

Environmental Scanning Summer 2015

Technology in Education

Librarians Leap to the Aid of Researchers Whose Funding Will Soon Depend on Open Access

As more federal agencies begin requiring grant recipients to make research results freely available to the public, college librarians have taken on a new role: helping researchers comply with open-access rules. A February 2013 memorandum from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy said federal agencies with more than \$100 million in research-and-development expenditures would have to require that results be available within a year of publication. New open-access rules will take effect in October at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, among other agencies. Researchers will risk losing grant support from those sources if they don't make their findings freely available to the public. Several private funders, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, are also shifting to public-access requirements. In response, many college libraries are working with institutional research offices and others to let researchers know what's expected of them. Library officials at some colleges say they are already prepared to support researchers, thanks to similar rules in place at the National Institutes of Health, which required an open-access policy in 2008. The National Science Foundation began requiring data-management plans with grant applications in 2011.

Source:

<http://chronicle.com/article/article-content/231997/>

Adobe's New Creative Cloud Has Big Plans for Higher Ed

Earlier this year, Adobe rolled out a massive update to its Creative Cloud suite of apps, with a few new capabilities tailored to the needs of higher education. The 2015 edition of Adobe Creative Cloud (CC) is focused on streamlining workflows between desktops and mobile devices. And with smartphones and tablets changing the digital landscape of campuses across the world, Adobe's plans are suited to the expectations of today's teachers and students. "We recognize that students and teachers — and the workforce — increasingly use mobile tools for tasks they previously have done on the desktop," says Johann Zimmern, head of Adobe's worldwide education division. "Adobe's mobile apps are compatible with CC, which makes workflow easier." CreativeSync, a mix of existing and new sync technologies, lets users seamlessly switch between desktop software and mobile apps, bringing with them all necessary files, photos, fonts, settings and other design elements. New mobile apps for both iOS and Android devices are part of Adobe's 2015 package for Creative Cloud. These new apps offer users in-app access to assets via Adobe's Creative Cloud Library, a cloud-based repository that works between desktop and mobile platforms. We are already starting to see how students are adopting new creative and collaborative workflows, which start with ad-hoc ideation on a smartphone, include iterations on tablet computers and receive final touch-ups on the full desktop application for either Windows or Mac," he says.

Source:

<http://www.edtechmagazine.com/higher/article/2015/07/adobe-s-new-creative-cloud-has-big-plans-higher-ed>

Why Technology Will Never Fix Education

This essay by Kentaro Toyama reflects on the use of technology in education:

In 2004, I moved to India to help found a new research lab for Microsoft. Based in Bangalore, it quickly became a hub for cutting-edge computer science. My own focus shifted with the move, and I began to explore applications of digital technologies for the socioeconomic growth of poor communities. India struggles to educate its billion-plus population, so during the five years that I was there, my team considered how computers, mobile phones, and other devices could aid learning. Sadly, what we found was that even when technology tested well in experiments, the attempt to scale up its impact was limited by the availability of strong leadership, good teachers, and involved parents — all elements that are unfortunately in short supply in India's vast but

woefully underfunded government school system. In other words, the technology's value was in direct proportion to the instructor's capability. Over time, I came to think of this as technology's Law of Amplification: While technology helps education where it's already doing well, technology does little for mediocre educational systems; and in dysfunctional schools, it can cause outright harm. When I returned to the United States and took an academic post, I saw that the idea applies as much to higher education in America as it does to general education in India.

Source

For the rest of the essay go to: http://chronicle.com/article/Why-Technology-Will-Never-Fix/230185/?cid=cr&utm_source=cr&utm_medium=en

Government/Regulatory/Accreditation Issues

Five Challenges Facing Faith-Based Institutions

This article in CCCU Advance discusses challenges facing Christian Higher Education institutions. They are:

- Narrower exemptions for religious organizations other than churches – currently religious organizations have been able to maintain practices and policies based on beliefs but there have been several attempts to reduce the number of organizations with those exemptions.
- Access to government funds – there are some groups advocating for a stronger separation of church and state which would result in reduced access to government funding.
- Accreditation – The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 requires accrediting bodies to respect an institution's mission, including a religious mission. But will that continue with the next round of authorization?
- Restrictions on tax advantages for non-profits – during the recent financial crisis there has been a desire to generate additional tax revenue by increasing tax burdens on non-profits.
- Internal and external constituent pressure on mission – as social norms change, institutions are facing pressure to reevaluate the historic interpretation and application of their mission.

Source:

http://issuu.com/cccu/docs/15-006_springadvance_web_07a6f11219b1cc/11

The Supreme Court Ruling and Christian Colleges

The June Supreme Court decision that states must authorize and recognize gay and lesbian marriages could create major legal challenges for religious colleges -- primarily evangelical Christian colleges that bar same-sex relationships among students and faculty members. Or the decision may not create much of a legal challenge at all. Or it may create challenges, but not soon. Legal experts are divided. But the question of whether same-sex marriage as a national right changes the legal status of Christian colleges is no longer just theoretical. For the majority of colleges that do not bar same-sex relationships, the decision won't change very much, or may simplify things. Many colleges and universities embrace the same-sex partnerships or marriages of their students and employees, and accord them the same benefits as straight couples. Not all religious colleges -- even those from faiths that oppose same-sex marriage -- may be affected by the Supreme Court's decision. The Roman Catholic Church, for example, is a vocal opponent of same-sex marriage. But Roman Catholic colleges do not bar people in same-sex relationships from enrolling or being hired. And as states have recognized same-sex marriage, many Catholic colleges, such as the University of Notre Dame, have extended health and other benefits to the gay and lesbian partners of employees. As a result of such policies, Catholic colleges are unlikely targets for those who want religious colleges to fully respect gay and lesbian marriages. But that is not the case for many Christian evangelical colleges, the vast majority of which bar students and faculty members from having gay or lesbian relationships. And those colleges, some legal experts believe, may now face challenges to their tax-exempt status or other government benefits.

Source:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/06/29/will-supreme-court-decision-same-sex-marriage-challenge-or-change-christian-colleges>

3 Themes From a Senate Hearing on Campus Sexual Assault

In July, A U.S. Senate committee played host to a wide-ranging discussion of campus sexual assault, and one question factored prominently into the two-hour-plus session: What can the federal government do better when it comes to colleges and sexual assault? The committee examined broad concerns about colleges' handling of sexual-assault cases as well as specific provisions of proposed legislation known as the Campus Accountability and Safety Act. The bill was initially introduced in the Senate a year ago, and a revised version was reintroduced in February. Among other requirements, the measure would direct campuses to designate confidential advisers for victims, sign memoranda of understanding with local law-enforcement agencies, and bolster due-process rights for accused students.

- Confidential Advisers: Senator McCaskill, one of the sponsors of the bill said that the requirement for campuses to designate a confidential adviser for students "may be the most important part of our legislation."The advisers, she said, would be able to guide victims through their options for reporting their cases to their college or the police.
- Working With Police Agencies: Lawmakers and panelists agreed that strengthening cooperation between campuses and law enforcement on sexual-violence cases was a commendable goal and that a memorandum of understanding between the entities would be a positive step. But Dolores Stafford, head of the National Association of Clergy Compliance Officers and Professionals, noted that such an agreement doesn't inherently make it more likely that a victim will report an assault.
- Rights of Accused Students: One goal of the revised legislation is to better protect the due-process rights of accused students. But Sen. Bill Cassidy, a Louisiana Republican, suggested on that handing cases over to the police is "the only way you ensure that you get fair treatment for both parties." He asked Ms. Napolitano to weigh in.

Source:

http://chronicle.com/article/3-Themes-From-a-Senate-Hearing/232005/?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

Education Department Now Plans a College-Rating System Minus the Ratings

The U.S. Department of Education has retreated from its controversial plan to create a giant college-ratings system, top officials revealed in June. Instead, by late summer the department is now promising to produce a customizable, consumer-oriented website that won't include any evaluations of colleges but will contain what one official described as "more data than ever before." In effect, it will be a ratings system without any ratings. The as-yet-unnamed new system will allow students and others to compare colleges "on whatever measures are important to them," said Jamienne S. Studley, deputy undersecretary of education. The proposed federal ratings have been contentious since the moment they were announced. In Congress, Republicans in particular have introduced measures to keep the department from spending money to develop them. And many college leaders and higher-education associations have questioned the department's capacity to devise an accurate or fair system.

Source:

http://chronicle.com/article/Education-Department-Now-Plans/231137/?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

NLRB Official Orders Count of Adjuncts' Ballots at Manhattan College

A regional official of the National Labor Relations Board has ordered the tallying of ballots in a union election for Manhattan College's part-time faculty members. She based her decision on a finding that such instructors do not contribute to the religious environment of the Roman Catholic college enough to be excluded from the board's jurisdiction for First Amendment reasons. Karen P. Fernbach, director of the NLRB's regional office in New York, said in the decision on Wednesday that she had found no evidence that such instructors are expected to advance the college's religious mission "other than to respect and support it." As a result, she said, the federal board can assert jurisdiction over the union election there without treading on the college's religious freedom under the First Amendment. Ms. Fernbach's decision is the latest in a wave of NLRB rulings clearing the way for union elections at religious colleges on the basis of new standards outlined by the board last year, in a case involving Pacific Lutheran University. Since that decision, regional NLRB officials have cleared the way for union elections involving adjunct faculty members at Duquesne University and Saint Xavier University. This summer's decision, involving Manhattan College, clears the way for the counting of union election ballots cast in 2011 but impounded in response to the college's challenge to the NLRB's jurisdiction.

Source:

http://chronicle.com/blogs/ticker/nlrb-official-orders-count-of-adjuncts-ballots-at-manhattan-college/103661?cid=pm&utm_source=pm&utm_medium=en

A College System Measures How Low-Paying Degrees Serve the Public Good

Everyone, it seems, is trying to measure the value of a college degree. For many elected officials in the states, that amount boils down to a fairly simple number: The earnings of the person who received that credential. But while higher-education officials often tout the salary bonus conferred by a bachelor's degree, for instance, many of those same officials worry about overrelying on wages as the only way to demonstrate the value of a college education. Christina E. Whitfield, vice chancellor for research and analysis at the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, is taking a new approach. She has designed a "social-utility index" to calculate the social good of degree programs that lead to low-paying jobs that may nevertheless be important to communities. Her measurements rely on a survey by PayScale, a company that collects information on salaries and other workplace benefits. Among other things, the PayScale survey asks employees in a range of fields, such as clergy members and radiation-therapy workers, to identify which occupations provide the most personal meaning to their practitioners. Ms. Whitfield also considers how important an industry is to a region. Activities related to coal mining and distilleries, for example, are more concentrated in Kentucky than in other parts of the country. And she looks at whether particular degree programs enroll a high percentage of minority students or attract a "nontraditional" gender mix, such as women in heavy-machinery maintenance or men in nursing.

Source:

http://chronicle.com/article/A-College-System-Measures-How/232191/?cid=pm&utm_source=pm&utm_medium=en

Wheaton College (Ill.) Ends Student Health Insurance Over Contraceptive Rule

Wheaton College of Illinois will stop providing students with health insurance because of its objections to the Obama administration's controversial rule on access to contraceptives, the Chicago Tribune reported. Many other religious colleges have asserted that the contraceptive mandate violates their religious beliefs. The Obama administration's attempts to compromise on the rule have so far failed to satisfy those institutions, several of which have filed lawsuits over the mandate. Wheaton's decision to end student health insurance took effect at the end of July, and affects more than 700 students who were enrolled in the plan. A lawyer for the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which has represented Wheaton in its fight against the rule, said the government's attempts to alter the policy had not gone far enough.

Source:

http://chronicle.com/blogs/ticker/wheaton-college-ill-ends-student-health-insurance-over-contraceptive-rule/102465?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

Obama's Higher Ed Home Stretch

American higher education is failing "far too many of our students," says Education Secretary Arne Duncan, as he calls for colleges to be held more accountable for graduating students with high-quality degrees that lead to good jobs. In a speech outlining the higher education priorities of the Obama administration as it enters its final 18 months in office, Duncan said it is time to "go further" than discussions about rising levels of student loan debt. He is urging a shift toward focusing on degree completion and educational quality. "Student debt is a burden for too many students, but most ultimately repay their loans, and for those who get their degree, college proves an excellent investment," Duncan will say, according to excerpts of his prepared remarks at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. "The degree students truly can't afford is the one they don't complete, or that employers don't value." Describing the current system of higher education as broken and inefficient, Duncan will call for fundamental changes to how colleges are held accountable. He will say policymakers "must shift incentives at every level to focus on student success, not just access." In seeking to reframe higher education discussions around student outcomes rather than student debt, Duncan also directly responded to the momentum that has been building in recent months for debt-free and tuition-free college proposals among some Democratic presidential candidates and liberal advocacy groups.

Source:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/07/27/white-house-pivots-accountability-and-outcomes-and-away-debt-free-major-duncan>

Higher Education Trends

A College Without Classes

Had Daniella Kippnick followed in the footsteps of the hundreds of millions of students who have earned university degrees in the past millennium, she might be slumping in a lecture hall somewhere while a professor droned. But Kippnick has no course lectures. She has no courses to attend at all. No classroom, no college quad, no grades. Her university has no deadlines or tenure-track professors. Instead, Kippnick makes her way through different subject matters on the way to a bachelor's in accounting. When she feels she's mastered a certain subject, she takes a test at home, where a proctor watches her from afar by monitoring her computer and watching her over a video feed. If she proves she's competent—by getting the equivalent of a B—she passes and moves on to the next subject. Kippnick's classroom is a small study she's set up in her home in rural Michigan, where she can stare out at apple trees and the occasional passing deer. She can finish her degree as quickly or as slowly as she wants. It costs her just \$5,000 a year. For the most part, colleges and universities have changed very little since the University of Bologna gave the first college lectures in 1088. But a new model is upending the traditional college experience, and has the potential to change the way universities—both new and old—think about learning. Called competency-based education, this new model looks at what students should know when they complete a certain degree, and allows them to acquire that knowledge by independently making their way through lessons. It also allows students who come into school with knowledge in a certain area to pass tests to prove it, rather than forcing them to take classes and pay for credits on information they already know. Competency-based education was pioneered by Western Governors University, a non-profit school founded by governors from 11 states in 1996. Its goal was to create an institution that would better prepare students for the working world, while harnessing the power of technology. Since then, dozens of universities, have signed on to the Competency-Based Education Network, making a commitment to design and deliver competency-based degree programs. They include not only small technical college and community colleges, but also large universities: the University System of Georgia, University of Maryland, Purdue University, and DePaul. By fall of 2014, three Big Ten institutions, including the University of Michigan, had announced degree programs that use the competency model.

Source:

<http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/07/a-college-without-classes/400115/>

End of Branch Campus Boom?

Opening branch campuses is now the lowest internationalization priority for European universities, according to a major study, prompting suggestions that a market dominated by British institutions is now past its peak. In a survey conducted by the European Association for International Education, just 1 percent of respondents who worked for universities said that they had witnessed a substantial increase in branch campus activity at their institution in the past three years. Twelve percent said they had seen an increase, while 53 percent reported no change and 1 percent said branch campus activity had decreased. This puts branch campuses at the bottom of the list of 15 internationalization trends that the EAIE asked about, with institutions focusing instead on strategic partnerships and student mobility.

Source:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/05/28/survey-european-universities-finds-end-boom-branch-campus>

Division in Christian Higher Ed

Union University, in Tennessee, has quit the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities, saying it cannot remain in a Christian group in which some member institutions will hire people in same-sex marriages. Union may not be the last college to leave the council, and its action is creating division in a group that has been proud of representing Christian colleges from many denominations and viewpoints. But while there is a diversity of views about many issues among CCCU institutions, the issue of same-sex marriage has been elevated by some institutions to one on which no compromise is possible. The action by Union follows the announcements last month by Eastern Mennonite University and Goshen

College that they were willing to hire faculty members in same-sex marriages. The two universities, until then, had said they would hire faculty members who were celibate (gay or straight) or married in heterosexual relationships. The new policy means that gay and straight applicants for faculty positions will be judged in the same way. The two colleges are the first CCCU members to be willing to hire gay and lesbian faculty members who are married to other gay or lesbian people. Union President Samuel W. Oliver released a letter he sent to the CCCU in which he explained that while Union is a member of higher education groups with a range of views, it could not be a member of a Christian higher education group that deviated from the university's views on marriage. After Eastern Mennonite and Goshen announced their actions, the CCCU announced that it would start a process of consulting with member institutions about the situation. At the time, the presidents of both Eastern Mennonite and Goshen indicated that they wanted their institutions to remain in CCCU. The CCCU's membership requirements do not ban members from recognizing gay marriages. But the organization says that members must be "Christ-centered and rooted in the historic Christian faith." Critics like Union University believe that Eastern Mennonite and Goshen are violating the reference to historic Christian faith, but supporters of those two institutions say their new policies are consistent with their faith.

Source:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/08/13/christian-college-group-faces-conflict-over-its-failure-expel-institutions-will-hire>

Roommate Tiff, Title IX Dispute: The General Counsel Sees It All

On any given day, José D. Padilla and the seven lawyers he oversees at DePaul University might be dissecting the latest guidance from Washington to ensure that the university's sexual-misconduct policies pass muster. On the same day they could also be monitoring "pay to play" litigation that, if successful, could require it to dole out more money to its athletes, and following up on a whistle-blower tip about a misuse of grant money. Meanwhile, contracts for a planned multimillion-dollar campus-events center in downtown Chicago might need scrutiny, and a student with roommate problems could be threatening to sue. Surviving as a university general counsel these days, says Mr. Padilla, "requires what I call a head on a swivel." Federal mandates and public pressures have been piling on in recent years, requiring universities to update policies on such matters as sexual and alcohol abuse, privacy protections, and crime disclosures. At the same time, perennial concerns over academic freedom and tenure sometimes threaten to flare into lawsuits. Whenever possible, DePaul's lawyers try to mediate issues so DePaul won't end up in court. "We don't get sued a lot, but people are lawyering up more and more these days," Mr. Padilla says. Cases like student suspensions, which used to be handled as disciplinary issues, often escalate into his office. If a student has a dispute with a roommate and wants to change rooms but is locked into a dormitory contract with the university, it's becoming more likely that "we'll be getting a nastygram from an attorney." With stepped-up enforcement of the federal gender-equity law known as Title IX, a staff lawyer holds frequent meetings with administrators from departments that oversee housing, public safety, diversity, student affairs, and athletics to make sure everyone understands their compliance responsibilities. And when it comes to hot-button issues like sexual assault, everyone wants to weigh in.

Source:

http://chronicle.com/article/Roommate-Tiff-Title-IX/231629/?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

Demographic and Student Trends

The Challenge of the First Generation Student

Tae-Hyun Sakong would love to be able to tell his parents why he decided to major in neuroscience, and what it was like to help his biology professor probe a genetic risk factor for Alzheimer's disease. The Trinity University undergraduate also wishes he could tell them about the anxiety and depression that overwhelm him when he compares himself with classmates who attended elite prep schools and spend spring breaks in Cancun. But his parents, who never went to college, speak little English, and he speaks his native Korean at a grade-school level. Mr. Sakong, 22, says that if it weren't for professors and his faculty advisor, he would have dropped out long ago.

As colleges seek to diversify their student bodies and patch up their leaky pipelines for disadvantaged students, many are expanding efforts to connect students who are the first in their families to attend college with supportive classmates, advisers, and professors. The challenges these students face are daunting. First-generation students tend to work longer hours at their jobs, are less likely to live on campus, and are more likely to have parents who would struggle to complete financial-aid forms. They're also more likely to arrive academically unprepared for the rigors of college and to require remediation before they can start earning college credit. Many feel the tug of family responsibilities, rushing home after class to take care of younger siblings or missing classes to care for an ailing grandparent. The disparity in household income is striking: Median family income at two- and four-year institutions for freshmen whose parents didn't attend college was \$37,565 last year, compared with \$99,635 for those whose parents did. The New York Times calculated those figures using data from the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles. Having lived so close to the margins, "first-generation students tend to be risk-averse," says Thomas G. Mortenson, a senior scholar at the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education.

Source:

<http://chronicle.com/article/The-Challenge-of-the/230137/>

Campus Diversity, Often Seen as Key to Learning, Can Have an Educational Downside

Although diversity on college campuses is widely viewed as crucial for learning, negative experiences with students from other backgrounds may actually hurt undergraduates' intellectual development, a new study suggests. The study, based on tests administered to college students as both freshmen and seniors, linked negative experiences with diversity to declines both in students' critical-thinking skills and their "need for cognition," or tendency to be intellectually engaged. Positive experiences with diversity, on the other hand, appeared linked to increased need for cognition but to have no real impact on their critical thinking, a paper summarizing the study's findings says. The paper, cautions that enrolling a diverse student body does not guarantee positive or meaningful interactions between students from different backgrounds, even though it does represent "an important starting point." "Apart from preventing or responding to negative interactions," it says, "administrators and faculty need to be intentional about creating environments to encourage positive interactions. A good starting point includes improving faculty skills in teaching at increasingly diverse institutions." The study differs from much other research on diversity on college campuses in its attempt to objectively measure the educational impact of diversity experiences and in its willingness to consider their downside as well as their upside. The new examination of the impact of both positive and negative diversity experiences is based on data on nearly 2,700 students in the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education, a large-scale, longitudinal study led by the Center of Inquiry at Wabash College, in Indiana. The study assesses students at four-year colleges both in the fall and spring of their freshman year and again in the spring of their senior year. In addition to gauging their intellectual development, it asks students about their college experiences.

Source:

<http://chronicle.com/article/Campus-Diversity-Often-Seen/229981/>

An Epidemic of Anguish

Families often expect campuses to provide immediate, sophisticated, and sustained mental-health care. After all, most parents are still adjusting to the idea that their children no longer come home every night, and many want colleges to keep an eye on their kids, just as they did. Students, too, want colleges to give them the help they need, when they need it. And they need a lot. Rates of anxiety and depression among American college students have soared in the last decade, and many more students than in the past come to campus already on medication for such illnesses. The number of students with suicidal thoughts has risen as well. Some are dealing with serious issues, such as psychosis, which typically presents itself in young adulthood, just when students are going off to college. Many others, though, are struggling with what campus counselors say are the usual stresses of college life: bad grades, breakups, being on their own for the first time. And they are putting a strain on counseling centers. Colleges are trying to meet the demand by hiring more counselors, creating group-therapy sessions to treat more students at once, and arranging for mental-health coordinators who help students manage their own care. A couple of colleges have even installed mental-health kiosks, which look like ATMs and allow students to get a quick screening for depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress.

But there is no consistent, nationwide standard of mental-health care on campuses, says Victor Schwartz, medical director of the Jed Foundation, which promotes emotional health among college students. "There are places functioning as top-of-the-line," he says, "and some that are extremely rudimentary." Just how much should parents and students expect of colleges when it comes to mental-health care? Campuses are first and foremost educational institutions, after all, not health-care providers. Mentally ill students can pose substantial challenges — not just to an institution's resources, but also to their own ability to succeed academically, to their safety, and even to the safety of the campus. "There is a real sense of responsibility, that part of our job and mission now is the whole student, not just the education of the mind," says Beth A. Pontari, chair of the psychology department at Furman University. "Our job is to produce better-functioning people. But when you have students who are more medicated and have been seeing a therapist since they were 12, that is very difficult."

Source:

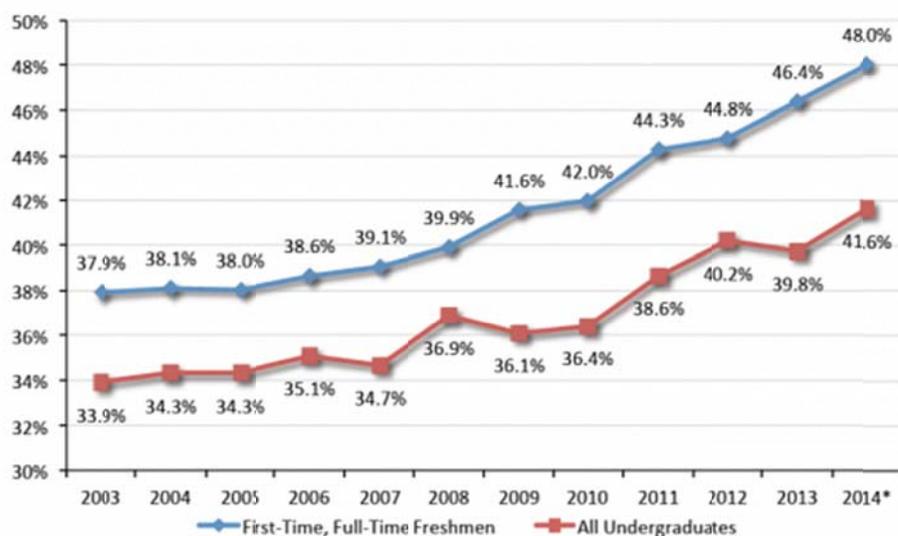
http://chronicle.com/article/An-Epidemic-of-Anguish/232721/?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

Economic Trends

Tuition Discount Rates Rise Again, Signaling Potential Challenges for Private Colleges

Tuition-discount rates at private, nonprofit colleges have once again hit an all-time high, and appear to be holding down net tuition revenue, according to preliminary estimates from the National Association of College and University Business Officers' annual survey. The projected discount rates for 2014 are 48 percent for first-time full-time freshmen and 41.6 percent for all undergraduates. That's likely to be the most attention-grabbing finding from the association's latest Tuition Discounting Study, released in late August. While rising discount rates are often seen as a warning sign for the sector, the other data in the report, based on responses from 411 colleges belonging to the association, may present even grimmer evidence of financial challenges ahead. Colleges might decide to provide more institutional aid as part of a strategy to grow enrollment, or increase net revenue, or both. If those were the outcomes participating colleges were going for, though, the strategy doesn't seem to be working terribly well for them, at least not as a group. Forty-eight percent of responding colleges indicated that freshmen enrollment stayed steady or decreased between fall 2013 and fall 2014. Nearly a third reported steady or decreased enrollment for both freshmen and all undergraduates. *Note: PLNU's discount rate is far below the 48% and 41.6% levels and we have seen enrollment increases, so we are not following these trends.*

Figure 1. Average Tuition Discount Rate by Student Category⁴



Source: NACUBO Tuition Discounting Survey, 2003 to 2014.

*Preliminary estimate.

Source:

http://chronicle.com/article/Tuition-Discount-Rates-Rise/232579/?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/08/25/tuition-discounting-grows-private-colleges-and-universities>

State Budget Squeeze Pushes Students Deeper Into Debt

While many state economies have bounced back from the global financial crisis, public funding for higher education has yet to recover from deep budget cuts since 2008, according to a report Wednesday from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. The result, say the authors, is that students and public colleges and universities continued shoulder a bigger share of the financial burden for their higher education in the latest academic year. As of the 2013 school year, the latest data available, some 59 percent of students graduating from a public 4-year institution had student loans, up from 55 percent in 2008. The average loan amount rose by 16 percent - or about \$3,600. Overall state spending for higher education was up just 1 percent in 2013 and an estimated 3.7 percent in 2014, according to a separate

report from the National Association of State Budget Officers. That report found that much of the recent growth has been paid with higher tuition and other fees—not from general revenues.

Source:

<http://www.nbcnews.com/business/personal-finance/state-budgets-squeeze-pushes-students-deeper-debt-n358186>

Education Dept. Reports Increase in Borrowers Using Income-Based Repayment

There has been a large increase in the number of borrowers enrolling in income-based student-loan repayment plans, according to statistics released by the U.S. Department of Education in August. The spike follows an effort by the Obama administration to better publicize the option. According to the department, almost four million borrowers had enrolled in income-based repayment as of June 30, a 56-percent increase compared with that time last year. Also, the share of borrowers who are more than one month late in repaying their loans dropped from 23 percent to 21 percent over the same period. In June of last year, President Obama announced he was expanding the income-based repayment program so that an additional five million borrowers would be eligible. That measure was part of a larger effort to better promote the program, which caps borrowers' monthly payments at 10 percent of their income and forgives all debt after 20 years.

Source:

http://chronicle.com/blogs/ticker/education-dept-reports-increase-in-borrowers-using-income-based-repayment/103429?cid=pm&utm_source=pm&utm_medium=en

Defining College Affordability

President Obama's plan for free community college. Bernie Sanders's vision of two years of debt-free college. Lamar Alexander's nascent proposal to rewrite the Higher Education Act to produce a more effective higher ed system. Elizabeth Warren's double-barreled push for more federal and state funding and greater accountability. Hillary Clinton's \$350 million proposed overhaul of higher ed financing. Those are just some of the many public policy proposals circulating right now to revamp how the various parties involved in financing higher education -- the federal and state governments, colleges and universities, philanthropic groups, and students and families -- interact to do that. All of them, in one way or another, start with the premise that higher education is increasingly unaffordable for too many Americans. But what does "affordable" even mean? And if politicians, policy makers and the public don't have a shared understanding of what families should pay for college, can we really expect them to develop and agree on what to do about the problem? Officials at Lumina Foundation don't think so, which is why they are today offering up a simple (and, they admit, somewhat simplistic) framework for concretely defining what is reasonable for the typical college student and her/his family to pay for college. Most discussions about higher education affordability focus on what colleges charge students (too much is almost always the conclusion) and what they should charge (less). The Lumina document, crafted with input from a working group of experts, approaches the question from another angle: "We want people to be able to use this as a gauge for what people have the capacity to pay," said Zakiya Smith, Lumina's strategy director. Here is the short version of what they call the "rule of 10": Families should be expected to contribute to their children's education what is reasonable for them to save over 10 years. Second, that "reasonable" amount they save over that decade should be based on 10 percent of their disposable income, which Lumina notes has become the standard for affordable loan repayment. (The savings expectation would apply only to those families who earn more than 200 percent of the poverty level.) And third, the foundation asserts that students can reasonably work 10 hours a week during the academic year without impairing their academic success.

Source:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/08/19/what-does-it-mean-college-be-affordable-heres-one-answer>

Moody's Upgrades Higher Ed's Outlook From 'Negative' to 'Stable'

Moody's Investors Service has upgraded its outlook for the higher-education sector from "negative" to "stable," citing expected increases in state funding and federal research funding. Higher education had been assigned a "negative" outlook since January 2013. "Our outlook revision to stable reflects our view that aggregate operating revenue growth for four-year colleges and universities will stabilize at a post-recession level of just above 3 percent over the next 12-18 months, providing some predictability in operating budgets for the first time since FY 2009," said Eva Bogaty, author of the service's new report, in a news release. Moody's cautioned, however, that regional public universities and small private colleges will be the most likely to feel financial "stress."

Source:

http://chronicle.com/blogs/ticker/moodys-upgrades-higher-eds-outlook-from-negative-to-stable/102213?cid=pm&utm_source=pm&utm_medium=en

Boosting Aid in California

When it comes to tuition and fees, California already has the lowest rates in the country for students attending two-year public colleges. Free community college plans have been around for years and have recently picked up some steam -- President Obama announced his America's College Promise earlier this year, Oregon's legislature passed free two-year college legislation last week and congressional Democrats have attempted to create a national initiative. And a wide range of related Promise programs exist in some form or another across the country. But California, with its 112 community colleges and 2.1 million students, would be considered a massive win for advocates of free two-year college. The state already has a huge tax surplus and has been reinvesting in higher education and boosting need-based financial aid this year. So waiving all fees for community college students might not be too large a leap for the state to make. The state's community college system receives about \$400 million in fee revenues a year. And the current per-credit cost for students, which is set by the Legislature, is \$46, said Dan Troy, the system's vice chancellor for fiscal policy. According the College Board, California had the lowest tuition and fees for two-year college students in the country, at \$1,429 for this school year.

Source:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/07/20/californias-reinvestment-student-aid-could-hint-toward-move-free-two-year-college>

Academic Trends

Student Evaluations: Feared, Loathed, and Not Going Anywhere

Janet Wilson has a number burned into her mind: 4.7. That's the average student-evaluation score, on a five-point scale, that she has to reach to feel safe. Her score helps to determine her fate as a full-time, non-tenure-track professor at her West Coast research university. Often, rather than discuss challenges in the classroom, Ms. Wilson and her colleagues pass around advice on what it takes to reach the magic number. One popular strategy is to bake cookies or brownies for students. (Chocolate-chip cookies are seen as the golden ticket. And if you're making brownies, leave the nuts out: A student's allergy could tank your score or, worse, lead to a phone call from Human Resources.) She and her colleagues have shared other tips, too (see the link). This is a grim vision, but it's one many professors might recognize. Student ratings of professors can have the feel of a high-stakes game. Faculty members speak of evaluations' driving decisions on hiring, promotion, and tenure; adjuncts say they feel paralyzed when a low score can mean a pink slip. Like Yelp in the restaurant industry or TripAdvisor in tourism, the student evaluation can be a powerful tool of communication for the frustrated student-customer. That's precisely what worries many professors: They view evaluations as part of the growing pressure, especially at public institutions, to treat students like clients and professors like service employees. Earlier this year, a Republican state senator in Iowa, Mark Chelgren, proposed a bill — which never came close to passing — that would have fired professors, even tenured ones, who scored low on their student evaluations. Mr. Chelgren cited high student-loan debt to argue that students should be able to hold their professors accountable through metrics. "Professors need to understand that their customers are those students," he told *The Chronicle*. Michael P. Chaney, an associate professor of counseling at Oakland University, in Michigan, says that over the past few years, more of his colleagues have expressed concern over the role of evaluations. "We've been debating how relevant and beneficial they are," he says. "There seems to be a disconnect between how faculty view their usefulness and how the university's promotions and tenure committees view them." Among the reasons to be cautious: Response rates tend to be low, a problem that has worsened as more colleges turn to online evaluations. Completed evaluations all too frequently include racist and sexist invective. And students often use the forms simply as a space to vent their frustrations.

Source:

https://chroniclevitae.com/news/1011-student-evaluations-feared-loathed-and-not-going-anywhere?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en#sthash.tWH8OeE0.dpuf

These Videos Could Change How You Think About Teaching

Mr. Wesch is an associate professor of cultural anthropology at Kansas State University who has won some of the highest honors for his work in the classroom, including a national professor-of-the-year award in 2008. Yet a couple of years ago, he "got into a funk" about teaching, he says. After many years covering the same material, he was worried things were getting too routine. And then there was the student who kept falling asleep during his lectures. Every class. That confirmed all his worst fears that he was no longer connecting. "When I first started teaching, I was 29," he says, and it was easy to relate to the students who took his introductory course. Now he's in his 40s, and he realized he had lost touch with where his students were coming from. So Mr. Wesch asked the sleeping student out to lunch. And he learned that, far from being a slacker, the student had been working late into the night designing his own videogame. That recalibrated the professor's thinking, and he started looking for ways to draw out the student's creativity in class rather than assume he had checked out. And now he regularly asks students to lunch.

Source:

http://chronicle.com/article/These-Videos-Could-Change-How/232645/?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

Videos: <http://myteachingnotebook.com/>

Why a Global Education Doesn't Have to Mean Going Abroad

Do students need a passport to get a global experience? Breaking with orthodoxy in study abroad, some educators have come to believe that the answer is no. Given the diversity of the United States, they argue, it's no longer necessary to cross national borders to give students the intercultural skills that colleges and employers both prize. Step off many campuses, and you can quickly find people from other countries and cultures, with different beliefs, practices, and languages. Today some 40 percent of Americans are racial or ethnic minorities, and one in every 10 is foreign-born; just a few decades from now, the United States will become a majority-minority country. Indeed, shifting demographics are among the reasons that a growing number of colleges have made graduating globally minded students a priority. Yet the number of Americans who study abroad remains startlingly small — fewer than 10 percent of undergraduates and just 2 percent of the total college population. In recent years, those percentages have barely budged. Advocates of domestic off-campus programs, often called "study away," suggest that studying in diverse communities in the United States — among immigrant groups, refugee populations, or marginalized residents — could be another way to gain cross-cultural know-how. And they hope such programs might appeal to types of students who normally haven't studied overseas, including working parents and those who are the first in their families to go to college.

Source:

http://chronicle.com/article/Why-a-Global-Education/232311/?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

Professors of Instruction

What's in a name? A lot, evidently. A year after Northwestern University's Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences introduced new titles for full-time, non-tenure-track faculty members, along with longer contracts and clearer paths to promotion, proponents say the system has helped them recruit quality teachers and attracted outside interest. "We wanted clearer paths to promotion and a set of titles that confers respect," said Monica Russel y Rodriguez, an associate dean at Weinberg who helped design the new ranks. "I've been pleased -- I think this was a good concept." Formerly various ranks of lecturer, Weinberg's full-time, non-tenure-track faculty members are now "professors of instruction" at the assistant, associate and full levels. Proponents say the titles better communicate to those within Northwestern that this is a career path, and to those outside of Northwestern exactly what the job entails. That's important when these professors, who make up about one-quarter of Weinberg's faculty (including lots of foreign language instructors), are writing student recommendation letters. It has also been helpful in recruiting new faculty members. Part-time faculty members are not affected by the changes.

Source:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/08/12/northwestern-us-arts-and-sciences-college-updates-titles-teaching-faculty-and-offers>

Court's Decision Clarifies the Role of Unpaid Internships

A recent ruling on the legality of unpaid internships may require closer coordination between employers and colleges, experts say. In July, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit ruled that unpaid internships may be legal as long as the intern is the "primary beneficiary" of the intern-employer relationship. The ruling also emphasized that the purpose of the internship should be educational. In highlighting the educational nature of an internship, the court, using strong language, dismissed what it called a "rigid" list of six points used by the Department of Labor to determine whether an internship was legal. Instead, the court presented a set of seven guidelines, in addition to the primary-beneficiary principle, to consider in evaluating internships. The guidelines include "the extent to which the internship is tied to the intern's formal academic work," and the degree to which the internship was similar to an educational environment. Many colleges will need to better screen potential internships before advertising them to students or offering academic credit for them. The colleges will also have to work more closely with employers to ensure the internships offer what students expect.

Source:

http://chronicle.com/article/Court-s-Decision-Clarifies/231513/?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

In Students' Minds, Textbooks Are Increasingly Optional Purchases

The average amount that college students spend on course materials appears to be declining. But not necessarily because textbooks are cheaper. A growing number of students, surveys show, simply skip buying required course materials. A survey of undergraduates on 23 campuses by the National Association of College Stores, expected to be released on Thursday, found that students spent an average of \$563 on course materials during the 2014-15 academic year, compared with \$638 the year before. The decrease is due in part to the rise of textbook-rental programs, which cost less, association officials note. But of those students who did not buy textbooks, the report noted, a greater percentage than in the past said it was because "they believed them to be unnecessary." Another recent survey of college students, by the Book Industry Study Group, found a similar change in attitude, says Nadine Vassallo, a project manager for the group. "Students say, We see the materials as recommendations rather than requirements," she explains. A separate survey of professors on the same campuses, meanwhile, found that they almost never see the course materials as optional. "What we think is happening is students are waiting to see how much the material is used before they buy them," Ms. Vassallo says.

Source:

<http://chronicle.com/article/article-content/231455/>

Scanning Universe by Institutional Type

Two-Plus-Two in Temecula

With 110,000 residents, the city of Temecula is in one of California's fastest growing regions. But the nearest public university is more than 30 miles away, an unusually large distance for densely populated Southern California. The city's leaders wanted the state to build a new California State University campus in Temecula around the time the recession began. Not a chance, they were told. And the California State University System couldn't afford to even open a branch campus there. That meant the best option for place-bound residents to attend a public university would remain a commute of more than 30 miles to the University of California at Riverside or, in the other direction, to CSU at San Marcos. As a result, most local high school graduates weren't going to college, even though there are several private university campuses in Temecula. So the city and CSU San Marcos got creative. They created a new campus location in Temecula in 2009 with a \$3 million contribution from the city, which also included a former elementary school building for a rental price of \$1 per year. The neighboring city of Murrieta -- also with a population of more than 100,000 -- kicked in another \$200,000 to renovate the facility. Private donors contributed as well. The state and CSU system do not pay for the campus, which is fully self-sustaining, mostly through tuition. The programs are in easy to launch and in high-demand fields. They included bachelor's degrees in nursing, kinesiology and business administration. After five years of operation, a total of about 1,000 students have enrolled in programs at the Temecula Higher Education Center, which offers five undergraduate and two master's degree programs. The center is graduating roughly 200 students per year.

Source:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/07/30/csu-san-marcos-and-mt-san-jacinto-college-travel-team-joint-degree-program>

A New College for Old Credits

A program aimed at helping adults finish incomplete degrees will be Rhode Island's newest college. College Unbound, a degree-completion program and now a private nonprofit college, will be allowed to award undergraduate degrees in Rhode Island, the state's Council on Postsecondary Education ruled in May. The program will continue as a tool for adults with unfinished bachelor's degrees while it seeks accreditation to become an independent institution. College Unbound President Dennis Littky said the institution has already begun the process of pursuing accreditation through the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Grants from organizations including the Lumina Foundation funded the founding of the program and have supported the creation of the institution's business and scaling plans for the next five years. Littky said the program always intended to become a college and government officials encouraged him and others to pursue state approval. He said the program helps students, 90 percent of whom are employed, improve their standing at their current workplace by not only completing their degrees but teaching them skills that can help them better individuals overall.

Source:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/05/26/rhode-island-approves-new-college-help-adults-finish-degrees>

Consumer Watchdog Scrutinizes Bridgepoint and Ashford U. Over Student Loans

Bridgepoint Education Inc. and its Ashford University are facing demands for information from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau in an investigation into whether for-profit educators or others are engaging in unlawful activities involving private student loans, the company said on Friday in a filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Bridgepoint said it and Ashford expected to provide documents and other information to the federal agency, which last month took action against a private student-loan servicer and a financial-services company. Last year the agency sued ITT Educational Services Inc., accusing it of predatory lending.

Source:

http://chronicle.com/blogs/ticker/consumer-watchdog-scrutinizes-bridgepoint-and-ashford-u-over-student-loans/103219?cid=pm&utm_source=pm&utm_medium=en

Federal Trade Commission Opens Broad Investigation of U. of Phoenix

The University of Phoenix is the subject of an extensive investigation by the Federal Trade Commission to determine whether it engaged in deceptive practices, according to a corporate filing in July by its parent company, the Apollo Education Group. Details about the inquiry are scant, but, according to the filing, the commission is seeking "information regarding a broad spectrum of the business and practices" at the giant for-profit educator, "including in respect of marketing, recruiting, enrollment, financial aid, tuition and fees, academic programs, academic advising, student retention, billing and debt collection, complaints, accreditation, training, military recruitment, and other compliance matters" since January 2011.

Source:

http://chronicle.com/blogs/ticker/federal-trade-commission-opens-broad-investigation-of-u-of-phoenix/102485?cid=pm&utm_source=pm&utm_medium=en

Ashford University Closes Physical Campus

Ashford University is shutting its physical campus in Iowa, the latest in a series of recent closures of small colleges (many in obscure places) with shrinking enrollments and revenues. But Ashford, given its history and its owner, is far from just another private college. A decade ago, in 2005, Franciscan University of the Prairies was on the verge of closure, its enrollment down to 320 students and the religious order it was affiliated with, the Sisters of St. Francis, in steep decline. In stepped Bridgepoint Education, a California-based company that vowed to pour resources into the Iowa college's physical campus and bolster its enrollment and revenues with online programs. Over the next 10 years, Bridgepoint's takeover of Ashford became exhibit A of one of the perceived questionable tactics of for-profit higher education: the "buying" of accreditation, by annexing an existing institution and transforming it into something very different (almost always online, and usually on a mass scale). The small Iowa campus became a springboard for a publicly traded college company with (at one point) soaring online enrollments and significant profits, drawing the enmity of U.S. senators and prompting significant scrutiny of the accrediting agency that approved the initial transaction. So it isn't surprising that this month's closing of Ashford's Iowa campus led critics to question Bridgepoint's commitment to the on-ground college -- especially since 2013, when it no longer needed a physical presence in the Midwest to keep its accreditation, having been approved by the regional accreditor in California -- and to accuse it of having broken its promises. The reason for the cuts: online enrollment at Ashford has fallen from a peak of nearly 90,000 students to 50,000. The company has to look for ways to cut costs to preserve the value of its stock, Richard L. Pattenaude President of Ashford said: "We have a responsibility to shareholders." So far, news of the campus closing has had little effect on the company's share price.

Source:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/07/15/ashford-us-closure-and-what-it-says-about-profit-higher-ed>
http://chronicle.com/article/Why-Ashford-U-Closed-Its-Iowa/231541/?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en