



IN THE NEWS

News, Press Releases, and Articles | 2020



American Higher Education Alliance
101 N Federal Highway, Suite 600
Boca Raton, FL 33432
561.617.7413

As seen on
MarketWatch

American Higher Education Alliance (AHEA) Offers a New Global Pathway for Higher Education Through Innovative Technology

By creating an integrated platform, American Higher Education Alliance aims to change the education landscape

Boca Raton, Fla., June 30, 2020 – American Higher Education Alliance (AHEA) was founded as a nonprofit in 2017. The founding principles are to develop innovative education technologies that emphasize institutional growth, faculty and curriculum development, and student engagement while lowering the cost of technology.

AHEA's InspirED™ platform natively integrates a student information system ConnectED™, a learning management system BlendED™, and a professional engagement system CollaboratED™. It also combines operational highlights, performance reports, CRM, and analytics.

InspirED is based on education theories and best practices, combined with current and innovative technologies. This fully integrated, single sign-on platform is designed to provide colleges and universities the tools to identify and assess their strengths, challenges, and efficiencies to further enhance their operational models and better serve and prepare new student populations for the rapidly-evolving world.

“Our sector faces the daunting challenge of balancing a budget without compromising academic integrity. We will have to answer this question: does higher education’s current model meet the needs of today’s constituents? We need to identify transformative options that would meet our needs and better serve our students, faculty, and staff,” said Benjamin Shank, CEO of AHEA.

American Higher Education Alliance is building a global network of partner institutions and organizations. Through its global network, member institutions will be able to collaborate on multiple academic activities such as faculty development, co-curricular development, and student exchange programs. The alliance network is to serve as a vehicle for the promotion of global understanding, social stability and acceptance, cultural appreciation, and scientific information exchange. Member institutions have the ability to grow beyond local and national borders and reach students who

value their institutional, academic, and cultural characteristics, either virtually or on-campus.

“The InspirED platform is free to our member institutions. Its data driven algorithms and predictive reporting highlights students’ needs and potential obstacles, as well as celebrates their individual achievements. Academic advisors, student services personnel, and departments across campus can focus less on technology, and more on helping every student,” said Shank. “We cherish our institutional and programmatic characteristics. We value our unique teaching and learning cultural environment, so let’s focus on that, these are the reasons we are here. The platform is simply a tool to help us reach the solution, how we define our values and the paths to implement our vision is the key.”

About AHEA

American Higher Education Alliance (AHEA) is a nonprofit educational organization that focuses on providing member institutions education theories and best practice-based technologies to support higher education institutions around the world. To learn more visit www.ahealliance.org.

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As seen in
The Washington Post

Distance-Based Employment and Job Hunting And What It Means For You

Many companies have offered telecommuting – or partial telecommuting for decades. Higher education has offered distance instruction as an option as well – depending on the course, requirements, and location in which it is taught. Now that the pandemic of COVID-19 has reached every state in the U.S., many businesses – and colleges -- have suddenly shifted to a forced kind of distance—to keep working and teaching while everyone remains at least six feet apart to avoid spreading the virus.

That is raising tough questions for colleges and those that wish to teach at them: What is the best way to rapidly spin up online courses or deliver exams online? How can colleges ensure that all students have access to the technology needed for remote studies? What happens if the health crisis extends into the fall or if it returns as is predicted?

In this unprecedented moment, human resources teams, senior management, business leaders, and college leaders and professors are stepping up to jointly create resources online, share best practices, rapidly train faculty in a mode of remote teaching they may never have done, and adapt to a constantly changing environment. All with the goal of continuing their business in a new way, while helping students find jobs in areas they desire.

While overall college and job preparedness is top of mind during the pandemic, the possibility of remote learning or employment adds complexity for higher education institutions. Only 25 percent of students responding to a survey agree that they feel prepared for a remote freshman year of college, compared with 54 percent who believe they are prepared for an in-person first year. In addition, only 23 percent of students are confident they can get a quality education through remote classes, and just 19 percent are confident they can build relationships in a remote environment.

“Though a majority of institutions have online teaching and learning tools, it was left to individual instructors as to whether they would teach online. Many traditional colleges and universities were surprisingly unprepared to adapt to an online-only instruction environment,” says Benjamin

Shank, CEO of American Higher Education Alliance (AHEA). *“This health crisis has acted as a catalyst to this much needed change in the industry. Just as we see innovative businesses during this pandemic opting to have their employees work virtually and adopt processes that allow their employees to stay engaged, institutions must also develop innovative ways to engage their faculty, staff, and students virtually.”*

But even more concerning is the fact that an employee or students’ ability to succeed in a remote-environment may differ greatly by income levels. Less than half (40 percent) of students (including those working in internships, first jobs, and so forth) from lower-income households report being able to get the necessary equipment for things as simple as new glasses for remote learning compared with 72 percent of students from high-income households. Furthermore, only 56 percent of students from low-income households report having reliable internet access and 45 percent report that their home environment could support remote distance work or learning, compared with 77 percent and 64 percent of high-income students, respectively.

Schools will need to consider providing support for students to succeed in a remote learning environment, especially those who may not have the necessary equipment or reliable internet access. Institutions can offer stipends for internet access and laptop rentals or purchases, or they can directly procure and lend equipment for under-resourced students. In addition, schools can research options for, provide information to, and advocate for students, including working with state and local providers and agencies to request government support.

According to the Institute for International Education, there were more than 1 million international students studying in the U.S. in 2019, an all-time high. International students make up about 6% of the total higher education student population. While the Department of Homeland Security initially provided guidance that allowed international students to maintain their visa statuses, the department issued new guidance that warned that international students would be forced to leave the US or transfer to another institution if the institution they attend moves to online-only instruction. Higher education institutions and advocacy groups promptly denounced these new rules and filed several lawsuits against them. On July 14, the proposed policy was rescinded by federal officials.

The rules come as schools are preparing for substantial declines in international enrollment, a report from the NAFSA: Association of International Educators estimates that institutions will lose at least \$3 billion due international student enrollment declines in fall 2020. Additionally, most universities have shut down their study abroad programs and cancelled school-sanctioned trips; amidst a host of other issues like lawsuit loans because of unpaid tuition.

In the face of such disruption, a public-health crisis, and a global economic downturn, fall enrollment remains uncertain. But the higher education leaders keeping a pulse on students’ and parents’ concerns, perspectives, and thinking—and responding accordingly—will be the ones best positioned to serve them in meaningful ways come fall.

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As seen on

The Distinct Connection Between Higher Education And Workforce Readiness

July 24, 2020

There's a stark misalignment between the talents employers demand and the skills graduates have as they enter the U.S. workforce. There is a common disconnect where many higher education leaders fail to see it. While 96% of chief academic officers of colleges and universities believe that their institutions are very or somewhat effective at preparing students for the workforce, only 11% of business leaders strongly agree. Herein lies the misalignment; a gap that has critical implications for both businesses and institutions of higher learning. Companies in major industries report that they are unable to grow and compete because they struggle to identify properly skilled talent: 49% report unfilled job openings, and 37% can't take on a new project or major initiative.

It's not just businesses that recognize the disconnect between what companies need and what graduates know. Studies consistently show that a mere 35% of college students say they are prepared for a job, and over half of recent graduates are unemployed or underemployed. Among the general public, just 16% of Americans think that a four-year degree prepares students for a well-paying job in today's economy. And, in fact, a recent study by Gallup and Strada Education Network shows that 40% of bachelor's degree holders would study a different major if they could do it over again.

There are several data-driven arguments that question the actual, rather than the perceived, value of a college degree. First, meta-analytic reviews have long-established that the correlation between education level and job performance is weak. In fact, the research shows that intelligence scores are a much better indicator of job potential. If we were to pick between a candidate with a college degree and a candidate with a higher intelligence score, we could expect the latter to outperform the former in most jobs, particularly when those jobs require constant thinking and learning. Academic grades are indicative of how much a candidate has studied, but their performance on an intelligence test reflects their actual ability to learn, reason, and think logically.

Yet, while the value of a college degree has increasingly been called into question, college enrollment rates at public higher education institutions have fallen by less than 2% each year since 2013. Meanwhile, as of 2017, 44 million Americans carry \$1.3 trillion in student loan debt. In short, millions of students enroll in postsecondary education programs and, in some cases, take on considerable student loan debt without the guarantee that their investment will result in a viable career. This educational/work divide must be shortened in order for both types of organizations to continue to grow. How, then, do we set students up for success so that they can complete degree programs that lead to promising career pathways?

Universities and institutions of higher education could substantially increase the value of the college degree if they spent more time teaching their students critical soft skills. Recruiters and employers are unlikely to be impressed by candidates, unless they can demonstrate a certain degree of people-skills. This is perhaps one of the biggest differences between what universities and employers look for in applicants. While employers want candidates with higher levels of Emotional Intelligence (EQ), resilience, empathy, and integrity, those are rarely characteristics that universities nurture or select for in admissions. As the impact of AI and disruptive technology grows, candidates who can perform tasks that machines cannot are becoming more valuable — and that underscores the growing importance of soft skills, which are hard for machines to emulate.

“I think the next step is for higher ed to meld more hands-on training into the curriculum as a whole, while getting back to soft skill basics — like teaming, communication skills and conflict resolution skills. This combined approach will really help prepare individuals for employment, fill in the readiness gaps that hiring managers see, and in turn, improve job fulfillment,” says Benjamin Shank, CEO of American Higher Education Alliance (AHEA). “Job training and fulfillment is a topic where I see both an improvement in higher education and yet there is still much more to do.”

In their report *Learning to Work, Working to Learn*, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (USCCF) highlights best practices of higher education institutions that are working to realign education with the workforce. These case studies reveal several common strategies for building partnerships between employers and educators to help students enter the workforce better equipped to establish careers.

Work-based learning: One successful strategy is to embed work-based learning into in-classroom and out-of-classroom experiences. In past research, Gallup has found that students who had internships where they could apply the knowledge and skills they were learning in the classroom are more likely to find full-time employment after college and to be engaged in their work. Work-based learning can happen on-campus as well, such as project-based or simulated experiences that take place on the school premises.

Career services: Education leaders ought not to think of the student as the only customer of their work. In some ways, employer partners are just as important in identifying ways in which postsecondary training can lead to a good job. Just last year, Gallup found that though about half of U.S.

college graduates report visiting the career services office at least once during their undergraduate experience, they are equally likely to say their experience was “not at all helpful” (16%) as they are to say it was “very helpful” (16%).

Better information: Gallup and Strada Education released a report showing that half of U.S. adults would change either their degree level, field of study or higher education institution. One implication is that students require better information about the outcomes of different education pathways. The Launch My Career website provides program-level outcomes data for first-time and full-time students, as well as working adults considering upskilling. Launch presents career awareness information as well as a practical exercise in which students can see for themselves how long it would take to achieve their lifestyle goals based on their program of study, purposefully tied to an ROI mindset.

In order to better align higher education and the workforce, businesses and education institutions must partner together more closely to ensure that graduates enter the workforce prepared with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed.

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As seen on
THE PRICE OF BUSINESS SHOW
WITH KEVIN PRICE

Why Mentoring In Higher Education Is Mission Critical For Everyone's Success

July 24, 2020

Mentoring, long considered an effective tool for developing relationships and transferring knowledge from a more experienced individual to a less experienced individual, is a concept that has expanded in definition in recent years to include non-traditional relationships beyond face-to-face mentoring. Mentoring programs are frequently supported by technology, can be reversed, external to an organization, or with peers.

Mentoring in higher education helps learners acclimate to a new academic topic, increases the likelihood of academic success, and reduces attrition. Learners rely on the expertise and experience of mentors to help them graduate in a timely manner and advance on to their career. As online and distance education becomes more pervasive, computer-mediated mentoring allows learners to connect with their mentors in new ways. Research about mentoring in higher education includes investigations into the efficacy of virtual or e-mentoring.

Mentoring students doesn't mean acting like their parents — or their best friends. One university dean, describes mentorship as a “professional” relationship, as opposed to a “personal” one. This framing, he thinks, can remind faculty and staff not to take it personally when a student they are mentoring chooses not to follow their advice, or acts in ways they disagree with. Students retain their autonomy. Benjamin Shank, CEO of American Higher Education Alliance (AHEA) says, “Mentoring should be considered a critical element to student success.”

Increasing the number of college students who graduate prepared for participation in the work-force and civil society will require a redoubling of efforts to improve college-going and completion rates for students traditionally underrepresented by higher education— individuals from low-income backgrounds and young people of color, who currently earn degrees at much lower rates than other groups.

Given the urgent need to increase the success of underrepresented students in college, individuals from college access programs, youth development organizations, and advocacy groups, along with K–12 and higher education leaders, have an important role to play. Practitioners from college access programs and youth development organizations bring to bear a nuanced understanding of the academic and social supports that enable students at all levels to succeed in high school and college.

Mentoring is a valuable strategy to provide students with the emotional and instrumental support students need to achieve the goal of a college degree. By providing information, guidance, and encouragement, mentors can play an important role in nurturing students' college aspirations, helping them prepare for college and, advising them on how to make successful transitions from high school to their first year on campus. In addition, mentoring for students in college helps students to feel more connected and engaged on campus, which can ultimately improve student outcomes.

“[S]tudents will need new skills to be competitive five years from now, yet mentoring ends when they graduate. Successful mentoring today requires a more personalized experience as well as the understanding that each student has potential to be a lifelong learner. Ideally, mentoring should be available throughout an individual's career,” says Shank.

This is a common dilemma found in both professional and academic mentoring – degradation or dissolution of mentoring programs over time due to a lack of commitment to assessment and evaluation requirements. This situation occurs pretty evenly on the part of participants, program managers, and institutions; and the rate of occurrence is more frequent than desired. Inadequate consideration to the design, staffing, or available funds, all become factors in whether or not a program will render a positive process and outcome. Without these best practice elements, a mentoring program is on its way to being doomed before it even gets off the ground.

But mentoring programs continue to be a useful tool for enhancing the performance of employees and students, transferring knowledge from more experienced individuals to less experienced individuals and for the retention of employees and students. The benefits of mentoring programs, both formal and informal have been documented in countless studies during the past 30 years.

Mentoring has become a core strategy in leading and managing many organizations today even though the programs in organizations are changing. Mentoring programs in the 21st century are no longer thought of in just the traditional pairing such as the teacher and student, but now non-traditional relationships can be formed either electronically, with groups or peers, or a combination of several types. The programs now usually extend beyond face-to-face mentoring and are frequently supported by technology. While one-on-one mentoring is used in most programs, and is the model most people prefer, technology is creating opportunities for more individuals to be mentored and to be mentored internationally by a global mentor through expanding geographic boundaries.

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Press Release

American Higher Education Alliance (AHEA) and Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC) Partner to Promote Global Collaboration

AHEA and CONAHEC join forces to facilitate opportunities for members to engage and collaborate in curriculum co-development and programmatic internationalization through virtual exchange.

July 29, 2020. Boca Raton, Florida. For Immediate Release. American Higher Education Alliance (AHEA) and the Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC) today announced their partnership to facilitate opportunities for members of both organizations to engage and collaborate in curriculum co-development and programmatic internationalization through virtual exchange via AHEA's InspirED™ platform.

The partnership was established to address the needs of higher education as the world comes to grips with the impact of COVID-19. Colleges and universities are preparing for an extensive and rapid transition to online-only modes of academic interaction. The need to further develop pedagogical methods to ensure student engagement for virtual or hybrid delivery models needs to be addressed now. The disruption of international student mobility and academic exchange requires higher education to re-envision the future of international education.

"Our member institutions were not fully prepared for the exodus of the international students they had on campus, nor for the sudden repatriation of many of the students they had sent abroad," said Santiago Castiello Gutiérrez, mobility coordinator for CONAHEC. He went on to say "Technological developments and their broadening adoption mean that acquisition of intercultural knowledge and skills is no longer as travel-dependent. Virtual academic mobility and technology mediated exchange hold great promise for much wider, more affordable access to international and intercultural experiences."

Currently, faculties at AHEA's and CONAHEC's member institutions are collaborating on multiple academic activities such as faculty development, co-curricular development, virtual student exchange programs, and their assessment methods in an online or hybrid delivery environment. "The partnership between CONAHEC and AHEA will help faculty and students develop their intercultural competencies and institutions

to strengthen their partnerships with peers abroad,” said Sean Manley-Casimir, executive director of CO-NAHEC. “Through this symbiotic relationship, our member institutions will be able to work collaboratively with their peers in different countries to internationalize their curricula and to expose their students to new perspectives.”

“Both organizations share the same core beliefs that it just made sense for us to join forces and address these challenges higher education is facing together” said Benjamin Shank, CEO of AHEA. *“The pandemic has placed physical and economic limits on both institutions and students. Our partnership is to empower academic institutions and their missions, which ultimately benefits the students. We are working to establish a path for the future of higher education where global faculty collaboration results in innovative academic programs, and help higher education leaders anticipate change and prepare their students for success.”*

About AHEA

American Higher Education Alliance (AHEA) is founded with the mission to support colleges and universities for their institutional effectiveness and growth, promote the collaboration of faculty and curriculum development, facilitate programmatic internationalization, and implement best-practice student engagement strategies.

AHEA recognizes the advancement of technologies can enhance its educational visions, partnered with tech industry and developed InspirED™ platform. The platform natively integrates a student information system ConnectED™, a learning management system BlendED™, and a professional engagement system CollaboratED™. It also combines operational highlights, performance reports, CRM, and analytics.

Free to its member institutions, the platform provide colleges and universities the tools to identify and assess their strengths, challenges, and efficiencies to further enhance their operational models to better serve and prepare new student populations for the rapidly-evolving world.

To learn more visit www.ahealliance.org.

About CONAHEC

Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC) is a non-profit organization that fosters international higher education collaboration in North America and with the rest of the world. With more than 150-member higher education institutions and organizations, CONAHEC is uniquely positioned to facilitate ongoing practical relationships among members through our student, faculty and staff mobility programs, and international conferences and events. CONAHEC has become a preeminent network supporting an integrated yet diverse higher education community and catalyzing collaboration to address our common challenges. Centrally important is improving technology-based support for international higher education engagement, the focus of CONAHEC's Virtual International Partnerships initiative. To learn more visit www.CONAHEC.org

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The Benefits Of Online Learning In A COVID-19 World And Beyond

July 29, 2020

Right now, the Coronavirus pandemic is forcing global experimentation with remote teaching. There are many indicators that this crisis is going to transform many aspects of life. Education could be one of them if remote teaching proves to be a success. No doubt, the transition to on-line learning due to COVID-19 was sudden and hasty. But when done right, online learning comes with many benefits. Considering that universities may not be going back to in-person classes for at least a couple more months, with some experts estimating it would take up to a year before a coronavirus vaccine becomes commercially available, this should come as welcome news for all those planning to go to university in 2020.

It's flexible.

Online education enables the teacher and the student to set their own learning pace, and there's the added flexibility of setting a schedule that fits everyone's agenda. As a result, using an online educational platform allows for a better balance of work and studies, so there's no need to give anything up. Studying online teaches you vital time management skills, which makes finding a good work-study balance easier. Having a common agenda between the student and teacher can also prompt both parties to accept new responsibilities and have more autonomy.

Online degrees are more affordable.

You can save a lot of money when undertaking an online program. Not only are your housing and commute expenses eliminated, online programs are generally more affordable. One survey found that, "The most important factor for students choosing a school for their online program continues to be tuition and fees, specified by 34 percent of respondents. That has been the top-ranked choice for the past four years, according to the researchers."

It's accessible.

Online education enables you to study or teach from anywhere in the world. This means there's no need to commute from one place to another or follow a rigid schedule. On top of that, not only do you save time, but you also save money, which can be spent on other priorities. The virtual classroom is also available anywhere there's an internet connection, and a good way to take advantage of this is to travel. For example, if you're studying abroad and want to get a job, online education is a great choice. There's no reason to give up on working or studying while exploring new and exotic places.

You develop important skills.

Studying online requires certain skills such as self-discipline, self-motivation and communication. When you're an online learner, you'll find that you will quickly hone and develop these skills which are important for the workplace.

For example, you'll need to communicate – whether verbally or written – with your professors and peers regularly. This will sharpen your communication skills. You will also need to motivate yourself to complete an online course and turn in your online assignments as there is much less handholding in online courses compared to in-person ones. Unlike face-to-face setups, where it can be hard to offer critical comments, an online environment gives one more time to really study the modules and make considered comments.

It allows for a customized learning experience.

Mentioned previously, flexibility can help you to set your own study pace. But online education is also flexible for each student's individual requirements and level of ability. Online classes tend to be smaller than conventional class size. Most of the time, online learning platforms only allow one student at a time, and in almost all cases, this allows for greater interaction and more feedback between you and your teacher.

There's often access to very diverse material such as videos, photos, and eBooks online as well, and teachers can also integrate other formats like forums or discussions to improve their lessons. And this extra content is available at any moment from anywhere, which will offer you a more dynamic and tailor-made education.

Online education is spreading. The coronavirus pandemic simply sped up the adoption of online learning by higher education institutions. In fact, just today the American Higher Education Alliance (AHEA) and the Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC) announced a new partnership.

The press release said, *“The partnership was established to address the needs of higher education as the world comes to grips with the impact of COVID-19. Colleges and universities are preparing for an extensive and rapid transition to online-only modes of academic interaction. The need to further develop pedagogical methods to ensure student engagement for virtual or hybrid delivery models needs to be addressed now.”*

There are more reasons to choose an online education than just those presented here. Ninety percent of students today think that online learning is the same or better than the traditional classroom experience. Every student must assess their unique situation and decide according to their needs and goals, and while this alternative to traditional education is not for everyone, it's still a convenient option with virtually endless options for international students all over the world.

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ENTREPRENERD.NET
Entrepreneurs can be nerds too

Diversity In Higher Education Demands A Global Footprint That Works

August 3, 2020

Over one million international students are currently studying in the United States. While their economic contributions to this country tend to be a primary focus, they also bring cultural, political, and historical perspectives that help build vibrant, diverse campus communities.

There is tremendous diversity within the international student population at American colleges and universities, with important differences in English language ability, family income, and educational goals. Nevertheless, they are all subject to the same legal and regulatory constraints. Uncertainty over the visa application process alone is a source of great anxiety, and foreign citizenship places important restrictions on eligibility for financial aid and access to work experience. Perhaps most important of all, statements by the current administration, have sent a strong message that the United States is no longer a welcoming environment for international students and scholars.

International student enrollment has steadily declined since 2016. This decline has led some institutions to invest more heavily in marketing and recruiting. Others are beginning to think more holistically about the entire international student experience, from initial contact through alumni status. While institutions cannot change the visa policies of the U.S. government—at least not by acting individually—there is much they can do to improve the quality of the international student experience on their own campuses.

What is international education?

International education is about the mobility of students and scholars who go to another part of the world to study, research, or teach. It's not only about the mobility of students, both in and out of the US, but it's also about research scholars who come to the US to do research, faculty who go to other destinations to teach, and those who do community-based service learning. The primary goals of international education are furthering knowledge and cultural capital, learning about plac-

es and cultures, and gaining intercultural skills in the process.

International education has existed throughout time and, through that time, people have sought education elsewhere in order to better their lives, in order to contribute to their societies and communities, and in order to better equip themselves as citizens of their respective countries. It's not just the US that's been engaged in this activity; many nation states have participated in this kind of work.

What is the importance of international education, and who benefits from it?

You can think about the benefits of international education on several levels. One is international education and the benefit to the individual in pursuit of education, research, or teaching. Another way to think about it is through the nation states engaged in international education: how and why might a government decide to provide scholarships or other mechanisms encouraging citizens to acquire an education overseas?

It may be trying to equip citizens with a level of education and knowledge so they can return and contribute to the economy or to in-demand fields in their country. International education may be a form of cultural diplomacy. Employers also have a stake in international education. Some employers incentivize their employees to go and acquire credentials elsewhere because, in this global economy, companies need a workforce with the capacity, skills, and talents to compete globally.

Why should students be encouraged to study abroad?

International education, particularly in a global economy, is a very important part of a 21st century education. In the world that we live in, no one is an island to themselves, so we need to expose students to the world out there. There are opportunities to learn from all different parts of the world. And now more than ever, isolationists are not who we want to be.

For any student to have a nuanced understanding of their field, there is value studying abroad. One, studying abroad provides you with varying perspectives on a subject matter. And two, studying abroad contextualizes international relations so that you understand the global dimensions of your work. Through international education, students are exposed to different perspectives and important nuances.

How do you study internationally during COVID-19?

The rush of colleges and universities to complete the current academic year online in response to the COVID-19 crisis, and possibly prepare hastily for the same delivery mode this coming fall, could well result in unprecedented turbulence for faculty, students and families. The unavoidable haste of implementation presents a highly uneven and potentially unsatisfying educational experience — threatening to further discredit distance learning as a viable educational platform.

The challenge then is to identify how to deliver high-quality learning at a distance — especially if these

necessary yet on-the-fly efforts run into challenges from students and their families. What type of digital learning platform will emerge from this crisis that might assuage faculty members' lingering doubts about the medium and students' motivational challenges with online learning?

Just today, a partnership between the American Higher Education Alliance (AHEA) and the Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC) was announced. The partnership was established to address the needs of higher education as the world comes to grips with the impact of COVID-19. Colleges and universities are preparing for an extensive and rapid transition to online-only modes of academic interaction. The need to further develop pedagogical methods to ensure student engagement for virtual or hybrid delivery models needs to be addressed now. The disruption of international student mobility and academic exchange requires higher education to re-envision the future of international education.

“Both organizations share the same core beliefs that it just made sense for us to join forces and address these challenges higher education is facing together” said Benjamin Shank, CEO of AHEA. *“The pandemic has placed physical and economic limits on both institutions and students. Our partnership is to empower academic institutions and their missions, which ultimately benefits the students. We are working to establish a path for the future of higher education where global faculty collaboration results in innovative academic programs and help higher education leaders anticipate change and prepare their students for success.”*

For institutions that want to strengthen their approach to international students, this means addressing the entire international student experience, from first contact through alumni status. It also means that institutions should develop their goals for international students in parallel with the development of their goals for the curriculum, co-curriculum, international partnerships, and faculty development.

About AHEA

American Higher Education Alliance (AHEA) is a nonprofit educational organization that focuses on providing member institutions education theories and best practice-based technologies to support higher education institutions around the world. To learn more visit www.ahealliance.org.

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561.617.7413

As seen on
THE PIE
Professionals in International Education

AHEA & CONAHEC to Virtually Collaborate

Callan Quinn | August 10, 2020

American Higher Education Alliance and the Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration have announced a partnership which will allow their members to virtually collaborate on “co-development and programmatic internationalisation”.

“The partnership between CONAHEC and AHEA will help faculty and students develop their intercultural competencies and institutions to strengthen their partnerships with peers abroad,” said Sean Manley-Casimir, executive director of CONAHEC, which has over 150 members and promotes international higher education collaboration between North America and the rest of the world.

“The partnership... will help faculty and students develop their intercultural competencies”

“Through this symbiotic relationship, our member institutions will be able to work collaboratively with their peers in different countries to internationalise their curricula and to expose their students to new perspectives.”

The partnership also aims to support HEIs preparing to transition to online and hybrid learning, focusing on online pedagogy, curriculum development, virtual exchange programs and online or hybrid assessment methods.

Benjamin Shank, CEO of AHEA said that they were working to “establish a path for the future of higher education where global faculty collaboration results in innovative academic programs, and help higher education leaders anticipate change and prepare their students for success.”

Santiago Castiello Gutiérrez, mobility coordinator for CONAHEC, further added that technology has made the “broadening adoption mean that acquisition of intercultural knowledge and skills is no longer as travel-dependent.”

“Virtual academic mobility and technology-mediated exchange hold great promise for much wider, more affordable access to international and intercultural experiences,” he said.

The project promotes the use of technology in intercultural and academic exchange.

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As seen on
Cordoba Musings
Thoughts on Finance, Business, Travel and Education

How An International Relationship Is Changing The Way We Educate

September 3, 2020

In 2018, the International Association of Universities (IAU) conducted a global survey of 907 higher education institutions from 126 countries, identifying the importance of internationalization to academic leadership. The survey revealed that around 83% of respondents rated internationalization as highly important, namely in Africa and the Middle East.

At the time when many countries, for political reasons, are becoming more nationalist, protectionist and isolationist, international relations couldn't be more important. Through internationalization, academics from many different countries can cooperate on research projects, advancing every field together instead of redundantly conducting the same research. It is the future of education.

Through internationalization, universities can also exchange academic staff and students, sharing experiences as well as the latest trends in curriculum and teaching methodologies. No university can be world ranked without internationalization efforts.

Just recently, the American Higher Education Alliance (AHEA) and the Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC) announced their partnership to facilitate opportunities for members of both organizations to engage and collaborate in curriculum co-development and programmatic internationalization through virtual exchange via AHEA's InspirED™ platform.

"The partnership between CONAHEC and AHEA will help faculty and students develop their intercultural competencies and institutions to strengthen their partnerships with peers abroad," said Sean Manley-Casimir, executive director of CONAHEC. "Through this symbiotic relationship, our member institutions will be able to work collaboratively with their peers in different countries to internationalize their curricula and to expose their students to new perspectives."

Various stakeholders can benefit from the internationalization of higher education, including inter-

national and domestic students, higher education institutions (HEIs), companies, home and host countries.

Students

Studying abroad is a way for students to gain international experience and to develop both personally as well as professionally, for instance, by getting to know different cultures, improving language skills and developing a more cosmopolitan identity. In addition, it can be a strategy to improve one's career prospects, especially if the required knowledge and skills cannot be obtained in the student's home country. International classrooms lead to improved learning outcomes, foster intercultural skills and create international networks preparing both international and domestic students for living and working in a globalized world.

Higher Education Institutions

Higher education institutions can benefit from the internationalization of higher education both financially and academically. In the context of declining financial contributions of governments, international students are an additional funding opportunity. Moreover, internationalization can improve HEI's reputation and the quality of education programs because of increased international competition for the best students and academics. In addition, attracting international students is vital for many HEIs to survive, especially in countries where the population of young adults is expected to decline drastically in the coming decades.

Host Countries

Host countries can benefit from the internationalization of higher education economically. In the short term, international students bring additional revenue through general living expenses. In the long term, international students can add to the domestic pool of highly skilled workers and thereby help strengthen the domestic knowledge economy. This is especially important for countries that experience demographic change, negative population developments and growing skills shortages. International students who do not remain living in the host countries can become ambassadors for HEIs and the industry of the country in which they studied which can contribute to international cooperation and trade.

In the period 2010–2020, not only has the number of international students doubled to 5 million, but there's also been an increase in franchise operations, articulation programs, branch campuses, and online delivery of higher education. There is fierce competition for talented international students and scholars, and immigration policies have shifted from low-skill to high-skill immigration. National excellence programs have increased differentiation in higher education with more attention for a small number of international world-class universities and national flagship institutions that compete for these talents, for positions in the global rankings, for access to high impact journals, and for funding, at the cost of other institutions.

The internationalization of higher education requires a significant shift in the operation of higher education systems, as well as of individual higher education institutions. Operating in a most com-

plex world, policy makers at the national level of higher education, as well as leaders of universities and other higher education institutions have to handle concurrently contrasting trends, and define their missions and operational strategies accordingly. The increased focus on international collaborative ventures, the growing link between internationalization, research and employability require the rethinking of the roles and responsibilities of higher education institutions within national borders and beyond.

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As seen on
BRIEFMOBILE

The Benefits of Online Learning and a True Education “Reset”

September 3, 2020

In the world of college instruction, online education is on everyone’s minds these days—and rightly so. Professors and students have had to make a sudden and unexpected switch to new methods of teaching and learning, and the broader higher education community is wondering what this will mean for the future of both online and in-person education.

The college campus ethos is changing, and the current pandemic has certainly brought more attention to updating traditional models in recent news. In reality, the status quo of dorm rooms, frat parties, dining halls, and the stereotypical college experience in general, have been evolving for some time.

As a point of fact, nontraditional students are the fastest-growing demographic for college attendance. Working adults, veterans, students with disabilities, and parents are all now students of higher education. These working professionals lead busy daily lives, making traditional college options nearly impossible. As such, accredited online colleges and universities have stepped in to fill their needs.

“I really see this pandemic as an opportunity for higher education to do a “reset”. There is no reason institutions cannot hold on to their core beliefs while transitioning to a virtual setting. We know this will not be easy but institutions willing to make the transition now will be set up for success in the future,” says Benjamin Shank, CEO of the American Higher Education Alliance (AHEA).

The current challenges facing traditional colleges and universities — including higher tuition, budget cuts, and course shortages — cause many students to search for alternatives. With nearly three million students currently enrolled in fully online programs and six million taking at least one online course as part of their degree, online education has clearly become one of the most popular

higher education alternatives. The continually improving reputation of online learning helped fuel its expansion, as initial skepticism faltered in the face of evidence showing that online learning can be just as effective as face-to-face education.

1. It offers convenience and flexibility.

Online education enables the teacher and the student to set their own learning pace, and there's the added flexibility of setting a schedule that fits everyone's agenda. As a result, using an online educational platform allows for a better balance of work and studies, so there's no need to give anything up. Studying online teaches you vital time management skills, which makes finding a good work-study balance easier. Having a common agenda between the student and teacher can also prompt both parties to accept new responsibilities and have more autonomy.

2. It offers a wide selection of programs.

In a space as vast and wide as the internet, there are infinite skills and subjects to teach and learn. A growing number of universities and higher education schools are offering online versions of their programs for various levels and disciplines. From music composition to quantum physics, there are options for every type of student. Studying your program online is also a great option for getting an official certificate, diploma, or degree without physically setting foot on a university campus.

3. It's accessible.

Online education enables you to study or teach from anywhere in the world. This means there's no need to commute from one place to another or follow a rigid schedule. On top of that, not only do you save time, but you also save money, which can be spent on other priorities. The virtual classroom is also available anywhere there's an internet connection, and a good way to take advantage of this is to travel. For example, if you're studying abroad and want to get a job, online education is a great choice. There's no reason to give up on working or studying while exploring new and exotic places.

4. It offers a variety of programs and courses.

From traditional four-year universities to completely online career colleges, higher education today offers a variety of options for students. This means that no matter what students study, from nursing to neuroscience, they can find the courses or programs they need online. Students can also earn every academic degree online, from a career certificate to a doctorate.

5. It's more cost-effective than traditional education.

Unlike in-person education methods, online education tends to be more affordable. There's also often a wide range of payment options let you pay in installments or per class. This allows for better

budget management. Many of you may also be subject to discounts or scholarships, so the price is rarely high. You can also save money from the commute and class materials, which are often available for free. In other words, the monetary investment is less, but the results can be better than other options.

These are only a few reasons to choose an online education, and why 90 percent of students today think that online learning is the same or better than the traditional classroom experience. Every student must assess their unique situation and decide according to their needs and goals, and while this alternative to traditional education is not for everyone, it's still a convenient option with virtually endless options for international students all over the world.

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6 Ways to Improve Your Zoom Virtual Classroom

October 15, 2020

As teachers around the country work to engage students remotely, they're continually on the lookout for ways to improve the online experience. It's a learning process for many, but fortunately, some instructors have been engaging students online for some time and have tips and advice to share to help teachers improve their Zoom virtual classroom experiences. Here we take a look at "6 Ways to Improve Your Zoom Virtual Classroom."

1. Make it Personal

Even when teachers and students are in different places, it's possible—and highly advised—to make personal connections. Lisa McGrath, a national board certified teacher with Teacher to Teacher says that, at the outset, it is important to make meaningful connections to build relationships with students. Initially, that might involve introducing yourself and sharing some personal information like your favorite books, movies, your pets, etc. It's important, she says, to be personable—and work to keep things fun.

Because online connections are, by their very nature, less "personal," everything you can do to build more personality into your online interactions can help improve the experience for students.

Dennis Yim, director of live, online courses, for Kaplan recommends getting to your virtual class about 15 minutes before it's scheduled to start and using the time to chat casually with students. "What room are you learning in?" is a great icebreaker, he says. *"Put up a slide or a poll. You'll gather useful insights about your students' prior knowledge and engagement level."*

Make sure that students are prepared to engage as well. Establish guidelines up front requiring students, for instance, to have their video cameras on. Consider whether it's necessary to establish criteria, or guidelines, for attire and the type of personal space it's appropriate to share with the classroom.

2. Avoid Trying to Make a 1:1 Shift from In Class to Online

While online learning can certainly offer significant benefit to both students and instructors, it requires thinking differently about how to deliver information and engage students.

McGrath advises against simply trying to convert classes from in-person to remote with the exact same material, processes and interactions. *“Do not expect to replicate your face-to-face instructional program online,” she cautions. Instead, she says, “concentrate your unit designs on your core standards.”* Think about how your course objectives can best be met in the online environment.

“Think outside the box and be creative,” McGrath recommends. Use your interests and talents to engage students.”

3. Think Like a Movie Producer

Teachers using a Zoom virtual classroom can boost engagement—and learning outcomes—by thinking of themselves as film producers, suggests Deanna Hurn, founder and executive director of Miracle Math Academic Coaching Center. *“Rather than just presenting coursework, teachers need to put on a production,”* she says. Hurn coaches tutors in doing just that—training them on lighting, camera angles, voice inflection, facial expressions, etc. Her techniques lead to real results—the achievement levels of her students rose 10%, per month, between the time tutoring went online in March until August 2020.

In preparing lesson plans think carefully about the flow of the lesson. Seek to find a good balance between lecture, individual and small group interaction, supplementary materials like video clips, etc. Expecting students to sit for long periods of time just listening to a lecture doesn’t work well in the classroom, or online.

4. Break Things Up in Your Zoom Virtual Classroom

James Boatwright, is CEO of Code Galaxy, an online provider of coding classes and camps for kids ages 7–14. “One of the best tips for teachers who are having to teach remotely is to encourage students to learn independently. You don’t need to sit with them all day. Offer some guidance for an assignment, then give them a certain amount of time to go work on it on their own. This works better for older kids, but for any age it is a good idea to get a break from the screen – for the teacher as well!

5. Think of Ways to Gamify the Classroom Experience

Nicole Hamilton is head of mathematics at Dwight Global Online School. She recommends gamifying the online education experience. *“A little friendly competition helps students bond with each other and with their teachers, even in virtual classes,”* she says. *“I like to tap into people’s competitive spirit in fun, fresh ways.”* She suggests activities like themed trivia, bingo, board games—“anything to get students invested enough that they don’t get distracted by the internet and, instead, engage with their peers and with the content I’m teaching,” While Hamilton teaches at the K–12

level, gamification can be applied in higher education as well.

6. Use the Zoom Classroom Features Available to You!

Zoom and Class for Zoom offer a wide range of features that can enhance the online learning experience.

Benjamin Shank, CEO of the American Higher Education Alliance (AHEA) recommends that instructors take full advantage of the Zoom classroom features available to them. *“By using video, whiteboards, discussion boards, polling questions and general Q&A, you meet a variety of learning styles and interaction styles, helping to keep your students better engaged,”* he says.

Yim agrees: *“Ask students to respond early and often. Use every tech tool you have: chat, polls, raise hands, even literal thumbs up on camera. Ask frequently for responses and you’ll keep your students on their toes.”*

Online learning is likely to continue to be part of the learning experience for students at all levels for some time. Investing time in considering ways to make your Zoom virtual classroom as appealing as possible will pay off for your students, and for you.

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