

**Part II: Special Issue on the International and Comparative Impact of COVID-19 on
Institutions of Education**

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INTRODUCTION

Close to three years on, after severely disrupting every sphere of our lives, the world is still grappling with the burden of the evolving COVID-19 Variant of Concern (VoC) and subvariants. Globally, the education sector has seen tremendous changes since the onset of the coronavirus. Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared another global health emergency as Monkeypox transmissions have been documented to be on the rise (WHO, 2022). While its rate of transmissibility is not as severe as COVID-19, it is yet another signal of the potential disruptions arising from viral zoonotic transmissions. Already, officials in San Francisco have declared that Monkeypox cases are rising and call for resources to be mobilized to prevent the spread (Office of the Mayor, 2022).

With new viral transmissions on the horizon and ongoing COVID-19 challenges, this special issue documents the global setbacks faced in the field of international higher education. Disruptions to student learning and well-being, a sudden halt to internationalization activities, decline in undergraduate enrollment and staff shortages are just a few of the challenges that education institutions have faced since 2020 (Kuhfeld et al., 2022; Mbous et al, 2022; Mok et al., 2021). Economists project that the costs of these setbacks in the long run could mean that COVID-era cohort students could earn US\$49,000 to \$61,000 less in their lifetime and may cost the economy up to US\$188 billion each year as they enter the workforce (Dorn et al., 2021). Moreover, this also means that inequities in racial earnings will persist (Zerbino, 2021).

During this time of severe global health disparities, world governments and health professionals have also had to mitigate the harmful spread of COVID-19 related misinformation via existing and new social media platforms (Otto, 2021). In recent times, harmful misinformation and historically unchecked systemic biases against racial minorities have also

caused a worrisome rise in hate crimes. The US justice department reports that in 2020, hate crimes data show that race played the greatest motivation for (61.8 percent) crimes in single-bias incidents (US Department of Justice, 2020).

As we take stock of the psychological, economic, financial, and social damage (Pak et al., 2021) done over these pandemic years on the education sector we must also recognize the compounded impact of the worsening conflicts around the world. The Russia-Ukraine conflict and political instability in Italy, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Ethiopia and other countries have also contributed to rising costs, changes in how and where we travel and sustained supply chain woes. To make matters worse, economists predict an inevitable inflation driven recession which could mean market volatility, job loss, and greater inequality in the near future (Miller, 2022). As institutions around the world continue to prepare students for a post-pandemic workforce, this special issue aims at providing a robust understanding of these issues, the ways they impact our future and provide potential strategies collected from around the world to navigate these testing times.

Currently, medical science experts warn that the latest BA. 5 VoC and BA. 4 subvariant are highly transmissible and fear higher rates of infection and reinfection. To reduce the spread, they emphasize that comparative data from around the world show that vaccine regimens are key to protecting and saving lives (Arbel, et al., 2022; Gupta et al., 2021). Since the development of vaccines, the urgent call for disease mitigation with vaccine equity has been a top priority for the World Health Organization (2022). However, the fast spreading BA.5 VoC further highlights the inequities in vaccine delivery particularly given that new mutations are found in countries with lower rates of inoculation (Callaway, 2021; Welch, 2021). World education institutions continue to play a pivotal role in our collective ability to develop medical innovation, processes, and

procedures in the hopes of easing the burden of COVID-19. In this special issue, researchers from around the world discuss the setbacks they face, offer strategies to mitigate COVID-19 challenges and provide insights for a meaningful path forward.

In part two of JCIHE's special issue on the impact COVID-19 on world education systems, I am proud to present a diverse group of authors who examine data from China, United States, Japan, Vietnam, Mexico, Taiwan, Chile, Austria, Germany, Brazil and Canada. First, Schiffecker et al. offer findings from their comparative study to highlight ways university leaders were informed in their perception of international students during COVID-19. Zhang and Sustarsic's study sheds light into the compounded challenges of the pandemic and how the rise in hate crimes affected Chinese international doctoral students in the US. McNaughten et al., use institutional websites to study decisions that universities made to mitigate the COVID-19 crisis. Sato et al., use comparative survey data to report on how student mobility differences occur in international students from Japan and the US as they are influenced by government policies. Neria-Piña offers a case study from Mexico that provides insights into university strategies such as virtual mobility initiatives that were used for internationalization during COVID-19. Tran and Jordan examine COVID-era government policies from Vietnam and discuss its impact on their higher education system. Mann and Mennicke discuss a successful remote education delivery using a case study of a hybrid residential-remote program designed for first year Chinese students. Finally, LeBeau and Zhang highlight an unconventional international cooperation initiated by an institution in China aimed to provide Chinese students enrolled in other countries continued education during the pandemic. Collectively, these global studies offer a nuanced understanding of immediate and long-term challenges brought on by COVID-19 on the field of

international higher education. They also seek to arm us with knowledge on ways to mitigate future pandemics.

I am humbled to report that this closing second part makes this the largest special issue in the journal's history. It is the collective effort of many editors, faculty scholars/researchers and reviewers that made this special issue come to fruition. I first want to thank Dr. Lindsay DeMartino for serving as Guest Special Editor and for providing clear editorial decisions whenever possible. I could not have managed this special issue without the consistent leadership of the JCIHE Editor in Chief, Dr. Rosalind Raby. Dr. Raby's mentorship and guidance throughout this publication not only strengthened my editorial skills but also provided a masterclass on effectively managing multiple moving parts that ultimately resulted in the production of this important issue. I sincerely thank all members of Dr. Raby's editorial team including Dr. Prashanti Chenamsetti Dr. Yovana S. Veerasamy and Marisa Lally for their tireless efforts and attention to detail. It was my honor to work alongside such a dedicated editorial team!

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