



FEATURE

The hybrid campus

Three major shifts for the post-COVID university

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KEY FINDINGS

In the summer of 2020, as it became clear that the COVID-19 pandemic would have a long-term impact on higher education, Deloitte's Center for Higher Education Excellence and the Strada Education Network gathered a group of leaders from across the sector to discuss what's next for colleges and universities. We called this panel the Forum for a New Era in Higher Education. The group met several times over the summer to gather and disseminate ideas.

This report is a result of our convenings. It examines how a hybrid approach—a mix of face-to-face and online—adopted by many higher education institutions during COVID-19 to deliver education remotely could be expanded across campus to student services and the workforce, and as a result, become a more permanent feature after the pandemic. The features of a hybrid university will make it a more **student-centered university**.

Among our main findings:

- The hybrid campus, as we're calling the concept, transcends our current idea of blended education into a more holistic vision for delivering *everything* an institution offers, from academic advising to courses to career services.
- This approach, which sits between the physical and digital worlds, is what students (and prospective students) have come to expect outside of the college campus. Because it meets the students where they are, it can create brand loyalty and better outcomes.
- A hybrid approach can make an institution more accessible by a broader range of students, thus breaking down barriers to access and reaching a broader, more diverse population of students.
- A fully hybrid campus can help institutional leaders better manage costs and pedagogical demands while personalizing the campus experience.
- The approach encourages innovation in teaching and learning.
- A hybrid campus can employ analytics to shape support services and academic programs.

The jolt to higher education

COVID-19 prompted a swift pivot to remote learning across higher education in 2020, exposing challenges in the technological infrastructure and financial sustainability that had been festering at many institutions for years.

In the long term, however, the staggering disruption to higher education's traditional residential, face-to-face delivery model may also

have an upside: a radical reimagining of the way colleges and universities conduct operations and serve their students.

Emergency remote education has inspired a burst of innovation on most campuses and set the groundwork for what's next. Professors have reimagined courses that have been untouched for years. Academic leaders have revised calendars to offer more flexibility for students. Campus officials have modified a range of services—from academic

advising to career counseling—to offer them remotely. And campuses, like much of the corporate world, have moved to a remote work environment using a variety of tools to support the administration of the institution.

Now, as higher education leaders plan for what their institutions will look like on the other side of the pandemic, the decisions they make in the coming months will have ramifications for years—even decades. With presidents and governing boards already confronting growing uncertainty—enrollment and revenue shortfalls and major demographic shifts—colleges may be reluctant to embrace even more of it. That said, a once-in-a-generation opportunity could exist for institutions to harness their new investments (and learning) in digital technology to enhance the student experience and the shift to some remote work.

What a hybrid approach means for higher education

Twenty years ago, colleges and universities faced an inflection point, although not in a moment of national crisis. The internet was popularizing the idea of learning online. But rather than take advantage of the new medium and a new population of students, traditional colleges ceded the online learning market largely to for-profit providers.¹ The growth spurt of those colleges in the first decade of the new millennium forced many traditional higher education institutions to play catch-up in the online space over the past decade.²

Traditionally, universities had erected divisions between the online and in-person experience, often with different management structures, tuition rates, degree requirements, and faculty compensation. At colleges that offered online

programs, students often couldn't mix and match online and face-to-face experiences. More importantly, even if residential students could enroll in online classes, they had to navigate the brick-and-mortar campus in order to access most services, such as financial aid, counseling, or academic and career advising, not to mention all of the other unstructured residential learning opportunities only afforded to those within the confines of the campus.

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THE EFFECT OF THE PANDEMIC

Right now, the stakes are high for institutions to place the right bets. Overall, enrollment fell 4% in fall 2020, with the number of first-year students dropping by a staggering 13%.³ By one estimate, the pandemic has cost colleges at least US\$120 billion.⁴ At the same time, a demographic cliff is projected to arrive in 2026, when the number of students graduating from US high schools will significantly drop.⁵

Colleges enjoy a certain amount of brand loyalty based on the *physical* bonds that connect students to each other and their campuses. Once that physical campus was removed from the equation during the pandemic, however, many institutions lacked the digital infrastructure to engage students as a “community.” And students noticed: In one survey of 3,000 undergraduates, nearly 80% of respondents said their online courses lacked the engagement of in-person classes.⁶

There were some exceptions. Those institutions that already had a robust set of digital tools in place—such as Georgia State University,⁷ Duke University,⁸ Arizona State University, University of Central Florida, and University of Michigan⁹—found the shift to the hybrid environment smoother because they understood how their institutions should serve the needs of learners both in person and virtually. Arizona State, for instance, added a new modality during the pandemic that combined its experience with online and face-to-face classes, called ASU Sync, which allowed students to watch a real-time, live broadcast of their in-person class.¹⁰

The experience of the pandemic has offered a radical opportunity for experimentation, encouraging institutions to rethink the overall operating model. As colleges and universities plan for their postpandemic future, they face a series of choices. They can either approach the exercise by returning to the old way of doing business, or they can select a range of hybrid approaches and reshape how their campuses operate, diversify their offerings, and differentiate themselves.

WHAT EXACTLY IS A HYBRID CAMPUS?

Higher education has long been seen as a traditional experience: Full-time students sequestered in a bucolic campus environment interacting in person with professors, staff members, coaches, and classmates, rich with planned and unplanned interactions that comprise the student experience and “social learning.”

In contrast, the hybrid campus reimagines residential education in a tech-enabled world: a *technology-enabled student experience*. This is not only hybrid *instruction*, but rather a blended, immersive, and digital residential experience that fuses the online and physical worlds across campus. It transcends the current concept of blended education, which too often focuses solely on

classroom instruction that toggles between face-to-face and online. Instead, the hybrid campus can deliver everything an institution offers with a blended approach.

Think of the hybrid campus as similar to the retail model that sits somewhere between the physical and digital worlds, with little distinction between the two. Many retailers that started online also operate physical outlets to spark sales on their websites and increase customer loyalty. Most customers, however, don’t make a distinction between the two. The same thing happens when we shop at Home Depot, which started as a brick-and-mortar store: We don’t differentiate between buying online or driving to the store. What’s critical here for institutional leaders is not the technology necessarily but the changes to campus culture and operating models that go well beyond the acquisition and deployment of new tools.

The recent and sudden transition to purely remote operations unveiled the drawbacks of this bifurcated model when colleges aren’t strategic about what they’re doing in person and what they’re offering virtually. Understanding the distinction between the two is important as institutions reimagine the campus and decide which services deliver their best experience face-to-face and which could easily or more effectively be delivered online. The know-how gained during COVID-19 can provide important guidance for making such decisions and to institutionalize what they’ve already accomplished during the pandemic.

WHY THE HYBRID CAMPUS NOW?

A hybrid approach will allow institutions to become more resilient during future disruptions, whether pandemics or natural disasters; help institutional leaders better manage costs and pedagogical demands; and, ultimately, become more student-centered. Moreover, this model can make higher education more accessible to a much broader

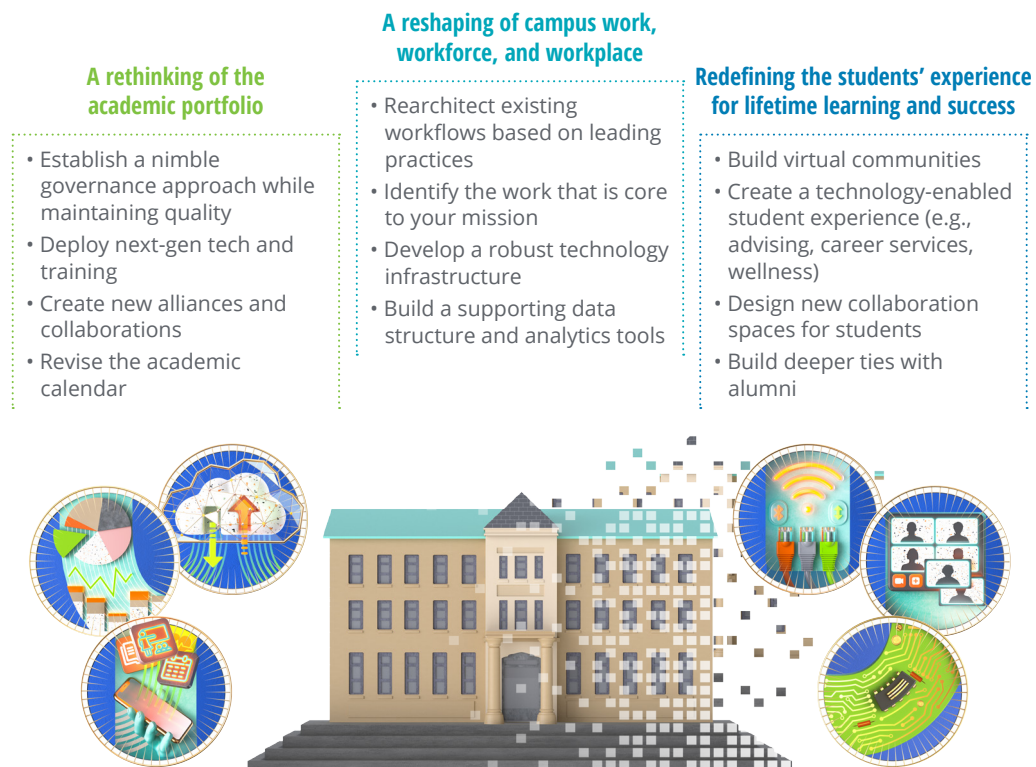
population of learners: adults with some college education but no degree, those with degrees but seeking to improve their skills, and international students who wish to take advantage of a US education without relocating.

In the end, one potential lasting impact of COVID-19 in higher education is the belief and an urgency within institutions that they could remake legacy structures that have long been seen as intractable. New institutional frameworks and services were quickly established to support students in the pivot to online learning and then to get them back to campus.

As colleges and universities plan for their postpandemic future, they face a series of choices. The rest of this report discusses how some colleges are already changing and making this vision a reality and what needs to be done next in three key areas of the institution: **academic affairs**, **student success**, and the **campus workforce** (figure 1). Not every campus will follow all the routes we lay out, nor are we suggesting that institutions flip a switch overnight and rely more on the digital model they adopted during COVID-19. But the investments colleges made in 2020 can get them closer to a hybrid strategy that combines the important elements of “place” with online and tech-enabled education.

FIGURE 1

Three shifts to the hybrid campus



Source: Deloitte analysis.

Three shifts to the hybrid campus

Our conversations with university leaders during COVID-19 and additional research have identified three big shifts that need to happen in order for universities to become hybrid campuses. Because higher education is incredibly diverse and serves a wide population of learners, the paths each institution employs could be different. The strategies that follow are designed to serve as building blocks for the future of institutions. These ideas should not be taken as exhaustive or prescriptive, but rather as prompts to drive discussion and new ideas.

1. A RETHINKING OF THE ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO

What's happening now?

The pandemic has accelerated academic innovation to unprecedented levels on campuses, forcing many to rethink enrollment capacity, pricing, course delivery, and assessment of student learning. Changes that were thought to take years to implement through shared governance—if ever—have been put in place almost overnight.

But fully remote education on residential campuses will come to an end when the pandemic is over. As students return to campuses, colleges and universities should think through what was learned about online education during the pandemic and what their institutions should look like in the future. It's clear that students want an in-person experience in some way. Whether that needs to happen in classrooms remains unclear, however. As hands-on, experiential learning becomes more important in a reshaped job market, experiential learning might be the focus of face-to-face interactions, while classroom material is largely delivered online.

Making the move toward hybrid in the near future

- **Accelerate hybrid education by identifying academic programs and individual courses that can be delivered in a hybrid format.** What's likely to become much more prevalent on campuses are tech-enabled courses that allow a synchronous *and social* learning experience that enables the peer learning aspects of classroom instruction to seamlessly float between online and face-to-face education. To do this successfully, institutions can leverage teaching and learning centers to help faculty members become experts in redesigning courses and delivering instruction in new formats. For example, Indian River State College in Florida and Trinity University in Washington, DC, helped their faculty pursue certification through Quality Matters, a nonprofit organization that promises to help individuals and institutions develop and improve their online teaching.¹¹
- **Rethink the academic calendar to cycle students through campus beyond the traditional semester schedule,** opening up possibilities to increase capacity or use the campus in new ways.¹² Add three-year programs and low-residency options to allow students to work concurrently at an internship or job, on a long-term research project, or take a gap year before starting college.¹³ The Georgia Institute of Technology has added “Mini-Mesters” that fit within the traditional semester calendar and allow institutions to more easily pursue a flexible academic calendar while using their current student information systems.¹⁴
- **Employ real-time data on the changing needs of the workforce, and develop flexible academic programs** that bend to the needs of learners and the evolving economy.

Build “credegree” programs where students graduate with both a traditional degree and some kind of industry-recognized skill or credential that could be delivered online and qualifies them for a job.¹⁵ Create shorter-term degrees and certificates to reduce costs to students.¹⁶ Bundle together liberal arts and professional education using hybrid courses by offering combined bachelor’s and master’s degrees within the time frame of four years, increasing the value of both.¹⁷

- **Organize alliances with other universities to share courses in low enrollment but critical areas,**¹⁸ and create a robust undergraduate research network that allows students to pursue project-based learning both in person and virtually throughout their four years of college.¹⁹ The postpandemic higher education system offers institutions plenty of opportunities but has diminished resources in many cases. Campuses need to recognize that potential solutions go beyond the boundaries of their own institutions and thus turn to a deeper level of collaboration than ever before. Through such alliances, institutions can mobilize a diverse set of resources and human talent not otherwise available to them. Seven institutions within the 14 members of the Big Ten Academic Alliance, including Indiana University, Michigan State, and Penn State, agreed to expand their course-sharing program during COVID-19, allowing students at the institutions to take an array of courses from peer institutions at no additional charge.²⁰
- **Connect with employers to offer remote internships** in both short- and long-term

stints during the semester and the summer. Pair up undergraduates and alumni for virtual job shadowing on a regular basis.

- **Improve students’ understanding of how and what they learn** in different contexts (i.e., classroom vs. work) with a virtual curriculum that can help them craft a narrative for life after college.

Making the move to hybrid for a longer horizon

- **Create professional development programs and employ external training opportunities for faculty members** to redesign their face-to-face courses for the hybrid campus.
- **Adopt a campuswide approach to the learning management system (LMS)** so it can be used as the “backbone” of the hybrid campus. Right now, faculty use of the LMS is sometimes spotty and uneven. At many institutions, multiple systems are deployed, frustrating students and missing an opportunity to effectively use data from the LMS to support planning and investment decisions.
- **Consider a next-generation student information system** that manages students as lifetime constituents throughout their journey at the institution, not just as full-time residential learners.
- **Embrace new governance processes and structures** used during the pandemic that can provide speed and agility to institutional decision-making.

CASE STUDY: UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA²¹

While the concept of hybrid education is a new approach for many institutions during the pandemic, the concept of blending online and in-person classes has been somewhat routine at the University of Central Florida (UCF) for more than two decades.

Soon after the Orlando institution started online courses in the mid-1990s, university officials noted many of the students taking the classes weren't distant learners but rather local students who liked the convenience and flexibility of virtual learning. As a result, the university added a blended format, what it calls "mixed mode," in which the class meets face-to-face only once a week, and the rest of the work is shifted online. Nowadays, 90% of the university's 59,000 undergraduates take blended or online classes. Students at UCF give the highest marks in satisfaction surveys to mixed-mode courses.

In an interview, university officials shared with us some of what they've learned about hybrid education and how those lessons might be applied to the expanded concept of the hybrid campus:

Plan for students to swirl. UCF has found that over the course of their undergraduate career, students typically move between online, blended, and face-to-face classes. What's more, each year, thousands take all three modes at once. Because students are swirling among modalities, a common campuswide student information system and LMS are necessary.

Train faculty to redesign their courses. UCF's Center for Distributed Learning serves as a clearinghouse for online learning strategies and practices and as a hub of training for professors.

One element is a "mix map" that faculty members prepare to help decide what's best delivered online and what's better for in-person instruction. Such an approach could be useful in designing other hybrid elements on campuses. From its training modules, the university developed a free "blended learning toolkit," which has been shared with other institutions.

Expect better space utilization, but not huge savings. Because hybrid courses meet only once a week in person, UCF can, in theory, fit many more course sections in the same amount of space. But there are limits to how much the university saves on space. There are few universitywide classroom buildings; most classroom space is "owned" and scheduled by individual colleges within the university, which means that excess space in one college can't easily be booked by another.

Improve student study spaces. With more students learning outside the formal classroom, UCF had to expand and improve common student study spaces. The university renovated five floors of its library, removing some of the stacks and adding additional study spaces, both individual and collaborative.

Think online, not "in line." To improve the student experience by reducing wait times and student frustration, university officials are constantly monitoring their services and systems to see which can be better offered online.

2. REDEFINING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE FOR LIFETIME LEARNING AND SUCCESS

What's happening now?

Even before COVID-19, how we learn, how we work, and how we engage with each other was changing at an unprecedented rate. However, colleges and universities were mainly focused on student success, and too often that was limited to retaining and graduating them. The reality is that the postpandemic economy will require constant reskilling and upskilling. Colleges are perfectly positioned to provide this training and education in small and large chunks if they think of themselves as serving learners throughout life rather than just as students during one moment in time.

This will require most institutions to provide a new student experience, in part by reducing the friction between residential and online delivery.

Making the move toward hybrid in the near future

- **Enhance academic advising** with e-advising and virtual sessions so that face-to-face sessions can focus on building mentor relationships and are less transactional.²²
- **Build a virtual community** that complements, not competes with, the in-person campus. It should provide a sense of belonging, interaction, and cooperation: Students should be able to share content and experiences; collaborate on research with each other and faculty; network around hobbies, skills, and interests; build relationships; and locate work opportunities.
- **Extend well-being services to the virtual world** so that students see college as an opportunity to create communal relationships, develop skills, and start on their life journey.

Offer telemedicine and online mental-health counseling so that in-person services are provided to students who need them the most.²³

- **Build a hybrid career services model** to give students a chance to meet more often with employers and alumni mentors. Offer virtual career fairs, allowing students access to a wider range of postgraduate options.²⁴ Extend virtual career advising to alumni.
- **Create call centers and develop virtual chatbots to offer improved customer service** in admissions, financial aid, and advising.²⁵
- **Build deeper ties with alumni** to foster relationships and give students agency over their learning and credentials, allowing them to upskill throughout their careers as part of a robust virtual community.
- **Create “microcampuses” in both local communities and alumni hubs**, for those universities with national and international footprints, to give institutions public visibility and serve as focal points for educational and outreach activities with local employers. The University of Washington’s Othello Commons in southeast Seattle is a 2,300-square-foot space that hosts classes for local residents as well as private spaces for meetings and researchers.
- Organize noncredit and short courses into plug-and-play, always-on **continuing education for alumni** to access on a subscription basis.

Making the move to hybrid for a longer horizon

- **Assess and then double-down on those in-person activities that truly deliver value for learners** and provide a unique value proposition for the institution.

- **Identify common definitions for student data** across campus and metrics to measure student success, especially in academic advising.
 - **Establish accountability** within new or existing roles to monitor, respond, and improve on key moments along the student journey, thus helping to achieve desired outcomes.
 - **Design “third-place” spaces** away from classrooms and residence hall rooms where students can access synchronous social learning experiences.
- Focus on merging the in-person and online experiences inside and outside the classroom.

CASE STUDY: GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Since 2003, Georgia State University's graduation rate has risen by 23 points, to 55%, with no gaps by race, ethnicity, or income.²⁶ Those gains were made in part by robust data analytics that led to shifts in advising and instruction. While much of Georgia State's services were delivered face-to-face, they were also built on a “digital backbone,” allowing the university to more easily pivot to hybrid models when the pandemic hit.

In an interview, university leaders discussed how Georgia State's operating model and technology could be applied to the concept of the hybrid campus:

Use data to improve student outcomes. Georgia State was already using a set of risk factors to monitor students and reach out to them proactively if they were getting stuck. These risk factors must evolve to suit a hybrid environment: Are students logging into their classes? Are they logging onto other student systems at the university? Are they completing their assignments? In just the first few weeks of remote learning, the university triggered more than 3,500 alerts to academic advisers, who contacted those students. It's one reason why officials identified that a high percentage of students—around 98%—were signing into their classes by the end of the spring term.

Offer student services that can be done virtually in a hybrid format. Georgia State offers video advising sessions to students, with about two-thirds of sessions initiated by advisers based on the university's early alert system, because so many of them work off-campus. As a result, during the pandemic, it was an almost seamless transition to online-only advising, and the number of weekly advising sessions remained stable before and during the pandemic.

Employ artificial intelligence (AI) and automation technologies to enhance the student experience. Because students don't always open their email communications from the university, Georgia State has a chatbot named Pounce (after its mascot) to communicate with students, sending reminders or answering common questions, as well as getting feedback from students quickly. For instance, when the university needed to know how many students had to remain in residence halls during remote education, it sent a chatbot message. Within 10 minutes, the university had answers from 40% of students in university housing.

Explore remote work opportunities to rethink work. The physical location of the university's call center, which houses staff members who answer many student questions about financial aid, closed during the pandemic. With staff working from home, calls could not come into a central location and then be routed to an agent. So the university moved to a ticket system where students fill out information online and agents call them back. Because the university now knows the questions being asked in advance of picking up the phone, they've doubled the number of cases resolved every day.

3. A RESHAPING OF CAMPUS WORK, WORKFORCE, AND WORKPLACE

What's happening now?

In response to COVID-19, colleges and universities have demonstrated a remarkable ability to rapidly transform the way they work. Once the pandemic hit, university workforces went to an almost entirely remote work environment. This shift has challenged the orthodoxy that all staff must be on campus to effectively support the needs of the campus community.

Many institutions are now looking beyond returning to the former status quo and are evaluating the potential to transform how work gets done across campus. Universities are evaluating which capabilities and services need to be delivered in person, and when services are more convenient or effective if delivered through a hybrid model that adapts to the changing needs of students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders. In fact, many participants of the New Era Forum told

us that they were already taking steps to move to a hybrid delivery of services across a variety of areas such as financial aid, academic advising, wellness, career services, and telemedicine (figure 2).

Participants also signaled a clear direction toward delivering hybrid services outside the classroom.

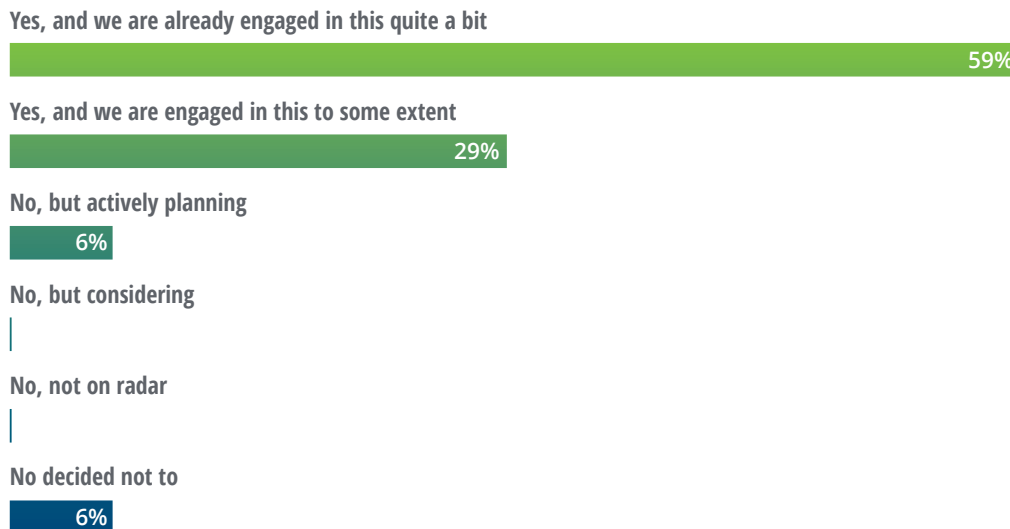
“When March arrived and everybody pivoted, we greatly accelerated the plans we had developed that were meant to roll out over a period of, say, three years, and we implemented many changes almost instantaneously.”

— *Mark Becker,*
Georgia State University president

FIGURE 2

Higher education institutions are moving toward delivery of hybrid services

“Is your institution considering implementing hybrid services outside the classroom, such as career services, advising, counseling, telemedicine, or other campus life activities?”



Source: Forum for a New Era in Higher Education, 2020.

Making the move toward hybrid in the near future

- **Rearchitect existing workflows**, and push outside the bounds of a department or college view to better understand the full picture of where and how work should be performed across campus. This can improve productivity, unleash human potential, and better support the needs of faculty and staff. For example, Georgia State has been rolling out automation tools to assist with traditionally manual workflows. By using data and analytics, Georgia State was able to anticipate which students were in financial difficulty and then reached out to provide aid directly without ever requiring in-person interaction. Since April 2020, more than 34,000 students have received emergency aid through this direct process.²⁷
- **Develop a robust technology infrastructure to support hybrid and virtual interactions**, including collaboration tools for video, text chat, discussion boards, simulations, and virtual private network connections.
- **Build data infrastructure and analytics tools** to support a culture of facts and data that can be used to understand which methods are working in a hybrid environment and where adjustments need to be made to service.
- **Provide greater access to Wi-Fi** for students, faculty, and staff on campus and by supporting connectivity at home. When needed, provide tablets or other means of connecting to those who don't have the needed technology.
- **Develop and deliver training for faculty and staff** to use new tools effectively and understand how they can engage across campus.
- **Provide additional emotional support to faculty and staff**, including a safe place to

talk and share their ideas and concerns. This may require a unique approach as needs will differ across faculty and staff.

- **Reexamine what is “core vs. context” on your campus**, i.e. look at those functions that are critical to the mission of the institution, and focus precious human resource there, while looking to outsource or cosource those functions that are still critically important to the operation of the institution, but are potentially better delivered by external entities that can invest and provide them at scale to a variety of clients and industries.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN REARCHITECTING WORK

- How can we remove silos to better support students and faculty?
- What specialized skills and services could be provided more evenly across campus at scale (e.g., cybersecurity, instructional design, sponsored accounting)?
- How can we make data an “institutional asset” and not the property of any one silo in the institution?
- As more work is done virtually and collaboration occurs across boundaries, how can we share accumulated knowledge?
- How can we harness the collective intelligence of people working across the institution to identify and roll out leading practices?

Making the move to hybrid for a longer horizon

- **Support the workforce with the transition**, and consider capabilities in and around the university that are needed to move

to a hybrid model. This isn't just permanent and full-time staff; it includes student workers, temporary employees, and supporting technology enablers such as chatbots.

- **Identify areas where talent is scarce today**, and develop a plan to close the gap over time.
- **Roll out additional capabilities and tools to improve the speed and quality of services.** For example, the University of Utah has expanded its concept of workforce to include virtual assistants to answer common questions related to financial aid and admissions. Student remote-learning data is also used to understand student preferences.²⁸
- **Adapt the workplace to extend beyond physical campus boundaries**, and organize networks of teams that have a mission of supporting students, rather than relying on traditional workplace silos. For example, the University of Central Florida has rethought what the workplace looks like. It has developed a mixed-reality environment where new approaches can be practiced by teachers in a “safe space” that is highly realistic, complete with customizable student avatars. These same approaches could be adapted to test services supporting the broader campus community.²⁹
- **Support the workforce with smart campus and AI capabilities.** To more efficiently operate physical elements of the hybrid campus, sensors can be used to better understand building conditions and make adjustments in a dynamic hybrid campus environment. Additionally, AI tools can provide better information about when buildings need maintenance or how to assign personnel to perform routine maintenance and prioritize repairs.³⁰

Success factors for building the hybrid university of the future

As the spread of COVID-19 has disrupted not just one but several semesters of operations for college and university campuses, it's become evident to governing boards and leadership teams that there is no going to back to the old normal when the pandemic is over.

But going beyond what the postpandemic campus will look like, what *should* it look like?

Whatever elements colleges adopt, reevaluating the basic functions of the legacy campus won't be easy. Based on convenings of the New Era Forum and our research, there are several important actions college leaders and governing boards should consider to build support and effectively transition to a hybrid campus:

1. Ensure strong and visionary leadership from the president as well as vice presidents of every major area of campus, from academic and student affairs to technology and human resources. Using the return-to-campus task forces that have been convened during the pandemic as a model, college leaders should set a vision for the hybrid campus in their own context, then align resources and establish the road map to identify what the university can do itself and where partnerships are needed.
2. Inculcate an institutional culture that puts the student at the center. When the needs of the student are at the forefront, decisions about investment in hybrid capabilities are clearer based on how to meet student demand and preferences. The result is an institution that not only serves its existing students well but also helps expand its market to more students, and including those outside the traditional student population.

3. Employ a data and technology strategy to gain a clear idea of the student journey. To better understand what should be done face-to-face on campus and what can be moved online, start with a clear idea of the student journey that emerges from a data and technology strategy. These data and systems also help to show which approaches are working and which are not. Then proactive decisions can be made on how best to support students and direct further hybrid efforts.
4. Explore new financial models and incentives. One barrier to change is often the cross-subsidies provided by certain functions on campus, such as revenues from housing and auxiliary services assisting the academic side of the house. The shortcomings of that financial model were exposed during the pandemic when students couldn't be on campus. As universities innovate and evolve their hybrid offerings, financial models and incentives need to be aligned.
5. Communicate the vision of the hybrid campus clearly and frequently. To support a move to hybrid, there should be clarity of purpose for why change is needed and how a hybrid campus can better support students, achieve desired outcomes, and provide flexibility for university faculty and staff. Discuss openly the tradeoffs in campus design to help come to a shared vision of what the hybrid campus will look like.

In the middle of this crisis, no one can predict the future, but we do know this: There are compelling reasons for lasting change that the pandemic has highlighted, and the cultural and operational shifts experienced under “emergency” conditions have illustrated that many changes previously considered off-limits in higher education are, in fact, quite implementable and potentially beneficial for the long term. The investments that were made into online education and the knowledge gained from the “grand remote education experiment of 2020”—both the benefits and the drawbacks—seem too potent to ignore. The time to design your version of the hybrid campus is now, before others define your future for you.

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