

## Themes and Descriptions

**Global Competition:** Higher education institutions outside North America (e.g., in China) are increasing the quality and breadth of their programs, at times with government assistance. This will make it more difficult to continue to attract top international faculty and students to the US.

**Student Expectations:** Our core constituents—students—increasingly want an education better tailored to meet their needs, prior learning and knowledge, and life circumstances. They seek marketable skills, an integrated, interdisciplinary, adaptive education and real-world experience.

**Diversity and Inclusion:** US demographics suggest that our campuses will be more diverse in the future. This will increase universities' need to accept differences and enhance inclusiveness, and may lead to further stratification of haves vs have nots.

**Relevancy of Curriculum:** Students, their families and other stakeholders (governments, trustees, associations, etc.) are increasingly expecting universities to close the gap between academia and industry by providing market-focused skills and academic offerings directly related to specific job roles.

**Lifelong Learning:** The need for continual learning is rising due to frequent job shifts across careers, rapid technological advances, and the automation of work. To support alums, universities must identify ways to meet this need while also competing with other organizations (including non-universities) that are providing offerings in this space.

**Meaning and Purpose of Education:** Fewer students report they go to college to develop a philosophy of life. At the same time, students seek meaningful discussions and instruction relating to character, morality, and ethics in a world of political polarization and public distrust.

**Financial Sustainability:** Due to factors like decrease in affordability/increase in wealth inequality, increased competition, demographic shifts, cost of delivering education, the traditional financial models of universities are becoming less sustainable, leading to closure of schools, cost cuts, and efforts to capture additional revenue streams.

**Public Mistrust:** The majority of US citizens question the university's ability to be an objective arbiter of truth. Rising tuition, student debt, concerns about inadequate and biased learning, inequities in regard to access and success, athletic excesses and other scandals compound these perceived problems.

**Academic Research:** Communicating research is switching from a print-based model of limited dissemination to an internet-based, open access one, where any sector of society can contribute. This transition, combined with declining university enrollments, could mean the decline of research support and productivity, increased workloads, and a shift in faculty roles and responsibilities.

**Flexible/Shorter Offerings:** Universities and other competitors are increasingly offering shorter programs (e.g. badges, certificates, stackable degrees, etc.) that can be pursued by learners over time in flexible ways. These offerings tend to be lower in price (compared to the tuition of legacy university programs).

**Non-University Competition:** An increasing number of businesses (and non-for-profit organizations) are providing educational offerings to both college-age students and working professionals, frequently utilizing online delivery platforms. At the same time, some corporations are establishing their own, in-house "universities" to support the educational and training needs of their employees.

**Integration of Technology:** More universities are utilizing advanced technologies to recruit and support learners, optimize and personalize learning, deliver knowledge to remote learners, automate administrative tasks, etc. Such technologies include Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, Adaptive Learning Management Systems, and Mobile Platforms.

**Faculty/Staff Roles:** The faculty/staff talent pools are evolving (in terms of job scope, faculty status, tenure, diversity, size, etc.) in response to social, technological, economic and other shifts in higher education. Universities are asked to re-imagine the traditional roles of faculty to take advantage of new opportunities and address challenges in this changing landscape.