

After the Pivot:

Strategic Evolution of Online Education in the Research University

Online Education Leaders from
Big Ten Academic Alliance Universities

June 2021

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A discussion paper designed as a resource to assist academic leadership in Big Ten Academic Alliance institutions in evaluating strategic decisions related to the future role of online learning activities at their universities. The authors fully recognize that each Big Ten Academic Alliance member has its own character and circumstances that will likely lead to varying approaches in addressing online learning.

Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying rapid shift to remote and online learning have significantly accelerated many preexisting, long-term challenges impacting the teaching mission of our Big Ten institutions, including:

- Large increases in residential students demanding the flexibility offered by online courses.
- A major shift of degrees (especially professional master's degrees) from on campus to online.
- A significant decrease in the future undergraduate pipeline and accompanying revenue ("the demographic cliff of 2025").
- Rapidly emerging student and workforce needs driving the demand for a wider variety of flexible educational opportunities throughout the lifetime of learners (the "60-year curriculum").
- The rise of such nonprofit "mega-universities" as ASU Online, University of Maryland Global Campus, and Western Governors (offering online programs to 30,000, 60,000, or even 120,000 students), which is erasing the geographic monopoly of the university.

Members of the Big Ten Academic Alliance Online Leaders Group, composed of the chief online officer (or contact) from each institution, strongly believe that now is the time to take action to position Big Ten institutions to succeed in a significantly altered post-COVID future, where online learning will loom large, strategic investment will be critical, and competition is likely to be intense. As author Joshua Kim described the post-COVID world, "Residential education will come back, but online education will never again be a fringe activity of the institution." Learners are emerging from COVID with significant experience in blended and online spaces, which are now becoming as critical as the physical campus in providing a successful student experience.

In order to fulfill our core teaching and learning missions and maintain sustainability into the third decade of the century, ***we believe our Big Ten institutions should adopt a strong and proactive, technology-enhanced learning focus in three strategic areas:***

1. Address the increasing demand for online learning and shift in demographics by emphasizing a new inclusive, equitable, and student-centered lifelong learning service model.

- Target a broader audience by reaching out beyond the declining number of traditional post-high school college students to address adult and lifelong learners with flexible start times, delivery options, stackable credentials, and microcredentials.

- Provide an inclusive and equitable climate that is welcoming to a broader range of learners and that builds on our missions as public and land-grant institutions.
- Focus on student success through advanced academic analytics and proactive e-advising systems that help students succeed while ensuring their privacy.
- Adopt a student-centered approach to all administrative processes (enabled by CRM technology) to retain current learners and attract new ones.
- Align these initiatives with workforce needs to lift the economies of our states and region.

2. Emphasize and provide the infrastructure to support high-quality and technology-enhanced learning driven by innovative pedagogy as a key differentiator in programs.

- Make critical infrastructure investments for growth in online and blended learning. Online learners' experience is dependent on technology, tools, and online services.
- Provide a more centrally coordinated, but collaborative, instructional design and development service, as well as resources for growth, to ensure a strong, at-scale faculty development approach and to enable greater consistency in the student experience.
- Leverage data and promote multidisciplinary collaboration.
- Align pedagogy with technology through teaching and academic technology units.
- Make learning more equitable, accessible, and affordable by leveraging online learning to support a more representative student body.
- Support student technology needs. Learning cannot depend solely upon a student's ability to afford and maintain their own digital infrastructure.

3. Clearly articulate—and deliver—value to learners from their educational investment with an emphasis on more flexible, integrated offerings that align with in-demand workforce skills.

- Support innovative, rapid, and responsive program creation and iteration.
- Highlight the value of each course and document the specific skills and competencies gained within courses and across programs.
- Drive workforce-ready skills that both students and employers value.
- Provide such alternative cost-to-degree models as noncredit-to-credit pathways, stackable credentials, and competency-based learning options.

Using This Discussion Paper to Advance the Conversation on Your Campus

To initiate the conversation as to how your institution is planning to move forward to address the expected rise in demand for online and blended learning, we recommend the following action steps:

Step 1: Distribute this report to university leadership and key stakeholders.

Step 2: Conduct conversations with university leaders and stakeholders.

Step 3: Assess your current state using the tools in Appendix B.

Step 4: Establish a roadmap for your university with key milestones.

Step 5: Create action groups to implement strategies.

Big Ten Academic Alliance Chief Online Officers and Representatives

The following **Big Ten Academic Alliance** chief online officers and representatives support the findings and recommendations in this discussion paper:

- ***Andrea Deau**, Assistant Vice Provost Online Lifelong Learning, University of Wisconsin–Madison
- ***Chris Foley**, Associate Vice President and Director of the Office of Online Education, Indiana University
- ***Reba-Anna Lee**, Assistant Dean of Distance Learning, School of Professional Studies, Northwestern University
- ***Bob Rubinyi**, Senior Analyst for Online Learning, University of Minnesota
- ***Mary Warneka**, Associate Director Learning Experience, University of Maryland
- **Antonius Bittmann**, Associate Vice President, Online Programs, Rutgers University
- **James DeVaney**, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Innovation and Executive Director of the Center for Academic Innovation, University of Michigan
- **Robert Griffiths**, Associate Vice President, Distance Education, Ohio State University
- **Laura Hendley**, Assistant Provost for Educational Innovation, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- **Jeff Lindgren**, Interim Co-Director, Center for Educational Innovation, University of Minnesota
- **Chris Martin**, Executive Director, Online Operations and Student Experience, Purdue University
- **Matthew Nesson**, Associate Director, Professional and Continuing Education, University of Maryland
- **Mary Niemiec**, Associate Vice President for Digital Education and Director, NU Online, University of Nebraska
- **Karen I. Pollack**, Associate Vice Provost for Online Education, Penn State Online, The World Campus
- **Gerald Rhead**, Director, Academic Entrepreneurship, Michigan State University
- **Chris Scherer**, Director/New Program Initiatives and Digital Learning, School of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers University
- **Anne Zalenski**, Associate Dean, University College, University of Iowa

**Members of the discussion paper steering committee*

After the Pivot: Strategic Evolution of Online Education in the Research University

I. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many significant short-term and long-term changes to our institutions, with online learning playing a central role. Even before the pandemic, universities were confronting a series of emerging challenges impacting their teaching mission, including:

- Large increases in residential students demanding the flexibility offered by online courses.
- A major shift of degrees (especially professional master's degrees) from on campus to online.
- A significant decrease in the future undergraduate pipeline and accompanying revenue ("the demographic cliff of 2025").
- Rapidly emerging student and workforce needs driving the demand for a wider variety of flexible educational opportunities throughout the lifetime of learners (the "60-year curriculum").
- The rise of such nonprofit "mega-universities" as ASU Online, University of Maryland Global Campus, and Western Governors (offering online programs to 30,000, 60,000, or even 120,000 students), which is erasing the geographic monopoly of the university.

Members of the Big Ten Academic Alliance Online Leaders Group strongly believe that now is the time to take action to position Big Ten institutions to succeed in a significantly altered post-COVID future where online learning will loom large. As educational columnist Joshua Kim put it, "Residential education will come back, but online education will never again be a fringe activity of the institution."

In this white paper, we identify three critical areas that need to be addressed to ensure the sustainability of the teaching and learning component of our institutional missions into the third decade of the century:

- *Student-focused services model*
- *High-quality, technology-enhanced learning*
- *Articulating and delivering value to learners*

We believe that our institutions are up to this challenge. If our Big Ten schools were able to shift to remote learning in a two-week period in Spring 2020, then we can certainly apply a strategic, deliberative, and inclusive approach to position us for success in the next 10 years.

It is our hope that this paper will guide discussions and strategic priorities for technology-enhanced learning and inspire the necessary investments. We envision a 21st-century education model that builds on the strengths of both online and face-to-face pedagogies and methodologies to address projected student and community needs and to foster achievement and access, both on and off campus.

II. Student-Focused Services Model

The *Educause 2019 Top 10 IT Issues* validated the increasing importance of the student-centered institution, indicating that a deeper focus on the “student experience”—from applicants to alumni—was a growing trend in higher education. This includes emphasizing student wellness and community building and ensuring that all aspects of student interactions with the institutions are thoughtfully planned. Students are increasingly bringing in a consumer mindset. Engaging them will require an evolution of the university culture and approach to incoming students. In an environment where universities grapple with decreasing revenues and a desire to reach new audiences to foster growth, it is vital that research institutions remain a compelling educational option for prospective students.

CURRENT STATE

Widening Interest in Online Learning. While some students had less than optimal experiences with the rapid pivot to “emergency remote learning,” other students valued the additional flexibility and pedagogical opportunities provided by online delivery. Higher education commentators expect the net result to be a significant increase in the demand for online learning for both residential and distance students. Exclusively online students will seek more academic program choices. Resident students will likely be enrolled at an increasing rate in “blended” programs that feature both on-site and online classes for additional flexibility and improved pedagogy (e.g., for large survey classes).

Increasing Choices. Technology is weakening the geographic monopoly of the university. Beyond the cohort of students attending college immediately after high school (now a minority of all students in higher education), the place-based monopoly of the higher education institution is already diminishing. If the local higher education institution does not provide the flexibility, program, or support students need, those seeking educational opportunities beyond place-based degree programs will be able to easily access these online from other high-quality, out-of-state (and, in some cases, other in-state) institutions.

Other public, private, nonprofit, and for-profit higher education institutions are rapidly working to provide a wide variety of academic programs that are responsive to industry needs and market research indicators. Our Big Ten Academic Alliance institutions will be at a serious disadvantage in providing new types of credentials (including certificates and microcredentials) if we do not adapt and innovate. Silos need to be torn down and

schools should be encouraged to view collaborating with other units across the institution as an opportunity to turn toward agile curriculum design, not only within, but across, disciplines. In this way, graduates will be much better prepared to solve society's most pressing problems and to thrive in the future of work. Such an approach could also provide opportunities for more innovative collaboration across the Big Ten institutions beyond today's CourseShare program for less commonly taught languages.

Decrease in Future Pipeline. As articulated in a number of recent articles, including "Americans Are Having Fewer Kids. What Will That Mean for Higher Education?" (Harvard Business Review, October 17, 2019), the Great Recession of 2008 resulted in 800,000 fewer babies being born in 2018. This translates to significantly fewer high school students applying for college in the mid-2020s. But the effect will not be evenly distributed geographically, with the Midwest and Northeast experiencing significant declines. States such as Ohio are reporting a type of "brain drain" where more residents are now enrolled in out-of-state universities than their institutions enroll from other states (NC-SARA data). Adult learners should become a priority for the teaching mission of our institutions, including the need for flexibility in instructional modes and scheduling to meet working adults' needs.

Increasingly Savvy Consumers. Providing a high-quality student experience is critical in attracting and retaining students. As increasingly savvy consumers, students know how to research and find the best products and prices. The public has come to expect the opportunity to use self-serve online resources and to access efficient customer service when problems arise. These consumer expectations are carrying over to the world of higher education, and our learners want the same level of service from their learning institutions. Students are expecting a seamless experience across all delivery modes, whether online or on site. This has become even more critical with the COVID-driven convergence toward hybrid experiences tailored to better address student needs.

CRITERIA FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

Fully Adopt a Customer Relationship Management System (CRM). A critical technology component to support the student experience is a comprehensive and well-implemented CRM. Too often, students need to retell their story with each campus unit they visit. We send them conflicting and duplicative messages, making it less likely that they will read them. This is especially true for online adult learners, who already have limited time to dedicate to their education.

A student-centered approach to all administrative processes is fundamental for keeping current learners and for attracting new ones. There is no reason why Big Ten Academic Alliance institutions should not be a student's first choice for online learning, as opposed to one of the "mega-universities." Big Ten Academic Alliance institutions are mission driven to serve students and provide pathways toward flourishing communities and meaningful lives. We aspire to be our citizens' first choice.

In order for this to be the case, students require a barrier-free experience that leaves them feeling emotionally connected to, and proud of, their affiliation with the institution. This can lead to a lifelong connection with the university and additional engagement in the social promotion of the university brand.

Strive for New Markets. The “100-year life” and the “60-year curriculum” are creating new educational needs while redefining the “traditional student” and the academic degree. Young people planning for retirement are told to prepare for a 95-year lifespan. Those entering the workforce are projected to change careers multiple times and are likely to have more than 12 different jobs during their working life, increasing the need for lifelong learning.

Changes in work life are already leading learners to demand a more flexible university. Students are beginning to reject the current model of providing only discrete bachelor’s, master’s, PhD, and continuing education credentials. Instead, they are seeking a university that can be a flexible lifelong partner in offering a variety of educational opportunities tailored to their needs, including:

- Different delivery modes.
- Different types of “stackable” credentials, including microcredentials such as credit and noncredit certificates.
- Flexible and multiple start times during the year.

Design Processes That Promote an Inclusive and Equitable Campus Climate.

A student-centered approach to administrative processes should include aspects of universal design to remove barriers, especially for students with disabilities, non-native speakers, first-generation college students, and others for whom the navigation of complex policies and processes is especially onerous. This would require increased training and knowledge for staff regarding disabilities, communication and accommodation strategies, rights and responsibilities, and campus resources. By pursuing this focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion, we can ensure our universities do not perpetuate social divides by class, race, first-generation students, and non-native speakers.

Personal barriers impacting online learners, especially the returning adult population, can be significant. Students face competing demands on their time while they navigate work, family, and aging parents; financial challenges; and even the uncertainty that they can succeed in a degree program. When students also have to navigate the fragmented administrative processes and student infrastructure that are all too common in many institutions of higher education, they may leave the university.

Focus on Student Success. Data mining can be leveraged to actively support student success. Universities should move away from fragmented and highly decentralized

approaches and toward more integrated methods of assessing and providing action-oriented insights regarding student data. Analysis for timely and accurate action should be the rule, with the integration and implementation of “just-in-time” intervention strategies alongside traditional advising and student services. This is no simple task. There are privacy and ethical issues to honor; and the extreme magnitude of the data that universities possess will require investment of time and resources.

III. High-Quality, Technology-Enhanced Learning

The use of academic technology, regardless of course modality, has increasingly been the norm for higher education during the past decade. In a post-pandemic society, however, students’ expectations for technology-supported learning will have progressed even further. In addition to experiences in learning management systems, student fluency with entertainment software (Netflix, Instagram, Discord, Twitch, and Amazon) sets high expectations for their digital experiences. Institutions should be prepared to invest further in such areas as course development, faculty development, student success, and appropriate technical infrastructures to provide a seamless learning experience for students.

CURRENT STATE

Lean Budgets. Reduced budgets will require less duplication and a more centrally coordinated approach to online learning and support. The current state at many institutions can lead to both redundancies and gaps in service. There is often no provision for prioritizing collaboration across system campuses in the creation and offering of online degrees and strategic online courses. Instead, individual campuses and collegiate units pursue their own priorities without attention to potential overlap or duplicative costs.

Digital Divide Challenge. Prior to the 1980s, most courses depended upon the same instructional technologies across multiple generations (e.g., a chalkboard, library, textbooks), but in the last 30 years, we have gone from the integration of mainframe computing to personal computers, laptops, Wi-Fi, online learning, and smartphones. In this rapidly evolving world of learning and knowledge dissemination, the way faculty learned will likely be significantly different from the way their students learn. Each student cohort will increasingly bring new learning preferences, and there will be an ongoing need to educate faculty on new instructional technologies and pedagogical approaches. In addressing equity-and-access goals, Big Ten institutions face the added challenge of incorporating emerging technologies (e.g., artificial intelligence, extended reality, and virtual reality), while also trying to serve other students who need minimalist, universal-design, mobile friendly, and less data-intensive instructional technology systems.

A New Space to Manage. Campus buildings and classrooms have been managed for centuries. Today, the growing infrastructure surrounding virtual or blended classrooms requires a similar kind of management. Just as the physical space has required architects, contractors, maintenance, and custodial staff, the digital learning space requires no less of a team to build and maintain it. The “campus experience” for online learners depends on technology tools and online services. The LMS is their campus, not buildings, unions, or athletic facilities. Strategic leaders, privacy officers, data analysts, accessibility experts, instructional designers, academic technologists, graphic designers, and information architects are just a few of the team members needed for these “digital classroom and campus facilities.”

CRITERIA FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

Budget for Growth. Prioritize for Success. The long-term fiscal impacts of the pandemic present a critical challenge. We recommend a bold, future-oriented vision. Budget decisions should be made strategically to support the expected demand for online programs and corresponding opportunities for enrollment growth. They should not rely on across-the-board cuts that adversely impact the core teaching and learning mission. Because online is “a new space to manage,” critical new infrastructure is needed for instructional design; student support; market research, marketing and enrollment management; policy realignment, system coordination, compliance, data analysis, and project management; and faculty development. A clear decision-making structure and prioritization process are essential to support the broader goals of the institution in serving learners, not just addressing individual academic unit needs. With the change in student demand, there will also likely need to be a shift in institutional funding away from existing work to new areas. Institutions need to examine whether there are opportunities to create programming to upskill our own employees to meet the needs of the evolving university.

Provide Greater Central Coordination, and Resource for Growth. As mentioned earlier, the new digital space that supports in-person, online, and blended courses needs to be managed by a robust team of professionals. Their charge would be to:

- Reduce the faculty workload required to develop and deliver coursework.
- Provide greater consistency and quality in course design, including the need to address concerns related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Leverage data to improve the student learning experience.
- Coordinate multi-course and multidisciplinary collaborations to leverage evidence-based practices for learning and to create new, measurably effective programs.

Align Academic Technology with Pedagogy. Academic technology units need to become more closely aligned with pedagogical support units like teaching and learning

centers. Institutions need to do a better job of connecting their significant research strengths in learning science and other related fields with the academic technologies that institutions employ in order to lead and advance research and effective practices.

Ensure Faculty Development. Faculty should be trained to bridge a continuous digital divide between themselves and the students they teach. The COVID-19 pandemic has proven that online teaching and learning can be included as a part of a university portfolio. Higher education institutions need to plan on how they can work within the parameters of the new definition of quality online education. A key step would be to reimagine faculty professional development to support high-quality online teaching and learning and the instructional design process.

Design Equitable and Accessible Learning. The rapid shift to digital content and the political climate in 2020 challenged many instructors to consider accessibility and other aspects of universal design to create equitable learning experiences. According to a recent study documented in the *Washington Post*, “In many states, Black enrollment at flagship universities lags behind the share completing high school.” Online learning has a role to play in providing affordable and accessible education to a more representative student body. Some institutions, such as Arizona State and Georgia Tech, have committed to offer both highly selective academic programs, as well as those with broader access pathways. As Arizona State says in its mission, their university should be “measured not by whom it excludes, but by whom it includes and how they succeed. . . .”

Support Student Technology Needs. The pandemic has also underscored discrepancies in physical access to technology. Institutions should consider not just the availability of online materials and coursework, but the technology and tools required for students to use them. In the future, access to higher education programs at R-1 institutions, whether on campus or online, cannot depend solely upon a student’s ability to afford and maintain their own digital infrastructure. Big Ten Institutions are in a position to extend our community partnerships and be an agent of positive change to support learners in their communities.

Fine-Tune Technology Review Process. The pace of technological innovation is fast and greatly driven by industries outside of higher education. Institutions should fine-tune the technology review process, including the evaluation, adoption or creation, maintenance, integration, and possible sunseting of software and platforms. New purchases should be driven by pedagogical strategies with a data-driven approach to monitor rates of adoption.

Particular attention should be given to the mix of internally developed technologies versus externally acquired products. Given the magnitude of investment required for technology development, as well as the pace of innovation and change, organizations should reserve limited development resources to:

1. Generate interfaces between technological products.
2. Fill technology gaps that are not readily available in the market.
3. Offer customizations that are required to meet the needs of university policy and procedure.
4. Guide transitions from one platform to another when products inevitably (and increasingly) become outdated.

Universities are more often consumers/curators of services rather than innovators, because our institutions do not have the capital to be an Amazon or Google.

IV. Articulating and Delivering Value to Learners

The value of an education is now increasingly being defined outside of traditional colleges and universities. Lower-cost, highly flexible, practical, and applied courses and programs from online institutions and corporations are becoming an enticing and cost-effective option for many students. Higher education institutions are being challenged to consider the broader competitive educational “business” environment while still preserving and advancing their core mission. This involves reflecting on the value our institutions have traditionally provided and how we can build on that through innovation to offer more benefits to a new generation of learners.

CURRENT STATE

Reliance on Institutional Brand. Colleges and universities have historically relied on the value of their institution’s name and legacy. A select group of elite universities have significant name recognition, creating a major demand for their graduates. Recognition of faculty research and tenured faculty has also conveyed value, especially for students interested in specific disciplines or areas of research.

Exclusivity/Selectivity. Colleges and universities also continue to advertise the small percentage of students who are accepted in order to highlight the selectivity and exclusiveness of their programs. According to a Business Insider 2019 article, a college degree can increase student earning potential by up to 167 percent, depending on the industry and state. Focusing on providing additional access options, however, can help significantly in: increasing tax revenues for our states and region, reduced need for government services, and the opportunity to create flourishing communities.

High Cost-to-Degree. A college education is a major investment. According to *U.S. News & World Report*, as of 2020 the average annual cost of tuition and fees of a four-year degree was \$11,000 from a public university and \$41,000 from a private institution. These are just the “direct costs” of an education and do not include additional costs that

students incur such as room, board, books, and transportation. In many cases, a significant portion of college costs have been borne by students and their families by either paying “out of pocket” or through loans. There are also broader equity concerns, where poor and middle-class families are bearing more debt and are increasingly less likely to afford the cost compared to wealthy families, further exacerbating inequities into the next generation, especially with students of color.

As these costs increase, students and families have questioned the value of a traditional college education and have looked to alternatives. Initially, the Great Recession introduced greater price sensitivity and aversion to using loans to pay for education. Now the pandemic and the move to remote learning has brought additional questions about the value of high-cost education. Economic uncertainty, coupled with increased comfort with online education, has placed significant pressure on the pricing of higher education. Remote education has put additional pressure on college costs, as students have often compared the tuition rates of on-campus programs with online program tuition, which can often be less expensive than on-campus tuition, especially the non-resident rates. One important note, however, is that this concern is not universally shared by all student segments and therefore will likely impact campuses differently (e.g., two-year institutions experiencing the largest decline in enrollments during the pandemic).

Corporate Rivals. While many public and private universities have been closely monitoring for-profit institutions providing online degrees, companies such as Google have emerged recently as competitors that provide post-secondary, skills-based microcredentials. As outlined in a recent *Inc.* article, “Google’s New Career Certificates Could Disrupt the College Degree,” the Google certificate program “takes only six months to complete, and will be a fraction of the cost of college.” Since it is being offered by Google, there is already strong brand recognition internationally and access to a seamless technology platform.

At some companies, a degree is no longer needed to increase earning potential. Industry giants such as Tesla and Apple have dropped the requirement for many positions, emphasizing instead the value of practical experience, initiative, and industry certifications.

CRITERIA FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

Support Innovative and Rapid Program Creation. In order to compete, higher education institutions need to respond to new quality metrics such as speed-to-market, affordability, seamless use of technology, and clear relevance and applicability of the learning. To do this effectively will require critical infrastructure investments in key areas, including market research, marketing, student services, instructional design, faculty development, and data analysis.

Highlight Value of Each Course. Part of the shift in defining quality is the value that is being placed on individual courses or a set of courses rather than on an entire degree. The increase in microcredentialing and continuing popularity of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), especially in professional areas, provides further evidence for this trend. According to Dhawal Shah from Class Central, the modern MOOCs movement, now in its ninth year, encompasses more than 900 universities around the world, providing approximately 13,000 courses for 120 million learners enrolled (Shaw, 2019). As indicated, employers are placing increased emphasis on the real-world application of specific skills covered in an individual course. MOOCs and microcredentials are directly addressing this need. If institutions of higher education can emphasize the outcomes and skills gained from individual courses, this would make a university student a more appealing candidate in the workforce.

Drive Workforce-Ready Skills. This is a cultural shift requiring research institutions to focus on who is graduating rather than who is being accepted. Employers and students have similar expectations: they want to graduate with workforce-ready skills or experience. There is a shrinking acceptance of the idea that college graduates will “learn on the job.” In today’s work climate, employers are showing increasing interest in hiring a person with hands-on experience over a college graduate. Our institutions need to make a better case documenting that the broader liberal arts curriculum offered by our universities offer specific benefits in areas such as leadership, entrepreneurship, and critical thinking that go beyond just imparting specific skills.

Provide Alternative Cost-to-Degree Models for More Affordable Degrees.

To address the high cost of higher education, many institutions are looking at strategies that include noncredit-to-credit pathways (e.g., Micromasters, MasterTrack, microcredential certificates), stackable credentials, the alignment of verifiable skills with broader curricular materials, more flexible credit-for-prior learning practices, and employer cost-sharing of degrees.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

The Big Ten Academic Alliance Online Leadership Group believes that now is the critical time during the waning months of the COVID pandemic for member institutions to plan and implement strategies to prepare for the increased demand for online learning in their institutions. The three key action areas we have outlined in this report include the need to:

1. Address the increasing demand for online learning and shift in demographics by emphasizing a new inclusive, equitable, and student-centered lifelong learning service model.
2. Emphasize, and provide the infrastructure to support, high-quality, technology-enhanced learning driven by innovative pedagogy as a key differentiator in programs.

3. Clearly articulate, and deliver, value to learners from their educational investment with an emphasis on more flexible, integrated offerings that align with in-demand workforce skills.

Using This Discussion Paper to Advance the Conversation on Your Campus

To initiate the conversation as to how your institution is planning to move forward to address the expected rise in demand for online and blended learning, we recommend the following action steps:

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*“Learning and innovation go hand in hand.
The arrogance of success is to think that what
you did yesterday will be sufficient for tomorrow.”*

—William Pollard

Appendix A: Recommended Reading

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APPENDIX B: Questions for Self-Assessment

STUDENT FOCUSED SERVICES MODEL

- Are you fully leveraging your CRM throughout your institution to provide a barrier-free experience and helping to create lifelong connections to the university?
- What is your current plan for connecting with lifelong learners (from secondary school to seniors) and engaging new markets at your university?
- What support measures have you put into place to remove barriers for students with disabilities, non-native speakers, first-generation college students, and others for whom the navigation of complex policies and processes is especially onerous?
- Are you using integrated and “just-in-time” tools that leverage data analytics to support student success and to ask critical questions at the institutional level?

HIGH-QUALITY AND TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED LEARNING

- Are you budgeted and resourced for future growth? Consider your institution’s capacity for instructional design, market research, project management, instructional design, faculty development, enrollment management, accessibility, security compliance, and data analysis.
- Are you structured to provide central coordination and prioritization to support the broader goals of the institution in serving learners, as well as the needs of the individual academic units?
- Is faculty development available to ensure high-quality instruction?
- Are faculty development and instructional design services available to support equitable and accessible learning?
- Do your students have access to the technology and tools required for their academic success?

- How are you choosing to allocate your technology resources? When do you invest vs. develop? Are your technology purchases driven by pedagogical goals, research, and adoption rates?

ARTICULATING AND DELIVERING VALUE

- Do you have the appropriate leadership and decision-making process in place to facilitate fast and timely resolution to questions and decisions related to the development and delivery of online academic programs?
- Have you explored Agile project management for rapid program creation? Do you have mechanisms to collaborate across disciplines?
- Do you carefully consider how courses map to the broader learning outcomes of the program and to workforce certifications so that the learner can articulate the value gained from the credential(s)?
- Are you developing new programs in response to industry/labor trends as exhibited through market research?
- Do you have a culture that embraces innovation, experimentation, and piloting?