

IMPACTS OF THE CURRENT PANDEMIC  
ON HIGHER EDUCATION: THE  
PARADIGM SHIFT FOR STUDENT  
MOBILITY

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## DIMENSIONS OF EFFECTS—DISRUPTING THE DOMINANT PARADIGM

Higher education as we know it will change as a result of the Pandemic.

- Restrictions on physical mobility, both within countries, and between countries and regions.

- Interruptions in many aspects of “ordinary” administrative/bureaucratic activities of HEI’s, such as: recruitment, registration, provision of “in-place” classroom activities, etc.

- Interruptions in both regular, scheduled engagements between students and faculty, and equally important, the interruptions in student culture itself—a major source of “informal” higher education learning.

## MOVING BEYOND THESE...

- Let me suggest just three new “macro” effects emerging from the social impacts of the pandemic and their possible implications for mobility in higher education.

# ECONOMIC DISLOCATION

- Economic dislocation may occur in a wide variety of ways, but for this conversation let me emphasize only three:
  - One---impacts on gross domestic product. Higher education is a beneficiary of positive economic development in terms of its overall support from the broader society, and dependent on it for the fulfillment of its basic rationales—the graduation of students into a society in which they are expected to make a positive economic contribution, one that results in macro benefits to the society at large and to themselves as social/economic agents; and the provision of research and service to the broader community.
  - Two--institutional dependency—whether in the form of direct state support, or the payment of individual tuition, HEIs are in many ways fundamentally dependent on external financial support either in the form of contributions by the state or through grants and tuition—and often on all three together.
  - Three—Mobility...in a multitude of ways, higher education mobility is dependent on stable economic conditions in both sending and receiving locations. In the immediate events of the Pandemic mobility may be limited for compelling reasons of public health...which can set the primary “rules” for overall higher education engagement.

## DISRUPTIONS OF THE FACULTY/STUDENT “FLOW”

- The vast proportion of existing higher education faculty are most familiar and dependent on face to face classroom activity, which has in the main defined their ”teaching expertise”. Learning to construct, exercise with quality, and effectively evaluate performance within these new structures will be demanding.
- What we have tended to mean by a ‘good and experienced” teacher at university level, is one able to provide effective information and analysis, and “read” a classroom situation to determine the relevance and receptivity of their teaching, and adapt to such a constant and dynamic interaction.
- Distance education in all its forms requires a different skill set and will take explicit training and learning on the part of all involved.
- One can presume that for the near future, current levels of physical student mobility will at best be interrupted, and perhaps (at least for a while) eliminated...to be replaced by “virtual” models.

# HEIGHTENED PACE OF “INNOVATION” IN VIRTUAL LEARNING

- It is a basic finding of policy research that important changes within established institutional structures is more likely to occur in conditions of “crisis” than in periods of “normality”.
- The fact of the Pandemic’s varied dislocations will make “possible” changes that could not be otherwise made within various governmental and higher education administrative structures.
- What was previously “maybe barely possible”, e.g. wide-spread use of on-line courses, and working remotely, is now both possible and necessary.
- Thus, perhaps our first “task” in rethinking student mobility is a series of open forums, not unlike this one, with the desired “take away” of developing new ways of doing older and familiar “things” such as conventional matriculation.