

## 2 **The Evolution Revolution**

### The Application of a Leadership Adaptation Continuum to the Future of Global Higher Education Post COVID-19

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#### **Abstract**

Viewing the COVID-19 crisis with the application of a leadership adaptation continuum provides insight into tracking systemic and environmental issues that could affect future educational sustainability. Leadership in higher education involves hedging in response to punctuated bursts that challenge educational stasis. Principles from the evolutionary theory of punctuated equilibrium illustrate leadership speciation that emerged during the fall of 2019 in Wuhan, China. Using an interdisciplinary phenomenological approach, the authors pulled concepts of evolutionary biology, business, and higher education leadership to understand the leaders' position on our leadership adaptation continuum model before and after the crisis, along with the association to varying leaders' response strategies; prevention-focused leadership, promotion-focused leadership, pragmatic leadership, and progressive leadership. By cross cutting our approach through different disciplines, new approaches to identifying future leaders that are adaptable and responsive can assist educators in surviving and succeeding during uncertain times.

#### **Keywords**

COVID-19, leadership adaptation continuum, leadership

#### **Introduction**

Punctuated bursts that produce a rapid evolution of leadership styles allow contemporary future leaders to be cognizant of how to navigate environmental pressures, such as the arrival of the novel coronavirus. On December 31, 2019, the World Health Organization (2020b) was notified of pneumonia-like cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, in China, later associated with the Huanan Seafood Market. The unexpected arrival of the novel virus produced a financial, psychological, and technological pandemic that led to massive

leadership speculation. This speculation can be dissected through education, business, and science lenses, which can assist future leaders in understanding and preparing for a new form of higher education. Strategies adopted from leaders post-coronavirus disease-19 (COVID-19) represent various alignments or deviations from universities' visions, missions, and values as they attempt to grapple with a new reality.

### ***History of Coronavirus***

A historical account of how the coronavirus arrived and spread across the globe provides the reader with an understanding of a unique setting, something that has been compared to the 1918 Spanish flu and the 2009 H1N1 Swine flu (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018, 2019). Following the notification of pneumonia-like symptoms in 2019, intensive investigations into the known causative agent of the infection disease occurred. By January 7, 2020, the health authorities in China had identified the novel coronavirus (nCoV) (World Health Organization, 2020a). Gardner (2020) reported by January 23, 2020, there were a little over 800 cases across about 20 regions in China, reflecting a vein-like connection among society. While the disease appeared isolated in China during January, arguments erupted in other countries. By January 19, 2020, the United States health officials reported the first case of a 35-year old man in Snohomish County, Washington, who had recently traveled to Wuhan, China (Holshue et al., 2020). He exhibited a prolonged cough and fever. This global spread presented a result of global mobility and reflected two facets of society: social networking as a mechanism to trace the disease and social connectedness among different cultures and people.

The progressive spread eventually created fear of the unknown and became a form of a global assessment of relative preparedness. Lotking (2020) referred to disaster preparedness and illustrated the desire for society to avoid disruption leading to a possible short-sighted adaptive mode, whereby the society will attempt to regain a sense of pre-COVID normalcy. Progressively, states mandated school closures, mask-wearing, and in-home grocery deliveries would shape a new form of routine. The word *normal* is a term that came to define the world without COVID and the world with COVID, with facets among society asking what normal would look like by fall 2020. As with any predictive model, it is grounded in evidence and impacted by values across society. The arrival of COVID-19 illustrated that the community was learning, adapting, and predicting all at once. However, as a leader, it is expected that answers are provided, and because of such a strong technological network, those answers are expected sooner rather than later. Therefore, leaders had the responsibility of being orators who had the solutions for the present moment and an unpredictable future.

Burke (2020) illustrated that predictive resurgence patterns over time will be influenced by overall immunity or cross-immunity and the transmission rates in warmer summer months. Cross-immunity, the ability to partially protect due to conserved antigens between other strains (Epstein & Price, 2010), can

help understand how one can implement new strategies in education but is still one of many variables that impacts what the remaining years will look like. Factoring in vaccine production, vaccine adopters, and non-adopters adds challenges since a vaccine is only as good as the percentage of the population that agrees to be vaccinated. As evidence from public health officials poured in over time, it became apparent that no one could predict what the remaining part of 2020 would look like for higher education or what *normal* would mean.

### ***Leadership Speciation***

Understanding of concepts related to evolution is challenging to comprehend and rarely as a learner can one witness the process. This lens, the researchers propose, is one in which the theory of punctuated equilibrium (Eldredge & Gould, 1972) can be applied to leadership style before COVID and after the arrival of COVID in the higher education system.

The concept of speciation arose through the work of Charles Darwin and Thomas Malthus, who, through observational scientific discovery, came to note that variation and similarities existed among species (Carroll, 2009). However, “Malthus proposed that there were checks-disease, famine, and death-upon the growth of populations that prevented them from increasing at an exponential rate” (p. 30). The theory of punctuated equilibrium explains that slow progressive change or stasis occurs with sudden bursts of fast progressive change, usually through some external force. The external pressure of COVID placed an unforgettable immediate hold on face-to-face social interaction, particularly as it relates to education. The educational structures exist as categories illustrating the vast diversity of the educational system ranging from community colleges, public and private colleges and universities, for-profit colleges, liberal arts colleges, research universities, religious colleges, and mission-driven colleges.

Online education threaded itself into some of these various structures and became a dominant form of knowledge in the spring of 2020 after the arrival of COVID. The sudden shift was a response to environmental change; a change Corning (2014) stated “can thus be expected to give rise to new needs (*besoins*) that in turn will stimulate the adoption of new ‘*habits*’” (p. 244). Rather than applying the punctuated equilibrium theory in biological terms, it can be used through a sociocultural lens. Kolondy et al. (2015) posited that in applying the punctuated equilibrium theory with computer simulations, cultural innovation views can be classified as lucky leap innovation, toolkit innovation, and innovative tool combination whereby change is not just about pure genius but also relies heavily on the contextualized environment. The environment is the fundamental foundation for this chapter in that leaders can avoid facing the disruption or they can use it as an opportunity to retool their organization. In applying the theory to university leadership, the ability to learn, adapt, survive, and thrive is mostly dependent on the culture that exists within the overall system. Under this model, it is assumed that leadership variation exists across all contexts, like how we can see genetic variation

among humans. By recognizing this leadership variation, it is possible to predict a form of cultural innovation based on the differential distribution of traits such as knowledge, and the frequency of COVID resurgence as a form of environmental change to retool a new university. Kolondy et al. (2015) noted “the periods of little change are waiting times between occurrences of large leaps, and each of these rare occurrences brings about rapid change in the form of the invention of functionally related tools, functionally analogous tools, or innovative combinations” (p. E6767). Therefore, leadership variation pre-COVID-19 led to speciation and is dependent on organizational structure (i.e., differential knowledge), institutional structure, and the ability to take and support innovative risks that could reposition oneself ahead of other leaders. Thus, diverse thinking and discovery paves the way for the new *normal*.

This chapter should serve as a tool to assist current and future leaders in engaging in reflective practices as they grow a new university post COVID. While society may hope to attain a former view of the university prior to COVID, the researchers posit that evolutionary punctuation results in either persistence and growth in the university organization or progressive decline.

The research question the researchers sought to address was the following:

- How can a leadership adaptation continuum serve as a tool to prepare future global higher education leaders?

## **Literature Review**

An integral part of good leadership is a leader’s capacity to adapt and grow from meeting significant crucibles. By committing to these best practices in direction, academic leaders will emerge from the crisis to rebuild with untarnished and perhaps enhanced credibility and branding. Many facets of the COVID-19 pandemic are unique, but it is unusual for university officials to contend with circumstances of this extent. Within this pandemic, universities are facing organizational change. Weick and Quinn (1999) perceived a shift in the organization as either continuous or episodic. The episodic difference is rare and radical at times, while constant change can be incremental, emergent, and endless. Possessing change management skills was related to bringing about effective organizational change. The lack of awareness of strategies for improvement in execution and the failure to adjust management style or organizational roles was cited as obstacles to progress (Bossidy & Charan, 2002; Gilley, 2005).

## **Global Higher Education**

While leadership practitioners in academia play a crucial role in their institution’s response to crises, in fact, the position of campus leaders in developing a culture of confidence, cooperation, and shared leadership before a crisis can affect the institution’s ability to withstand times of crisis more significantly (Kezar et al., 2018). The transition to online course delivery

may require some stakeholders to make radical changes in attitude, values, and beliefs (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001). It may also entail drastic changes and innovative approaches.

The converse relationship between leadership and the COVID-19 virus is the extreme need for a balanced curriculum offering equal opportunities for the community it serves. Leaders' thoughts and abilities are reflected in attitudes, systems, and processes that promote or hinder progress, further reinforcing the link between their activities and efficacy in bringing about change. For those academic leaders who are goal-oriented, risk-takers, and long-term strategic thinkers, there is an opportunity to create a spiral of success and gain a competitive advantage in their redesigned educational environment.

### ***Diversity of Leaders***

The work of Gulati et al. (2010) serves as a foundation for understanding four types of leadership before and after an evolutionary pandemic: prevention-focused leadership, promotion-focused leadership, pragmatic leadership, and progressive leadership. Leading change involves the use of a range of communication strategies to convey relevant communications, seek feedback, build preparation for moving forward with a sense of urgency, and inspire recipients to act. While Gulati et al. (2010) focused on companies, their definitions can be contextualized to the university leadership style.

In prevention-focused leaders, it is typical to adopt a defensive strategy after a disaster to avoid and minimize loss (Gulati et al., 2010). Leaders choose a static model where costs are immediately cut in the operating budget. Still, programs continue to operate, even though there might be fewer people and reduced quality. While prevention-focused leaders concentrate on the defensive, promotion-centered leaders develop offensive strategies that appear to benefit the overall system. Usually, the development-targeted leaders adopt a verbose mode of thinking that involves spending to get ahead of other networks, with a belief the university will become a superpower. Pragmatic leaders choose a combination of defensive and offensive strategies, where priorities become cutting from the budget and at the same time investing in new ways of conducting research. However, the critical element of investing after a crisis is that the investment is driven in response to the new needs from the crisis. Progressive leaders adopt the optimal balance between defensive and offensive strategies. By selecting the optimal balance where costs are cut using justified measurable data, the leadership can maintain support from the overall system. When the administration adopts more prevention-focused mechanisms and staff is let go as a response to the decline, it is more difficult for the leadership to achieve stability upon returning to normalcy. Thus, achieving a balance between cost-cutting and spending allows progressive leaders to survive and do well after the disaster. Leaders must understand that a professional re-articulation is necessary to convincingly redefine their position as invaluable in order not to be replaced.

### ***Adversity of Leaders***

The variation within the structure of higher education, like the variation within society, provides an opportunity to understand risk aversion and risk tolerance in leaders. A fundamental trait necessary for campus presidents is being comfortable at taking risks. Leaders must realize that a professional re-articulation is inevitable to redefine their role convincingly as indispensable in order not to be replaced. Training programs need to be designed suitably for mobilizing faculty resources by providing them with a wide range of holistic solutions to the online teaching challenge that can be addressed and making them essential to higher education professionals (Gulati et al., 2010). Leaders should create multi-level structures to guide a campaign against the crisis. Established systems often do not have any support for crisis management. Because of a lack of creativity and foresight, leaders often forget that organizational structures are designed for purposes other than crisis management.

### ***The Leadership Adaptation Continuum Framework***

Viewing leadership adaptation using a continuum (see Figure 2.1) allows educators and risk managers to analyze current and future preparedness as a model for identification of successful leadership. While all leaders possess a great deal of variability in traits, it is worth acknowledging one's own individual preparedness for events such as COVID-19. Lokting (2020) illustrated that after a 2016 Columbia University Disaster survey, 65% of households lacked plans for surviving a catastrophe, a concept that is related

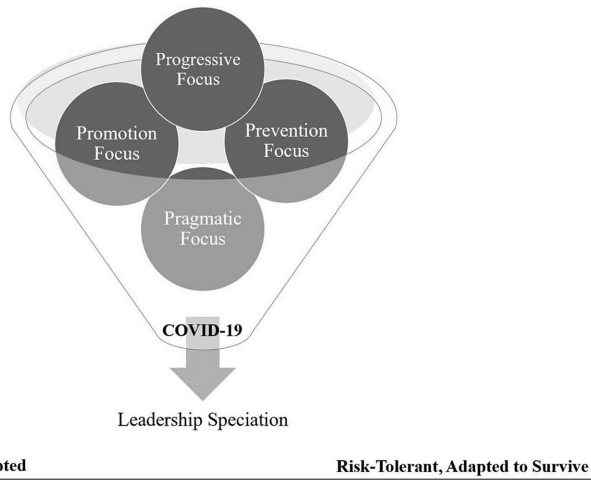


Figure 2.1 Leadership adaptation continuum.

to our own innate individual level of preparedness. Individually, it is easy to assume that disasters will not impact us as the individual but are more likely to impact others.

## **Research Method**

The researchers sought to adopt a qualitative phenomenological approach to evaluating experiences within university leadership prior to and after the arrival of the novel 2019 coronavirus. Phenomenology, for the purpose of this work, refers to how society experienced and navigated the world, particularly in response to the pandemic.

The phenomenological approach, as explained by French philosopher Merleau-Ponty (1945), was used to seek understanding of how leaders navigated the pandemic from the researchers' point of view. The researchers assumed that individuals' truths emerged from what they directly were experiencing and thus could lead to internal desires central to their own identity (Byrne, 2001). In addition, research supported by Sohn et al. (2017) was used to illustrate how voices within a community may be interpreted with the Merleau-Ponty philosophy noting, "Human beings are not passive before the stimuli in the lifeworld; we take an intentional stance toward the objects and events in our conscious awareness" (p. 125). This approach was chosen not because the research was more dialogical but because the dialog created revolved around how people vocalized their realities about education needs through what they perceived from their own experience of the pandemic.

Secondly, the researchers also reflected on their own experiences to aid current leaders and new emerging leaders in higher education responses. To explore this, a proposed leadership adaptation continuum was adopted as a theoretical framework to which various leadership styles were critiqued.

## ***Sample***

Leadership style was evaluated across two different university systems, each of which were renamed for the purpose of this research. The two university systems were different both in size and regarding the type of funding they receive. University A is a small private liberal arts college which depends on endowment funds and high tuition. University B is a large public, state school that serves a larger population and depends on state funding streams.

## **Results**

### ***University A Leadership***

University A is a private four-year liberal arts college; the institution serves as an essential element in the higher education system today through increased

educational opportunities. However, University A relies heavily on funding and has high institutional costs. University A administrators use a prevention leadership approach.

The pandemic exposed the ongoing mistrust between leaders of the academy and the communities they serve. The prevention leadership style highlighted the discrepancy between what is said and perceived and what derives from legitimate—and potentially productive—perspective variations (Gulati et al., 2010). Colleges and universities rely on outdated processes that have collapsed in this emergency period. How can we build lasting solutions rather than using band-aids to help us through the crisis? The academy is purposely made to look like a meritocracy that values diversity but is built down to its foundations to only support and value those of a specific subset of individuals. The preventative leadership style at University A ignores that the institution has a built-in system to continuously avoid the integration of oppressed and otherwise marginalized people in the academy, allowing for one group of privileged individuals to maintain power while providing crumbs to other communities. Leaders cannot separate capability through COVID-19, the campus discussion from the ongoing anti-racism violence by universities.

For University A, COVID-19 was and is an equity test, telling one who one might be if they respected equity as much as they think they do. Let leaders not hesitate until they have the next pandemic right. When leaders do hesitate, those who struggle will still be the ones who are suffering currently—the citizens who are really in need. Students recognize that the implementation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (2020) recommendations decreases the coronavirus spread, and the situation is continuously changing. Changes made regarding the upcoming semesters must be accompanied by clear information and instructions that are thoughtful and considerate of the difficulty students will face as they are implemented. With much uncertainty about the upcoming academic years, waiting for a new update or being directed to an empty website does not relieve the tension and anxiety that many students experience.

The lack of income that many students are facing will be at the top of their priority list. Many students have paid thousands of dollars in tuition to gain a sense of belonging on campuses. Many of whom must take out loans to cover these expenses. It is harsh and unreasonable to continue to pay for an on-campus experience within the current pandemic crisis. Administrators should recognize that students and parents are counting every penny that it takes to finance a college degree and be proactive in offering financial assistance and reimbursement when feasible. Leaders aim to make the numbers fit when carrying out their academic and educational missions. Transitioning into the *new norm* will require a different form of leadership (Gulati et al., 2010). Campus administrators need to ask, “How should academics and administrators concentrate on the potentially constructive aspect of their



diverse viewpoints and stop becoming stuck in trench warfare despite the very complicated nature of the COVID 19 crisis?”

### ***University B Leadership***

University B is a large public, state school, where survival requires bringing in revenue while acknowledging that the states must continue to balance their budget. The leadership within this institute responded to the pandemic using a progressive approach.

Prior to the pandemic, the leadership within this university focused on innovation as an alternative model for revenue streams. New models of revenue generation had been proposed, whereby faculty were perceived to be the authors of creative intellect. When new models such as the efforts to refit a university with a focus of intellectual property are utilized, there will be unintended consequences. This approach prior to the pandemic was associated with fear of change from the historical meaning and definition of tenure. Historically, the university structure has been grounded in traditional norms where faculty apply for promotion and rank through the journey of publication. However, when the paradigm shifts from publication to innovation, the system will attempt to resist this change. Gutsche (2009) refers to this resistance stating, “The ‘old way of doing things’ and fixed expectations are the enemies of adaptation” (p. 46). However, prior to the pandemic, this was a risk tolerant approach to generate revenue, specifically because it acknowledged the progressive decline in higher education funding.

During the transition to online coursework, the university leaders followed models that provided opportunity to continue measurement of effectiveness. While some areas saw cuts in the form of positions, the leadership within this university used the pandemic as a form of continued assessment. The sudden movement to online in March of 2020, proceeded with quick deployment of online coursework in conjunction with evaluation of cost savings for serving students online, versus face-to-face. Gulati et al. (2010) posited progressive companies stay close to the customer needs, and through this same lens, progressive leaders also stay close to the needs of their university. Examples of serving those needs involved contact with staff and faculty using wellness checks, whom at this point worked remotely, and deployment of new types of classes that now focused on emerging technologies in light of the technological revolution. The preparedness prior to the pandemic, shifting to alternate forms of revenue in the form of intellectual property and innovation and continued focus on people, allowed the entire system to persevere and evolve.

### **Implications for Theory and Practice**

We propose a leadership adaptation continuum that shows maximizing engagement in change allows leaders to reflect on how they inspire and engage

in beneficiaries of change as agents of change. Inevitably, the dependent condition tends to divide higher education institutions:

- 1 Leaders who became paralyzed, cut costs, and saw no change following COVID, inevitably will struggle to catch up to the new societal needs that will drive education.
- 2 Leaders who overspent, saw only opportunity for growth and lacked appropriate evaluation of alignment of current program offerings to new potential programs, will likely struggle to catch up to competitors.
- 3 Leaders who cut costs with reduced manpower and increased revenue, will have difficulty offering quality education, even though they spent money to improve in other new areas.
- 4 Leaders, who anticipated financial decline, proposed new models for revenue generation prior to the pandemic, used both cost-cutting procedures that were not limited to cutting personnel, and incorporated innovative research models for revenue generation, will likely thrive in a new state of normalcy.

There is no such thing as a complete institutional leader, but those leaders with the versatility and flexible ability to grow and develop as a result of handling a crisis may be able to respond more quickly and with less commitment to potential problems and might well be the perfect allostatic leader for academic institutions going forward (Yarnell & Grunberg, 2017).

The pandemic induced changes needed in higher education. The online mode will remain as a modern standard. Leading in times of distress goes well beyond the organization's pure tolerance to it. Leaders need a clear people-first mentality, a willingness to communicate with others and not outshine them, the institution's reorganization to address the crisis firmly and robustly, and, above all, a dream that goes beyond crisis. In this chapter as a part of the modern transition sparked by the coronavirus pandemic, we focused on the topic of leadership in academia and higher education.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

The questioning of the role of the university in educating the public has been debated for several years, producing evolutionary revolutions in how the university leadership responds to its changing environment. The education system is an example of a pluralistic organization that is constantly in a state of flux due to rising demands for measurable outcomes, response to unemployment rates, and societal need for instant gratification. This flux has produced a governing board not made up of trustees or faculty who make policy, but rather are market decisions acting as the governing board dictating every move the university leadership makes. While college education historically has been for the most elite social classes, the social shifts and the resistance by outsiders has produced a new generation of

students who are women, minorities, and post-traditional students (Trow, 1989). Our desire for *lernfreiheit*, a student's right to decide their course of study (Kerr, 2001), along with the publication *Was College Worthwhile* by Tunis in 1936, gave way to a new generation of students (Horowitz, 1987). This new student is the post-traditional student who now needs to evolve to new societal needs, and our higher education system is still trying to grapple with how to define what this student looks like. Soares (2013) defined the post-traditional student:

The term encompasses individuals with a range of education needs from high school graduates to high school dropouts and those with limited literacy and English language skills. Post-traditional learners also encompass many life stages and identities; they are single mothers, immigrants, veterans, and at-risk younger people looking for a second chance. (p. 2)

Applying this definition, one can understand the creation of the designer university one sees forming today in higher education as a response to *lernfreiheit* (Kerr, 2001), COVID-19, and an increased desire for accessibility to lifelong learning. It is by concerted and focused management intervention that universities successfully adopt success-fostering reform initiatives that target the needs of their students. Organizations and their members who do not understand the value of these talents will become another statistic in the history of reform failure.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The work presented by Gulati et al. (2010) assists in explaining the post-COVID results, particularly as it relates to their unexpected findings that post-recession winners were not always those cutting costs quick and deep. As science and technology grow, and new advances become ingrained as part of society, one will see the development of the designer university, like the creation of the designer gene. This will be a university not shaped by the administration, faculty, governing boards, but by the market itself. Lifelong knowledge, the commodity for which one will buy and sell, will come at a cost. Additionally, enrollment will be based on a desire to make one stand out as employable, marketable, and knowledgeable. Diversity today is one's own selling point, both in their own abilities and in institutions. One can even see this desire of uniqueness and measure it using social media *likes*. One can market themselves in the quest for lifelong learning and through their own design have selected and produced a university that is most compatible with the environment. Trow (1989) noted that the growth of older students, part-time students, minorities, and women in higher education is representative of how the power has shifted to the consumer, or what one refers to as the designer. This power of the consumer is illustrated in how students have demanded justification for high-cost tuition, considering the forced online

coursework. The issue is a self-perpetuating problem, where a gap exists, and the university is slowly trying to tinker with how it accommodates these new diverse student needs.

In conclusion, the trouble with universities' leadership is their inability to understand what the students' needs are and how to design an environment to meet those needs. In higher education, leaders focus on teaching the importance of feedback and assessments but have missed one of the largest assessments of all. One would attribute this issue to biases on only seeing outcomes, usually measured quantitatively, or processes measured qualitatively, while failing to realize that both are valuable. Faculty are fragmented into camps grounded in Kuhn's (1970) paradigms of being either positivist or constructivist, negating that true value is based on the research question alone. Failure of higher education is not an outcome, nor should be a process, rather it should be approached by looking at it from the pragmatic lens. The university that dies will be the university that failed to change its approach.

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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

 **STAR**SCHOLARS  
NETWORK

# 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-faceted 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.

**Ravichandran Ammigan, Ph.D.**, is the Associate Deputy Provost for International Programs and an Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Delaware, Delaware, USA.

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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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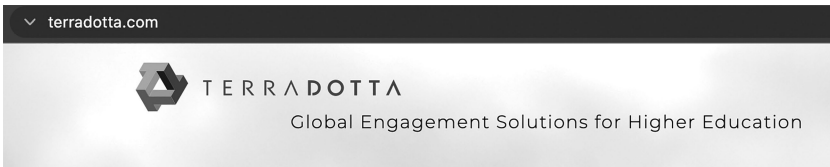
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# Foreword

*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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