The Institutional Researcher

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AAIR Newsletter July/August 2021

THE JOURNEY IS ON

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

AAIR is the professional association for institutional research practitioners in higher education and other institutions in Australasia. We have a number of principal objectives that include raising the level of professional competence and practice in the fields of tertiary education institutional research, planning and analysis in the Australasian region, and assisting the professional development of members.

As an association, we have a focus on supporting our members to be professional in our practice, and AAIR is an enabler for the work we all do to be considered professional.

I am currently in the midst of my studies for a Doctor of Professional Practice where I am looking at how professional staff (that's basically non-teaching staff) create our professional identity.

For much of 2021, I have been undertaking a series of interviews with professional staff from different institutions who have captivated me with their story.

What has interested me most so far are the different interpretations people have on what a profession is and how someone demonstrates they are professional. In the current work environment, and the current tertiary education environment, the traditional view of what a profession is and who those professionals are is very different from the concepts at the turn of the 21st century.

This signals to me that the place and purpose of associations such as AAIR need to constantly evolve and adapt to ensure that they continue to be relevant and provide opportunities for current and prospective members. Internalising a strong professional identity and believing in what we do is valued, and of value, and is one way to support our own wellbeing. We now work in times of super complexity, and it has never been more important to embrace our own professional identity and be able to answer the question, 'Who am I and what do I do?'

I encourage everyone to use the wonderful resources AAIR provides to support and build your professional identity, as we all ride these waves of organisational change and turbulence. One of those great resources is the AAIR annual forum. For 2021 we are creating an exciting programme over 6 and 7 December that will be bought directly to you. Please keep those dates free and register when registrations open shortly. Our theme this year is, 'Get Your AAIR Booster Shot'. Visit our AAIR events page for more information about AAIR events.

Noho ora mai

Stay well, look after yourself, goodbye

Stuart Terry
AAIR President
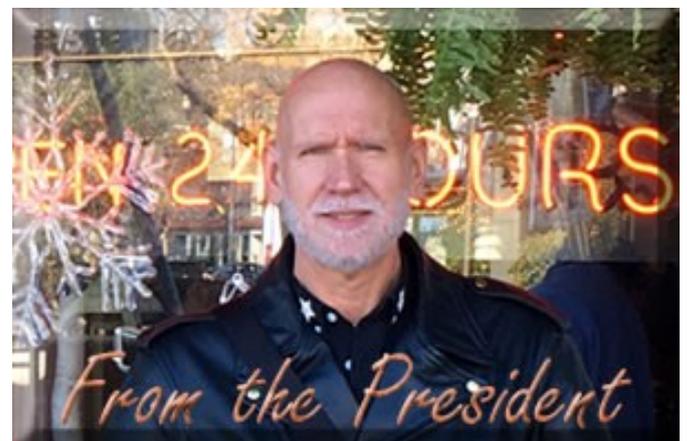
EDITORIAL

Over the last 18 months, we have observed our world changing drastically. Almost everyone on the planet has either lived through some extended period of lockdown, been 'in and out' of lockdown mode, or been touched more personally by what is happening on Mother Earth.

In previous issues of our newsletter, I have tried to focus on positive news and updates, rather than repeating all too familiar dialogue around the tough situation confronting our higher education sector. I now realise that no-one is exempt—including myself—from experiencing the fallout of the corner our organisations have been backed into.

Have you ever had a time when you feel so much in your heart that there are no words to describe the depth of that feeling? I have now lived that moment, but I also believe that there is a time for everything … a time to be silent, and a time to speak …

Do you have something you would like to share with your IR colleagues? Please send your contributions to editor@aair.org.au.

Lizzie Li
Editor, The Institutional Researcher

SPOTLIGHT ON AN AAIR MEMBER

Rintaro Ohno, Senior Assistant Professor, Tohoku University, won our best presenter award at the 2020 AAIR Annual Forum. As the winner, he was awarded a registration to attend the AIR Forum Virtual 2021. He shares his experience with us here.

In BC (before COVID) times, when you joined an overseas conference, you had to take a lot into account. Making reservations, taking time to travel, time for the conference, exchanging currencies, making sure your own work at home has nothing left marked 'urgent', making sure people won't contact you for something that 'won't take long', et cetera et cetera. And this doesn't even take into consideration the secondary things like adjusting to time zones—especially when you cross the Pacific—or catching up on paperwork that piled up on your desk while you were gone.

Read More …

SECTOR NEWS AND VIEWS

Universities must plan and budget for the public good: the wholesale loss of public university employment via sackings and voluntary redundancies and reducing casual workforces should stop. In past decades we have seen public universities in Australia turned into corporatised entities with accrual accounting and weak accountability mechanisms to their staff and students. This corporatisation of universities budgets and consequences for workers must be rectified in the current situation. The choices made by vice-chancellors and senior executives should not continue, with business models that have placed the Australian higher education system in chaos. I call on vice-chancellors to move to strategic planning and university budgeting for the public good. The university community must engage and push for change that builds a more inclusive and equitable

budgeting and funding process (James Guthrie AM, CMM, 5 Jul).

Feds asks experts for standard uni-industry research contracts: A bunch of research admin and intellectual property experts are invited to join a working group to create a standard contract for uni-industry research partnerships and technology licences. Commonwealth agency IP Australia is involved, with Education Minister Alan Tudge's university research commercialisation taskforce engaging with the idea. Standard contracts that all unis would use is an idea that fits with the government's Keep It Simple, Scientists thinking and addresses one of the reasons partnering with research organisations can get too hard for business to bother with. An entrepreneur who has done deals with universities describes being involved in a Linkage Grant proposal, which captured them in a 250-page Australian Research Council contract (CMM, 5 Jul).

New 'category standards' adopted for HE institutions: The Australian federal government has adopted a set of new 'category standards' for the nation's universities, with a new university created as a result and three other institutions reclassified as 'university colleges' under the changes. This could mean that, in time, the colleges could also be renamed universities. Under the government's reforms to the national higher education regulatory framework, Avondale University College in New South Wales was reclassified as Australia's first new university in almost a decade, while three providers became university colleges under a new category established as part of the changes. (Geoff Maslen, UWN, 17 Jul).

COVID cuts, casualisation create rising stress for staff: The impact of mass forced redundancies and non-renewal of employment contracts has proved highly stressful for academics and tutors in Australia and New Zealand, according to research led by Megan Lee of Southern Cross University, Australia. But the pandemic-related turmoil comes on top of years of casualisation, new management techniques and other factors putting academics under increased pressure. (Geoff Maslen, UWN, 22 Jul).

Think our unis are all much the same? Look more closely and you will find diversity: The COVID-19 pandemic plunged Australian universities into crisis. From early 2020, many voices declared increased specialisation and difference

between institutions was the way for them to survive. Yet our soon-to-be-published study has shown if we dig a little deeper each university is a complex patchwork, especially in the area of research. Australian universities present an array of sometimes competing interests, activities and priorities. So why is the sector seen as lacking diversity? (Zipparo, et al., the Conversation, 5 Aug).

QILT uncovers international students first pandemic response: "Australia remains an attractive destination for international students, despite the impacts of COVID-19," according to a media statement from Education Minister Alan Tudge; at least it was when the survey was conducted, July-October last year. But even a year back, satisfaction levels among onshore international students were way down on the pre-pandemic pinnacle. Satisfaction with the overall education experience was down 12 per cent (the drop for locals was 9 per cent). Overall, 18 per cent had "seriously considered" bailing from their study institution (admittedly only 1 per cent up on 2019), mainly for health/stress/financial reasons (CMM, 6 Aug).

The internationals unis really, really, need to come back: In 2019 coursework internationals accounted for 61 per cent of all PGs and as Frank Larkins points out, their preference for on-campus study means, "in terms of cost efficiency in the delivery of postgraduate course programmes overseas students have been a better investment for universities than domestic students." The Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching survey for on-shore internationals in 2020 lock-down, released Thursday, found 63 per cent were satisfied with their overall education experience, with a 67 per cent positive rating for teaching. This is lower than for domestic PGs, but not much (68 per cent and 72 per cent). The international figures are a bit better for business students, who are 40 per cent of the international PG population, 66 per cent on teaching and 69 per cent overall (CMM, 10 Aug).

Uni finances: 2020 could have been worse. The financial challenges occurring in 2021 are likely to be greater. The 2020 Annual Reports are publicly available for all Australian universities, with the exception of the three South Australian universities. With no prospect in the short or medium term of borders being re-opened to international students, an extended lockdown in NSW and repeated lockdowns in Victoria, the financial challenges occurring in 2021 are likely to

be greater than in 2020. Preliminary reports indicate 2021 international student enrolments will be lower than in 2020. 2021 is now likely to be the proving ground for the strategies and pandemic responses each university adopted – whether explicitly or implicitly – in the first year of the pandemic (Ian Marshman and Frank Larkins, CMM, 16 Aug).

Needed: a performance-audit of NSW universities: The state's Auditor-General should have a look. The NSW Auditor-General (A-G) released her 'Annual work program 2021–24' on August 5, providing an overview of planned audits for the year ahead and foreshadowing likely performance audit topics for the following three years. To our disappointment, there is no planned performance audit of the ten public universities in the state. COVID-19 has had a significant impact on Australian universities, not least those in NSW. The universities have implemented severe austerity measures due to COVID-19, arguing that their future revenues will be seriously impacted. These measures include wide-scale job losses, the closing of courses and subjects and a widespread switch to remote learning, in some cases when face-to-face learning is possible. (James Guthrie, CMM, 17 Aug).

Campus safety survey set to start: The excellent Social Research Centre will conduct the new National Student Safety Survey next month. The survey will discover students' perceptions of safety on camps and "experiences relating to sexual harassment and sexual assault. The SRC (the people who create the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching) will have the survey of all universities in the field September 6 – October 3 (CMM, 17 Aug).

Right the first time: academics' pandemic responses: The Australian section of a six-nation survey conducted June-July last year found 77.6 per cent of respondents, "suffering from digital fatigue" 69.3 per cent believing COVID-19 had "intensified top-down governance" and 59.6 per cent feeling "weakened trust in university leaders." A paper based on the survey focuses on whether the pandemic — and institutional responses, "were intensifying already established trends in higher

education as a result of marketisation." (CMM, 24 Aug).

Rebound in researcher jobs: An analysis of job advertisements for academic roles reveals the market hit bottom in April 2020, with ads down 70 per cent on YTD 2019. But by June this year advertisements were at 90 per cent of June '19. While the rebound does nearly nothing to restore university jobs lost during COVID-19 it does indicate a recovery of sorts. The finding is in new research from ANU's PostAc team, which analyses labour markets to find a, "better fit between the higher education sector and Australia's other users of highly skilled researchers." (CMM, 24 Aug).

International News

Why we need ethical leadership in international HE: Is ethical leadership in international higher education in crisis or not? Increasing coverage of the shortcomings of executive leadership in higher education institutions in glocal (local and global) geographical spaces suggests that this may be due to the failure of executive leadership teams to uphold the moral code. COVID-19 is not the reason for the current malaise in academia, which is decades old. But new cases of financial mismanagement, sexual harassment and unethical leadership are emerging during the pandemic. If anything, institutional executive leadership should be more vigilant and compassionate at this time. (Fay Patel, UWN, 3 Jul).

Walking the talk of diversity, equity and inclusion in HE: The field of DE&I is relatively new. It requires a competence that is not taught in most universities or training organisations – systems thinking. As a new field, many DE&I leaders are doing their best based on what they know. They simply don't know what they don't know. Walking the talk of DE&I is not just about showing leaders some behaviours; it requires a systemic understanding of the human mind as a starting point. Deeper level awareness and development, such as of people's perception of reality and of their thought processes, come well before surface-level

behaviours. (Ted Sun and Mariale Hardiman, UWN, 10 Jul).

Long way to go for parity for women in HE leadership: The latest International Brief for Higher Education Leaders from the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Center for International Higher Education (CIHE), titled Women's Representation in Higher Education Leadership Around the World, reveals the "unfinished" business that is achieving gender equality at institutional, national and international levels. The brief argues that, while overall access of women to higher education as students has risen in some but not all regions (sometimes achieving more than parity), this development is not uniform and is by and large not paralleled in positions of either leadership and decision-making or at the highest levels of institutional administration. (Tessa DeLaquil, UWN, 24 Jul).

Virtual recruiting: Is it the key to a more diverse talent pipeline? A new survey finds that virtual recruiting can attract more Black, Latinx, Asian, and multiracial students. The survey, conducted in May, examined perceptions of the virtual recruiting of college students, with responses from 2,400 students, nearly 500 employers and 500 higher education professionals. The findings highlighted how prevalent the shift to virtual has become—97% of educational institutions and 93% of employers said their student career fairs this fall will be virtual or hybrid—and where it's making the most impact. Diverse students were more likely to say virtual career fairs allowed them to be more "noticed" by employers, as in-person events have a tendency to be "hijacked" by the most extroverted, aggressive candidates—a view shared by 57% of Black students and 38% of white students. Non-white students were also much more likely to apply to a position after attending a virtual career fair, compared to an in-person event, citing better connections with employers. (Jen Colletta, UB, 22 Jul).

6 powerful ways to connect with international students: Western New

England finds success through creativity. It has become particularly welcoming for international students. Around 300 or so from 30 countries give this smaller private university a very diverse feel. Though the past 16 months presented some barriers to their arrival and studies, Western New England found ways to deliver to those from Pakistan, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Brazil. With declining demographics, changes in consumer mindset, unsustainable tuition discounting practices and the rhetoric around struggles in higher ed, a lot of institutions have jumped into the international recruitment market. Competition has increased by 300% to 400%. But a large majority of late-comers aren't taking a value-based approach. They're doing it because they're hoping to diversify their international student portfolio. (Chris Burt, UB, 2 Aug).

How the pandemic has set the agenda for HE improvements: In the wake of the unprecedented COVID-19 education disruptions which affected more than 220 million tertiary-level students around the world, UNESCO conducted a global survey aimed at providing an evidence-based overview of the current situation of the higher education system at national and global levels. The results provide insights into how some countries were able to transform the challenges –brought about by the rapid digitalisation of education – into opportunities through strong government support and international cooperation. The survey attempts to assess the different impact the pandemic had on higher education systems in terms of access, equity and quality of teaching and learning, university operations, national challenges, emerging issues and strategic responses. (Akemi Yonemura and Lisa Cruz Lackner, UWM, 4 Aug).

Coursera Doubles Down on Degree Programs: Online course company will increase percentage of revenue it shares with university partners as they add degree programs or increase their enrollments. The competition to help colleges and universities launch affordable online degrees and credentials heats up by the day -- literally. A few weeks ago, the online program enabler 2U announced a plan to buy edX, the nonprofit online course platform founded by Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, for $800 million. Inside Higher Ed reported Monday that Noodle, another online program management company, would try to muscle its way in to the crowded market alongside 2U and the other dominant player in the space, Coursera, by creating a new platform for its university partners to market non-degree courses to its alumni and other learners. (Doug Lederman, insidehighered, 10 Aug)

3 data-fueled ways to boost retention by improving student experience: Colleges and universities are trying to re-recruit previous students while simultaneously targeting new students. The bottom line is there is less room for error in student retention—particularly for community colleges and smaller private institutions stretched thin. Administrators are even more focused on where to invest time and scarce resources. To strike a balance between predictability and flexibility, institutions must use data that already exists across campus to support student needs in aggregate and provide new ways for it to support decision making. This may include identifying which courses or set of courses are the most beneficial to students and the institution, and which are underperforming with low margins or lower than expected learning outcomes, or which types of majors are in higher demand. (JD White and Mirko Widenhorn, UB, 12 Aug).

Data Collection Comforts: Most Students Trust Their Colleges. Students don't know a lot about what their colleges are doing with their data, and experts say institutions must help them think more critically about data privacy. The latest

Student Voice survey from Inside Higher Ed and College Pulse, presented by Kaplan, found most students are unaware of just how much data their institutions have about them, but they also are not overly concerned about it. "Students seem less concerned if the institutional behaviour can be linked to academic help seeking," says Michael Brown, an assistant professor of higher education and student affairs at Iowa State University. With Klein, Brown has researched and written about student privacy policy documents and come up with an inclusive approach to policies that govern learning analytics use. "When I interview students, they assume the institution has an ethic of care," he says. "Maybe [college leaders] don't always do the best thing, but at least they have good intentions." (Melissa Ezarik, insidehighered, 17 Aug)

Ranking and Rating

Asian universities are on the rise. This is what it means for the rest of the world: The data does not lie: in successive editions of the annual Times Higher Education World University Rankings, Western nations have been losing ground while the East rises. In 2016, just two universities from mainland China made the world top 200. Today the number is seven – led by Tsinghua University in Beijing, which made history by entering the world top 20 for the first time in 2021. (Phil Baty, World Economic Forum, 8 Jul).

The new GUGuide: stable results and no surprises – despite COVID-19: There is room for the GUG to be further strengthened and continue to be an invaluable resource for prospective students and institutions. The 2022 edition of the Good Universities Guide (GUG), released on 2 August, provides yet another lens by which to assess the performance of Australian universities over the past two years. The GUG does not produce an overall rating; instead, it produces 13 ratings at the institutional level. The GUG ratings reflect the relative performance of Australian institutions in the domestic sphere, compared to the several world university rankings which emphasise the global nature of education. The GUG only publishes five-star ratings. If an institution has not received a five-star rating, only its score is published. It is then up to readers to draw any conclusion they wish to infer from these results (Angel Calderon, CMM, 2 Aug).

Where is the evidence for ERA? Time's up for Australia's research evaluation system: Research at Australian universities has been scrutinised through the Australian Research Council's (ARC) assessment exercise, Excellence in Research for Australia, since 2010. A companion Engagement and Impact Assessment exercise began in 2018. The time and costs for universities of running these exercises (the ARC collected this information when ERA began but never released it) and the value they generate for universities, government, industry and the public are unknown. It's difficult to see how any future versions can be justified without evidence of a healthy return on investment. (Ksenia Sawczak, the Conversation, 16 Aug).

LEARNING & TEACHING

The Commonwealth has abandoned learning and teaching innovation: The abolition of the university teaching awards sends a clear signal about the government's priorities. Quietly, all funding for the Australian Awards for University Teaching (AAUT) has been cut from the Federal budget as from 2022. Funding for the national Learning and Teaching Repository (LTR) was also cut. This follows the 2016 abolition of the Office for Learning and Teaching (formerly the Carrick Institute), which provided grants and fellowships for educators to pursue evidence-based means of enhancing teaching quality and student learning experiences across the

sector. Together these cuts end key mechanisms used to support and enhance quality university teaching for Australian students. Ongoing support for innovation and excellence is necessary for university teaching. This need is particularly acute in 2021, with unprecedented upheaval in HE brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and other policy forces. The abolition of the university teaching awards sends a clear signal about the government's priorities, at a time when thousands of Higher Education jobs are being lost due to loss of international student income, steadily declining federal support per student, increased class sizes, and continuing tight border controls (CMM, 11 Jul).

TEQSA acts on website that says students will become a "topper in your class": The Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency is seeking a Federal Court injunction to require 51 internet carriage services to block access from Australia to website Assignmenthelp4you. The site pitches itself as providing "various professional writing and editing services" and tutors "for university assignment help" so clients can "earn better grades (and) become a topper in your class!" "We work in each assignment and homework from scratch so there is no reason to come under plagiarism," Assignmenthelp etc promises (CMM, 8 Jul).

VU's block model: so far so (very) good. With the model extending across all UG, plus PG, courses the university brought in independent experts to assess what has been, and needs to be done. Veteran curriculum experts Denise Chalmers, Elizabeth Deane and Alfred Lizzio report to VU in what is less a report than a product manual on how the model works, and adjustments now needed to serve a way-bigger audience than the original first-years it was introduced to serve. "There is much to be celebrated in the success of the university in achieving in such a short timeframe a whole of university change to almost every aspect of the way in which teaching and learning is offered … this has been an extraordinary achievement and the institution, its staff and students are justified in feeling proud of what they have done," they suggest (6 Jul).

NASA makes big research investments at several universities to boost STEM diversity: The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has announced it will be funding research projects - totalling about $18 million - at several Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other Minority-

Serving Institutions (MSIs). The new investments at more than a dozen institutions will support research addressing three of the agency's top priorities: understanding and monitoring global ocean health, returning humans to the Moon through the Artemis program, and helping build a more inclusive workforce. It will also give a big boost to STEM diversification. (Michael T. Nietzel, Forbes, 17 Aug).

How does virtual learning impact students in higher education? A number of studies have assessed online versus in-person learning at the college level in recent years. A key concern in this literature is that students typically self-select into online or in-person programs or courses, confounding estimates of student outcomes. The most compelling studies of online education draw on a random assignment design (i.e., randomized control trial or RCT) to isolate the causal effect of online versus in-person learning. Several pathbreaking studies were able to estimate causal impacts of performance on final exams or course grades in recent years. (Stephanie Riegg Cellin iFriday, brookings 13 Aug).

Communication is changing — and most universities haven't kept up:

Communication today is more multi-modal than ever, but we still tend to give and receive the most training in writing. Our national survey of introductory communications courses in 2020, just published in the journal Communication Research and Practice, found more than 70% of assignments in the sample evaluated only a single communication mode. Perhaps unsurprisingly, 85.7% of these were in written form. Less than a third of the assessment pieces were multi-modal. And only 11% enabled students to practise their spoken, written and visual communication skills in an integrated way (Thomson et al., the Conversation, 25 Aug).

Student Retention and Success

Women in STEM-pathways less travelled: While fewer disadvantaged people enrol

in university than from the overall population, the proportion of those that do who study STEM is the same as for the general population. Which isn't bad. But what isn't good is that just 23 per cent of women who study STEM disciplines defined as non-traditional areas for them (which qualifies them as an equity group) are employed in a course-related field by age 25. The study uses LSAY and PISA data to look at STEM engagement by people from low SES, non-metro, first in family in HE and women in designated "non-traditional" areas of study. The report also finds that "self-concept" of maths capacity at age 15 is a "significant predictor of STEM participation in HE for women, first in family and low SES people (CMM, 7 Jul).

Quality of teaching matters in higher education: Teaching quality has arguably taken a backseat to research output as a measure of "success". Following a successful pilot project, the University of Newcastle is offering all teaching staff a self-guided professional development programme to enhance their teaching practice, called 'Quality Teaching in Higher Education'. The Quality Teaching Model, developed by education academics at the university, has been used extensively in NSW government schools, with robust evidence demonstrating improvement in quality of teaching, teacher morale, and student learning. In the pilot project at UON, 26 academics – from sessional to tenured professor level across the disciplines of nursing and midwifery, psychology, creative industries, education, architecture and built environment, medicine and public health, and law – engaged with the Quality Teaching Model as part of a series of workshops and peer observation sessions. (Sally Patfield & Jenny Gore, 22 Aug).

Staff and Student Wellbeing

20% of year 2&3 UK students have no 'real friends' at university: One in every five students in years two and three in the United Kingdom say they don't have a 'real friend' at university, according to a survey of more than 12,000 students nationally. The finding has renewed fears that students are struggling with loneliness and declining mental health. The survey, carried out by student market research consultancy Cibyl for Accenture during the COVID-19 pandemic, found that as social restrictions and other impacts of the pandemic continue, more than half – 55% – of students say they feel lonely every day or every week and 45% say they have been avoiding socialising in

person or online with others. The isolation currently felt by students appears to be contributing significantly towards declining mental health, the Accenture report says. (Brendan O'Malley, UWN, 17 Jul).

5 ways students can seize control of their mental health: Universities are going to see a tsunami of mental health issues as students come back. With COVID only compounding higher's ed mental health crisis, experts say it's time for wellness to be integrated into every aspect of the campus experience.That could something as simple as a professor encouraging students to get some exercise on a beautiful day to comprehensively screening all students for signs of anxiety, depression and burnout, says Bernadette Melnyk, dean of the College of Nursing and chief wellness officer at The Ohio State University. (Matt Zalaznick, UB, 26 Jul).

How a mindfulness app helps conquer more than stress and anxiety: Mindfulness can reduce many undesirable campus behaviors. Statistics that show about a quarter of female students report having been sexually assaulted on campus haven't changed in decades. But regular training in kindness and compassion and other mindfulness skills could bring those numbers down in a way that other responses haven't, says Mick Miyamoto, the University of Wisconsin-Madison's interim director of Recreation and Wellbeing. "What if we spent as much time on mental hygiene as we did on our oral hygiene?" Miyamoto says. "It's a minimal investment of time that can dramatically increase mental health." This fall semester, first-year students and sophomores can participate in a 30-day mental health challenge using a free mindfulness and meditation app developed by a non-profit affiliated with the university's Center for Healthy Minds. (Matt Zalaznick, UB, 5 Aug)

The "How" of Well-Being
Explore the Well-Being Framework

train your mind:
AWARENESS

[Protecting Students Who Seek Mental Health Treatment](#): The U.S. Justice Department reached a settlement with Brown University after students who took medical leaves for mental health reasons were refused readmission, even after their doctors cleared them to return. A department investigation found that Brown broke the law by denying readmission to dozens of undergraduates who sought to return to campus after taking mental health leaves between fall 2012 and spring 2017, according to an announcement from the department on Tuesday. Students were allegedly denied readmission even when treatment providers confirmed that they were prepared to continue their studies. Students were also forced to remain on leave for at least two semesters, regardless of what their doctors recommended. (Sara Weissman, theinsidehighered, 12 Aug)

[How fertility benefits can be a vital tool for attracting higher ed talent](#): Higher education organizations are adding more and more comprehensive family-building benefits. Few things challenge an academic's work-life balance more than the desire to have a family of one's own. It is a powerful, often innate force. It can do more than drive prospective parents to distraction at work and at home. Employees who struggle with infertility face higher rates of depression, absenteeism, and turnover than their peers. That's why family-building benefits have become especially necessary among higher education professionals. Two prominent universities, Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland, recognized this need and now offer fertility benefits to all of their employees. (Peter Nieves, UB, 16 Aug).

BIG DATA, DATA ANALYTICS BUSINESS INTELLEGENCE

[Uni networks' cyber intel organisations announce a joint warning system](#): The partnership will allow real-time alerts of cyber-attacks against institution in Australia, Canada, the UK and US, using open-source intel and threat sharing platform, MISP. "Sharing is key to fast and effective detention of attacks, "the EU co-funded MISP states. AARNET (Australia's Academic and Research Network) is the local partner in the new MISP community (CMM, 27 May).

[Four Capabilities to Look for in AIOps Tools](#): 2020 has been a year of realizations for business leaders around the world. Most significantly, business leaders have seen the need to scale down operational costs and introduce automation in data centers. Businesses have had to increase their focus on maximizing uptime and optimizing customer experience, all while operating with skeletal staff and seeing an exponential increase in online footfalls. Artificial intelligence for IT operations (AIOps) tools have proven to be the way forward for enterprises to achieve these objectives. Girish Muckai, Chief Sales & Marketing Officer, HEAL Software Inc., discusses four critical capabilities to look for in AIOps tools. Every AIOps tool brings something unique to the table. Evaluating your options based on these four features can help ensure you are set up to move from a break-and-fix to a predict-and-prevent model (insidebigdata, 25 May).

[ProctorU Abandons Business Based Solely on AI](#): The company will no longer sell services to monitor test taking -– if there is no human being analysing the results. ProctorU, a leading provider of remote proctoring, is ending one of the ways it sells its services. No longer will colleges be able to purchase a system based solely on artificial intelligence, or AI. Instead, colleges will be required to purchase systems that involve a human being in analysing what the video has captured. The company believes this switch will cut down on false positives for

cheating and will build support among faculty members. ProctorU officials also hope to spur change within an industry that has grown and become more controversial during the pandemic. (Scott Jaschik, insiderHigherEducation, 24 May).

REPORTS AND RESOURCES

[Experimental higher education multifactor productivity estimates](#): This paper contains new experimental indexes of multifactor productivity growth for Australian higher education. The estimates show that between 2008-09 and 2018-19, higher education labour productivity grew on average by 1.2% per annum. This growth is similar to the average growth of market sector industries (around 1.1%). Multifactor productivity grew on average 0.5% per annum, with increased use of intermediate inputs (per hours worked) contributing about 0.6 percentage point to annual growth in labour productivity. It is important to note that these estimates do not reflect the impact of COVID-19 as the analytical timespan ends at 2018-19. However, the methodology used in this paper will reveal medium to long term impacts of COVID-19 on higher education output and productivity when data becomes available (ABS, 4 Aug).

[Apprentices and trainees 2020: December quarter - Australia](#): The most recent data on apprentice and trainee training activity shows that commencements for the December quarter 2020 increased by 141.5% compared with the December quarter 2019. The total number of apprentices and trainees in-training as at 31 December 2020 was 297 920, an increase of 13.9% from 31 December 2019. Apprentices and trainees 2020 – December quarter released by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) provides a national picture of apprenticeship and traineeship activity, including both quarterly and annual figures that can be broken down by state and territory. It also includes information and on the main movements across various demographic and occupational categories.

[The online delivery of VET during COVID-19: part 1](#): This report, the first of two reports for this project, investigates the extent to which RTOs shifted to online training delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic. It compares the incidence of online training delivery during 2020 with pre-pandemic figures from 2019 and includes an examination of training type and subject result during these periods.

The report also highlights key findings from a joint NCVER and ASQA survey of RTOs, describing their journey with regards to how training was delivered pre-pandemic, delivery in 2020 and any implications this has on future plans for training delivery.


The New Academic Workplace. Like other workplaces across the country at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, many colleges sent staff home to work remotely, either full- or part-time. Now many colleges are considering whether remote or hybrid work should remain an option. But identifying the work arrangements most appropriate to your institution and to various roles is a complex process. This report will help you develop a policy that will support and advance your institution's mission. Full of expert advice and case studies, it also includes data from a Chronicle survey of administrators and human-resource professionals on factors influencing their thinking about new work models.
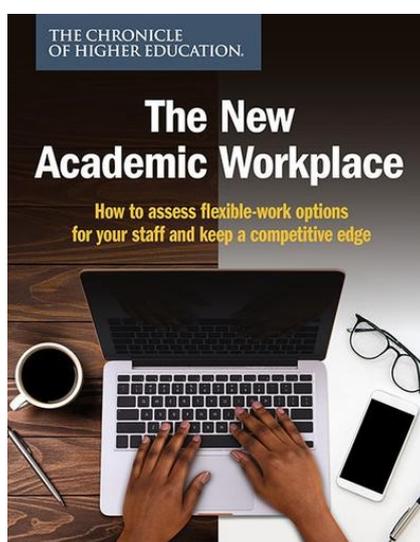
A Curriculum That Matters: The Covid-19 pandemic and racial reckoning revealed huge fissures in political, social, and scientific infrastructure and response, as well as stark underlying inequities. These have prompted a rethinking of college curricula as institutions wrestle with financial havoc and technological logistics. Experts caution, however, against empty virtue-signalling, or offering fare that's poorly thought out and might prove superficial and fleeting.

In this Chronicle issue brief, you'll learn why there is a distinct urgency to help students understand, cope with, and eventually improve their turbulent world. While there's no one right way to incorporate racial history, moral kinship, and a balance of humanistic and scientific values into a college curriculum, students are depending on colleges' innovative thinking and empathy like never before.
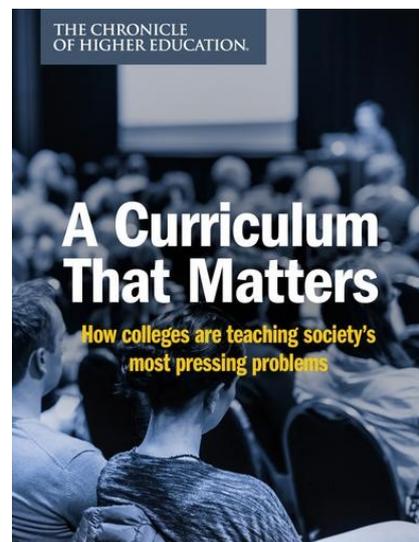
The Future of Gen Z: Higher education has experienced demographic droughts and global calamities before, but rarely have both occurred at the same time. At the most basic level, students are worried about their safety and well-being, and hesitant about paying for a residential experience that's even partly virtual. The pandemic has also had a dramatic psychological effect among Gen Z-ers on the path to college.
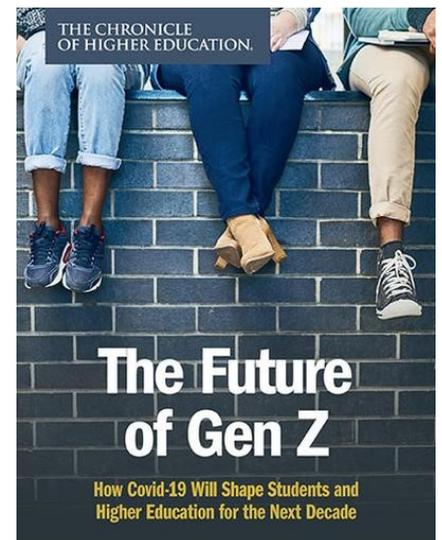

The Future of Teaching: Drastic changes in course delivery and instruction over recent years are leading to conversations among college leaders and faculty members about what effective teaching looks like for students today. This report offers a holistic examination of the future of teaching that will help you decide what kinds of instruction your institution should offer and how best to support faculty members and students to teach and learn effectively.
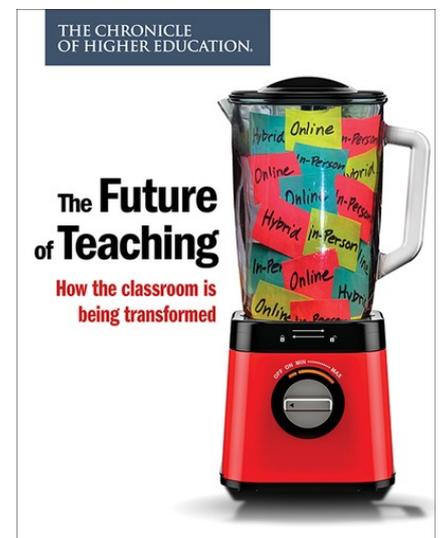
insideBIGDATA Guide for Higher Education: The goal for this Guide sponsored by Dell Technologies is to provide direction for enterprise thought leaders on ways of leveraging big data technologies in support of analytics proficiencies designed to work more independently and effectively across a few distinct areas in higher education: student success and workforce readiness, simplified systems and processes, and accelerate research. Dell Technologies is helping higher education institutions store, analyze, and protect their data, turning pools of data into meaningful

outcomes to improve student success, operational efficiency and more.
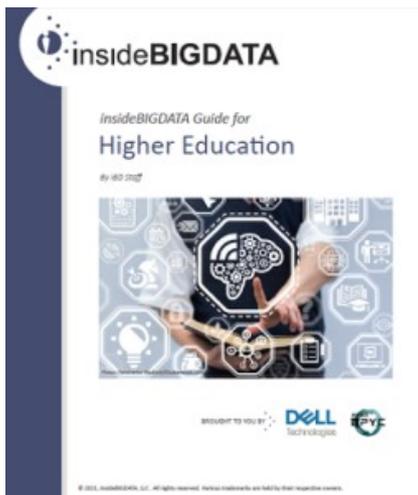
[Building Diverse Campuses: 4 Key Questions and 4 Case Studies](#). Whenever colleges consider how to become more diverse and inclusive, the same assumptions, ideas, and debates tend to come up. College leaders may blame a lack of faculty diversity on the PhD. pipeline. They often propose or require diversity training to try to improve the campus climate. They create task forces to make recommendations for institutional change. And they fret that a bold approach to increasing racial diversity could invite legal scrutiny. Those four usual suspects prompt questions, detailed below, that don't have simple answers. Still, thinking through the complexities is essential to moving forward with a strategy to diversify.

POSITIONS VACANT
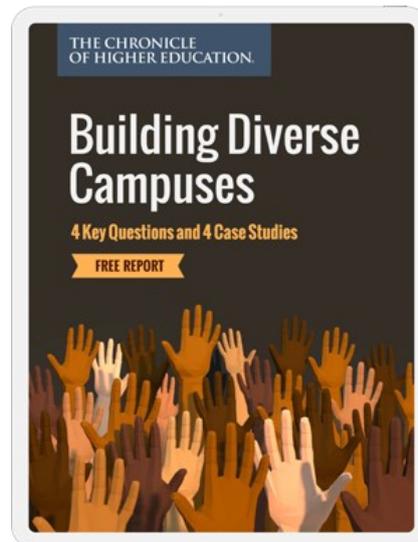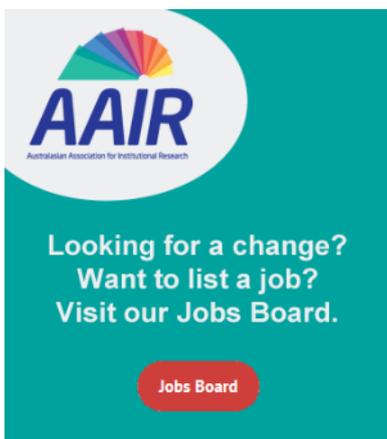
[Rethinking Tenure](#): Tenure as an institution has been shrinking for years. Today, tenured, and tenure-track faculty members make up less than 30 percent of the nation's professoriate. Some colleges are experimenting with alternatives to tenure, finding ways to offer job security and a governance role to those outside the system. Others are trying to make tenure expectations clearer and fairer. In this collection of Chronicle articles, anchored by newly reported analysis, you'll hear from academics who want to strengthen tenure, recreate it, abolish it, or experiment with something new in its place. Read on to learn how tenure's place in the academy is changing.
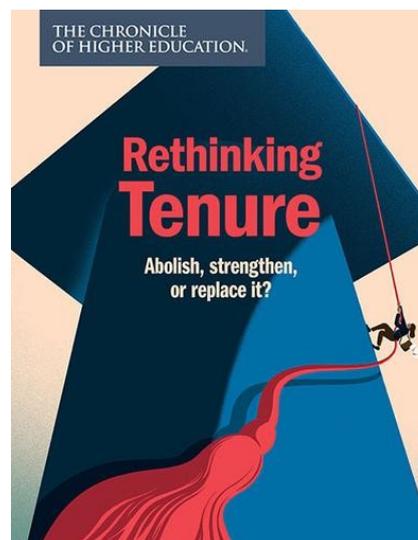
PODCAST

[What now? What next? Insights into Australia's tertiary education sector](#): Claire Field talks with leaders and experts from within the Australian tertiary education sector and across the global ed-tech sector.
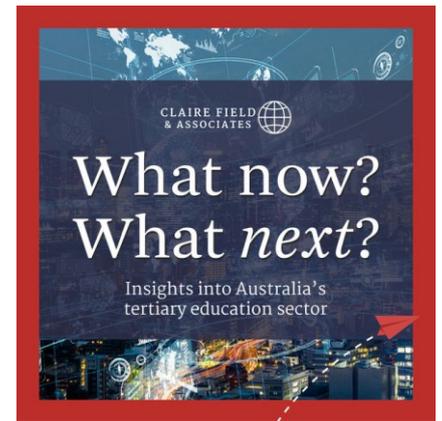
[How to Educate With Resilience When Everything Changes With Crystal DeJaegher](#): The pivot from face-to-face interaction to online interaction is happening across many industries, especially in education. There are ways that technology can enhance your online teaching, but it can be difficult to know 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.

The podcast, **Illumination by Modern Campus**, focuses on the transformation of the higher ed landscape, where we speak to leaders across the board about the trends, ideas and opportunities that are shaping the future of higher ed. We'll also share some best practices and advice that leaders can apply to their own institutions. On our [first episode](#), we spoke with Eric Bullard, Dean of Continuing Education and Extension at UCLA, about the key role professional and continuing education divisions play in driving innovation for the institution.

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCES & EVENTS

LOOKING FOR AN EVENT?

Look no further!
AAIR finds the most relevant events in the IR space and brings them together for you on our website.

● ● ●

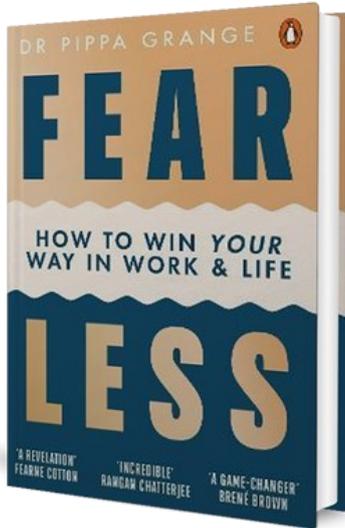CONFERENCES, EVENTS, TRAINING, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WORKSHOPS, AND MORE ...

Click here to visit aair.org.au/events

GOOD READS

### Fear Less: how to win your way in work and life

Dr Pippa Grange

We strive for success, but we are rarely happy. The more we try to win - putting on a brave face for work or family - the more we risk losing ourselves. And even reaching our goals can feel strangely hollow. The culprit? Fear. It makes us anxious, or shameful, or turns us into perfectionists. We pretend to be someone else while aiming for a status that's never truly satisfying. In *Fear Less*, Pippa Grange shows all of us how, by starting to live with less fear, we can find our real passions and deeper fulfilment. Her simple manifesto enables us to replace stress with courage and connect with the people around us on a far deeper level. This type of success isn't about trophies or beating others, it's about winning at the very deepest level: winning from within. It's time to fear less.

Buy Now

Workparent: The complete guide to succeeding on the job, staying true to yourself, and raising happy kids

Daisy Dowling
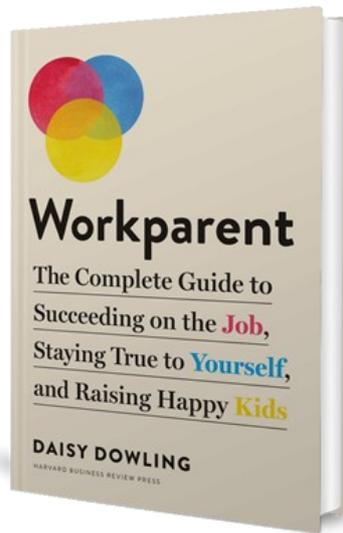
Whether you're planning a family, pushing for promotion during your kids' teenage years, or at any phase in between, *Workparent* provides all the advice and assurance you'll need to combine children and career in your own, authentic way. Whatever your field or family structure, you'll learn how to: Find a childcare arrangement you fully trust; Build a strong support team, at home and on the job.

Buy Now

Mathematics of machine learning

**Marc Peter Deisenroth , A. Aldo Faisal, Cheng Soon Ong**
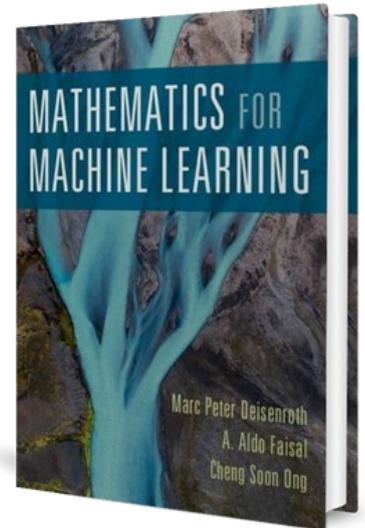
The fundamental mathematical tools needed to understand machine learning include linear algebra, analytic geometry, matrix decompositions, vector calculus, optimization, probability and statistics. These topics are traditionally taught in disparate courses, making it hard for data science or computer science students, or professionals, to efficiently learn the mathematics. This self-contained textbook bridges the gap between mathematical and machine learning texts, introducing the mathematical concepts with a minimum of prerequisites.

Buy Now

Minding the machines: building and leading data science and analytics teams

Jeremy Adamson
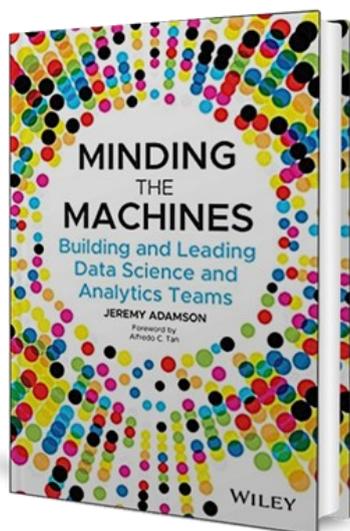
In *Minding the Machines: Building and Leading Data Science and Analytics Teams*, AI and analytics strategy expert Jeremy Adamson delivers an accessible and insightful roadmap to structuring and leading a successful analytics team. The book explores the tasks, strategies, methods, and frameworks necessary for an organisation beginning their first foray into the analytics space or one that is rebooting its team for the umpteenth time in search of success.

Buy Now

Analytics stories: Using data to make good things happen

Wayne L. Winston
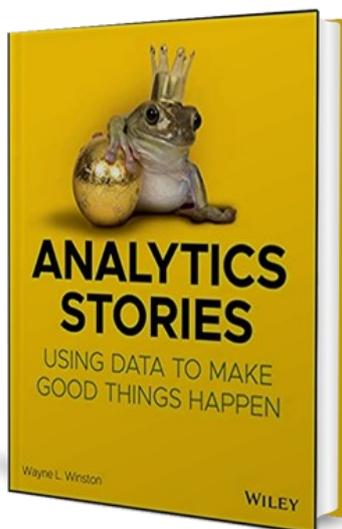
Inform your own analyses by seeing how one of the best data analysts in the world approaches analytics problems: *Analytics Stories: How to Make Good Things Happen* is a thoughtful, incisive, and entertaining exploration of the application of analytics to real-world problems and situations. Covering fields as diverse as sports, finance, politics, healthcare, and business, Analytics Stories bridges the gap between the oft inscrutable world of data analytics and the concrete problems it solves.

Buy Now

ON THE MOVE

Griffith U announces **Liz Burd** will become the inaugural provost in January.

Rachel Buchanan becomes deputy head education at Uni Newcastle's (new) College of Human and Social Futures.

Emma Sparks is appointed Rector and Dean of UNSW Canberra.

Melissa de Zwart moves Flinders as professor of digital tech.

Laurie Pearcey moves to the Chinese University of Hong Kong where he will be VP for external engagement. **Sarah Lightfoot** becomes acting CEO at UNSW G.

Lan Snel is the new head of Uni Southern Queensland's business school.

James McLaren has a one-year appointment at Australian Catholic U as

Interim DVC in the new portfolio of DVC Research and Enterprise.

Carl Rhodes becomes dean of the UTS Business School.

Jenny Beresford is the new CEO of the Council of Australasian University Directors of IT.

Jenny Dodd becomes interim CEO of TAFE Directors Australia.

Anna Phillips is incoming Chief People Officer at Australian Catholic U.

At Flinders U, **Luke Havelberg** becomes CIO, he has acted in the post since November '20. **Mark Schultz** will become Director, People and Culture.

Ross Young becomes DVC Research and Innovation at Uni Sunshine Coast.

At Murdoch U **Romy Lawson** will move from provost to interim VC at the end of July.

Suresh Cuganesan moves up to Deputy Dean for students and external partnerships in the Uni Sydney Business School.

At Murdoch U, **Andrew Webster** becomes executive dean of the College of Arts, Business, Law and Social Science. **Jon Hill** will be ED at Science, Health, Engineering and Education over the coming 12 months.

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCHER'S CORNER

Five quick questions with Henry Zheng

What is your job title?

Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA.

Briefly, how would you describe your role in your institution?

As the Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, I am the senior-most institutional research leader for Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), and report to the provost of the university. I lead a team of researchers and analysts who provide both internal and external reporting and data analysis expertise to the university. In this capacity, I play an active role in leading, championing, and facilitating data-based decision making at CMU. I serve as the primary liaison between the office of institutional effectiveness and planning and other Carnegie Mellon offices, providing both evidence to university leaders in support of strategic priorities and decision making, and analysis capabilities to the broader university community.

From your perspective, what are your expertise in institutional research?

Institutional researchers nowadays utilise a wide range of skills, capabilities, and knowledge to do their jobs effectively, depending on their institution's size, mission, sector, and organisational structure. In my opinion, Patrick Terenzini provided a very elegant framework (originally proposed in 1993 and revised in 2013) that described such skills, capabilities, and knowledge requirements.

According to Terenzini, institutional research work requires three tiers of 'intelligence' to be effective. Tier-1 is technical or analytical intelligence. The first is the body of technical knowledge and information required to be an IR practitioner. Tier 1 intelligence can include a working command of statistics, research methods, and computer applications that help organise, manage, and analyse data resources (e.g., SPSS, SAS, R, STATA, Microsoft Access, Microsoft Excel, and SQL). With the rapid advances of analytical applications, this also means that you need to keep your analytical toolset current. Think Tableau, PowerBI, Python, and other newer tools available.

Tier-2 is issue intelligence. This refers to knowledge and understanding of the major operational domains and issues for colleges and universities. For example, IR practitioners need to know:

- what enrolment management is about
- how it works

- what data resources are generated from the enrolment management process
- how data can be used to improve that process.

To be effective, a good IR practitioner needs to develop familiarity, and preferably expertise, in the operational areas they do most of their analysis. You simply cannot be a good IR researcher if you do not understand the content areas where your analysis is applied to.

Tier-3 is contextual intelligence. According to Terenzini, contextual intelligence is about understanding the campus operating environment, the relationship dynamics, and the strategic imperatives of a university. Contextual intelligence is about the understanding of your institution's position in relation to state/province, regional, national, and international contexts and issues. To be able to become highly effective in institutional research, it is essential to develop contextual intelligence. For example, when Coursera went public with their IPO, or when 2U purchased edX from Harvard and MIT. You need to know what these transactions are about and how they might relate to your institution's operations.

Communication skills are not specifically addressed in the three-tier framework, but it is critically important for institutional research. If you want to be truly effective in institutional research and want to play an effective role in supporting decisions on campus, you must learn to present your ideas and data insights clearly and effectively to your audiences. Your leaders have a lot of competing priorities. When you have their attention, don't just give them a data dump. Focus on the key data messages, tell the data stories, and explain your data stories in a way that will impress upon them the key actionable points. I suggest that anyone interested in polishing up their data storytelling skills should check out these books:

- Storytelling with data: a data visualization guide for business professionals
- Storytelling with data: let's practice!
- Analytics Stories: Using Data to Make Good Things Happen
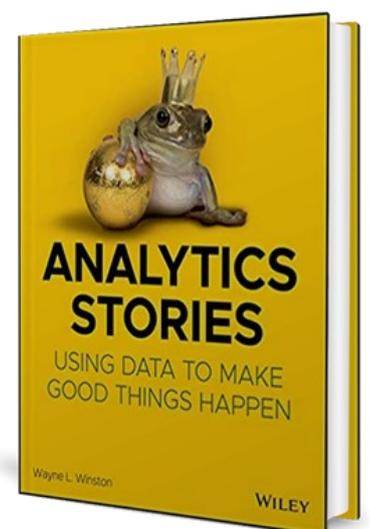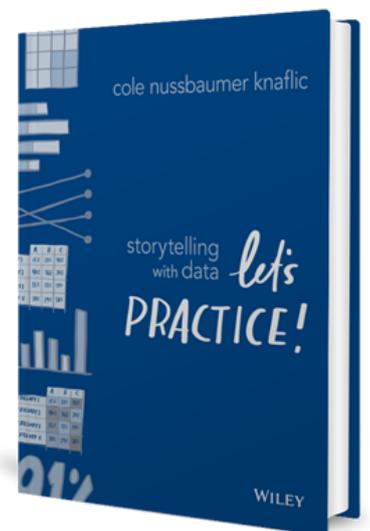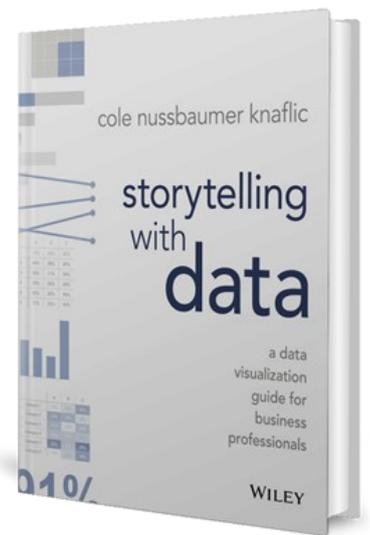
What do you believe will be the future priorities or the emerging areas for institutional research, in particular since COVID-19?

COVID-19 accelerates the pivot to online education. Universities large and small were forced to take part in a mass experiment of online learning when the pandemic ravaged the world. With this massive exposure, it is expected that online learning models (fully online, blended, hybrid, and hyflex (hybrid-flexible)) will continue to grow. For institutional researchers, this means that we need to evaluate the student success assessment process and predictive algorithms with different learning models in mind. What works in the in-person environment may not work in the online environment, and vice versa. We need to have a better understanding of data generated from the learning management system and differentiate learning behaviours in different learning models or platforms.

Another area of change to come is the increasing use of different pathways to educational achievements. Competency-based learning, micro-credentials, stackable credentials, micro-masters degrees, and experiential transcripts, will add more complexity and much-needed changes to the traditional credit-hour-oriented education model. For institutional researchers, this means that counting degree completions and measuring student outcomes suddenly gets more complicated. We need to welcome such changes and develop the right data capturing and management system to reflect such changes.

Lastly, we are going to see more and more institutions moving to cloud-based enterprise resource planning systems, customer relationship management systems, and data lakes. The cloud platform provides easier expandability and faster response time to organisational needs. For institutional researchers, this means at least two things:

1. How will cloud-based solutions disrupt your data access, reporting, and quality control practices?

2. Do you have the right skills to keep up with such changes? For example, do you have a working knowledge of programming languages such as Java, JavaScript, R, and Python. These are the common languages for cloud-based data resources.

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

… building a network of collaborators on campus. Without trusting and relying on the participation and professionalism of our colleagues on campus, and without strong support from the senior leadership, the road to analytics maturity will be a steep uphill climb with little hope of success. People are the most important element in the data analytics equation.

Henry'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@aair.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.

ENEWS SIGNUP

AAIR on Twitter @AAIRaustralasia

Lizzie Li
Editor, *The Institutional Researcher*

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