10 The Vulnerability and Opportunity of Privatization in Higher Education during a Pandemic

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised fear for an impending global economic recession that would further accelerate the privatization tendencies in public higher education in the United States. During the 2008–2009 financial crisis, university leaders pursued self-sustaining academic programs as an alternative funding model in response to the state funding austerity. Such programs have grown dramatically at the master's level. Many scholars questioned the appropriateness of these programs with the public missions of universities. This multi-site comparative case study reveals that self-sustaining master's programs do not meaningfully contribute to student diversity, despite the highlight of diversity in home institutions' mission statements. Recommendations for public universities to be more attentive to diversity and inclusion according to most universities' missions are made at the end of the chapter.

Introduction

Higher education scholars have emphasized the educational values of a diverse graduate student body for all students (Hurtado et al., 1999; Milem, 2003; Page, 2007; Smith, 2015). To meaningfully contribute to the university diversity and inclusion missions, Milem et al. (2005) recommended achieving student compositional diversity first, since it can play a key symbolic role in indicating diversity as a priority for the institution and its leaders. However, they also cautioned institutions to seek to develop beyond just this one dimension of diversity. Although in some cases, mission statements are not always operationally substantive (Morphew & Hartley, 2006), all programs should adhere substantively to the same mission statements of their respective public institutions.

Prior to the COVID-19 global pandemic, recent history suggested that along with the decline in state appropriations during and after the economic

downturns in 2001–2002 and 2008–2009 and the increase in revenue-generating behaviors of public higher education institutions that resulted, a funding model for some master's programs in public research universities has appeared and expanded at a fast pace: self-sustaining master's programs SSMPs (Hagigi, 2014; Kinne-Clawson, 2017). These are master's programs that reside in public universities but do not rely on direct state appropriations, rather, generating virtually all their revenue from student tuition. Hagigi (2014), the only research on SSMPs thus far, found that none of the informants from two public health SSMPs in two universities within the same state mentioned the importance of student diversity. Furthermore, revenue-generating behaviors of public universities that resulted in rising tuition without adequate aid tend to hurt the access of students from low-socioeconomic status to these institutions (Bok, 2003; Ehrenberg, 2002).

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised fear for an impending global economic recession that would further accelerate the privatization of public higher education in the United States. This pandemic has already affected students in the US higher education when many institutions that traditionally provide in-person instruction abruptly moved to a virtual space with little preparation or structured guidance regarding how to do so in the spring of 2020 (Marinoni & van't Land, 2020). Along with the emergency responses from universities, students from non-dominant ethnic groups and internationally also faced discrimination, such as a rise in anti-Asian sentiment and hate crimes in the wake of the pandemic (Chen et al., 2020). These problems made revenue-generating programs, including SSMPs, more vulnerable when trying to attract students from underrepresented minority backgrounds and internationally.

SSMPs have been expanding, further accelerated the privatization of public higher education. Public higher education institutions are encouraged to uphold diversity and inclusion in their mission statements. However, whether SSMPs adhere to the diversity and inclusion missions is unknown, especially considering how the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified racial economic inequality. Therefore, this research aims to answer the following three research questions: (1) Is the expansion of self-sustaining master's programs undermining the mission of diversity and inclusion in public research universities? If so, how and why? (2) What lessons can self-sustaining master's programs offer public universities that want to make up for revenue loss during the COVID-19? (3) How can such programs create a more inclusive academic environment?

Literature Review

This research is informed by the literature on the privatization of higher education and diversity in US higher education. In most higher education contexts, privatization is defined as "the retreat of public dollars from public universities and a corresponding increased reliance on private money and diverse revenue streams, increased competition for resources, and freedom from excessive public regulations" (Eckel et al., 2005). Since the 1980s, the emergence and subsequent expansion of SSMPs in public universities followed a similar timeline to the

movement of privatization. Publicly available institutional policy documents from university and program webpages (for example, the University of Virginia, the University of Maryland, and the University of California), indicate that SSMPs can be in any discipline with a professional focus and with any modality of instruction delivery, and are allowed to set tuition rates based on a competitive market rate. In general, when facing declines in state appropriations, public research universities resort to raising tuition as one of the primary mechanisms to increase revenue. Raising tuition at institutions relying on external sources of full-paying students could lead to problematic disparities in the socio-economic profiles of in-state versus out-of-state students and international students (Ehrenberg, 2006; Toutkoushian, 2009). Concurring with Ehrenberg's (2006) and Toutkoushian's (2009) arguments, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2016) cautioned institutions that a financial model, with sharply rising tuition and more dependence on this revenue, had put the public character of these institutions at risk. Further, students coming from low socio-economic backgrounds could suffer more financially from attending public research universities, where tuition is generally higher than other types of public higher education institutions (Toutkoushian, 2009), and even worse they could be deterred from enrolling in these institutions (Heller, 1999; Paulsen & St. John, 2002; Perna et al., 2005).

In the US higher education system, the racial and ethnic diversity of student enrollment has been increasing (Espinosa et al., 2019). Educational scholars like Turner et al. (1996) have argued that to ensure the educational outcomes of an increasingly diverse student population, higher education institutions should seize the opportunity that diversity brings, reexamine their missions, values, and conventional practices, and take actions accordingly (Turner et al., 1996). More recently, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U, 2015) called for institutional commitment to equity and inclusive excellence, emphasizing the importance of expanding access to quality education, which can ultimately make the opportunity to enroll in higher education real for all people. However, the reality, as the report revealed, was that "at all levels of US education, there are entrenched practices that reinforce inequalities—and that lead to vastly different outcomes for low-income students and for students of color" (AAC&U, 2015, p. 3) than for students from higher social-economic status groups and other racial groups. Thus, the focus of this research is to unravel the implications of SSMPs on the diversity and inclusion mission of public universities, especially in light of the COVID-19 public health pandemic that intensified racial economic inequality.

Research Method

Considering the lack of unified terminology of SSMPs across institutions and no distinction between SSMPs and state-funded programs in the federal databases, the study is designed as a qualitative multi-site comparative case study using a purposeful sampling strategy (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002, Yin, 2014). The case study methodology is appropriate for answering the research questions because it is designed for researchers who aim to explore the "how"

and "why" of a contemporary social phenomenon that the researcher has little or no control over (Yin, 2014).

Data Sources

The sample includes six graduate programs in three flagship public research universities in three states (see Table 10.1). To protect the confidentiality of the institutions and especially the individual informants within each institution, the comparison table presents detailed information about each institution without naming them. Table 10.1 provides an overview of key characteristics among the three sample institutions, including location, control, state higher education governance, Carnegie classification (2018), total enrollment (Fall 2018), graduate enrollment (Fall 2018), master's degrees conferred (2017–2018), the first year an SSMP was started on record, the total number of SSMPs by September 2017, and state appropriations as a percentage of institutional revenue in 2017. These three states represent different state higher education governing structures that vary in their impact on institutional governance and

Table 10.1 Sample State and Institutional Profiles

Institutions	University A	University B	University C
Location	West Coast	Midwest	South
Control	Public	Public	Public
State and/or University system higher education governance	State higher education coordinating board	No single statewide higher education coordinating or governing board; system-wide governing board (Board of Regents of University B System)	State higher education coordinating board; system-wide governing board (Board of Regents of University C System)
Carnegie basic classification (2018)	Doctoral university: very high research activity	Doctoral university: very high research activity	Doctoral university: very high research activity
Total enrollment (Fall 2018)	> 47,000	> 44,000	> 51,000
Graduate enrollment (Fall 2018)	> 12,000	> 8,000	> 11,000
Master's degrees conferred (2017–2018)	> 3,900	> 2,200	> 3,000
Year first SSMP established	1983	1999	1995
Total number of SSMPs (September 2017)	111	48	26
State appropriations (Percentage of total revenue in 2017)	9%	10%	14%

management (Lacy, 2011; McGuinness, 2011). The universities in the sample, one in each state, are similar in size, have more than ten full-time SSMPs, and have their first SSMP established earlier than 2001.

Within each institution, SSMPs were sampled based on the following criteria (see Table 10.2 for sample program profiles): (a) full-time program for

Table 10.2 Sample Program Profiles

	University A		
Programs	*Information management*	*Mechanical engineering*	*Statistics*
Year of establishment	2001	2012 (Conversion from state-funded program)	2012 (Conversion from state-funded program)
Credit requirement	65	42	49
Tuition 2018–2019	$52,585	$22,470 (In-state); $41,370 (Out-of-state)	$26,950 (In-state); $45,325 (Out-of-state)
Enrollment 2017–2018	96	114	32
Acceptance 2017–2018	32%	81%	17%
International students	Eligible to apply	Eligible to apply	Eligible to apply
Administrative staff 2018–2019	1 full-time staff academic advisor; 3 staff administrators shared by 3 SSMPs	1 full-time staff academic advisor	1 full-time staff academic advisor

	University B	*University C*	
Programs	*Data Science*	*Software engineering*	*Economics*
Year of establishment	2013	1998	2013
Credit requirement	30	10 courses	30
Tuition (total) 2018–2019	$48,000 (non-VISP); $24,000 (VISP)	$34,000	10-month: $29,250 (In-state); $45,325 (Out-of-state)
Enrollment 2017–2018	65	17	56
Acceptance 2017–2018	68%	63%	64%
International students	Eligible to apply	Ineligible to apply	Eligible to apply
Administrative staff 2018–2019	1 full-time staff student services/ career advisor	1 full-time administrative staff; 2 staff administrators shared by 4 SSMPs	1 full-time staff administrator hired after the program started

students, (b) in-residence program, and (c) programs that have graduated more than one cohort of students. The reason for choosing only full-time programs was that international students could only be enrolled full-time due to visa requirements, and they are an important part of US graduate education and my research interest. The choice for in-residence programs is based on the fact that funding models, structure, and student populations are different from those of online programs. Online programs do not require international students to obtain visas since they are not physically on campus long enough to trigger the visa requirement. The reason for choosing programs that have

Table 10.3 Interview Participants by State, University, Program, and Role

State A			
University A			
University Extension Unit administrators	2		
The Graduate School administrators	3		
College dean, associate deans	4		
	Information Management	Mechanical Engineering	Statistics
Dept. chair, faculty, staff	2	2	2
Subtotal by university	15		
State B			
University B			
University Extension Unit administrator	1		
The Graduate School administrators	2		
	Data Science		
Dept. chair, faculty, staff	3		
Subtotal by university	6		
State C			
University system high-level administrator	1		
University C			
The Graduate School administrators	2		
College dean, associate deans	2		
	Software Engineering	Economics	
Dept. chair, faculty, staff	4	2	
Subtotal by university	11		
Totals by State			
All of University A	15		
All of University B	6		
All of University C	11		
Total Participants	32		

graduated more than one cohort of students is that usually the number of graduates in the first year of a new program differs from later years, and having alumni of the program helps with the understanding of student placement. At the graduate level, disciplinary differences profoundly affect culture, program design, and program outcomes (Berelson, 1960; Golde & Walker, 2006). In most cases, SSMPs in similar disciplines were sampled across institutions; at the same time, within each institution, a maximized variation across programs was adopted to obtain a spectrum of disciplinary differences.

This study utilized multiple data sources, including 40 semi-structured interview data collected from June 2017 to June 2019 with university system leaders, university central administrators, faculty and departmental staff (see Table 10.3), secondary administrative data acquired from public websites or requested through university administrators, and online and archived policy documents and reports. Multiple sources of evidence were used for the purpose of triangulation to achieve "convergence of evidence" (Yin, 2014, p. 121).

Findings

This research found that diversity, with respect to US minority students, is neither the mission nor the priority of SSMPs, despite the fact that all three sample universities included and elaborated on "diversity" in their mission and vision statements. This finding corroborated Hagigi's (2014) observation with evidence from student demographics and informants' accounts of reinvestment of the generated revenue from SSMPs. This study also found that students who enrolled in SSMPs were either capable of paying the tuition including relying on loans or receiving a subsidy from their employer. Interviewees (faculty and deans) generally referred to SSMPs as "revenue-generating programs." Increased resource allocation for diversity-related efforts may reflect universities' commitment to diversity, access, and affordability for all students (Taylor et al., 2016), yet the choice of investment of revenue generated by SSMPs, as determined by colleges or schools, does not reflect the value of diversity. None of the SSMPs in the sample invested the revenue into diversity-related efforts, such as recruitment and admission of students, inclusive student experience, and funding and financial support for students in need.

Admission. One of the design principles of SSMPs at the sample institutions is to attract either a new student population or a student population that has not been served traditionally. These student populations are supposed to be a new source of students in the market that has not been tapped into by higher education institutions regionally or nationally. Table 10.4 shows the breakdown of accessible information on student demographics for the entry class in the 2017–2018 academic year, with much lower-than-average underrepresented minority (URM) student enrollment in sample SSMPs compared to the university average in all master's programs. The URM column is a subset of students in the US column, and "-" means unavailable information due to the small number of URM students in sample SSMPs at the University C might be identifiable. When asked during the interviews, no informants from

Table 10.4 Select Student Demographic Information in the Sample SSMPs:
2017–2018

University	SSMP	Total	International	U.S.	URM (%)	University URM (%)
A	Statistics	23	20	3	0%	12.9%
	Information Management	96	58	38	6%	
	Mechanical Engineering	128	72	56	3%	
B	Data Science	46	46	0	0%	8.6%
C	Economics	61	28	33	-	17%
	Software Engineering	60	7 (work visa)	53	-	

any SSMP voiced concerns about not enrolling diverse domestic students into their programs. Comments regarding student admission and enrollment fall into two major categories: either to enroll a minimum number of students to meet the financial target or to enroll as many students as possible.

Student experience. Given the historical underrepresentation of particular student populations in higher education institutions, even in the 21st century, it is more pivotal than ever to recruit the most diverse students into higher education. SSMPs are established under the premise of preparing students for the future workforce and equipping students with more employable skills or, in some cases, with academic skills to pursue advanced graduate education such as a doctoral degree. Having a diverse student composition is the first step in creating a space where diverse perspectives are appreciated. Research in graduate education has proved the value of having a diverse team working on problem-solving or project development (Harvey & Allard, 2014; Page, 2007). Based on the review of documents and interviews, faculty and administrators in sample SSMPs have not considered diversifying students, URM students in the United States, in their programs as a priority. As a result, students did not benefit from being part of a learning environment with diverse perspectives. Besides, the low staff-to-student ratio in SSMP student service is particularly problematic when sufficient institutional and departmental support has been identified as a key to the master's student success (Conrad et al., 1993).

Funding and financial support. For conventional stand-alone master's programs, such as a Master of Business Administration (MBA) or master's of law, professional schools tend not to fund their students but provide merit-based scholarships for a few select students (Glazer-Raymo, 2005). The assumption that terminal master's degrees lead to certain well-paying professions is the foundation of many SSMPs, and students may pay their tuition or take out loans in the hope of earning a rewarding post-graduation salary. However, most first-generation graduate students in the United States come from low-income families and consider funding an essential factor in the pursuit of higher education (Holley & Gardner, 2012; Terenzini et al., 1996);

as such, having no financial support creates a financial barrier for students from underrepresented communities. The prevalent messages on the websites of SSMPs include the ineligibility of students for state-subsidized funding opportunities, such as teaching or research assistantships. The available financial support for students with insufficient funding includes all types of student loans, from federal to private sources. Nevertheless, international master's students are ineligible for any federal student loans. While some colleges or schools offer a minimal number of merit-based scholarships, to which students from all graduate programs, both state-funded and self-sustaining, are eligible to apply, no SSMPs in the sample offered non-merit-based scholarships.

To summarize, although public research universities claim to uphold diversity and inclusion at the center of their missions, SSMPs within these universities are operating without attending to these missions. The lack of diversity-informed practice makes one suspect that diversity and inclusion is simply institutional rhetoric not reflected in actual policies and practices. The findings of this study suggest that the expansion of SSMPs did undermine the mission of diversity and inclusion in the sample public research universities.

Discussion and Conclusions

Based on the analysis of this organizational study, the following recommendations are geared toward the state, institution, and program levels. Besides responding to the research questions, the many lessons learned from this research could potentially guide higher education leaders to design more equitable professionally oriented master's programs in public research universities, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

First, public higher education leaders should endeavor to secure state funding for innovative master's programs, for example, master's programs in data science, computational chemistry, or innovation management, and should be more cautious when creating any academic programs that require tying revenue to enrollment. This strict relationship between revenue and enrollment damages academic quality (Bok, 2003), especially when coupled with a high acceptance rate and rapid enrollment expansion without attentive recruiting diverse students. Such innovative master's programs could train qualified candidates, including students from low-income backgrounds who are rarely served when programs must break even from tuition alone, for particular careers that would benefit the state and simultaneously diversify its workforce. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the staffing shortage in the public health fields (CDC, 2021) raised the question of how our education system can prepare sufficient next-generation health care workers in face of crises. SSMPs could be a viable option to train more public health professionals and to diversify the workforce if they recruit students from low socio-economic backgrounds and provide adequate financial support.

Second, Colleges that operate SSMPs should also actively seek external funding opportunities, such as from private industry, to provide financial packages for students from low-income backgrounds, which would make admission a more equitable process. For example, one SSMP beyond the sample at University A receives funding from a large technology company in the form of student scholarships. The caution is that this type of external funding should not interfere with any decisions relating to the academic quality of the program. Although funding resources are more limited during COVID-19, new funding opportunities also emerged in response to the crisis in the health-related and medical fields (see U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2021).

Third, the institutional reporting process should ensure data transparency by disaggregating data about academic programs with different funding mechanisms. Currently, the enrollment and graduation data published by the federal government (e.g., the Department of Education) does not distinguish between state-funded programs and self-sustaining programs, which is a serious limitation. Additionally, state mandatory reporting requirements vary by state, depending on the role of the state higher education governing agency. As a result, the proportion of state-funded degrees out of the total number of degrees produced by public universities is debatable due to the ambiguity of counting degrees produced by self-sustaining programs toward the total number. For example, if attempting to measure the impact of COVID-19 on the privatization of higher education by calculating student enrollment or the number of graduates at the regional or national level, SSMPs should be counted separately from state-funded programs.

Finally, to assure academic program quality and student experience, academic program review for SSMPs should be separated from other state-funded programs in the same department or college and be implemented at the same frequency as the schedule of financial reviews, to assure that SSMPs are not primarily financially healthy secondarily academically sound. In particular, the alignment of SSMPs to the institutional diversity missions should be added as part of the academic review process. For example, when counting the number or calculating the proportion of underrepresented students in any department or college, students in SSMPs should not be grouped with state-funded master's and doctoral students. Further, the COVID-19 public health crisis affected both domestic and international students in the United States when many institutions that traditionally provide in-person instruction abruptly moved to a virtual space with little preparation or structured guidance regarding how to do so in the Spring of 2020 (Marinoni & van't Land, 2020). International students coming to the United States in ordinary times need to navigate visa processes, adjust to new cultural norms, and adapt to a new academic system that is often very different from that in their home country (Gold, 2016). Many of the SSMPs in the sample enrolled a decent number of international students, thus, faculty and academic staff in SSMPs are encouraged to stay connected with international students and provide tailored instructional support for their needs (Wilson, 2020).

Implications

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, universities are facing unprecedented challenges, including moving instruction online, funding uncertainties from the state and federal governments, and unpredictability in international student mobility (Altbach & de Wit, 2020). Although SSMPs can be a viable revenue-generation opportunity for public research universities during state funding austerity, they can also expose public institutions to the potential vulnerability of compromising their diversity and inclusion missions. Thus, when considering offer SSMPs, higher education leaders need to strive for more equitable practice in aspects of admission, student experience, and funding opportunities, especially in preparation for post-pandemic recovery.

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Bio

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COVID-19 AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

Exploring Contemporary Issues and Challenges

Edited by **Ravichandran Ammigan | Roy Y. Chan | Krishna Bista**

Foreword by Darla K. Deardorff

★STARSCHOLARS
N E T W O R K

Praise for this book

This book is a must-read for all university leaders and senior managers to enable them to get a better insight into the numerous challenges facing academia in the new normal, where it is not only about academic excellence but also about the human dimension through the enhanced use of technology.
—Dhanjay Jhurry, Professor and Vice-Chancellor,
University of Mauritius, Mauritius

This thought-provoking book captures contemporary changes to higher education at the micro and macro level post-2020. Stakeholders across the sector will benefit from reading the research-driven chapters that are stimulating and insightful. The book interrogates and challenges ways in which internationalization and global mobility can be re-imagined.
—Dawn Joseph, Associate Professor,
Deakin University, Australia

This book shows a more intensive and multi-facetted response by the higher education community to the pandemic that one might have expected. Attention is paid notably to sustain international life on campus.
—Ulrich Teichler, Professor Emeritus,
International Centre for Higher Education Research,
University of Kassel, Germany

This volume is a welcome addition to the literature on international Higher Education produced during the COVID-19 era. With a sensitively chosen array of topics, it shows new thinking around internationalisation, which is encouraging for all, and is exactly what is needed.
—Amanda C. Murphy, Professor and Director,
Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation,
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Italy

With the COVID-19 pandemic seeing no end in sight and its effects on international higher education for students around the world yet unknown, the importance of this timely book cannot be overstated. At a time when we are

literally awash in countless editorials prognosticating on *possible* implications of this health catastrophe, it is refreshing to get a carefully collected series of essays that step back, take a deep breath, and bring us back to the fundamental questions we need to be asking at this most dangerous time for humanity.

—Bernhard Streitwieser, IEP Program
Director & Associate Professor of International
Education & International Affairs,
George Washington University, USA

This is a valuable addition to higher education for understanding the complexities that COVID-19 introduced into the academic landscape. This volume explores valuable topics and issues such as employability, research and mentoring, innovative teaching and learning, and emerging opportunities during the pandemic.

—Jane E. Gatewood, Vice Provost for Global
Engagement, University of Rochester, USA

This timely book is much needed for practitioners, scholars, and policy makers who are grappling with the challenges created by the pandemic. The book is comprehensive given the depth and breath of topics. The human centric approach is refreshing.

—Fanta Aw, Vice President of Campus Life &
Inclusive Excellence, American University, USA

COVID-19 and Higher Education in the Global Context: Exploring Contemporary Issues and Challenges

COVID-19 and Higher Education in the Global Context: Exploring Contemporary Issues and Challenges addresses the lasting impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in the higher education sector and offers insights that inform policy and practice. Framed in a global context, this timely book captures a wide variety of topics, including student mobility, global partnerships and collaboration, student health and wellbeing, enrollment management, employability, and graduate education. It is designed to serve as a resource for scholar-practitioners, policymakers, and university administrators as they reimagine their work of comparative and international higher education in times of crisis. The collection of chapters assembled in this volume calls for a critical reflection on the opportunities and challenges that have emerged as a result of the global pandemic, and provides as a basis for how tertiary education systems around the world can learn from past experiences and shared viewpoints as institutions recalibrate operations, innovate programs, and manage change on their respective campuses.

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COVID-19 and Higher Education in the Global Context

Exploring Contemporary Issues and Challenges

Edited by
Ravichandran Ammigan,
Roy Y. Chan, and Krishna Bista

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In memory of those who lost their lives during the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide

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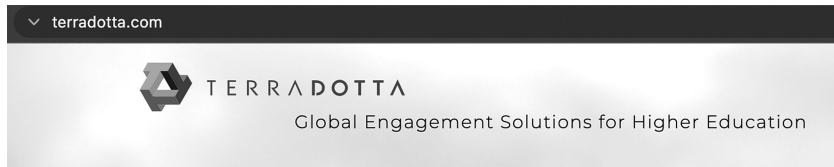
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Foreword

Darla K. Deardorff

The COVID-19 pandemic has represented a unifying challenge globally, providing a defining era in human existence as the pandemic upended life as we know it. *COVID-19 and Higher Education in the Global Context: Exploring Contemporary Issues and Challenges*, edited by Ammigan, Chan, and Bista, delves into the pandemic's impact on higher education around the world. Such an exploration empowers "educators, administrators, practitioners, policy makers, and families" with ideas and guidance that not only can be applied in the current context but also in the post-COVID future.

As the world emerges from the COVID pandemic, it is good to remember the signs of hope that have been there all along from the small gestures of kindness to the heroic efforts of those on the frontlines, from strangers lifting their voices together in song across balconies as the pandemic began with the later Jerusalema dance challenge that swept around the world, even as the pandemic was raging. This pandemic has shown us that we are all truly interconnected, for better or for worse. Desmond Tutu reminds us that we are all in this together and that our humanity is bound up together. We are members of one human family, and when some members are hurting, we all are hurt. He goes on to say, "For us to engage in the practices that will ensure that we all prosper, we must come to know that each of us is linked in the chain of our common humanity."

As we move into the light of a new day, there is radical hope in truly embracing our shared humanity. Let's seek to see ourselves in others. Let's seek to see the whole picture through discovering others' perspectives beyond our own. Let's seek to see the invisible among us and to remember the power of being seen and heard. As we do so, we can reflect on some of the following questions:

- What do I know about my neighbors?
- Do I make an effort to learn more?
- What are others' perspectives and can I articulate those?
- What are the connections I see in others to my own experiences?
- How much do I really listen for understanding and seek first to understand?

Higher education provides opportunities for students to explore these and other questions, as universities seek to educate global citizens. As we have come to understand more poignantly over the last year that we are indeed part of one global community, we need to remember that education is more than employment or even graduating global citizens—in the end, it is about how we come together as neighbors both locally and globally, to build a better future together. We can make choices every day that help make the world better for all. As Tutu noted, "When we step into our neighborhoods, we can engage in the practices of good neighborliness or we can choose not to. The quality of life on our planet now and in the future will be determined by the small daily choices that we make as much as by the big decisions in the corridors of power." As we move forward into a post-pandemic era, we must remember that actions matter and what we do impacts others. What daily actions will we take to support the most vulnerable among us? To improve the quality of life for others? How will we uphold justice and dignity for all in the human family? In the end, how will we be good neighbors to each other?

Let us commit to taking action to address the racial injustices and inequities faced by our neighbors. Let us commit to being a good neighbor, as we live in authentic solidarity with each other, aspiring to be compassionate, generous, and kind, knowing that we can find our greatest joy in showing love to all and that in doing so, we are embracing the oneness of our humanity.

Bio

Darla K. Deardorff is the Executive Director of the Association of International Education Administrators, a national professional organization based in Durham, North Carolina, USA. She is also a research scholar with the Social Science Research Institute at Duke University, where she has been an adjunct faculty member in the Program in Education and a faculty affiliate with International/Comparative Studies. In addition, she is an Adjunct Professor at North Carolina State University, a Visiting Research Professor at Nelson Mandela University in South Africa, and at Meiji University Research Institute of International Education (RIIE) in Japan as well as visiting faculty at Shanghai International Studies University (SISU) in China. Dr. Deardorff has served on faculty of Harvard University's Future of Learning Institute as well as Harvard University's Global Education Think Tank, in addition to being on faculty at the Summer Institute of Intercultural Communication in Portland, Oregon. She has also been an affiliated faculty at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, and Leeds Beckett University (formerly Leeds Metropolitan) in the United Kingdom and taught at Thammasat University in Bangkok, Thailand. She receives numerous invitations from around the world (in over 30 countries including in Europe, Latin America, Africa, Australia, and Asia) to speak on her research and work on intercultural competence and international education assessment, and is a noted expert on these topics, being named a Senior Fulbright Specialist (to South Africa and to Japan).

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