



AAIR Newsletter Jan/Feb 2021



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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### The Ups and Downs of Operating Online

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way AAIR engages with you as a member, and this has created both challenges and opportunities.

We have all been driven to use technology in new ways and to increase our knowledge of online communication tools such as Zoom, online breakout rooms, and online polls. We all know that while it looks easy to communicate online there is a lot of behind-the-scenes work that needs to take place to make sure it happens smoothly. However, the opportunities are far outweighed by those challenges. The big opportunity from virtual meetings and online webinars is accessibility. The traditional barriers of cost and time lost in travel disappear as online meetings and webinars are bought to you at your desk, or to wherever you chose to participate.

To date, one of our biggest challenges has been to hold the AAIR annual general meeting (AGM) in an online space, and for all intents and purposes, the same processes must be followed as if we were in a face-to-face meeting. We needed to ensure that we had a quorum of financial members to be present, online, for the AGM to proceed, and that there were

processes in place for members present to vote to pass motions. And to make it just a little bit more complex for ourselves we made 11 special resolutions including amendments to our rules that all needed to be voted on.

The changes to our rules were largely intended to modernise them by introducing, for example,

section '15. USE OF TECHNOLOGY' into our rules, and to align them more closely with the *Model rules for an incorporated association* published by the Consumer Affairs Victoria under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*. AAIR is incorporated under the regulator, Consumer Affairs Victoria.

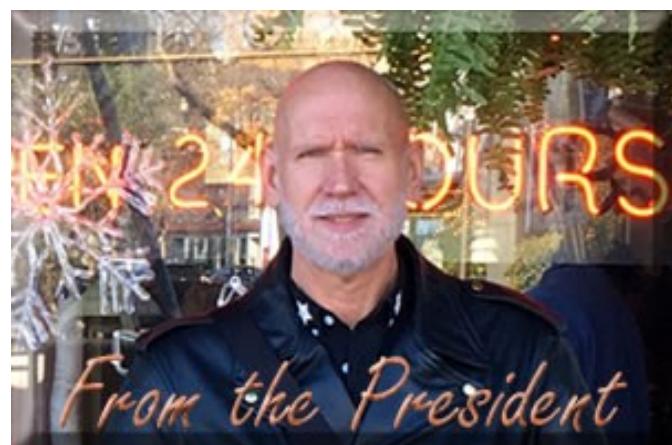
Our Immediate Past President, Kathie Rabel, worked closely with our Secretary Pam Rayner and Executive Officer Liesha Northover to review and prepare the 11 amendments to the rules, along with the many other edits deemed appropriate to be included in this new version of the rules. This was an enormous undertaking that now brings our rules into alignment with other incorporated societies and provides more clarity when we need to apply those rules.

You can view the approved changes to the rules and other papers from the AGM on the [Annual Statements and Reports](#) page on our website.

AGMs and rules are not the most interesting activities for many of our members, however, they are the foundations that ensure we continue as a well-functioning and strong organisation that provides recognition, professional development, and advocacy for our members across Australasia.

***Ngā mihi (with thanks)***

**Stuart Terry**  
AAIR President



## EDITORIAL

*It has been a while since our last AAIR Newsletter's issue back in November 2020. Since then, the AAIR Executive Committee has worked towards hosting the association's first online AGM, which would normally have taken place during our Annual Forum. You can read the summary of our AGM in the [President's Update](#) in this issue.*

*Also since the last issue, we have seen our colleagues leaving the university sector under the voluntary separation scheme (VSS). As a result of the VSS, many of us have now had to pick up additional responsibilities and workload to ensure business continuity and service level. The Committee has considered this situation across the sector, and as a result, decided to make the AAIR Newsletter a bimonthly publication. In doing so, we can continue producing high-quality newsletters in a stable and sustainable manner for the foreseeable future.*

*While the frequency of your favourite newsletter is now reduced, we are keen to hear your thoughts and ideas as members of the AAIR community. Do you have something you would like to share with your IR colleagues? Please send your contributions to the [editor@aaир.org.au](mailto:editor@aaир.org.au).*

*Have a great start of Semester 1, 2021!*

*Lizzie*

*AAIR Newsletter Editor*

## AAIR MEMBER UPDATE

Longstanding AAIR member, Anand Kulkarni, has published an article in *University World News*. He has kindly written an overview of his article for us.



**Resilience rankings, a new lens?**  
by Anand Kulkarni

The higher education sector has, and continues to face unprecedented disruption, through the impact of COVID-19. The international outlook is highly uncertain and turbulent, flowing through to the domestic scene.

Although not without controversy, university rankings are a window to the world, highlighting competitive advantages and disadvantages for institutions. At present, and going forward, there will be a premium on institutional resilience. To that end, I wrote an article for the University World News (UWN) in December 2020 on the need for resilience rankings. This blog article is an abbreviation of the UWN piece.

While the pandemic could be considered a once in a lifetime event, its impact is so pervasive and long term. Moreover, variants of COVID-19 are appearing. In addition, disruption seems to be the 'new normal', likely traversing massive technological change, rapid economic structural change, and climate crises.

With these conditions in mind, resilience rankings could be based on the capacity of institutions to innovate, diversify, act nimbly, continue to provide value for money, manage risk effectively, strive for financial sustainability, and stay true to their missions and core purpose.

[Read More](#)

## SECTOR NEWS AND VIEWS

### Southern Cross U's new structure starts:

The university has reorganised its academic units from six schools to four faculties, Health, Science-Engineering, Education, Business-Law-Arts. The change was announced in October. SCU also starts its block teaching model, adopted last winter (CMM, 16 Feb).

### With borders closed Australian providers are building foundations for TNE 2.0:

Traditional trans-national involves Australian institutions delivering courses offshore, face to face, either by their own staff or with an infrastructure partner. But the pandemic is driving a new model: providing curriculum on-line at partner university campuses. Virtual learning in a campus environment is a good mix says SGA's Alex Chevrolle. "Students are keen for additional opportunities for interaction and our new centre in Shanghai means students can also experience invaluable face-to-face engagement with peers." (Dirk Mulder, CMM, 16 Feb).

### Enough already on the integrity oversight:

The feds propose Commonwealth integrity over-sight, which will cover universities. Just like the states' corruption commissions do already. It's a point institutions and associations make in submissions on the exposure draft of the government's bill (CMM, 15 Feb).

### Absent international coursework postgrads leave a big gap on campus:

International coursework postgrads will be missed for as long as borders stay closed –they account for 40 per cent of overall international enrolments and campuses appear empty without them, only 3 per cent studied exclusively on-line last year. Professor Larkins (Uni Melbourne) points to problems for the 19 universities with 61 per cent plus postgrads from overseas. And for the country, "domestic growth is unlikely to be sufficient, nevertheless, to ensure the viability of some postgraduate subjects and courses in areas identified as critical to future national skills development in the Government's recent Job-ready graduates reform package," Professor Larkins warns (CMM, 12 Feb).

### Top of the study pops in NSW:

Because Sydney universities are not at all boastful the NSW Universities Admission Centre compiles a list of the top ten courses by application numbers. UNSW is first for its B Med, just ahead of Uni Newcastle and UNE's B Med. UTS's B Bus is third, with



Western Sydney U/Charles Sturt U fourth for their Doc Med. UTS is fifth for the B Nursing. Uni Sydney finally appears at sixth (B Arts) and seventh for Arts/Law, followed by UNSW for Double Commerce (8th). Uni Newcastle (B Nursing), and Uni Sydney (B Comm) make up the top ten (CMM, 11 Feb).

[Let's hear it for live and in-person lecturing- VC Brian Schmidt wants campus, "a far better place to learn" at ANU](#): "We need our teachers to be more than just people who stand at the front of the lecture hall or before a video camera. We need them to connect with their students in richer ways. This might include fewer lectures, and those that we do deliver, will be memorable and sophisticated, utilising technology." Professor Schmidt did not specify a solution, urging academics to find ways to replicate their very best classroom experiences as students. But he is "certain we will better than we do now." (CMM, 11 Feb).

[Claire Field on a VET review which HE people need to read](#): In November 2019, the Victorian Government commissioned a review of their post-secondary education and training system (the Macklin Review). Yes... another review and yes, despite the post-secondary focus, VET issues understandably dominate the final report released last week. But the higher education sector should not ignore it. The report includes important modelling (by economic consultants, AlphaBeta) highlighting that "relative to other advanced economies, Australia lacks skills depth in occupations at each of the elementary, semi-skilled and skilled levels", i.e. we need to lift the number of VET and higher education graduates (CMM, 10 Feb).

[Making more of HASS and creative industries at Uni Newcastle](#): Last year Uni Newcastle management announced the end of the five faculties, replacing them with three colleges. But the make-up of their constituent schools is not settled, with consultation to start next month. John Fischetti, PVC of the new college, Human and Social Futures, with colleagues, Paul Egglestone (Creative Industries) and Catharine Coleborne (HASS) propose merging those schools, which as they stand, are at risk from government funding changes and international and domestic student "enrolment patterns." (CMM, 10 Feb).

[Heywood's ten-year plan to put the new in UNE](#): Brigid Heywood spent her first 18 months as University of New England vice

chancellor getting the organisational ducks in a row, so the university would be staff and structure ready for what she has in mind. Now she has set out the purpose she wants UNE fit for in a ten-year plan. While it includes unquantifiable commitments to goodness and kindness, there are also a bunch of specifics demonstrating the VC means business, including in the setting and measuring of staff performance and cost control. Big policy objectives in three core categories include: "personalised student journeys"; "empowering communities" and "building resilience" (CMM, 9 Feb).

[Which universities are best placed financially to weather COVID?](#) 2021 is when the impacts of COVID-19 really start to take their toll on universities, as more than 140,000 international students seek to return to study in Australia. Omer Yezdani's new analysis, presented in this article, reveals that if one in five international students don't re-enrol, the loss of revenue would plunge half of all Australian universities into financial turmoil or budget deficit. While the impacts of COVID are unprecedented, modelling universities' financial resilience shows which institutions fare better and why (The Conversation, 4 Feb).

[Needed from National Cabinet-a single positive message for international students](#): What Australia's international education industry needs on Friday is for national cabinet to set an indicative date when students will be allowed into the country. This should not be that hard. If Tennis Australia can pull off quarantining for the Australian Open and Rugby Australia can invite the British and Irish Lions to tour, without attracting much hostile attention, there is surely room for Australian governments to agree to a safe, scaled return of international students to Australia (Dirk Mulder, CMM, 3 Feb).

[AUSTRALIA Postgraduate enrolments soar in competitive job market](#): Postgraduate enrolments at universities across Australia have spiked by as much as 26% and the higher numbers are expected to remain steady as the job market recovers from the recession. The universities with the highest growth in enrolments for specialised courses included the University of New South Wales (26%), James Cook University (20%) and the University of Queensland (19%). (Xanthe Gregory, ABC News, 25 Jan).

[Universities should report real staff numbers not accounting abstractions](#): Currently, Australian public sector universities in the Department of Education, Skills and Employment university staff data and university annual reports disclose a "full-time equivalent staff" number (FTES). But how this is calculated in the university setting is not discussed and challenging to comprehend. Our database shows that as of 31 December 2019, there were nearly 100,000 casual employees. Also, we found that one university with a ratio of 68 per cent casualisation. The staff profiles provided by some universities can confuse and information on redundancies may not specify the actual number of people who have lost their employment. This is because of the financial crisis caused by heavy reliance on fees from onshore international student fees (Tom Smith & James Guthrie, CMM, 27 Jan).

[NZ Universities welcome return of international students](#): Universities in New Zealand are celebrating the news that 1,000 international students will be allowed to enter the country, almost a year after they became stuck offshore when the borders closed. Education Minister Chris Hipkins recently announced that 300 students would be arriving in April, and the other 700 as MIQ (managed isolation and quarantine system) availability allows (Laura Wiltshire, Stuff, 14 Jan).

[Monash defies COVID with new branch campus set to open](#): Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture has granted the first licence to a foreign university, allowing Australia's Monash University to set up a branch campus on the outskirts of Jakarta which will open next year. The licence "allows us to forge ahead with designing a state-of-the-art, purpose-built campus in a burgeoning, modern and sustainable city centre" said Monash University's Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor (Southeast Asia Partnerships) Andrew MacIntyre (Yojana Sharma, UWN, 11 Dec 2020).

#### [International News](#)

[Have universities learned how to be ready for a crisis](#)? Universities, along with most other complex organisations, have endured a very tough year. When a crisis strikes – and make no mistake COVID-19 constitutes a crisis – an organisation is compelled to confront the reality of how well its systems and processes function, what it could do better and where its vulnerabilities remain. Universities responded in different ways to the



disruption of 'business as usual' caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some dallied while others rushed into new ways of doing things before they were sufficiently ready. It would be fair to say that many were unsure how to best respond because of a deficiency of information or the amount of divergent information available, or an absence of national direction or an overall lack of clarity of strategy witnessed in many places. (Nita Temmerman, UWN, 13 Feb).

[Online giving rises again; how colleges can capitalize in 2021](#): The deep uncertainty brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic did not dissuade online donations from pouring into higher education institutions, which saw a 10% overall bump in 2020, according to a report released Tuesday by Boca Raton, FL-based solutions provider Anthology. In its annual online giving analysis and strategic considerations study, Anthology highlighted the particular success of four-year public institutions in raising funds online, which garnered a collective increase of 16% year over year. The total number of gifts increased by 6%. A new study shows how donations came in during the pandemic and what strategies will be necessary to win them back again in 2021.(Chris Burt, UB, 9 Feb).

[Here's the truth about the campus budget crisis](#): Higher ed's financial challenges go deeper than declines in enrolment and operating revenues. Additionally, financial outlooks released by Moody's Investors Service and Fitch Ratings predict operating revenues will be down 5% to 10% across the sector in 2021. But the real budget crisis isn't a matter of declining enrolments and operating revenues, it is an over-burdened cost structure that struggled to be solvent before COVID and is now in further distress with the surge in expenses associated with responding to this public health emergency. (Darren Catalano, UB, 5 Feb).



[Pandemic 'Lessons Learned' detailed in new higher ed report](#): A collection of articles from ReportOUT looks at how colleges and universities have adapted to this crisis moment and what will make

them successful in the future. The report is a collection of 13 articles from experts and faculty that address some of the timeliest topics facing higher ed, along with some mythbusting – from financial aid assistance to the increase in certificate and credential offerings to student cheating to meeting students where they are in their college experience. Eventually, institutions will be expected to better deliver more robust technology and remote learning experiences, including the eventual transition from 5G to 10G. For now, authors in the report say a more "personal touch" may be required. (Chris Burt, UB, 2 Feb).



[Adopting a growth mindset in higher education](#): A growth mindset is defined as having a singular focus on revenue and program advancement. It's what drives small businesses and large corporations every single day. In other words, a growth mindset means shifting the perspective of a school as only an educational facility and realizing it is also an enterprise—whether that is not-for-profit or for-profit. To fortify a healthy and sustainable financial infrastructure, higher education leaders need to adopt a growth mindset and accelerate financial and operational decision-making and implementation processes across their institutions (John Farrell, UB, 2 Feb)



[Why colleges must reprioritize students in communications](#): Colleges and universities that serve traditional-aged students often think about their audiences as concentric circles, with students, faculty and staff at the centre, moving out to encompass other constituents such as alumni, donors and parents. Reassess whether you can—and should—continue to keep parents among

your primary audiences. (Teresa Valerio Parrot and Erin Hennessy, UB, 3 Feb)



[Why higher education should not be political](#): Higher Ed seems to have lost sight of its true mission. Falling prey to the funnel of funding from state and federal sources, we have hundreds, maybe thousands, of universities and colleges that squeeze themselves into the profile of most desirable to receive funding instead of focusing their efforts on an education that builds America. We see higher ed leaders playing the politics game, to advocate for their institution so legislators will look favourably on them when it's time to dole out dollars. Higher ed should be an example of thought, discourse and well-developed moral perspective ( Emily Barnes, UB, 2 Feb).



[How faculty morale moves ahead in higher ed](#): The economic crisis caused by COVID has many faculty members worried about the health of their institutions and potential consolidations, furloughs and layoffs. In Pennsylvania, a faculty association has been lobbying state officials to provide more certainty and stability, says Jamie Martin, president of the Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties. Administrators must take a proactive approach to involving and engaging faculty (Matt Zalaznick, UB, 20 Jan).

[The future for universities should be evidence-based](#): There is nothing like a good crisis to excite ideas about different futures and new beginnings. At the very least, right now we are told that there will be a 'new normal' and no return to the way things were before COVID-19. However, even before the pandemic, there were plenty of futurologists – especially in English-speaking nations –



declaring a series of cataclysmic scenarios for higher education in which various factors combine to challenge and disrupt traditional academic conventions, business models and working practices in public universities. More evidence-based and iterative approaches to imagining the future can ensure that we evaluate the full range of factors influencing current trends, including socio-cultural, political and environmental (and even quasilegal) factors, as well as economic and technological factors (William Locke, UWN, 16 Jan)

[Untapped talent? 95% of higher ed leaders open to new roles](#): Job searches for executive positions are exploding. In a recent candidate survey of nearly 400 higher education leaders done by WittKieffer, an astounding 95% said they were open to some degree to changing roles and moving into a new position. Nearly a third said they are "actively looking" and even more said they'd be open to select opportunities if approached by a college or university. 50% of candidates said their jobs had changed because of the pandemic; pent-up demand – many called off searches for months – could be driving some who delayed looking to seek new opportunities. Institutions are seeking those who can react well during crisis moments, who can demonstrate they have performed under pressure. WittKieffer is advising clients to think differently now than they did six months ago. That includes how strong those candidates are in embracing technology. (Chris Burt, UB, 11 Jan).



#### Ranking and Rating

[Uni Queensland makes the world top ten on the MOOC Lab ranking](#): As with most rankings there is not much movement in the top 100. Uni Queensland rates 10th (12th on the July '20 list), Deakin U is 12th, Curtin U is 45th, Monash U is 46th, Macquarie U is 52nd, Uni Adelaide is 54th, Uni Melbourne is 58th, Uni Sydney is 67th, ANU is 82nd, and UNSW is 91st – all largely in-line with the previous lists. The ranking covers MOOCs on edX, Coursera and Future Learn and scores for multi-

MOOC programmes, for-credit and degree and a mean, averaged from QS, ARWU and Times Higher rankings (CMM, 10 Feb).

[Credit ratings for ACU, Macquarie U, Uni Sydney and UTS](#): Ratings agency Moody's reports a periodic review of four universities long-term debt rating. They all rated second-tier investment grade: Australian Catholic U: is rated Aa2, Macquarie U: is also Aa2. Uni Sydney and UTS are Aa1's rating. Moody's points to the impact of the pandemic on international student numbers. "Its credit profile is constrained by lower levels of liquidity compared to domestic peers; exacerbating downside risks during periods of heightened volatility." (CMM, 8 Feb).



[In an era of disruption, do we need a resilience ranking?](#): Rankings season has come and gone and underlined the strength of many sandstone institutions in Europe and the United States and shown the continued rise of China, and to a lesser extent, other countries in Asia. The Times Higher Education Impact Ranking process is under way, measuring the contribution of universities to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. With this in mind, we argue that there may be a case for re-framing some of the ranking metrics, developing a complementary set, or even an entirely new schema, built around resilience or the capacity to prepare for and respond to crises, often externally driven, and to maintain core activities. This article attempts to put forward some of the key considerations associated with a resilience frame of reference. (Anand Kulkarni, UWN, 12 Dec 2020).

[Internal institutional academic quality assurance matters](#): The benefits offered by an external agency's evaluation of an institution's academic quality are invaluable to that institution. It provides feedback about and authenticates the extent to which the institution has met recognised professional quality standards. Developing quality curriculum and programmes should be a continuous process. It is essentially an ongoing cycle

of implementation, appraisal, reflection and redevelopment of what is offered to students, based on evidence from staff, students and external stakeholders. The process should be part of an institution's academic quality assurance system aimed to regularly improve its practices. (Nita Temmerman, UWN, 5 Dec 2020).

[New 'indisputable' rankings scoreboard for universities](#): The University of New South Wales (UNSW) has developed a global higher education ranking system it hopes will become the go-to international scoreboard for university performance and ease concerns about the distorting effects of league tables. UNSW's deputy vice-chancellor of research, Nicholas Fisk, said the system combines the top three existing rankings to broaden the criteria for judging universities and prevent too much emphasis on research at the expense of other factors. (Jordan Baker, The Sydney Morning Herald, 5 Dec 2020).

#### LEARNING & TEACHING

[Disability not the problem, awareness and accessibility are](#): A neurotypical approach to teaching assumes all students process information in the same way, respond the same way to social interactions or stress, and speak, move or behave in an "expected" way. These problems were exacerbated with the advent of COVID-19, as universities transitioned suddenly to teaching fully on-line. If we make disability awareness training mandatory for all staff, the less likely it will be that a student will be confronted with barriers that are not caused by their disability, but by others' reaction to it (Tim Pitman, CMM, 16 Feb).

[Cisco and Optus on the wave of technology innovation driving hybrid learning](#): That technology companies have fast-tracked development efforts demonstrates virtual learning and remote working are no longer fringe activities, or reserved for the small proportion of users that can't get to campus or work physically. 2020 was the year that mass online learning and work from home practices changed long-standing operating models in Australian universities. The question for most university executives is whether 2021 will deliver more of the same, or whether approaches will continue evolving into a much more blended and permanent model. A recent study by the National Industry Innovation Network (NIIN) – anchored by Curtin and La Trobe universities – forecast that we were entering a period of significant innovation



in the way digital technologies are used for learning and collaboration (CMM, 12 Feb).

#### To succeed in an AI world, students must learn the human traits of writing:

Students across Australia have started the new school year using pencils, pens and keyboards to learn to write. In workplaces, machines are also learning to write, so effectively that within a few years they may write better than humans. The predictive text commonly used by phone and email software is a form of AI writing that countless humans use every day. This is in stark contrast to parroting irrelevant grammar terms such as "subordinate clauses" and "nominalisations", being able to spell "quixotic" and "acaulescent" (words my daughter learnt by rote in primary school recently) or writing to a formula. Teaching and assessment of writing need to catch up to the real world (Lucinda McKnight. The Conversation, 10 Feb).



Universities' move to online goes permanent: Australian universities are outsourcing their online teaching to private companies to reduce costs and reach greater numbers of students, as temporary changes made in response to the pandemic become permanent. Education technology companies are expected to double their AU\$36 billion (US\$28 billion) global online market within five years as public universities increasingly form commercial partnerships with them to help deliver online courses. (Anna Patty, The Sydney Morning Herald, 10 Feb).

Micro-credentials: more research is (really) needed: Policy and practise is happening ahead of how they can be applied nation-wide. Ratna Selvaratnam (Edith Cowan U) and Michael Sankey (Griffith U) identify the issues. "Although there is no shortage of opinion pieces published on the internet, many of these lack the required level of academic rigour for an integrative literature review such as this," they write in the Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability. "At a very practical level, the recent review of the Australian

Qualifications Framework recommends the recognition of micro-credentials and presumably it is only a matter of time before the government moves to implement this recommendation." (CMM, 9 Feb).

A spike in cheating since the move to remote? New research finds jump in number of questions submitted to "homework help" website Chegg after start of pandemic, an increase the authors say is very likely linked to rise in cheating. The number of questions asked and answered on the "homework help" website Chegg has skyrocketed since classes migrated online due to the pandemic, an increase that authors of a new study published in the International Journal for Educational Integrity link to a likely increase in cheating. (Elizabeth Redden, insidehighered, 5 Feb).

On-line and off-shore: making it a new export market: If internationals students can't come to campuses here, providers can take courses to them – but only if they do a bunch of work first. A team from the Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education sets out the opportunities and how to access them. The MCHE reports what they heard from 39 Australian trans-national education providers in a paper for the feds. There's a mass of detail on how to establish a physical campus and why things can go wrong but in the present crisis the analysis of the on-line option will interest providers who fear international students will not soon return to Australia at scale (CMM, 4 Feb)

Three keys to developing successful online learning: Developing a high-quality learning experience means creating opportunities for students to connect, creating curricula specifically for the online space, and putting the user experience at the forefront of program design. (Jesse Borkowski, Senior Director of Brand Strategy for Berklee Online, Berklee College of Music, the EvoLLLution, 3 Feb).



Five Major Trends In Online Education To Watch Out For In 2021: The year 2020 has permanently changed the education of the future. Schools, universities and educational courses have moved online, causing an explosion in the EdTech segment. Researchers forecast that the development of 5G networks will remove most of the technological barriers and open access to online education for new users. Online education is different from traditional education, and my company's analytical center has compiled the main trends of 2021. I want you to be prepared and to consider them in your educational programs for corporate and personal development. (Mila Serneshkina, Forbes, 3 Feb).

Computer science students develop resources for faculty across the University: Two students majoring in computer science at Penn State Harrisburg, Mina Otgonbold and Sarah Kettell, used their software skills to develop new resources for Penn State faculty. Otgonbold created a chatbot that allows professors to answer basic course questions through artificial intelligence and schedule office hours appointments, and Kettell developed a web application for professors to estimate and customize their hours of instructional activity. Both students saw ways to simplify and streamline aspects of faculty teaching, and they worked on their solutions through the college's Center for Teaching Excellence. The center's staff interacted with them closely as they completed these projects (Penn State U, 28 Jan).

#### **Student Retention and Success**

Understanding attrition among regional and remote students: Aren't motivation and determination enough? Why is attrition so high for regional and remote students? Significant disparity in educational participation and attainment is evident in Australian higher education. Non-completion rates for regional and remote students are disproportionately high (Pollard, 2018). Currently, 39 per cent of people who live in a major city have completed at least a bachelor degree. In stark contrast, only 22 per cent of those in inner regional areas have a bachelor degree or above, only 19 per cent in outer regional areas and only 17 recent in remote/very remote areas (ABS, 2020). To be effective, policies and practices must draw on the regional/remote student perspective for a more deliberate move to counter high attrition (Janine Delahunt, CMM, 31 Jan).



### Making the Online Student Experience:

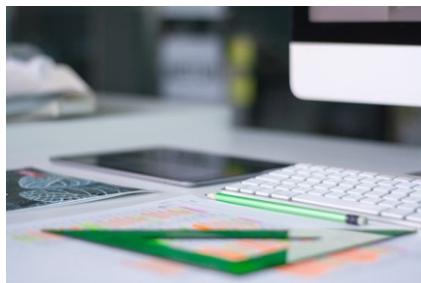
How Intentional Design and Engagement Lead to Success? In emerging from the pandemic and creating the new normal for higher education, institutions should prioritize flexibility, accessibility and equity while integrating traditional aspects of the learning experience. (Gregory Fowler, President, University of Maryland Global Campus, the EvoLLLution, 28 Jan).



### The New Dimensions of Scholarship:

#### Shifting Faculty Development from Morbidity Models to Student Success

Predictive Analytics, Fusion teaching, or the process of combining learning modalities, techniques and technologies to fit each student's learning profile can be key to a successful future for higher education (Stephen Dunnivant, Central Campus President and Vice Provost of Teaching Excellence and Learning, Broward College, the EvoLLLution, 26 Jan).



### 6 post-COVID insights from faculty teaching intro courses:

Faculty who teach introductory-level courses are increasingly concerned about equity and student success with shifts to online and hybrid instruction likely to become permanent post-COVID. A new report produced by Tyton Partners showed that high failure rates in intro course are disproportionately higher for students of colour and those from low-income families (Matt Zalaznick, UB, 26 Jan)

### Staff and Student Wellbeing

A new National Careers Institute (NCI) Partnership Grant project led by the NCSEHE will establish Australia's first Career Development Learning (CDL) Hub for students with disability. The CDL Hub will provide an accessible range of resources, as well as practical examples of programs addressing CDL for students with disability across the student life cycle. One of 13 projects funded under the first round of the NCI Partnership Grant program, National Career Development Learning Hub for students with disability will direct over A\$400,000 to improving careers outcomes for students with disability.

COVID-19 challenged us to listen. That listening made us more resilient: For years, we prepared for crises with tabletops and functional exercises. But when the crisis arrived, so did the realization that preparing for a crisis is one thing. Facing it is quite another, and COVID-19 presents challenges in scope and duration that most of our planning exercises could never have encompassed. The most important thing we learned—or more accurately were reminded of—was how to listen. We learned how to listen in multiple directions and to multiple constituencies at the same time, and that in order to build trust, listening must inform action. (Patrick O'Rourke, UB, 12 Feb).



### 5 ways to overcome compassion fatigue in higher education:

Unaddressed compassion fatigue leads to anxiety, trouble concentrating and desire to leave one's position. As the world continues to experience rising levels of COVID cases, healthcare workers, teachers, parents, administrators and others are feeling the heavy weight of burnout and compassion fatigue. While we don't normally think of college educators as the most susceptible to compassion fatigue, the demands of the field often lead to similar outcomes as those in healthcare. Faculty and administrators are under a tremendous workload in normal times; add a pandemic into the mix and educators are

saddled with the financial, emotional and healthcare needs of their students as well as their academic needs. (Laurie Cure, UB, 2 Feb)



Online students' mental health more likely to suffer: College students enrolled in online and hybrid learning reported mental health struggles at a far higher rate than did in-person students, a new study has found. Mental health concerns are 75% more common among remote or hybrid students, according to a survey of 1,000 two- and four-year students conducted by Hanover Research, using Hobsons' Starfish student support platform. Overall, students reported decreased focus and engagement, and one third said they've had trouble paying for food, housing and school. Students also more concerned about their future than they were before COVID (Matt Zalaznick, UB, 28 Jan).



### Bullying and harassment rife at state's universities:

A survey of staff at South Australia's three major universities has uncovered widespread bullying and harassment, with managers accused of being more concerned with their institution's reputation than academic and general staff well-being. Conducted by the state's Independent Commissioner Against Corruption or ICAC, the survey found that academic and general staff at the three institutions believed their managers rated institutional reputation more important than their concerns about falling admission and assessment standards for 'lucrative' foreign students. The ICAC survey obtained responses from more than 3,000 staff at the three universities. One in five said that their university did not have adequate protections for those reporting misconduct and more than 10% believed



their organisation actively discouraged reporting. (Geoff Maslen. UWN, 4 Dec 2020).

[How faculty can ease students' stress—and their own anxieties](#): Three out of four faculty members reported significant stress while transitioning to new modes of teaching, according to a recent Course Hero survey of 570 full- and part-time faculty at two- and four-year colleges. More than half of those surveyed also reported a significant increase in emotional drain and work-related stress or frustration—both warning signs of burnout. : The worsening COVID pandemic has brought college faculty the twin stresses of overhauling teaching techniques while helping students cope with trauma and anxiety. Faculty members have been more focused on making a successful shift to online learning and maintaining high-quality instruction than on their own mental health needs, says Tara Graham, Course Hero's vice president of educator community. Faculty experts in stress, anxiety and inclusion offer guidance for self-mental health care and supporting students through online courses (Matt Zalaznick, UB, 3 Dec 2020)

## GRADUATE OUTCOMES AND EMPLOYABILITY

[Careers and employability learning: we need a more integrated pedagogy](#): Despite the clear alignment of research inquiries, employability and career development are two distinct fields of research, with limited theoretical or practical exchange between them. Employability has become a fundamental target of teaching and learning and student services strategies, often deployed in institution-wide initiatives and with strong mandates to influence the academic curriculum. University careers services, which for decades have supported students with career planning and job seeking, have been tasked with supporting such strategies, particularly in the form of integrating career development learning in the curriculum and collaborating across the institution in “connected communities” with shared goals for supporting student success. Indeed, there are many examples of innovative collaborations between career development educators and teaching academics (CMM, 7 Feb).

[Evolving our credentialing ecosystem for the future of work](#) (Part 1&2): We face many challenges in transitioning from our current state of documenting learning

achievements to 21st century digital credentials, but two problems stand above the rest. First, credentials that document learning achievements are disconnected from employer requirements. Since employment and career advancement are the primary drivers of education and training enrolments, people aren't seeing the benefits they expected from their investments of time, effort, and money. The second key problem is lack of ownership. Even if learning activities are aligned with employer requirements, learners don't have control over their own learning and employment records. Their credentials and employment history are stored in silos that generally don't help people connect their knowledge, skills, abilities and potential career opportunities (Tracey Taylor O'Reilly, Amrit Ahluwalia & Deborah Everhart, The EvoLLLution, 29 Jan).



[What is the role of universities in global upskilling?](#) Upskilling for Shared Prosperity, prepared in collaboration with PwC, is a call to action. It makes the economic case for providing employees with learning and development opportunities to expand their horizons while minimising skills gaps and makes sweeping generalisations while presenting country- and region-specific information that indicates that there are great differences between these. The WEF report highlights many challenges and states that the ‘disconnect’ between current educational programmes and the skills employers need today and, in the future, have to be addressed. If higher education is currently playing an insignificant role in upskilling, what changes would enable it to have a bigger role? (Jan Petter Myklebust and Hanne Smidt, UWN, 29 Jan).

[How to address the skills gap between higher ed and employers](#): Reviewing any higher education publication today, it is hard not to recognize and empathize with those working at colleges and universities, given all that is on institutional plates. Colleges continue to develop students holistically, while also preparing students for the needs of

today's employers and ever-changing economy amid an ongoing pandemic and declining enrolment. However, for several years, the ongoing debate between higher ed institutions and employers within the marketplace has centred around the gap in skills and preparation of students entering the workforce. Intensified by the pandemic and economic downturn, the higher ed and skills gap debate is missing critical technology-driven insights and cross-departmental collaboration discussion to begin to solve the issues confronting institutions. (Adam Hopkins, UB, 17 Dec 2020).



## BIG DATA, DATA ANALYTICS BUSINESS INTELLEGENCE

[How organizations can leverage the power of AI in their data analytics projects](#): Government decisions, particularly in the wake of a crisis, stem from a seemingly simple question: what is the data telling us? That's what the state of Virginia asked when deciding how to monitor and respond to its opioid crisis. To answer that question, the Commonwealth launched a data sharing and analytics platform. It compiles previously siloed data from various government agencies, healthcare organizations, community groups, and law enforcement so that stakeholders can make data-driven decisions that support their communities. This data sharing framework was later adapted to aid in COVID-19 response and recovery. Because Virginia had this framework already in place, the Commonwealth was well positioned to handle this rapidly evolving crisis (insideBigData, 18 Feb).

[Data and analytics: Delivering clarity at a time of great uncertainty](#). Looking back over the past year, it's clear that for many organizations, regardless of size or industry, technology was invoked to survive the crisis. Much has been reported about the rapid migration to the cloud and the move to support remote working but according to James Don-Carolis, Managing Director of TrueCue, data, and the value which can be obtained from



actionable, business intelligence, often acts as the differentiator between success and failure (insideBigData, 13 Feb).

[Circular Statistics in Python: An Intuitive Intro](#): In a wide range of scientific disciplines, the observations are that directions have periodic nature measured in degrees or radians. Such data should be analysed on an angular scale with respect to a chosen "zero-direction" and an essence of "rotation". For instance, since  $0^\circ$  and  $360^\circ$  are identical angles, the sum of  $20^\circ$  and  $350^\circ$  angles is equal to  $10^\circ$ , not  $370^\circ$ . In this article we will review some basic principles and tools of circular statistics, as well as the reasons why conventional linear methods would not work well on circular data. Furthermore, we will reveal on how you can construct a simple noise filter from these basic tools (insideBigData, 12 Feb).

[Utah's dashboard targets enrolment, focusing on students first](#): The university's Sorenson Impact Center says 'rightsizing', not downsizing, is key to ensuring their future. It is looking for partners on its MAPS Project to help in this mission. This academic "think-and-do-tank" has been working to address those marginalized voices while providing data that can help higher education better meet their needs. Its MAPS Project (Model, Analyse, Prototype, and Share) is not only relaying their stories, but attempting to solidify their future successes. (Chris Burt, UB, 5 Feb).



## REPORTS AND RESOURCES

[Leading through crisis](#): These are historically turbulent times for higher education, as college leaders respond — daily, it seems — to new challenges brought on by the pandemic, the racial-justice movement, and the battered economy. Meanwhile, the enrolment cliff — the projected shrinking of the college-bound population — looms ahead. To help leaders navigate the uncertain road before them, we've compiled some of The Chronicle's best advice columns and other coverage — on how to meet financial challenges, create a more inclusive campus, manage your career, and more.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

# Leading Through Crisis

Strategies for handling the pressures of the pandemic, racial-justice movement, and economy

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

# Rethinking Campus Spaces

How to Prepare for the Future of Learning and Work

[New survey illustrates challenges and opportunities for assessments](#): University Business (UB) and ExamSoft partnered to develop and deploy a survey of higher education leaders in the UB audience, exploring the challenges of measuring and assessing student learning outcomes at their institutions. Some 386 college and university leaders from around the country responded and participated in the survey.

**81%** of respondents said it was challenging for their institution to gather and measure evidence of academic quality and student learning for accreditation purposes.

**54%** said it was challenging for their institution to identify students who are struggling academically

**46%** said it would be helpful to have one central platform or system for assessment or exams used across all or most departments and programs.

[Rethinking campus spaces](#): The Chronicle spoke with leaders of colleges that had just started to bring more people back to campus, after emptying their grounds earlier in the spring. They had transformed their spaces — removing chairs, putting up one-way signs, marking six-foot distances on the floors. Although Americans may be accustomed to such measures now, at the time those changes were new. But the quiet and the caution tape won't last forever.

[The New Risk Management](#): This Chronicle report explores these layers of legal and financial vulnerability and examines key tactics that lawyers and risk-management consultants recommend for minimizing and managing liabilities. The report is designed to help readers put various kinds of risk in perspective and offers ways to think about developing a strategy that aligns with their institutions' priorities, missions, and identities.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

# The New Risk Management

A multilayered strategy for today's legal threats

## PODCAST

[How to educate with resilience when everything changes with crystal dejaeger](#): The pivot from face-to-face interaction to online interaction is happening across many industries, especially in education. There are ways that technology can enhance your online teaching, but it can be difficult to know where to start if you're not sure how to adapt your in-person strategies to on-screen learning. In this post, education and technology professional, Crystal



DeJaegher, shares advice for developing a virtual teaching practice that works for you.



## POSITIONS VACANT



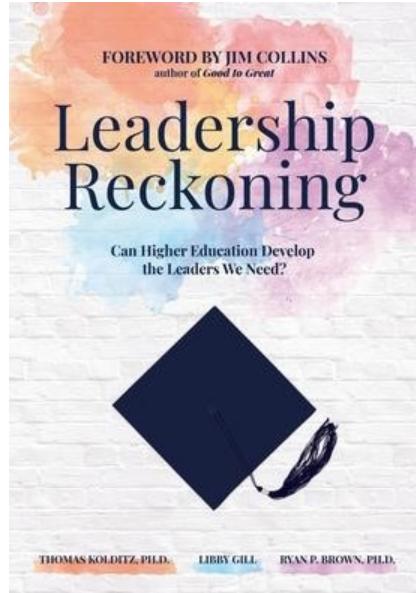
**Looking for a change?  
Want to list a job?  
Visit our Jobs Board.**

[Jobs Board](#)

## GOOD READS

### [Leadership Reckoning: Can Higher Education Develop the Leaders We Need?](#)

Thomas Kolditz, Libby Gill, and Ryan P Brown

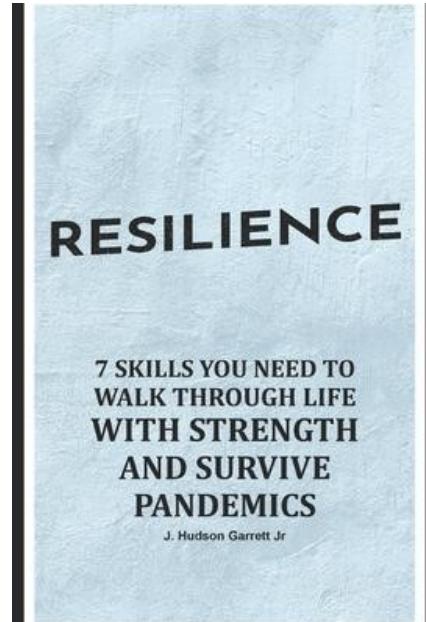


Since its inception, higher education in the U.S. has claimed to develop leaders. This bold claim appears in college mission statements and mottos, and it is reinforced in recruiting materials and ad campaigns. But is this claim justified? Leadership Reckoning takes to task American colleges and universities for their haphazard, incoherent, evidence-free approaches to developing students as leaders and offers a principle-driven, outcome-oriented blueprint for how effective leader development can occur. Higher education has both the opportunity and the responsibility to take leader development seriously and create the leaders we need. It's high time that happens, and Leadership Reckoning points the way.

[Buy Now](#)

### [Resilience: 7 Skills You Need to Walk Through Life with Strength and Survive Pandemics](#)

Hudson Garrett



Resiliency is an important aspect of mental health and physical wellness during times of extreme stress and pressure. This book reviews 7 Core strategies to reduce stress, maintain optimal resilience and health during pandemics and other public health crises. Thru an evidence-based approach to stress management, it is possible to improve the outcomes of even the most difficult situations. This book is a step-by-step guide provides clear concepts of optimizing your personal resilience.

[Buy Now](#)

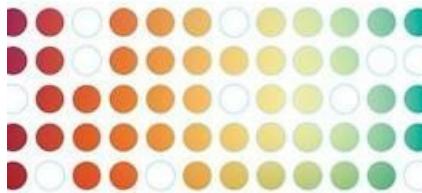


[Ungrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning \(and What to Do Instead\)](#)

Editor: Susan D. Blum

# UNgrading

Why Rating Students  
Undermines Learning  
(and What to Do  
Instead)



EDITED BY

**Susan D. Blum**

With a foreword by Alfie Kohn

The moment is right for critical reflection on what has been assumed to be a core part of schooling. In Ungrading, fifteen educators write about their diverse experiences going gradeless. Some contributors are new to the practice and some have been engaging in it for decades. Some are in humanities and social sciences, some in STEM fields. Based on rigorous and replicated research, this is the first book to show why and how faculty who wish to focus on learning, rather than sorting or judging, might proceed. It includes honest reflection on what makes ungrading challenging, and testimonials about what makes it transformative.

[Buy Now](#)

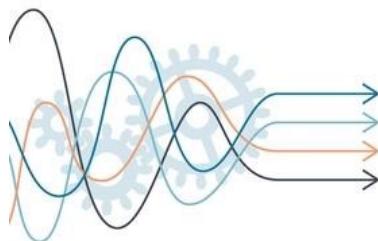
[Facilitating Change in Higher Education:  
The Departmental Action Team Model](#)

Courtney Ngai, Joel C Corbo, and Karen L Falkenberg

## Facilitating Change in Higher Education

[The Departmental Action Team Model](#)

Courtney Ngai, Joel C. Corbo, Karen L. Falkenberg, Chris Geanious, Alanna Pawlik, Mary E. Pilgrim, Gina M. Quan, Daniel L. Reinholz, Clara Smith, Sarah B. Wise

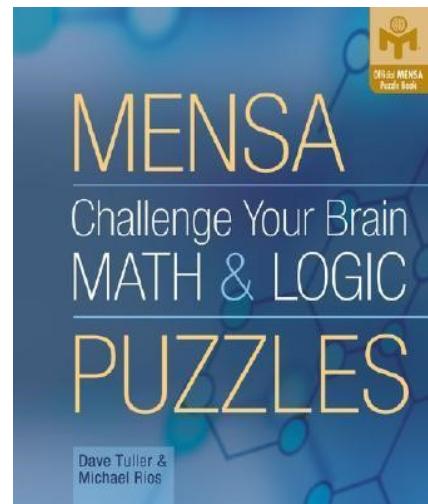


Creating positive and sustainable change in higher education is hard. Facilitating Change in Higher Education provides a complete roadmap to support those interested in driving departmental change. This book blends theory and practice so that readers understand the why and the how behind creating change in higher education. Covered topics include developing change agency, building a productive team culture, and interfacing with key stakeholders. Supported by over 100 resources integrated into the text, readers will come away feeling prepared to facilitate change in their own context.

[Buy Now](#)

[MENSA Challenge Your Brain Math & Logic](#)

By Dave Tuller and Michael Rios



Give your brain a workout on the type of brainteasers that challenge the best solvers at the World Puzzle Championships. They're tough, but fun, and the feeling of satisfaction you get when you succeed is simply unbeatable. Some of the puzzles are oldies but goodies, like battleships - and its many variants - where you search for a fleet hidden within a grid. In "Eminent Domain," try to determine which blanks cells are owned by the numbered ones. For "Hex Loops," locate a path that travels through adjacent hexagons: the trick is, it has to end where it started, and the lines can't touch or cross.

[Buy Now](#)

## ON THE MOVE

**Courtney Cardow** joins Uni Queensland as Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit.

**Michael Stuckey** joins U Tas as dean of law.

**Freya Campbell** is acting chief comms officer at UNSW.

**Michael Keppell** joins International College of Management, Sydney as DVC Learning and Teaching.

**Lindsay Robinson** joins UNSW as Chief Development Officer.

**Leah Hill** is Uni Sydney's inaugural Chief Faculty Experience Officer. She has charge of student administrative services and oversees faculty general managers.



**Michael Gilding** joins Flinders U as VP and ED of the College of Business, Government and Law.

**Peter Høj** takes over as Uni Adelaide VC.

**Michelle Ryan** will be inaugural director of ANU's Global Institute for Women's Leadership, starting in July.

**Noordin Shehabuddeen** is the new PVC VET at Charles Darwin U.

ANU announces **Maryanne Dever** will be PVC Education and Digital (from April).

**Nina Fotinatos** is now dean for learning and teaching at Federation U.

**Kelly Smith** is appointed PVC International at Murdoch U.

**Janine Deakin** is promoted to executive dean for Science and Technology at Uni Canberra.

TEQSA welcomes **Helen Gniel** as director of the new Higher Education Integrity Unit.

**Sean Henriques** is appointed programme director for the Edith Cowan U city campus project.

**Lori Lockyer** becomes executive dean of QUT's Faculty of Creative Industries, Education and Social Justice.

**Anthony Pages** is interim CEO of ANU Enterprises.

**Sarah Pearce** is acting CSIRO Chief Scientist during the search to replace **Cathy Foley**, who is the new national Chief Scientist.

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

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

### [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.



### Professional Development

The Association for Tertiary Education Management provides high quality professional development and leadership programs for the tertiary education sector in Australia and New Zealand. Professional development events can be found by [Browse the ATEM PD Programs Calendar](#) or [Search Programs and events by Region](#).



### [COVID Conversations: 5 Dos and Don'ts for Adjusting Your Unit Evaluation Strategy](#)

'Uncertainty' is quickly becoming a buzzword, but in the time of COVID-19, it's an accurate assessment of the state of higher education surveys and evaluations. Teaching and learning have been dramatically transformed as institutions have been thrust into virtual learning mid-semester, and remote instruction is a completely new experience for many faculty members and students. A recent Watermark panel discussion brought together administrators from diverse institutions and backgrounds to discuss their plans for unit evaluation this term and beyond and offer tips to help others find a new path forward.

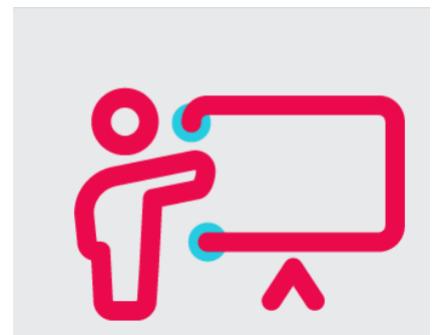
### [Salesforce: 2021 Innovation Leadership Forum](#)

How are universities planning for a post-COVID future? Join us at the 2021 Salesforce.org Innovation Leadership Forum for a thought-provoking discussion about critical challenges and opportunities in higher education.

Michael V. Drake, M.D., President of the University of California, will share his perspective on leading through change and helping students thrive.

Tune in on March 23 to learn about:

- The impact of the COVID crisis on higher education
- How universities can create economic and social mobility for students
- Training the next generation of diverse leaders



### [Altis Public Training Courses](#)

Build your Information Management knowledge and hone the skillsets required to manage the proliferation of organisational data. From strategic planning to implementation and management, our extensive suite of training courses provides you with critical insights and structured learning across the IM value chain.

## 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.

### [MTMImpact Symposium 2021](#)

**Chicago, IL, USA**  
July 28–30, 2021

The MTMImpact Symposium is evolving to meet changing workforce talent needs. At its core, it remains the industry's premiere event for HR L&D leaders, professionals, and learning providers – particularly those professionals who are using Explorance's MTM and Blue suite of products and solutions. Based on feedback from attendees of the MTMImpact 2020 Virtual Experience, the 2021 symposium expands its topic coverage to include a selection of broader talent capability and innovation, re-imagining a post-COVID future.



### 2021 Student Service Centres Conference

31 May – 2 June 2021  
Wellington, New Zealand



In planning for next year, we can confirm that the cancelled SSCC will re-emerge next year and be on in Wellington. At this stage, we hope to make it face to face depending on COVID restrictions, but it will certainly have an online element either way. In the meantime, we have been keeping people working with the student experience in touch with other program(me)s.

### HERDSA 2021 Annual Conference

Brisbane Australia  
7–10 July 2021



HERDSA Executive and the Queensland Branch invite you join us at HERDSA 2021, the 43rd annual conference of the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA).

### The Tertiary Education Management Conference (TEMC)

Brisbane  
October 2021



It will be fabulous to have everyone together again and by then who knows, international students might start to reappear, COVID will have receded even

further and vaccines will be commonplace for everyone. So, let's be optimistic!

The Call for Abstracts will open shortly. We look forward to your involvement and contribution and to meeting you in Brisbane. Registration will also open soon - click here to join the [TEMC mailing list](#) and keep updated.

## INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCHER'S CORNER

### *Five quick questions with Joshua Lee*



#### What is your job title?

Manager, Institutional Analytics and Data Science at The University of Sydney.

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

Running a small but busy 'data R&D' team – integrating, exploring, and visualising institutional data in new ways to support emerging strategic reporting needs.

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

Everyone is interested in geospatial data, especially in a COVID-19 world. Where are our students, and how do we know that what they've told us is correct? We don't have tracking devices on all of them, but 'big' data can be almost as good.

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

Learning analytics, especially in light of the radical shift in teaching delivery to online, and tackling many of the student experience and educational integrity problems that come along with it.

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

... can I say, 'resourcing and staff'? ☺ Otherwise – cooperation and communication at all levels, from data owners to SMEs through to ICT and data engineering.

*Joshua's LinkedIn profile is [here](#).*

## CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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@aaair.org.au](mailto:editor@aaair.org.au).

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](#)



Lizzie Li  
Editor, *The Institutional Researcher*

## DISCLAIMER

*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.*

