects and there is an assumption that students will develop these skills by osmosis. A recent Office for Learning and Teaching project (2018) developed the Distributed Expertise Model (DEM), to assist universities to strengthen their evidence base for communication skills in face-to-face and online contexts. The two main findings from the study were: The highest impact on student learning is when communication skills are included in disciplinary assessment tasks throughout a student's program. The development of communication skills is important for both domestic and international students achieving successful learning outcomes (Sophie Arkoudis, CMM, 4 June).

**How the Pandemic Will Change Teaching on Campus: The things that make learning effective in person need to be reimagined.** Trauma can affect students' executive functioning and self-regulation skills. That means they will have a harder time planning, remembering, and focusing on what they need to learn. Aside from the logistics of being able to hear someone talk through a mask—or plexiglass—imagine how tense everyone will get if a student coughs? And what about all of the other challenges the people in that room face each day, as they wend their way across campus, worried that they might be exposing themselves to a dangerous virus? Stress inhibits learning. So, what can professors do to help students under these conditions? (Beth McMurtrie, The Chronicle of Higher Education, 3 June).

**New Monash U strategy, (including classes in China):** Vice Chancellor Margaret Gardner told staff, "the reactivation of the campuses will be slow" and require operating changes, "a mix of face-to-face and on-line across the semesters; week-on/week-off, in-person schedules for most students; not all our enrolled students can come back to campus this year, and so our blended learning needs to be more flexible". Suzhou campus will become a new learning site for some commencing Chinese students who may be able to



transfer to other Monash campuses in 2021 (CMM, 2 June).

**Let's lose the deficit language about online education:** Universities didn't choose to pivot to online, but now they have, it's opening up fresh conversations about effective pedagogies, says University of Bristol PVC Tansy Jessop. It won't be easy; it won't be cheap; but our online education won't be a paltry imitation of old and tired genres like the lecture. And we are saving the best kinds of interaction which enable students to learn the most, for on campus teaching in small groups and in laboratories, on a scale that Covid-19 will allow, and in ways that our scientific invention might enable (wonkhe, 2 June).

**ACU doubles down on OpenLearning:** Australian Catholic University invested \$1m in the float of Sydney-based OpenLearning. Now ACU announces a three-year agreement for the platform provider to deliver ACU short courses, micro-credentials and staff professional development (CMM, 2 June).

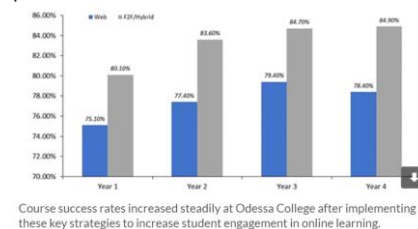
**Lab experiments in the pandemic moved online or mailed home to uni students:** The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken university education, with most teaching moved off campus and students learning online at home. But a cornerstone of undergraduate science education has been a challenge: the laboratory class. Broadly speaking there are currently three models being trialled, the mail order lab, the home lab, and the online lab. It's the duty of academics to clearly articulate why the laboratory experience is central to teaching and learning, and be open to new and unconventional ways of achieving this experience (Brian Abbey & David Hoxley, the Conversation, 1 June).

**'Students like the flexibility': why online universities are here to stay?** With the coronavirus pandemic radically reshaping the education system, universities may never be the same again. So if universities stay online, will students still come? New research suggests that 20% of students are reconsidering plans to start university in the autumn – a possible 120,000 student shortfall. Yet so far, the University and College Admissions Service reports that very few have reneged on their offers. And for those already at university, a National Union of Students survey found that almost half of students were happy with their online learning. Lauren Razavi, 27 May).

**Cambridge University moves all lectures online until summer 2021:** Cambridge has

become the first university to set out measures for the full 2020-21 academic year, announcing that it will move all "face-to-face lectures" online for the duration. The institution added that it was "likely" social distancing would continue to be required. Exams are being carried out virtually (The Guardian, 20 May).

**Strategies to Engage Your Students in Online Learning:** Despite the popularity of online programs, online-only students tend to struggle more than those in face-to-face courses. While 79% of online students view online programs as at least as good – if not better than – traditional courses, online courses typically have a 10-20% lower retention rate. But it doesn't have to be that way. Educators can help engage students by knowing them by name, creating consistent online videos, and tracking student performance.



### Student Retention and Success

**La Trobe U Helps for students open all hours:** Mollie Dollinger and colleagues surveyed students who use on-line study support which their university sources from independent company (and CMM advertiser) Studiosity. They found well over half of users were women, a third of survey respondents were regional students and that 40 per cent used the service at night, when the university's own support unit wasn't open. "These results may indicate that the service can provide a useful and relevant alternative to students who would like to access support outside of standard business hours when they may have work and/or family responsibilities." "44 per cent of students also indicated that the provision of the service may make them more likely to stay enrolled at the university." (CMM, 10 June).

**College Embraces AI Technology with Packback for Increased Student Engagement Online:** A growing body of research suggests that improving college students' behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement has a significant positive impact on academic performance. Packback uses AI and machine learning to provide inquiry-based online discussion to over 2,000 instructors and over 450,000 students,

who have posted 12 million questions and responses to date. Recent pilot studies suggest that classes who use Packback are more likely to be engaged in discussion and are also more likely to report higher levels of satisfaction and improved overall course grades (<https://www.tapinto.net/>, 2 June).

**The Three Most Important Digital Literacy Skills for Students:** There is a growing gap in digital competencies between low socio-economic status students and the rest of the general student population. When students from regional and remote areas (n=84) were surveyed about their preparedness when transitioning from school to university, they told us that the top three digital literacy skills they needed were, working with spreadsheets, on-line researching and referencing (Sonal Singh, CMM, 25 May).

### Student Experience and Voices

**Widening participation: we need national collaboration not an institutional focus:** The Australian higher education (HE) policy framework on Widening Participation (WP) is shifting. Particularly, new equity performance indicators should force a national collaborative conversation to (re)define future WP practice, while one of the immediate impacts of COVID-19 is said to be increasing levels of inequality. This lack of policy clarity means that it is left to institutions and individuals to interpret national policy goals via disparate WP initiatives. Equity leadership, collaboration and policy clarity are needed now more than ever (Kylie Austin, CMM, 15 June).

**How online learning may lead to greater access and affordability:** The traditional campus model continues to inhibit access because it's too costly for some and, for others—such as working parents—it doesn't offer enough flexibility of schedule. Usage data, for instance, can show an instructor—even in a large lecture course of several hundred—which students are actively participating. However, designers of online learning should also figure out how to incorporate the best components of face-to-face learning, such as student study groups and one-on-one tutoring sessions. Campus leaders need a willingness to make a substantial in the online program and give its directors autonomy (Matt Zalaznick, 15 June).





Only a fifth of UK universities say they are 'decolonising' curriculum: Only a fifth of UK universities have committed to reforming their curriculum to confront the harmful legacy of colonialism, an investigation by the Guardian has found. The disclosure comes as universities are under pressure to modernise their syllabuses to address the attainment gap between white students and those from black and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds (David Batty, the Guardian, 12 June).

COVID-19: An opportunity for higher ed to redesign itself: A few months ago, colleges and universities across the United States were forced to rethink their primary education delivery model almost overnight, a gargantuan task considering that speed is not a characteristic typically associated with change in academia. The world may be in a constant state of flux, but the roadmap for higher education has never been clearer: We must change the models and methods to meet the learning needs and preferences of today's students, and we must do so quickly. Rather than focusing solely on "opening," university leaders should think about access and equity—how to remove the obstacles students will face upon returning to campus. (Ioannis Miaoulis, UB, 10 June).

It's time to rebuild—with diversity in mind COVID-19 is offering leaders the opportunity to re-envision higher ed—fostering more open inquiry, viewpoint diversity and constructive disagreement. COVID-19 has razed the once-familiar landscape of higher education. College and university leaders have the opportunity to think anew about what higher ed can and should be, and to re-envision and redesign with that purpose in mind. Robust and productive engagement across lines of difference should undergird all aspects of the academy since it is central to both ongoing knowledge production and the proper functioning of our diverse democracy. The pandemic offers an unexpected chance for leaders and educators to fortify their classrooms and curricula by building these values into the

foundations of whatever they rebuild. (Debra Mashek, UB, 1 June).

Will foreign students start degrees if they can't travel? A recent survey of 6,900 students by IDP Education found that, of those who had received an offer of a place in an overseas university, less than a third of students (31%) would be willing to start their course online and move to face-to-face learning at a later date. Most would instead defer their commencement until on-campus study is possible. Those who would not consider starting online expressed concerns about missing the chance for international exposure (69%) and the standard of online teaching (47%). This may be disappointing for those of us who teach online, but it is not really surprising, considering the history of cross-border online degrees. Although distance education has grown in scale and sophistication all over the world, very few students actually enrol in online degrees offered by universities based outside their home country. (Christopher Ziguas, UWN, 23 May).

"Time running out" to help internationals: professors warn: The Association of Australian University Professors calls on all vice chancellors to assist international students, "one of the most vulnerable groups in our society". "While some universities have set up limited hardship funds, we now call on every vice-chancellor to put their hand in their pocket and mobilise their administration to reach out to those stranded international students and support them now," the AAUP states. With their jobs in hospitality, retail and tourism gone and with no access to public assistance, "time is running out" for international students who are unemployed and unable to return home." (CMM, 22 May).

Disabled students need extensions to their deadlines and extra equipment, but are finding it hard to get them: Research suggests that 81% of disabled students have been negatively impacted by changes to their academic work due to coronavirus. A new report by the National Association of Disability Practitioners, which warned that disabled university students are struggling more than their peers during lockdown. The report urges universities to provide better training for academic staff to ensure their online teaching is inclusive. It also warns that neurodiverse students and those with visual and hearing impairments are facing problems with access to teaching and course materials, such as poor captioning and underprepared lecture slides (Alfie Packham & Rachel Hall, 21 May).

## Staff and Student Wellbeing

Keeping gender equity on the agenda: Universities and peak bodies are thinking post pandemic. A five-point commitment to address the "gendered effect of COVID 19" is out for endorsement. It focuses on maintaining existing programmes and monitoring the gender impact of pandemic-related decisions, "including compounding intersectional factors." Some eight universities have signed, La Trobe U, Macquarie U, Uni Melbourne, Uni NSW, Uni Sydney, UTS, Uni Wollongong and Western Sydney U. (CMM, 10 June)

Top universities unveil plan to tackle social inequality: The Russell Group, which represents 24 leading universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, says focusing on university admissions alone will not address the current embedded inequalities in the United Kingdom. In a new report, *Pathways for Potential: How universities, regulators and government can tackle educational inequality*, publishes analysis showing that even if student numbers from the most highly represented backgrounds are capped, universities would be required to admit large numbers of students with low grades and some with no academic qualifications at all to meet the targets. The report proposes a three-pronged approach to tackle inequality throughout the education system. (Brendan O'Malley, UWN, 29 May).

How to address student wellness, post-pandemic: First, respond to trauma; then, create (and assess) wellness programs to facilitate ongoing student success—from academic progression and psychosocial stability to workforce readiness and more (Karen Gross, UB, 26 May).



(Photo by Giff Habeshaw on Unsplash)

Racism permeates education from early childhood through college and beyond: There is perhaps no issue in American education more intractable or more painful than the persistent gaps in educational outcomes between black and brown students and their white peers. In our ongoing coverage of education, The Hechinger Report explores how white students are given advantages every step



of the way, how racism is woven into the system — from the way schools are funded to the material students are taught — and what's being done to make change.

## GRADUATE OUTCOMES AND EMPLOYABILITY

**Needed now: a value proposition for bized students:** Bennett and colleagues analysed self-reported employABILITY data from 6,131 undergraduate business students enrolled with Australian universities.\* Findings highlight that many students are unsure why they are studying business and they're worried about whether they can establish a career. Although students are committed to completing their programmes, they do not know how to position themselves for the transition to work and their thinking is largely limited to the immediate graduate outcome. International and domestic markets will want a clearer value proposition in a post-COVID world (Dawn Bennett, Colin Jevons, Elizabeth Knight, Subramaniam Ananthram, CMM, 15 June).

**Asterix, Graduate Outcomes, and the squeezed student middle:** Martin Edmondson highlights how difficult it will be to understand graduate employment patterns post-Covid in UK. The class of 2020 leavers are graduating into a really tough labour market, graduate vacancies are down around 12 per cent (ISE data) and general job board vacancies down around 60 per cent (ONS data). In addition, quite a few of the students who got on to graduate schemes have had places deferred. Tenuous introductions aside, we are set to live for a long time with caveats and asterisks on all the main sources of data and measures we have used to evaluate university and student/graduate education and employability performance. (WONKHE, 14 June).

**University students aren't cogs in a market. They need more than a narrow focus on 'skills':** Providing training for people "who need to upskill or reskill" was also a recommendation of an interim Productivity Commission report released last week. The same emphasis on skills is evident when it comes to higher education. Something is going wrong in the relationship between education and employment. If educational providers clearly specify the skill they are teaching, and if employers clearly identify which skills they want in their employees, students will be able to decide what they

should learn (and pay for). What this means is that the social contract between education and the world of work has shifted from one that emphasises employment (a pathway to a meaningful job), to one that emphasises employability (the attributes that might enable a person to find and keep a job). (Leesa Wheelahan & Tamson Pietsch, The Conversation, 11 June).

**Why careers and employability learning matters in higher education:** The evidence is clear: the work of career development educators has a positive impact on student outcomes. These citations can certainly support any argument you put forward to advocate for the role of career development education at your university. But by themselves, they are not enough. Assess the outcomes of your programs with valid and reliable measures. Collect stories about student experiences of your programs to enrich your measurements with qualitative data. Most importantly, be curious about how your decisions as an educator impact what the student learns. We have an abundance of evidence here at our fingertips, but we need to learn how to better use it to design and evaluate high quality careers and employability support for our students (Michael Healy, 28 May).

**AI-powered chatbot keeping students engaged at Texas A&M:** In an effort to encourage students to visit and engage with the resources and tools on their career center website, Texas A&M staff implemented an AI-powered chatbot. The chatbot interacts with students and provides answers to common questions, links and other information. Between August 2019 and May 2020, the chatbot conducted more than 14,300 student conversations.

**14 ways campus career offices are serving students during school closures:** In-person opportunities typically dominate campus career services offerings at colleges and universities. With campuses closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, career services teams have gotten creative about delivering programs virtually (Melissa Ezarik, UB, 15 May).



Campus career services teams are supporting students from afar. Photo by Saulo Mohana on Unsplash

## BIG DATA, BUSINESS ANALYTICS/INTELLEGENGE

**Data Science Demystified: The Data Modeling Proposition:** Data modeling is the foundation of this discipline that's responsible for the adaptive, predictive analytics that are so critical to the current data ecosystem. Before data scientists can refine cognitive computing models or build applications with them to solve specific business problems, they must rectify differences in data models to leverage different types of data for a single use case. By leveraging a combination of technologies revolving around cloud computing, knowledge graphs, machine learning, and Natural Language Processing (NLP), organizations can automatically map the most variegated data to a common data model to drastically accelerate this aspect of data science—without writing code (Jelani Harper, IBD, 5 June).

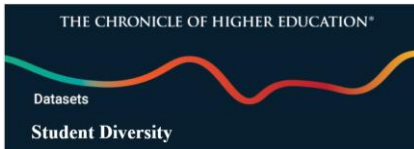
**The Rise of No-code Knowledge Graphs:** Most organizations today collaborate on critical business processes via email, and spreadsheets stored on shared drives — sometimes on the cloud and often on employee laptops. Different departments tend to use different technologies. This often creates information silos and makes it difficult for them to share common information. Customer, supplier, accounting, operations, sales and marketing, and product data are often maintained across a range of platforms. With no-code knowledge graphs, all the departments in a company can speak the same "language" connecting the dots between sales, marketing, product datasets. Collaborators can contribute, visualize and query their data, eliminating information silos and enhancing strategic decision making. With no-code knowledge graphs connecting data sources is easy, anyone working with csv files can import their data, define relationships between entities and create their own knowledge graph (Marta V. Lopata, IBD, 28 May).



No-code Knowledge Graph Astrophysics class with STEM Brown scholars at American Museum of Natural History in New York City, March 6th 2020

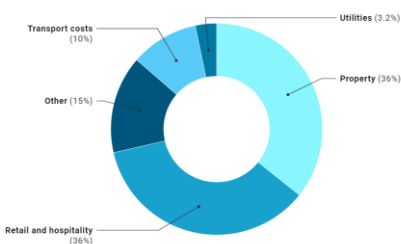


[The Chronicle's Student Diversity dataset](#) includes statistics from 4,000 institutions, including data for full-time and part-time students, identifying information on the colleges including sector and Carnegie Classifications, as well as state information. Access to the most up-to-date data on student race, ethnicity, and gender ensures you'll be better equipped to address the changing demographics in the country and prepare your institution for the future.



## RESEARCH, REPORTS AND RESOURCES

[Interactive: international students make up more than 30% of population in some Australian suburbs.](#) The Mitchell Institute mapped where international students lived using data from the ABS census and Department of Home Affairs. The mapping highlights how international students have become intertwined in Australia's social fabric. Not only do they contribute A\$38 billion to the economy annually and support 130,000 jobs (at any one time), they are also important members of local communities. It is important that Australia continues to support international students who are struggling. This will signal to current and future international students that Australia values them and the enormous contribution they make to our country. (Peter Hurley, the Conversation, 15 June). **Proportion of international student general living expenses by type**



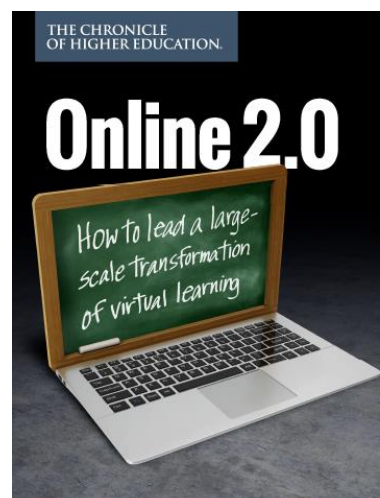
Based on Mitchell Institute analysis of Universities Australia Student Finances Survey 2012 and 2017  
 Chart: Mitchell Institute • Source: Universities Australia • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

### [Australian VET statistics and products:](#)

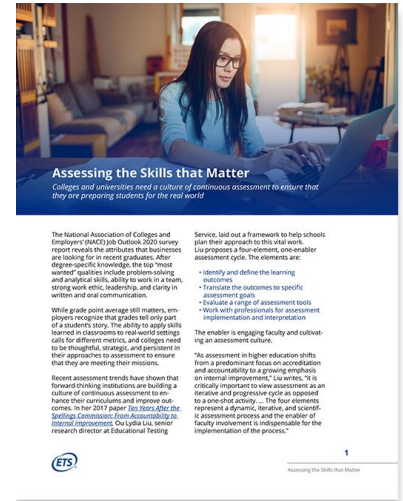
The latest national data shows there were 259 930 apprentices and trainees in-training as at 31 December 2019, down 1.6% from 31 December 2018. Trade commencements were down 4.8%, with the biggest decrease seen in construction trades workers (down 11.7%). Non-trade commencements were down 2.5%, with the biggest decreases seen in hospitality workers (down 15.0%) and sports and personal service workers

(down 10.7%). Completions in the 12 months ending 31 December 2019 saw a minor increase of 1.0% from the previous 12 months, with noticeable increases in completions recorded for construction trades workers (up 7.6%).

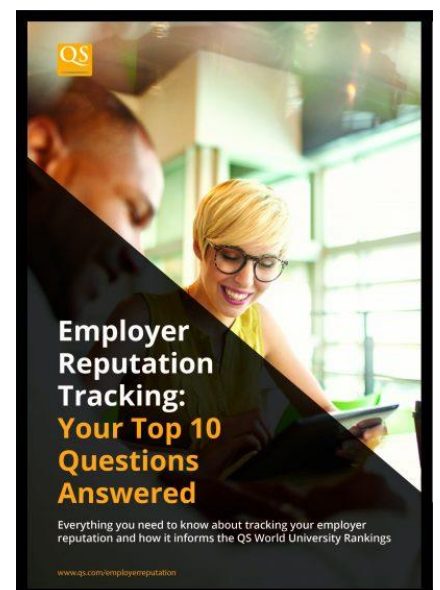
[The Chronicle's report, "Online 2.0"](#) explores how institutions can take remote learning to the next level. What is the best way to make an online-learning experience coherent, educationally meaningful, and attractive to potential and returning students? What is the science behind online learning? And what are the best ways to provide faculty development, evaluate remote courses, and ensure equity for all students?



[Assessing the Skills that Matter](#) [Colleges and universities need a culture of continuous assessment to ensure that they are preparing students for the real world:](#) As job markets become more competitive than ever, employers demand graduates who are not only knowledgeable in their field but also exemplify qualities such as interpersonal aptitude, strong work ethic, leadership, and communication skills. To measure these "soft skills," forward-thinking colleges are building a culture of continuous assessment to enhance their curriculums and improve outcomes.



[Employer Reputation Tracking: Your Top 10 Questions Answered.](#) Struggling to accurately measure your institution's employer reputation? In this white paper, QS explored how universities can track, analyze, and improve their employer reputations by covering these 10 crucial questions: Why should you care about tracking your employer reputation? What's involved in the QS Employer Survey and how many people respond? Is there a difference between my institution's domestic and international employer reputation? How is this calculated? Why do my closest competitors have better employer reputations than my institution? What can institutions do to significantly improve their graduate employability and employer reputation? Where is this area heading in the future?



[New research explores emerging business models for campus and energy initiatives:](#) New research explores emerging business models for campus and energy initiatives



The demands of campus operations and its energy infrastructure are evolving, and keeping pace will be critical to protecting the business of tomorrow. However, adequate funding can be difficult to muster when an institution has many competing priorities. According to a new survey conducted by University Business, more higher education leaders are exploring new and emerging business models to fund these critical upgrades.

In November 2019, TechnologyOne launched the Global Mobility Program tour. Inspired by academic study tours, our UK delegation had the opportunity to experience how leading tertiary institutions in Australia are transforming business processes to attract, support and retain students throughout their education journey. [The post-tour report](#) provides an insight into the key themes that were explored throughout the tour and addresses issues that many institutions are currently facing including business transformation, change management and most importantly, the student experience.

#### PODCAST

Podcast: [The global project - Breaking down barriers to higher education pre and post-COVID-19](#). Matt Brett is joined by Dr. Graeme Atherton to discuss some of the significant research that Graeme has undertaken, the impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education in the UK and internationally and why student equity matters to him personally. Matt also grabs the opportunity to talk about Liverpool's lead in the Premier League title which Graeme handled in good humour being a Manchester United supporter. Dr. Graeme Atherton is an internationally renowned leader & researcher in the field of access and diversity in higher education. He founded and leads both AccessHE and the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON) in the UK. And established World Access to Higher Education Day.

#### ITEMS OF INTERESTS



#### [Student Success in a Global Pandemic](#)

The catastrophic disruption to higher education from the COVID-19 pandemic

has brought about significant and rapid changes to the delivery of mainstream teaching and learning in higher education institutions around the globe, in particular through the use of online learning. The many examples of innovation and novelty demonstrated by institutions and individuals in their support of students and their learning provides a timely opportunity for the sharing of exemplary activities and outcomes. The Student Success Journal is pleased to announce that Student Success in a Global Pandemic has been chosen as the topic for the 2021 Special Issue to enable academics, practitioners, leaders and policy makers to share their stories and outcomes and have ongoing learning from a time of extraordinary innovation.

Special Issue Editors: Professor Marcia Devlin and Dr Jade McKay

#### Timelines

Full papers due: 1st December 2020

Peer review: February/March 2021

Final selection of papers: June 2021

Special Issue published: November 2021

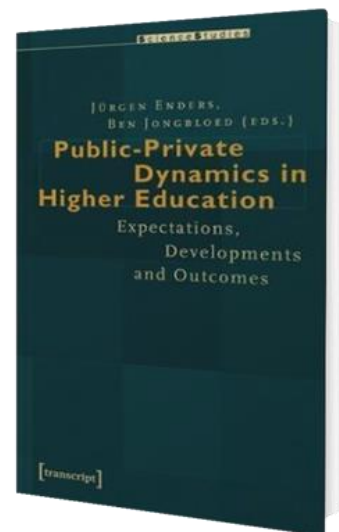
[Seeking survey participants: Supporting students with disabilities to succeed in and after higher education](#): NCSEHE Equity Fellows Tim Pitman and David Eckstein are currently seeking survey respondents for their 2020 projects on supporting students with disabilities to succeed in and after higher education. They would like to know what barriers students with disability face, both at university and when getting the work they want after graduation. They want to hear from students with disability as well as staff working in higher education institutions, regardless of whether or not their job role involves supporting students with disability. Students completing the student survey will be eligible for entry into a prize draw. There will be ten winners, each receiving a \$100 Amazon gift voucher.



#### GOOD READS

#### [Public-Private Dynamics in Higher Education: Expectations, Developments and Outcomes](#)

Editors: Jrgen Enders, Wolfgang Jongbloed, Jürgen Enders & J Enders



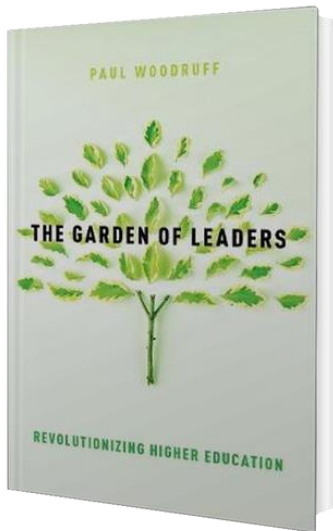
Worldwide, scholarship and policy-making develop new ideas and models for the role of higher education and research in society and economy. This development points to changing relationships and boundaries between the public and private spheres in higher education including their public and private steering and funding, public-private partnerships between universities and firms, the rise of private higher education, and of business models in the management of universities. The contributions to this edited volume investigate into the dynamics of blurring boundaries between the public and the private in higher education and their consequences for the university.

Buy Now



[The Garden of Leaders: Revolutionizing Higher Education](#)

Paul Woodruff

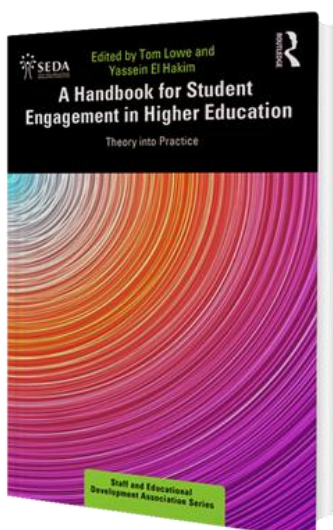


The Garden of Leaders explores two related questions: What is leadership? And what sort of education could prepare young people to be leaders? Paul Woodruff argues that higher education-particularly but not exclusively in the liberal arts-should set its main focus on cultivating leadership in students. Woodruff advances a new view of liberal arts education that places leadership at the root of everything it does, so that students will be prepared to lead in their lives and careers-and not necessarily in management roles.

Buy Now

[A Handbook for Student Engagement in Higher Education: Theory into Practice](#)

Editors: Tom Lowe & Yassein El Hakim



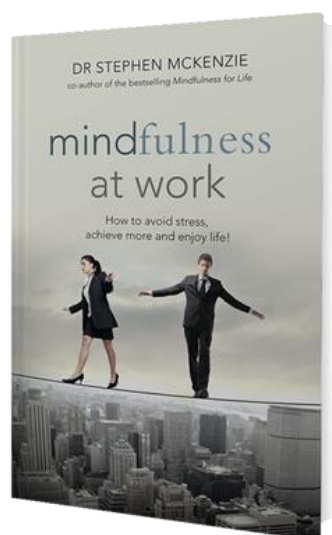
Drawing on scholarship as well as established practice, this volume unpacks

the concept of student engagement, and provides ideas and examples alongside compelling theoretical and research evidence, to offer a thorough and innovative exploration of how students and staff can work together to genuinely transform the higher education learning experience. Providing readers with evidence from successfully embedded schemes, the book uses case studies and practical, workable examples from a variety of international institutions. With the insight of world-leading contributors it showcases what good practice looks like in higher education institutions across the globe.

Buy Now

[Mindfulness at Work: How to avoid stress, achieve more and enjoy life!](#)

Dr Stephen McKenzie



Mindfulness isn't anything that we think; it's what we don't think. Mindfulness isn't something that other people do; it's something that we all do. Mindfulness is an ancient, life-enhancing, healing technique that can help us remember our natural state of happiness and health, even if we think we are too modern and too busy to prioritize what's really important--being fully alive and fully alive to our full life potential. Mindfulness at Work reveals how the practice of mindfulness--the ability to focus our attention on what is rather than be distracted by what isn't--can be a powerful antidote to the distractions and stresses of our modern lives, especially our working lives.

Buy Now

[Lunch Ideas When You Work from Home: Stress-Free Menu Ideas for Lunch Time](#)

Patricia Baker



Working from home is not a new concept, especially for freelancers, and given the current situation, a lot of office goers have been forced to adopt it. If you have been working from home long enough, then you will know how tedious it can be managing the house, meeting deadlines, and putting food on the table. And although most would think working from home means having all the time in the world to cook elaborate meals, on most days, freelancers don't even have enough time to make simple, healthy meals.

Buy Now

ON THE MOVE

**Scott Harrison** is confirmed as PVC for arts, education and law at Griffith U.

**Larry Marshall** has a new, three-year, term as chief executive of CSIRO.

**Gemma Carey** is to continue as acting director at Griffith U's Queensland Conservatorium of Music.

**Melitta Hogarth** becomes the Melbourne Graduate School of Education's first assistant dean.

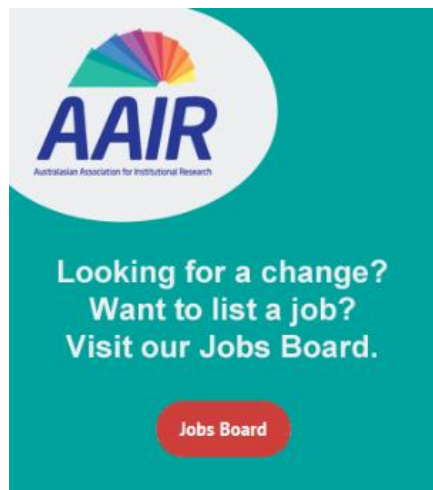
**Keith Jones** will move to the University of Sussex, to become PVC Research and Enterprise in October.

**Eric Knight** is appointed executive dean of the Macquarie University Business School.



**Craig Simmons** (Flinders U) joins the Australian Research Council as executive director for maths, physics, chemistry and earth sciences. He will continue research projects at Flinders U while at the ARC.

## POSITIONS VACANT



**AAIR**  
Australian Association for Institutional Research

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Jobs Board

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

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



**HEIMS ONLINE**

For webinars, online and customised training

- Training for new providers
- How to submit data
- How to manage your data
- Special interest topics

Learn Now

### 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.

### Data Science Melbourne

This is a group for anyone interested in 'Data Science'. We are not quite sure what the exact definition of a Data Scientist is, but if you deal with something generally related to converting data into useful insight then you will hopefully benefit

from joining the group. Please follow the link to join in the group and [follow the events posted on Meetup](#).

### AIR Webinars

AIR provides online resources, innovative practices, professional development opportunities, and training for AIR members and non-members and the higher education community, including professionals from IR, effectiveness, assessment, planning, and related fields.



[TEQSA, in collaboration with RMIT, a new weekly webinar series: R\(e\)imagining teaching and learning](#)

### [Student Engagement in Online Learning: What Works and Why](#)

Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2020  
Time: 2:00 pm EST

With the sudden shift to online teaching and learning, student engagement has become more vital to retention than ever. Keeping students involved, motivated and actively learning in an online environment is challenging colleges and universities across the country. Research-based best practices and strategies for how to maintain student engagement are vital to the success of any online learning program.

### [Swimming with sharks: Understanding and countering cyber threats in HE](#)

Date: Thursday, June 25, 2020  
Time: 2:00 pm EST

An interactive discussion about cyber threats facing higher education and how you can prioritize your limited resources to most effectively protect your digital assets. Topics will include:

- Review common cyber threats facing higher education
- Learn about cyber threat intelligence (CTI) concepts
- Explore how CTI can improve your information security

### [Measuring what Matters in a New Normal: How do we measure student learning progress in a meaningful way?](#)

Dr. Anne-Marie Chase of ACER  
Friday 21st August at 1pm AEST



## HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCES & EVENTS

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

### [AIR Virtual Forum](#)

**AIR FORUM**  
virtual

29 June – 1 July, 2020.  
Registration opens mid-May

It's the 60th anniversary of uniting our community through the AIR Forum. The first-ever all-digital conference for champions of data-informed decision making in higher education. The conference will cover:

- Three days of content curated and taught by subject-matter experts,
- An easy-to-use online conference platform featuring a customizable session lineup
- Opportunities to engage and network with fellow attendees
- A virtual exhibit hall and the ability to meet one-on-one with sponsors
- On-demand access to session content and presentations for 30 days following the virtual conference

### [Australasian Universities Safer Communities Symposium 2020](#)



17-19 August 2020  
Online

As one person on one of the conference local organising committees reflected this week. The human need to talk face to face, over a cup of tea or coffee say, remains important, as she explain "that's

why I GO to conferences". We understand completely and we will resume these essential events as soon as practicable. To alleviate that concern, and maximise online opportunities, our team is looking at innovative ways to connect through our conferences, including multiple breakout rooms, interactive coffee breaks and ways of tuning in and tuning out.

### Admissions Conference 'Adapting for Student Success'



**25–26 August 2020**  
**Online**

The theme for the 2020 ATEM Admission Conference draws our eyes to the horizon. What should University admissions look like in the future? How can we prepare for the unknown, be agile in an environment of disruption and change? How do we adapt and maintain transparency, cater for difference and maintain standards? And amongst it all, are we keeping the applicant and their success at the forefront of our thinking and process design?

### **2020 Higher Education Finance Conference**



**To be rescheduled later 2020**  
**in Queensland**

ATEM will again partner with Higher Ed Services to jointly deliver the 3rd Higher Education Finance Conference (HEFC). The 2020 HEFC will be the event in 2020 for higher education staff involved in finance, finance and business systems, strategic planning, procurement and supply chain management.

### NCSEHE Student Equity Snapshots Forum **26–30 October 2020**



The six Fellows have undertaken major year-long projects focusing on regional and remote students, students with disability, mature age students, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Participants at this year's Forum will enjoy unique snapshots on student equity, delivered by the six Fellows over the course of the week.

### UUK Improving student retention 2020 **5 Nov 2020**



A one-day conference delving into the innovations and new best practice surrounding retention, as well as the knowledge you need to approach the challenge of student retention in your own institution.

### UUK's Security and risk management in higher education: protecting universities from hostile actors **12 Nov 2020**



This one-day event organised by UUK is dedicated to helping universities protect their research, education activities and other expertise, without reducing the impact and reach of your institution.

### UUK Mental health in higher education **19 Nov 2020**



The conference will explore how institutions can embed a whole university approach to mental health that creates a supportive and healthy environment for students and staff to live, learn, and work.

### UUK's Access to higher education and student success summit **26 Nov 2020**



Universities are under intense financial constraints. Under these circumstances, how can we ensure that access remains on the agenda, and make the most of existing networks and resources?

### The Asia-Pacific Quality Network



**Quality Assurance for Higher Education**  
**4.0 in the Asia-Pacific Region**

**(Postponed to 2021)**

**Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts &**  
**Singapore Management University,**  
**Singapore**

Sub-themes:

1. Digitalization of Quality Assurance
2. Innovations in HE Accreditation in Era of Disruptive Technologies
3. Internationalization of Quality Assurance
4. Quality Assurance of Outcome-Based Teaching and Learning
5. The Role of the Governments in Higher Education 4.0



### Examinations Network Conference (Postponed to 2021)



Curtin University and the Examinations Network Executive would like to advise that due to COVID-19 crisis, the Examinations Network Conference, to be held at Curtin University, in Perth WA from 25-28 August, will be postponed until August 2021. Further information will follow in the new year. The Examinations Network Committee wish everyone well through this difficult period.

### 2020 Student Service Centres Conference (Postponed until 2021)



The SSCC will be in its 14th year and remains a key conference on customer service for all stakeholders in tertiary education management. Find out more about previous SSCC's and keep updated on latest information. In conjunction with the SSCC each year, Customer Service Benchmarking Australia (CSBA) offers a benchmarking program and pre-conference workshop.

### Tertiary Education Management Conference (Reschedule for 2021)

"Bright Futures – Shining the Light on Excellence"



If you have registered to attend TEMC 2020, and would like to retain your registration, we will hold these funds over for the 2021 conference.

## INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCHER'S CORNER

### Five quick questions with Angel Calderon



#### What is your job title?

Principal Advisor, Institutional Research and Planning at RMIT University.

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

I manage the University's strategic performance measurement regime, including global rankings. I also get to explore the possibilities that lie ahead for the university and the overall sector.

I am very fortunate that my role entails working across all functional areas of the University, so it gives me the opportunity to gain insights and build a cohesive picture of any opportunities and challenges that maybe ahead. It is a challenging but also a rewarding role.

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

Post COVID-19, we will be confronted by several challenges that will lead to a redesign of the higher education sector. This means we need to focus on financial sustainability, managing scarce resources (including talent), on-campus and off-campus student experience, and the ongoing geopolitical repositioning.

Let's not forget that increased inequality, demographic and labour market shifts, climate change and people's wellbeing, are critical factors of influence on education outcomes. Keep in mind that government policy is the key driver of change for students and institutions.

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

As professional practitioners, we need to:

- bolster our judgement-related skills, with an emphasis on ethical considerations
- strengthen our ability to infer about possibilities of the future and judge about the best possible course forward
- master the capacity to consider implications for institutions and the wider society about tensions arising out of local and global imperatives
- develop a narrative that enables us to engage with a variety of stakeholders (some with differing and conflicting agendas)
- promote, nurture, and cross-pollinate professional practice.

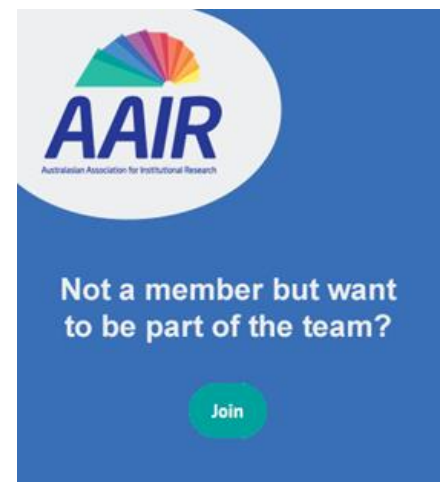
#### Complete this statement: In my role, I can't operate effectively without ...

... the support, inspiration, and motivation of my work colleagues; and sharing insights through professional networks and the broader university community.

I also can't operate effectively without ...

... access to the data and insights co-created by our students, staff, and partners.

Connect with Angel on [LinkedIn](#).



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**CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

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**Issue 7, July 2020**

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?

Please send your contributions to the [editor@air.org.au](mailto:editor@air.org.au) by **Friday, 10 July 2020**.

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](https://twitter.com/AAIRaustralasia)



[Lizzie Li](#)

Editor, *The Institutional Researcher*

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**DISCLAIMER**

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*The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual writers/authors and not necessarily those of AAIR or the institutions that make up the AAIR membership.*

