

MAPPING DISRUPTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE NEW FACULTY MODEL

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Abstract

Due to numerous problems in higher education, universities are struggling for sustainable answers. Higher education is undergoing tremendous changes. Disruptive change has a dangerous consequence to traditional institutions. The results of disruptive change for organizations produces unpredictability and uncertainty of outcomes in the environments. This article examines a new faculty model that includes an entrepreneurial mindset to stimulate innovation and creativity in the constant, changing environment in higher education. In analyzing the current crises in higher education, this paper describes a set of strategic implications that will aid faculty wishing to create sustainability education programs. The result of this investigation is significant because the results can better assist administrators, faculty and practitioners on how to inject innovative thinking in order to produce sustainability education for small liberal arts colleges and universities

Keywords: Faculty, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Mindset, Organizational Behavior, Leadership

Introduction

Higher education is under tremendous pressure due to market disruption. According to Spinelli (2019) “Stagnant high school graduation rates in the United States, international tensions, diminished government spending on education and technology costs, and squeezed personal income-coupled with a fundamental questioning of the value of college education - have brought higher education to the precipice. Since 2016, more than 100 colleges and universities United States have closed.” Economic pressures are forcing higher education to make drastic decisions especially strategic vision, curriculum, hiring, and vision. Engell (1998) argued that the current changes made by institutions are for financial not pedagogic reasons. For example, more teaching is being given to part-time faculty and graduate students because they are cheaper. The results are that even tenured faculty now fear for their jobs (Engell, 1998).

Furthermore, many people are questioning the value of higher education with growing pressures centered on the merit of post-secondary education against student debt and job readiness (Lederman, 2017). In addition, businesses, government officials, and the general public complain about the number of unprepared college graduates produced by today’s colleges and universities. According to a Pew Research study, 61% of Americans believe that the higher education system in the United States is going in the wrong direction (Brown, 2018). This may partly account for declines in college enrollment among traditional-age students. Across most of the United States, some projections show 450,000 fewer students in the years beyond 2025 (Pearson, 2019). According to Economist Nathan Grawe from Carleton College in Minnesota, the college-going population will drop by 15%

between 2025 and 2029 and continue to decline by another percentage point or two thereafter. As a result, there will be 25,000 fewer faculty positions (Pearson, 2019). Dr. Clayton Christensen, who has done extensive research on organization sustainability and disruptive innovation, conveyed doubt about the future of traditional universities; he has argued that in 15 years from now half of US universities may be in bankruptcy (Lederman, 2017).

This article examines a new faculty model that includes an entrepreneurial mindset to stimulate innovation and creativity in the constant, changing environment in higher education. Across the globe, universities are being challenged to change their processes due to the financial pressures and demands from government officials. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, there are 4,298 institutions which consist of 1,626 public colleges, 1,687 private nonprofit schools, and 985 for-profit schools in 2017. However, the number of academic institutions continue to shrink in the nation (Moody, 2019). In the United States, there is even general agreement between both political parties that today’s higher education is moving in the wrong direction (University Industry Innovation Network, 2015). In one study, 73% of Republicans and 52% of Democrats have a negative view about higher education (Brown, 2018). Sadly, most universities are following the same patterns of solutions to solve the wicked problem associated with higher education. Given these glooming predictions, a different mindset is suggested.

METHOD(S)

The collection and critical analysis of secondary data from relevant publications were used to evaluate the feasibility of a new university model based on an entrepreneurial mindset. In

addition, an extensive review of the literature was conducted to focus on the level of scale and depth of colleges and universities experience implementing the entrepreneurial mindset.

THE STATUS QUA IN ACADEMIA

Institutions of Higher Education are facing lower enrollments because of declining birth rates including reductions in two major sources of funding for institutions, federal research grants and state funding, which have declined over the past decade. Add in rising retirement and healthcare costs that are driving up the cost of higher education and competing for limited state funding, institutions face challenges. (Li, McChesney, Jasper, & Bichsel, 2019). Today, due to the COVOD 19 pandemic, prospective freshman may be unable to even apply for college because of their families’ financial situation from rising unemployment rates and a lack of college readiness that may result due to unplanned school closures, or community instability. This exacerbates the financial impact of declining college attendance along with a reduction in international students can mean severe financial shortfalls for colleges resulting in the ability to serve their students. These factors and others make the financial future of higher education in the U.S. uncertain (please see Table 1).

As the pandemic continues to spread, international students may find themselves facing uncertainty about their ability to leave their home country or travel to the United States for

college. Travel restrictions may become more important to help slow the spread of the virus impacting students who want to study in the U.S. Immediately after 9/11 many students chose to attend college closer to home and this may be a factor that is important for U.S. institutions to consider (Peng and Kotak, 2020; Binkley, 2020; Litow, 2020). The longer the pandemic persists, the greater impact the virus will have on international students in U.S. institutions of higher education.

The fear of a financial meltdown is also creating panic among college sports programs across the country as programs cut and others are being considered. The cancellation this spring of the 2020 NCAA men’s basketball tournament cost schools \$375 million with more losses expected, particularly if football season is impacted in the fall. Budgets reflect values and athletic directors will consider what is valuable and what is not. Many programs will be shuttered because of the lack of funding to institutions. Alternative forms of college athletics may result in more European-style academy system where elite young athletes develop their skills and receive an education, but they two are not tied to an education and U.S. institutions. This means a reframing of system and may be divided into spectator sports (ones that make money and are tied into NCAA scholarship limits) and participation sports (ones that don’t make money and are not tied to NCAA scholarship limits). Institutions would provide athletic scholarships in spectator sports, but not in participation sports, thus reducing coaching payroll

Table 1: PESTEL ANALYSIS – DISRUPTIVE FORCES FOR US UNIVERSITIES

P	E	S	T	L	E
(Political)	(Economical)	(Social)	(Technological)	(Legal)	(Environmental)
Government Regulation/ Oversight (i.e. Student Employment, University Cost)	Cost of Higher Educa- tion	Changing Demo- graphics	Rapid Advance- ment of Tech- nology (i.e. AI, Robotics)	Employee Rights	Waste Reduction/ Minimization Paperless Technologies
International Influences as It Relates to Immigration	Cost-Benefit of Pursu- ing An Education	Small Number of Traditional Students From High School	Need to Fre- quently Update Equipment	Immigration	Green Initiatives
Partisan-Divisive	Earning Power versus Affordable	Growing Cynicism About the Worthy of An Education			
		Public Perception About A Liberal Arts Education			



costs and even scheduling with regional opponents to lower costs (Russo, 2020). Athletic program models will be based on resource availability and program success will likely follow those resources.

A TIERED HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Today's higher education has been too complacency in their strategy given the backdrop of disruption change. Donoghue (2009) asserts that it is only possible to truly understand higher education in the United States until you appreciate the significant change in the concentration of wealth in the country during the last thirty years. During that period, a sharp socioeconomic divide has resulted in the richest one percent of Americans coming to own more private wealth than the bottom 90 percent. The top ten percent of Americans now own 71 percent of all private wealth and is now mirrored in higher education. The top and bottom segments of U.S. higher education have grown so differently they that are no longer a single coherent social institution.

Universities now have different values, different missions, different teaching personnel, and different sources of funding from the top to the bottom with other Universities in the middle are torn between these extremes. The top tier schools are now for the children of the wealthy, as rising tuitions have created a domain at elite universities and colleges for those who can pay the cost. At the lower end of the U.S. higher education spectrum, are institutions of various kinds from community and technical colleges to may for-profit universities. They are practical and occupation-oriented and offer alternatives to the abstract benefits of a traditional liberal arts education and are less expensive for several reasons with on being the time commitment of two-years versus four-years from student (Donoghue, 2020).

For-profit universities have become experts at guiding applicants and prospective students through the U.S.'s challenging financial aid system. Higher education has become increasingly privatized and government support has dwindled and tuition grants have simply failed to keep pace with the rising costs. The largest program, the PELL Grants, covered most of tuition at four-year public universities at one time. Now, education loans have largely replaced grants and are now the primary method of financing higher education. Furthermore, private student loan companies have blossomed, and these loans are guaranteed, meaning that they cannot be bankrupted. Thus, lenders take no risks in offering them even to unqualified students. Applying for student loans in the U.S. is a challenging process, but the for-profit higher education industry who specialize in facilitating the process, which insures an income stream for-profit college (Donoghue, 2020).

According to Donoghue (2020), community colleges and for-profits rely on adjunct labor, who are paid by the course, and hired and fired at will as student enrollment fluctuations.

Many of these schools do not require their faculty to do academic research and they do not fund research. These institutions do not have the expenses of a traditional, tenured professoriate, the faculty group of employees with retirement benefits and health insurance, with time spent on scholarship. These institutions will thrive because they are less expensive to operate and for students to attend. In addition, they are more convenient than traditional universities, offering courses in the evening and on weekends. These institutions are the pioneers in the arena of online learning, where traditional universities have lagged. Online learning perfectly fits for today's typical U.S. college student lifestyle and is now the norm for education in the COVID-19 era. Students on average are older, twenty-six years old, and the rising cost of traditional college tuition causes them to start school later or take longer to finish their degree as they work on average 36 hours a week. The online alternative is appealing for the working adult student and perhaps for today's part-time faculty.

AN ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET

During disruption in an industry, an entrepreneurial mindset may be the stimulus for innovation and sustainable success. The Entrepreneurial Mindset can be defined as 'a set of attitudes, skills and behaviors that help students to succeed academically, personally and professionally that include initiative and self-direction, empathy, risk-taking, flexibility and adaptability, creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving' (Turner, 2015). Just as entrepreneurs are seeking to solve problems and address needs, college professionals with an entrepreneurial mindset are not content with the status quo. In fact, they see problems as opportunities to reenergize the development and delivery of instruction within the higher education industry (Turner, 2015).

Hess (2020) describes this new mindset as one of continuous adaptation and hyper-learning. Hyper-learning is continuous high-quality learning, unlearning and relearning. This means transforming ourselves and our society so that we may flourish and thrive in the new formal.

COVID-19 has required businesses and educational institutions incorporate virtual human engagement and virtual learning into the fabric of these institutions. We have learned that people can perform at high levels very efficiently working remotely. We have also learned at higher levels in our education system that teachers and students could also rise to the challenges, too. However, many of our public schools struggled because of the lack of available technology, connectivity, and learning design expertise (Hess, 2020).

The driver of an evolution in humanity will be technology. Effective technology will be as important as clean air and water. Technology must be democratized and easily available to every adult and child and one should be left behind because of a lack of high-speed internet connection or device used

to connect them. Technology must also be managed and controlled for the common good and not for greed (Hess, 2020).

EMERGING CHANGING FACULTY MODEL

COVID-19 has accelerated the necessity for a change in the current faculty model. Due to the pandemic rush on the scene in March, many educational institutions in the United States were forced to move online and remotely with little or no input from faculty which runs counter to shared governance. Faculty groups who had long dismissed distance learning as a reputable teaching approach found themselves forced to teach remotely and design online content for students (Roth, 2020). A survey of 935 faculty members and 595 administrators from two-and four-year institution found that their institutions’

online courses during COVID-19 was inferior to what had been offered face-to-face (please see Figure 1). Yet, two-thirds of professors said their experience teaching remotely during COVID-19 was positive (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020), (please see Figure 2).

These changes exposed structure problems such as shared governance. When the pandemic hit the United States abruptly. Students and faculty were forced to operate remotely with little online training for faculty and students. In most cases, faculty input was little. In many universities. Weiner (2013) argued that the current structure of academia often hinders progress. Faculty rank and tenure often dictate the duties of faculty and outline the levels of risks. Adjuncts and non-tenured faculty can stimulate innovative thinking.

Taking Stock of Course Quality

Faculty members and administrators agreed that their institutions’ online courses in the spring were inferior to what had been offered in person.

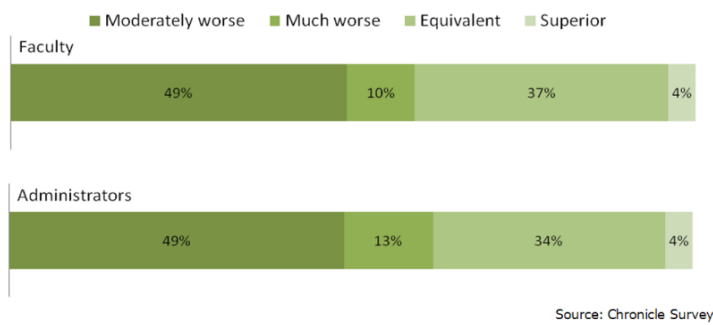
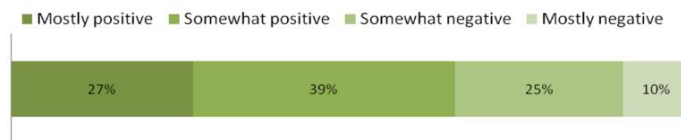


Figure 1: Taking stock of course quality

Something to Build On

About two-thirds of professors said their experience teaching remotely this spring was positive.



Nearly three-quarters of them are confident about teaching entirely or mostly online this fall.

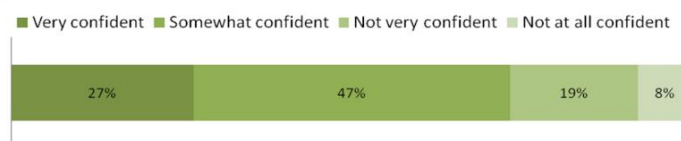


Figure 1: Something to build on

However, many not want to risk disapproval for tenured faculty. Some universities require faculty to fill departmental functions (i.e. teaching, scholarship, service) all the times. With this in mind, Weiner (2013) further suggested a shift to a holistic structure so that academic departments accomplish more by fully utilizing each members' talent and preferences. Due to financial pressures and preparation for the future, university administrators are increasing faculty workload and responsibilities. These new duties include recruitment of new students, development of online course offerings, assessment of curriculum, new advisement responsibilities, more engagement with business partners and alumni (Weiner, 2013). These new functions require a shift in the faculty thinking as innovators. Unfortunately, many of the current faculty do not have the attitude or the skill sets for these new roles for the future.

These changes may be considered drastic compared to the status quo. Alexander (2020) stated that the most vulnerable campuses may take the drastic steps of declaring financial exigency so that administrators have the flexibility to deal with their labor cost, including removing tenured-track faculty from the payroll. The pandemic exposed other academic area especially pedagogy.

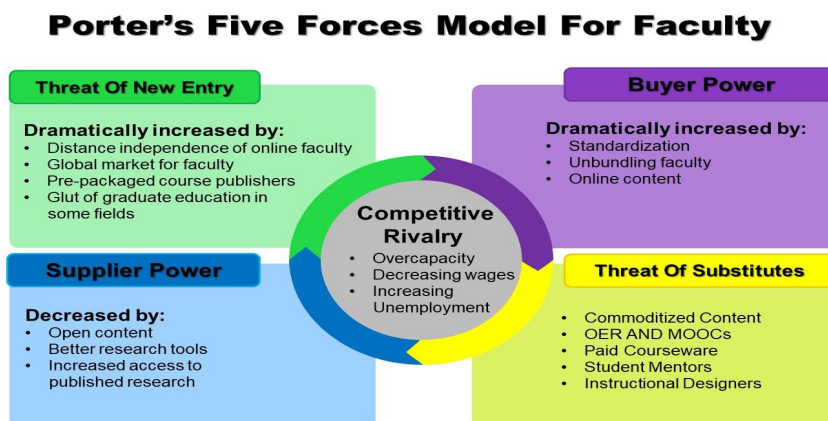
Furthermore, the faculty composition is changing. Many faculty feel comfortable by some staples like the tenured-track triad of teaching, research, and service. Porter's Five Forces is strategic tool that determines the level of competition. In this application, the five primary forces are evaluating which are (1) rivalry among current competitors, (2) threat of new entrants, (3) substitutes and complements, (4) power of suppliers, and (5) power of buyers (Harris & Lennox, 2013). In reviewing the current academic climate, Sears (2019) showed that that's today's faculty exist in an unfavorable. (See Table #2) This environment is a place where many universities outsource their valued tenured faculty asset in exchange for financial relieve.

Over the last decades, higher education employment has undergone a radical transformation making tenured faculty a rarity. Across the country, faculty has shifted from one composed mostly of tenured-tracked, full-time employees to one made up of contingent, part-time teacher. In fact, non-tenured-track instructors make up 70% of college faculty in the United States. Kezar, DePaola, and Scott (2019) argued the concept of the gig economy now applies to the university workforce too. To reduce costs due to the pandemic, more universities will remove full-time faculty either through early retirement packages, furloughs, or layoffs; these actions will place universities on the reliance on contingent workers (Alexander, 2020). Those faculty who are left will find more demands of their time.

Due to COVID-19 and its lasting impacts, faculty may be required to perform in different fashions. Currently, professors make decisions about curriculum, personal hiring and promotions, acceptable scholarship, and a whole range of other activities that empower them in shared governance (Gross-Schaefer, 2011). With the likelihood of universities operating more remotely, faculty will need to be more adapt to technology and pedagogy impacting on a digital platform. Sears (2019) suggested that faculty, like other professions in the future, need to possess a competency in technology if they wish to compete. In fact, he noted that the most attractive faculty will be extremely fluent across several technological field. Kezar, DePaola, and Scott (2019) further suggested that an over reliance on a contingent workforce with little power or influence is problematic because today community bonds are extremely strained; current labor models for faculty are not sustaining a quality learning environment for students. They argued that the situation is worsening.

Shifting in attitudes are happening concerning some sacred areas for tenured faculty. For example, academic freedom has often been viewed as core right of professors in the areas of speech, research, publication, and teaching. Gross-Schaefer

Table 2: PORTER'S FIVE FORCES FOR TODAY'S FACULTY



Source: Dr. Andrews Sears, City Vision University

(2011) argued for a shift in thinking where fundamental rights of academic freedom of professors are protected while recognizing the rights of other stakeholders like students and college administrators. This attitude focuses on the underlining interest of all relevant stakeholder groups. Additionally, teaching methods are being challenged. Barr and Tegg (1995) maintained a more effective path to the future is a shift from Instruction to a Learning Paradigm. In the Instruction Paradigm, the mission of educational institutions is to teach students. On other hand, the Learning Paradigm provides an environment where universities transfer knowledge and create experiences that bring students to discover and construct knowledge for themselves (Barr & Tegg, 1995).

STRATEGIC IMPLICATION THE NEW FACULTY MODEL

With the rise of disruption in academia, today's faculty need a new faculty model which will achieve greater results. Faculty have important roles and can make powerful impacts on the educational institution, shaping student experiences in and out of the classroom. All educational institution members have important roles from staff members who can make impact on their college or university environments to those faculty who shape student experiences. Consequently, creative and autonomous faculty can ignite entrepreneurial mindsets in students by allowing them to pioneer innovative solutions (Dewett, 2006). Essentially, entrepreneurship can serve as a catalyst for organizational growth by spearheading innovation across campus by impacting faculty, administration, and student and ultimately alumni, corporate donors, and other supporters to advance the institution. Based on the developed research in this paper, the researchers offer these strategic implications:

Faculty should embrace the entrepreneurial mindset:

The future of academic institutions is in question, including stable employment. Kelsky (2020) maintained that everyone in academia especially tenured faculty could benefit from an entrepreneurial mindset; these academics should consider how they might translate skills into freelancing and other consulting work in the event of unemployment. Furthermore, cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset may be the catalysis to transform academic from a stagnant state. Green, Dwyer, Farias, Lauck, and Mayfield (2019) noted the advantage of entrepreneurial mindset in stimulating innovative thinking in organizations. Additionally, entrepreneurial mindsets influence creativity and autonomy for staff and faculty so that this innovation can stimulate better student outcome (Dewett, 2006).

Faculty should impose learner-centered teaching for better student outcomes: In the current academic model, there are substantial power differences between the professor and student so that the professors drive the learning process (Gross-Schaeffer). In fact, unfortunately, that faculty academic freedom has become a roadblock for curriculum changes, learner-centered instruction, and other innovation.

In a subject-centered teaching approach, students are not empowered to invest in their learning. Learner-centered teaching changes this narrative pedagogically. Furthermore, Barr and Tegg (1995), suggested that a Learning Paradigm provides a holistic framework where the learner is the chief agent in the learning process instead of passive in most universities where faculty operated with subject-centered learning.

Be adaptable to changing market conditions: Green, Taylor, and Ford (2020) suggested that disruptive change often forces traditional institutions to make changes that they are not prepared to understand, due to unpredictability and uncertainty. Just as the Internet drastically disrupted the marketing and business of companies, educational institutions must adopt the tools that enable them to achieve their goals. Companies use these tools to search and link with other businesses, internally connect between different locations to share information, among other uses (United States Department of Commerce, 2017). These digital economy value-added tools must be adopted by educators and educational institutions. COVID-19 requires an evolution of humanity and technologies including artificial intelligence, digital and 5G technology, virtual and augmented reality, nanotechnology, biotechnology, genetic engineering, increased computing power, increased big data; increased connectivity, and even increased opportunities and risks that come with human surveillance, must be utilized (Hess, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Protecting the status quo is often what keeps organizations and educational institutions from seizing new opportunities. Nour (2020) discovered when resources and options are limited, as they are in educational institutions, two positive dynamics may result: (1) leaders encourage, recognize, and reward creativity and resourcefulness, which is often how innovation happens and is sustained, and (2) leaders become hyper-focused on their core capabilities. A laser focus by institutions and their leadership can generate extraordinary results needed in today's COVID-19 environment and into the "new normal."

The changing landscape in today's higher education will require innovative models and forward-thinking leadership to navigate the murky waters. Analyzing comprehensive data, both internally and externally for the entire higher education landscape, is an important component for making good decisions. Institution leaders should use these data and observations to develop their strategic and contingency plans.

This article focused on a new faculty model that includes an entrepreneurial mindset to stimulate innovation and creativity in the constant, changing environment in higher education. In analyzing the current crises in higher education, this paper describes a set of strategic implications that will aid faculty wishing to create sustainability education programs. The

result of this investigation is significant because the results can better assist administrators, faculty and practitioners on how to inject innovative thinking in order to produce sustainability education for small liberal arts colleges and universities.

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