Welcome back!

Demographic shifts. Political changes. Social movements. The evolution of technology. These all affect your institution. SCUP’s Trends for Higher Education returns, new and improved, to help you and your institution stay on top of the major changes in the world around you. How?

We scan a wide range of media sources and identify significant trends and movements outside of higher education.

We help you anticipate how these trends might affect your institution.

Trends is a leader in pushing conversations beyond the boundaries of campus and an indispensable tool in demonstrating relevance in a fast-changing world.

How can you use Trends?

» Inform your environmental scanning or SWOT analysis
» Support strategic planning efforts
» Discuss the future of higher education
» Serve as evidence to support your budget requests
» Assist in program prioritization
» Help develop new curricula

We’ve organized Trends Fall 2015 using STEEP:

Social: How people work internally (psychology) and with each other (sociology)

Technology: How people use technology (including hardware and software), how society relies on technology, and how technology affects society

Economic: Macro- or micro-economics, including global trends, anything related to jobs and skills needed for jobs, and industry shifts

Environmental: Our external surroundings, including sustainability and our evolving workplaces, cities, and living spaces

Political: Public policy, governmental systems, the people within them, and the effects of government decisions on our citizens and communities

Each trend includes a brief summary, a footnoted source, and discussion questions to help you analyze and act on the trend.

Join the Conversation

It’s impossible for us to identify every issue you may need to consider. What did we miss? What did we get wrong? Tell us!

» E-mail trends@scup.org
» Tweet @Plan4HigherEd with the hashtag #scuptrends
Social Trends

As institutions of higher learning, colleges and universities may have a deeper responsibility to help society find answers to the questions that persist around social issues. This section takes a look at some key challenges.

Advancing Workplace Diversity

Every organization needs to be vigilant about equal opportunity. In 2015, for example, Apple announced that in one year it had increased hiring of women by 65 percent, hired 50 percent more Black employees, and increased Hispanic hiring by 66 percent. Noting that some people would see progress in Apple’s track record while others would see room for further improvement, CEO Tim Cook said, “We see both.” Intel recently committed $300 million to “reengineer the face of technology” by increasing diversity in its staff, supply chain, and business as a whole.

For discussion

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that 50.8 percent of the United States’ population is female and 49.2 percent is male. In terms of race, 16.3 percent of the population is Hispanic, 12.6 percent African American, and 4.5 percent Asian. How well does your institution’s staff reflect that diversity? How diverse are your institution’s vendors and suppliers? What more could your institution do to advance equal opportunities?

Public attitudes evolving about LGBTQ community

Polling from the Pew Research Center shows that 55 percent of Americans now support same-sex marriage. That contrasts sharply with 2001, when that figure was roughly reversed and 57 percent of Americans opposed same-sex marriage. Similarly, Gallup tracks greater public approval for gay or lesbian relationships, with 68 percent of those surveyed in 2015 saying single-sex relations should be legal versus 43 percent in 1977.

For discussion

In this era of heightened racial tensions, universities may have to do more to foment inclusivity. How can universities best develop inclusive campus environments? How can we ensure acceptance of diverse people, backgrounds, and perspectives? More specifically, what must universities do to ensure safety for every student, employee, and visitor? Campus employees may need additional training and tools for integrating diversity into the campus culture.

Bridging the racial divide

Gallup reports that “Americans’ satisfaction with the way Black people are treated has declined to a new low.” Meanwhile, the Pew Research Center finds that 59 percent of Americans believe that the United States needs to continue making changes to achieve racial equality, while 32 percent believe the changes necessary for equality have already been made. In past research, the public was much less divided on this issue.

For discussion

In addition to complying with local, state, and federal laws in offering equal opportunity for all, most colleges and universities strive to maintain an inclusive, open, and safe environment that acknowledges the perspectives and individual differences of the LGBTQ community. (Some institutions, including some faith-based colleges, may have unique challenges in those regards.) How well do your institution’s policies, practices, and facilities meet the needs of an increasingly more diverse and ever-evolving campus community?
**Geezer boomlet?**

So much of our culture focuses on youth, but the Pew Research Center reports that the percentage of people in the United States aged 65 and older is expected to reach 16.6 percent by 2020, double that of 1950. Among many other implications, government programs like Medicare and Social Security will become more important. In the social fabric, more families may have to care for older relatives.8

*For discussion*

On the upside, might this trend suggest new markets for colleges and universities—in terms, for example, of a yet-untapped market of potential students, a broader pool of alumni to tap for support, or even a larger market for elder housing on campus? On the downside, might the need for more government support for the aging population divert fiscal resources away from higher education?

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**Top organizational workplace trends**

The Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology says that greater use of mobile technology for employee assessment is its top workplace trend for 2015. A related trend is increased reliance on data analysis for improving business and HR decisions. Other top trends include the need for vigilance in managing the effects of new technologies on work–life balance, the importance of understanding technology’s increasing impact on how work is performed, and the need to increase organizational efficiency.9

*For discussion*

Have your institution’s HR practices, policies, and training programs been updated to reflect changing workforce trends? For example, in this era when technology makes staff available 24/7, how does your institution encourage the right work–life balance? How well does your institution apply technology to improve work life and organizational productivity? How well does the curriculum prepare undergraduates for the evolving new ways of working?

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**Immigrant path to legal status**

Polling by the Pew Research Center shows that nearly three-quarters of Americans (72 percent) believe undocumented immigrants in the United States should be allowed to stay in the country legally if certain requirements are met.10 But an NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll in July 2015 shows more divided opinion, with 47 percent favoring a path to citizenship for “foreigners staying illegally in the United States,” but 32 percent favoring a “find and deport” approach.11

*For discussion*

Should and could your university be doing more to enroll undocumented students and support them financially? What new or amended policies and practices would your institution need to serve this population? More generally, is the community in which your university resides home to immigrant populations, and how is your institution serving those groups?

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**Top challenges around human talent**

Topping the consulting firm Deloitte’s Global Human Capital Trends 2015 is the need for business and HR leaders to “gain a clear understanding of their organization’s culture and reexamine every HR and talent program as a way to better engage and empower people.” Also among the top trends: the importance of building leadership capacity, the need to “transform and accelerate” corporate learning, and the need to be prepared to deliver “workforce on demand.”12

*For discussion*

Deloitte’s four major themes for HR in 2015 are leading, engaging, reinventing, and reimagining. As you assess your institution’s personnel, HR operations, and staff training, how might you apply each of those themes to add new value to current practices? How well does your institution support staff learning to help advance institutional goals? How flexible is your institution in terms of being able to apply staff talent to emerging and unexpected opportunities?

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**Boomer/Millennial divide?**

Millennials are now 35 percent of the U.S. civilian workforce versus Baby Boomers and Gen Xers at 31 percent each. Trends expert Mary Meeker says there are big divides between what Millennials want from work versus what managers—presumably mostly Boomers—want. Nearly a third (30 percent) of Millennials say “meaningful work” is a major factor in career success, versus just 11 percent of managers. Just 27 percent of Millennials say high pay is a top factor.13
Radical global trends

Anticipating a 2016 edition of its Trends Shaping Education publication, a team from the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is exploring some truly interesting questions: Will robots replace teachers? Will fertility technologies allow for designer babies? Will online relationships replace groups of friends? Such trends might seem radical, the report’s authors say, but they are supported by science. And while such trends could impact education, they say that “most of our education systems still do not address them.”

For discussion

In the spirit of innovation, does your institution invest sufficient time in looking beyond the immediate horizon to consider some of the more extreme changes that may be coming and how they might affect higher education? How could your institution push its thinking a bit and have regular and productive conversations about more speculative trends?

SOCIAL TREND SOURCES

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   Intel Global Diversity and Inclusion

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   American Fact Finder
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4 Changing Attitudes on Gay Marriage
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5 Gay and Lesbian Rights
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9 New Year, New Workplace!
   SIOP Announces Top 10 Workplace Trends for 2015
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14 Breaking Down the Silo: Connecting Education to World Trends
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FORCES OF CHANGE

The demographic swirl

Shifts in demographic and economic trends are bringing sometimes dramatic changes to college student populations. “Non traditional” is fast becoming the “new traditional.” But whether the focus is on adult learners, transfer students, “minorities,” international students, online learners, veterans, or first-generation students, the reality for higher education is that each of these groups comes to college with different needs and expectations. In terms of student services, pedagogy, enrollment marketing, alumni relations, and so many other dimensions of college operations, the “one-size-fits-all” mentality that might have worked when most students were 18-to-22-year-olds no longer applies. The challenge for universities is to tailor strategies that best serve the varied needs of today’s diverse student body.

As just one example, consider adult learners. Marketing college to adults requires different enrollment management strategies. Adults may want colleges to give them credit for past learning—and life—experiences. They may want streamlined application processes. They may resist requirements to take entry-level courses. They may want support services on demand, not just during business hours. They may be better served with different approaches to teaching than those that work for teenagers. Downstream, adult alumni may want to engage with the institution in different ways than their younger peers. This list of differences could continue, and different lists could be developed for each of the “new traditional” student bodies mentioned above.
Technology Trends

How smart, proactive, and forward thinking are your institution’s IT operations? For example, does your institution recognize the expansion of the Internet of Things—and has it planned accordingly? And what about cyberattacks— we all know they exist, but how well is your institution prepared to address them? This section takes a look at such trends.

Addressing cyberattacks

The explosion of cyberattacks has been well documented, but what about the reaction to them? Expert Mary Meeker notes that with the right technology, threat intelligence, and staff expertise, “detection-to-response” times to cyberattacks can be reduced by more than 90 percent. Nonetheless, she says, four out of five organizations do not update their breach response plans to account for changes in the threat landscape. Organizations say they could use more skilled help with cloud computing, network, and data security, as well as with security analytics and forensics.

For discussion

How ready is your institution to step quickly into action to address a cyberattack? Do you have procedures in place to recognize an attack and then move to mitigate its effects? Have staff been adequately trained in this regard, and are there regular drills to keep staff skills sharp? How can your institution best balance constrained IT resources to anticipate cyberattacks and still meet all other campus IT needs?

Prepping for the Internet of Things

One megatrend that is defining the future of technology is that devices and data are rapidly merging in the Internet of Things (IoT). Research from the consulting giant Gartner shows that more than 40 percent of organizations anticipate that the Internet of Things will have a significant, even transformational, impact on their businesses, including opportunities to make and save money. But Gartner also found that fewer than a quarter of organizations had defined leadership strategies for the IoT.

For discussion

In such areas as technology development, capital projects, and facilities management, to what extent is planning at your institution infused with thinking about the Internet of Things? Has your institution adequately planned a strategy to anticipate and take optimal advantage of the IoT to improve operational efficiencies and productivity? Has your institution planned for how student demands might speed the rise of the Internet of Things? Are staff being trained to capitalize on the opportunities inherent in the IoT?

Benchmarking social media

Based on input from 7,000 experts, HubSpot’s Social Media Benchmarks Report 2015 finds that nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of adults worldwide use social media actively. Facebook has the largest number of active users each month (an estimated 1.35 billion people) followed by Instagram (300 million) and Twitter (284 million.) But followers are no guarantee of customer engagement. The report says marketers need to balance the frequency and quality of their postings, including the credibility and uniqueness of postings and their relevance to users.

For discussion

Does your institution have a comprehensive and strategic plan for managing its social media presences? Does it have the requisite staff to ensure that social media is done right? Does it have procedures for assessing and fine-tuning its social media strategies? How well does your institution use social media to communicate with key stakeholders routinely and in times of crisis? How well is your institution positioned to manage reputational threats to its brand if social media is abused?
Faculty and online education

The Babson Survey Research Group’s 2014 Survey of Online Learning found a 3.7 percent uptick over the previous year in the number of higher education students taking at least one distance education course. While the survey found that 70.8 percent of chief academic leaders say that online learning is critical to their institution’s long-term strategy, just 28 percent of academic leaders agree that faculty embrace the “value and legitimacy of online education.”

For discussion

How effective is your institution’s strategy for online learning? Does that strategy encompass goals for learning as well as enrollment management? What could your institution do to better train and engage faculty in different pedagogic methodologies that rely on technology? How does your institution’s engagement in online learning affect faculty priorities and shared governance, the curriculum, and campus spending? Has your institution planned adequately to support the development and delivery of learning online?

Digital divide: Still a factor worldwide

According to the Pew Research Center, 84 percent of adults in the United States now use the Internet. Although there are differences in American accessibility based on age, ethnicity, and geography, those gaps have closed significantly in the last 15 years. In Europe, 77.6 percent of the population accesses the Internet. Elsewhere in the world, though, it’s a different story. In the Arab States, Internet access stands at just 37 percent of the population, and it’s about the same in Asia (36.9 percent). Access is even lower in Africa at just 20.7 percent.

For discussion

While Internet access in the United States is fast becoming more equitable, colleges and universities may see gaps in educational preparation and technological savvy among students from demographic groups in which access has not yet become saturated. Similar factors may apply to U.S. institutions of higher learning that export their programs abroad (depending on where those programs are based, of course) and potentially also to the growing numbers of international students coming to U.S. campuses.

Teens’ online habits

The Pew Research Center finds that 92 percent of teens go online daily—and that nearly a quarter (24 percent) say they are online “almost constantly.” Mobile devices drive this trend: nearly three-fourths of teens (73 percent) own or have access to a smartphone. A similar percentage of teens (71 percent) are on Facebook.

For discussion

In terms of campus technology, pedagogy, student support, career development, and student communication in general, is your institution prepared to support a generation of students that essentially “lives” online? How well does your institution use online technology to support today’s diverse student populations, including adults and part-time learners? Is your campus’s IT infrastructure robust enough to support the explosion in use of mobile devices?

STEM workforce: Flush or shortfall?

Are we starting to meet the needs for STEM-skilled workers? A recent report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics offered this nuanced perspective: While there are signs in the academic job market of an oversupply of Ph.D.s in STEM fields, government and private industry continue to need Ph.D.-level STEM-skilled workers in many but not all disciplines (e.g., we need more software developers and nuclear engineers but have an oversupply of biomedical engineers).

For discussion

Is your institution ready to invest students with STEM skills in the fields where demand is greatest without adding to oversupply in other disciplines? What kinds of investments in STEM, including infrastructure, does your institution need to make, and how can you best measure returns from this investment? Are there areas at your institution where there may have been an overinvestment in STEM? How can your institution pivot its STEM investments to ensure that it stays competitive and relevant?
Headed for the cloud

International Data Corporation predicts that total spending on cloud IT infrastructure will grow by 21 percent year over year to $32 billion in 2015—accounting for approximately 33 percent of all IT infrastructure spending and up from about 28 percent in 2014. As more organizations move to cloud-based solutions—and concerns about cloud security and privacy are being assuaged—the cloud is fast becoming a key factor in institutional technology. The technology company Ellucian, for example, recently reported that already nearly 70 percent of higher education institutions in North America have moved or are moving their e-mail systems to the cloud.

For discussion

The rise of the cloud shifts the focus in campus IT from infrastructure to service delivery. Has your institution developed a robust cloud strategy? Overall, how well is your institution migrating computing resources to the cloud? Has your IT planning and budgeting shifted appropriately? Is your IT staff adjusting to this shift? Is your campus IT spending flexible enough to successfully support cloud technologies as well as legacy technology investments and practices?

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Economic Trends

Given that the effects of the last recession persist and the global recovery is not yet robust, this section explores some key economic trends that might particularly affect colleges and universities.

U.S. economic recovery remains anemic . . .

In quarterly results released in August 2015, professional forecasters surveyed by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia tempered their outlook for growth in the U.S. economy over the next four years. The forecasters believe that real gross domestic product (GDP) will grow 2.3 percent in 2015—that’s down slightly from their previous estimate of 2.4 percent. While forecasters suggest that in 2016 real GDP will grow 2.8 percent—unchanged from their previous estimate—their forecasts for 2017 and 2018, 2.6 and 2.4 percent respectively, are slightly lower than previous estimates.25

For discussion

Absent a robust economic recovery soon, university budgets will continue to be constricted as will state and federal appropriations for higher education. Philanthropic support and funding for capital projects may be harder to find, and students will continue to find it challenging to finance their college educations. How well is your institution preparing strategically to adapt to the realities of an extended period of resource containment?

. . . but the employment picture might be getting rosier

Forecasters believe that unemployment will remain at an average of 5.3 percent in 2015 before falling to 5.0, 4.8, and 4.7 percent respectively over the next three years.26 Meanwhile, the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce finds that “good” jobs—full-time work paying more than $53,000 per year and offering benefits—account for almost half of all job growth since the economic recovery started in 2010. While low-wage jobs have recovered to pre-recession levels, middle-wage jobs still lag.27

For discussion

While economic conditions may impede prospects for employment in higher education overall, the gradual decrease in unemployment and the growth in jobs in key fields like STEM may mean that universities will face more competition for employees with in-demand skills. That may apply especially to professors in select fields and technology staff. Employers may need improved incentives and staff development to keep employees motivated and productive. Universities must also weigh how employment trends affect students.

States on the rebound?

Analysis by the Pew Charitable Trusts shows that 41 states saw economic growth in 2014 compared to 2013. Pew looked at GDP numbers from the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis. Manufacturing drives a lot of the growth. Some states also report growth in the professional, scientific, and technical services sectors.28

For discussion

Stronger state economies may have a positive effect on universities overall, but when economic times are good some potential students elect to enter the workforce instead of going to college. Another effect might be greater legislative allocations of financial support for higher education, but many competing priorities for state spending may keep state support for universities in check in the near term.
Is this the age of the “gig economy”?

Remember when people were predicting that “regular” jobs would disappear and most workers would become free agents? While the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that some 15.5 million Americans are self-employed, another study found that no fewer than 53 million Americans freelance. Regardless of the numbers, freelancing is growing, and freelancers constitute a significant portion of the U.S. workforce—34 percent according to the second study.

For discussion
Strategically, how can your institution best leverage freelance talent? In terms of the institutional workforce, more than half of today’s professoriate is made up of contingent faculty (part/full time, non-tenure track). How well has your institution changed faculty workloads, promotion policies, and factors like committee work to adapt to this new reality? How should your institution prepare for hiring more freelancers in other capacities in the coming years? If more future workers are going to work for themselves, is your institution doing all that it should to prepare its students to be entrepreneurial?

Economic implications of the speed of innovation

In an opinion piece published in The New York Times, Marina Gorbis, executive director of the Institute for the Future (IFTF), suggests that technologies like Airbnb and Uber are “emerging faster than our institutional capacity to adapt to them.” IFTF suggests that a new global economy is developing that blends many traditional and emerging economies—corporate, consumer, creative, civic, and criminal as well as “game” and “collaborative”—in ways that force us to “rethink the very purpose of economies.” In this context, IFTF suggests, organizations will have to develop new products, services, and business models. One specific ramification is that new approaches to strategic planning may be needed.

For discussion
IFTF worked with the University of California, San Francisco, to apply “collaborative forecasting” and “foresight studios” in a fresh take on strategic planning. Part of the goal was to break down institutional silos and overcome institutional inertia. When was the last time your institution rethought the very process of strategic planning? Could your institution benefit from new models? Is it time to jettison tired and old approaches to planning for ones that are more creative, dynamic, and inclusive?

Persistent poverty among children

Statistics from Child Trends show that poverty is pervasive among American youth. Nearly half (48 percent) of the nation’s infants and toddlers live in families whose incomes are less than twice the federal poverty line ($23,550 a year for a family of four); 25 percent live in families below that line, and 13 percent live in deep poverty, in families whose income is half or less than the federal poverty line. Moreover, two-thirds (66 percent) of Black and Latino children live in low-income households. Risks of poverty include poor nutrition, chronic health conditions, and disproportionate exposure to risks that can impair brain development.

For discussion
Future students from poor families may need more help learning about the benefits of college, applying for college, affording a higher education, and completing college-level work. Students from impoverished families may need to work to support their parents and siblings. From student aid policies to developmental educational programs to family-friendly practices—and beyond— institutions will need to make sure that they have the infrastructure in place necessary to support students from impoverished backgrounds.

Businesses delivering on the promise of their brands

Surveying 18 million business customers, Gallup observes that “whether a company is product- or service-oriented, its brand promise lives and dies by its employees and their ability to consistently act on it.” Yet Gallup finds that only half of customers strongly believe that the companies they do business with always deliver on what they promise. The same survey found that just 27 percent of employees strongly agree that they always deliver on promises to customers.

For discussion
In mission statements, viewbooks, and elsewhere, universities make implicit promises to stakeholders. How well does your university deliver on those promises? How well does it engage its customers and cultivate deep relationships over the long term? In today’s competitive market, does your institution use customer service to distinguish itself? Are staff trained regularly to provide outstanding service?
What constitutes a living wage?

While workers’ rights organizations push for compensation levels that they say constitute a living wage, groups like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce argue that minimum wages that are too high put undue pressure on employers and small businesses. A recent Harris poll finds that while Americans strongly agree that the current federal minimum wage of $7.25 per hour is too low—72 percent of Americans feel that way, in a majority that cuts across regional, political, and generational lines—there is considerable difference of opinion about what that minimum should actually be.36

For discussion

How do issues around the living wage affect your institution? Even if such positions are outsourced, how fairly are janitors and food service workers, for example, compensated at your institution? Similar questions can also pertain to professional staff—an adjunct faculty member who teaches four courses a semester at the national average of $2,700 per course earns below the national poverty level, generally with few if any benefits.37 As institutions rely more on contingent faculty, does the way adjuncts are compensated need revisiting?

Challenges in developing nations

A 2015 report by the World Bank Group predicts a fourth consecutive year of disappointing economic growth in developing countries. Once key drivers of global growth, developing countries now face challenges like higher borrowing costs and lower prices for commodities. World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim said investment in education is one part of the solution to help people worldwide lift themselves out of poverty.38

For discussion

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A CLOSER LOOK

Textbooks in flux

A study last year by the U.S. PIRG Education Fund finds that nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of college students decided not to buy a textbook based on cost.4

Textbook rentals are on the rise. Textbook publishers are developing new approaches to the textbook, including online books and personalized course materials.

Meanwhile, developers continue to produce more free and openly licensed open educational resources (OER), which are gaining more traction in classroom use.

Meanwhile, too, bricks-and-mortar campus bookstores are evolving to be social hubs versus merely places where you buy physical books, or are morphing online, or are being outsourced—or are disappearing altogether.

For discussion

Economic pressures at home require many U.S. universities to focus on immediate challenges to institutional fiscal health. They may not be as open to international activities as they may have once been. Regardless, robust interest in U.S. higher education in developing countries creates opportunities to export programs or even establish campuses abroad, and demand for U.S. education will remain high among foreign students. There will also be sustained need abroad for consulting expertise—in education and many other fields—from U.S. universities.

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Environmental Trends

The physical environment, changing continuously and sometimes significantly, impacts colleges and universities at many different touchpoints. This section explores some key markers.

Denying climate change

Despite July 2015 being the hottest month on record, society continues to debate the root causes and even the existence of global climate change. Recently, for example, scientists reported that climate change is constricting the range of bumblebees in the United States and Europe—with grave implications for plant pollination—while at the same time 16 out of 17 Republican candidates for president had positions skeptical about climate change.39,40

For discussion

Has your institution fully planned for how climate change might affect its long-term planning and campus master plan? As one small example, does campus landscaping need to be redesigned in the context of water shortages? What resources, such as research, can your institution bring to bear to help the public better understand climate change?

Driverless cars: The future is now

Researchers from MIT recently observed that “autonomous” vehicles are fast becoming a reality. Automatic parallel parking and collision warnings are commonly available on cars now. Completely driverless cars are predicted to be available for purchase as early as 2025. The authors suggest that self-driving vehicles could “blur the distinction between private and public modes of transportation,” making the use of cars overall more efficient and possibly reducing the number of vehicles by as much as 80 percent.41

For discussion

As your institution plans roads, parking lots, garages, and buildings, how should it plan for a world of driverless cars that could take hold in just 35 years? How might driverless cars affect student behavior? To what extent does your institution’s master plan reflect a future that includes more autonomous vehicles?

Office of the future

Research by Coldwell Banker Commercial Affiliates shows that Millennials prefer open floor plans over cubicles and private offices.42 Mobile technology is already making it possible for employees to work effectively from many physical spaces, meaning that it will be imperative to build flexibility into future workplaces and practices. But at the same time, experts say, smart employers are building physical spaces that essentially guide employees to meet face-to-face, formally and informally, as a key to sparking idea exchange and innovation.43

For discussion

If future employees will work as much outside their offices as in them and prefer open floor plans, what are the implications for space design? Will the need for square footage for offices change significantly? Are there parallel considerations for learning spaces, such as open and flexible classrooms? Can existing space be repurposed effectively? How might students and younger faculty push your institution toward nontraditional learning spaces?
Turn off the lights?

A Harris poll reports that most Americans say they turn off lights, televisions, or other appliances when they're not using them, but the percentage who take those steps has fallen from 82 percent in 2012 to 75 percent today. Another Harris poll finds that 56 percent of Americans believe that the current focus on the environment in our society does not go far enough. Do we need to do more to educate the public about environmental issues and encourage changes in behavior to preserve resources?

For discussion

By extension, the Harris research suggests that student interest in sustainability and environmental concerns will remain high. But it also suggests that there may be room for more education on campus about basic steps to conserve energy. Will younger students and employees drive changes in institutional behavior around energy use? Might your institution have to proactively address “sustainability fatigue”?

Parking smart takes smart planning

The publicity blurb for Parking Management for Smart Growth, a new book by Richard W. Willson, notes that the average parking space takes about 300 square feet of asphalt—the size of a studio apartment in New York and ample room to park 10 bicycles. The book offers ideas for strategic parking management that make better use of parking resources and avoid overbuilding.

For discussion

Institutions that are committed to principles of sustainability like Smart Growth need a responsive, proactive approach to parking. Does your institution have a strategic plan for sustainable parking? If so, how effective and up-to-date is it? Might investments in technology and online learning help mitigate the extent of the need for parking? More broadly, how can universities best balance their needs for modernizing physical and technical infrastructure with changing modes of work, such as flexibility to work from anywhere at any time?

Propagating green districts

An insightful recent article from McKinsey & Company examines “green districts,” or what its authors describe as potential “building blocks for the sustainable cities of the future.” Although definitions of green districts are evolving, the authors say, the general notion is that of “a densely populated and geographically cohesive area . . . within a city [that] employs technologies and design elements to reduce resource use and pollution.”

For discussion

In general, campus construction and expansion continues to be robust. Could designated “green districts” on and around campus moderate the environmental impact of campus sprawl? Might this concept create opportunities that help a university leverage robust local and regional public-private partnerships? Might it open doors for improved town-gown relations?

Advancing sustainability: A contrarian view

Fundamentally challenging higher education’s embrace of sustainability and what it calls the “climate orthodoxy on campus,” a provocative report from the National Association of Scholars argues that the campus sustainability movement harms higher education by “distort[ing] college curricula,” “foreclosing open inquiry about climate change,” and diverting funds that could be better spent elsewhere.

For discussion

While the report cited here might be called a minority opinion, universities may be interested in weighing some of its observations as part of an open discussion. As the report argues, has the sustainability movement in higher education gone too far?

Green vehicles

As the United States Postal Service prepares to buy some 180,000 new mail delivery trucks, politicians have expressed interest in seeing that the new fleet is more energy efficient—most current USPS trucks average fewer than 10 miles per gallon. Lawmakers urged the USPS to invest in vehicles that have better fuel economy, pollute less, and are safer.
**For discussion**

How effective is your institution in ensuring that environmental considerations factor into purchase decisions related to its fleet of vehicles? Are such considerations ad hoc, or are they inculcated at the policy level?

**Progress in global food insecurity**

A report by the United Nations and others finds that the number of hungry people worldwide has declined by 216 million since the early 1990s—that’s a drop of 21.4 percent, even while the world’s population increased by some 1.9 billion people. Progress in addressing food insecurity has been most pronounced in developing countries. Still, some 795 million people worldwide—780 million of them in developing regions—struggle to regularly find enough to eat.\(^{50}\)

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**For discussion**

Trends like global food insecurity will continue to translate into more student interest in food sustainability and local food production with implications for food services and, increasingly, the study of related issues through the curriculum. More broadly, how can your institution add to the body of knowledge that is helping us recognize and understand food insecurity? Can research at your institution help produce solutions to this challenge?

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Political Trends

From global macro concerns to issues that regularly make headlines, political issues often have a direct bearing on colleges and universities. Here, we take a closer look at trends in such areas as voter preferences for political parties, state spending for higher education, gerrymandering, Congress, the presidential campaign, and relevant Supreme Court rulings.

Tracking the top global issues

What issues will have the most significant impact globally over the next 12 to 18 months? The World Economic Forum suggests that deepening income inequality and persistent jobless growth will be the leading challenges. Lack of leadership, rising geostrategic competition, and the weakening of representative democracy are also top concerns. The Forum's list also includes three environmental issues—rising pollution, increased frequency of severe weather events, and increasing strain on the world's water supplies.

For discussion

Apart from providing much food for classroom discussion, this list of concerns underscores the need for institutional research designed to contribute ideas to solve or ameliorate some of the world's problems. With implications for personal safety and well-being, these issues may be of particular concern to institutions with campuses abroad, those that send students to other countries, and those that regularly welcome students and faculty from abroad.

U.S. voters: Parties, race, and gender

Polling by the Pew Research Center shows that in the United States in 2014, the highest percentage of the population in more than 75 years identified themselves as politically independent (39 percent, versus 32 percent who called themselves Democrats and 23 percent who labeled themselves Republicans.) Looking at party affiliation by race, Pew found that 49 percent of Whites identified as Republicans versus 40 percent who aligned with the Democrats. Blacks, however, identified with Democrats over Republicans by 80 percent versus 11 percent. Democrats also hold the lead among Asian Americans (65 percent versus 23 percent) and Hispanics (56 percent to 26 percent).

For discussion

Wise people say that “all politics are local,” so to some degree the party affiliations of stakeholders on or near a college campus are the ones that matter most. These statistics show how divided the country is politically, suggesting continued friction going forward around most legislation, including laws that affect higher education.

Shifting priorities for state spending

Research by the Pew Charitable Trusts shows that the share of their own money that states spent on Medicaid coverage was higher in fiscal year 2013 in all but one state—North Dakota—than in fiscal 2000. A separate study finds that spending on correctional health care rose in 41 states from fiscal 2007 to 2011, with median growth of 13 percent. Spending for higher education, meanwhile, has only inched up from the nadir of the latest recession, the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) reports, with state and local funding for higher education growing some 5.7 percent between 2013 and 2014.
For discussion
In an era when state budgets are generally tighter overall, higher education may be losing ground to other priorities for state spending, such as Medicaid and prisons. With state investments in higher education yet to bounce back fully from the levels of the recent recession, SHEEO suggests that we have entered a new era when students and parents must shoulder more of the financial burden for colleges that states used to fund. Institutions, particularly those that are tuition dependent, must plan accordingly.

Historic Supreme Court rulings on key social issues
The U.S. Supreme Court made history in the spring of 2015 with rulings favoring same-sex marriages, upholding subsidies for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act, and approving the use of a controversial drug that some states use to administer the death penalty by lethal injection. This fall, the court will take up affirmative action again when it hears *Fisher v. University of Texas* for a second time. Among other social issues, the court will also hear a potentially landmark case concerning public service unions and may consider abortion.

For discussion
With diversity remaining a major concern on college campuses, a ruling from the Supreme Court on affirmative action could have a significant impact on higher education. It is impossible to predict the direction of such a ruling, but many observers say that the court could rule the University of Texas’s admissions policy unconstitutional—striking a major blow against affirmative action. A separate ruling on a case about unions could affect any university that has unionized staff or professionals or that works with unionized contractors. Is your institution prepared for these kinds of changes?

Gerrymandering in the spotlight
Following the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2015 ruling that Alabama’s legislature had factored race too heavily in redrawing some of the state’s districts, “gerrymandering” is now also a focus elsewhere. In June 2015, the Supreme Court ruled that an independent commission in Arizona, not lawmakers, has the right to draw congressional districts. In July 2015, the Florida Supreme Court affirmed a lower court’s decision that a redistricting map drawn by the Republican-led legislature was “tainted by unconstitutional intent” and ordered an expedited redrawing of many of the state’s voting districts. Maryland Governor Larry Hogan, a Republican, recently created a commission to recommend reforms to the state’s approach to drawing its congressional districts.

For discussion
The ongoing debate about gerrymandering provides rich fodder for classroom discussions and research projects, of course, but the real impact on higher education may be in the kinds of legislative representation it produces for the districts in which universities are based. How district lines are drawn or redrawn may decide whether a university has a strong supporter in Congress or someone who is more critical of higher education.

Congress: Moving past gridlock?
So far, the 114th Congress is shaping up to be at least a little more productive than its immediate predecessors. In their first years, the 112th and 113th Congresses passed just 28 and 31 laws respectively—the least productive legislative records in some 40 years. But as of August, the 114th Congress had already passed 44 laws in its first year, according to the Pew Research Center. Discounting legislation pertaining to things like naming buildings and awarding medals, Pew found that the current Congress had passed 29 “substantive” bills—from restricting government access to personal phone records to revising how Medicare pays doctors.

For discussion
One of the most important pieces of pending legislation for colleges and universities is the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA), the sweeping package of laws that governs federal student aid among other dimensions of government engagement in higher education. Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN), chair of the Senate’s Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, has said that improving accreditation and reducing regulation of higher education are two of his priorities for reauthorization. Many observers say action on the HEA is not likely until next year or even thereafter. Whenever reauthorization occurs, experts say the potential for significant change exists.
Education a focus in the campaign for president

Higher education is a prominent issue in the 2016 presidential campaign. Breaking somewhat predictably along party lines, Democrats are calling for more federal support for higher education (e.g., Hillary Clinton’s $350 billion plan to keep college affordable) while Republicans are tending to focus on making colleges operate more efficiently and cost effectively (e.g., Marco Rubio’s calls to break up what he calls the accreditation “cartel”). The fact that presidential contenders are devoting so much oratory to higher education reflects the reality that the challenges of paying for college and mounting college debt are very much on the mind of the public.

Winter of our discontent?

Gallup finds that only about a quarter (26 percent) of Americans are satisfied with the country’s general direction. That’s actually up over the satisfaction rate Gallup has tracked over the last eight years, which has averaged 22 percent. Perhaps more startling is that compared to polling numbers dating back more than 35 years, Gallup finds that we Americans are in “an extraordinarily long spell of subpar satisfaction.” Prior to 2006, Gallup says, satisfaction ratings below 30 percent were the exception, not the rule.

For discussion

We can speculate that worries about the economy and unemployment will continue to cast a shadow of concern on college students and their parents. Alumni and donors might be less inclined to provide financial support for higher education. And it is perhaps not too much of a stretch to think that Americans dissatisfied with the government might tend to be dissatisfied in general with other institutions in society, including universities, and might view higher education with skepticism rather than unfettered support.

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The power of adaptive leadership

Writing recently in *The Presidency*, the magazine of the American Council on Education, ACE vice president and chief of staff Philip G. Rogers reminded us about the concept of “adaptive leadership,” an approach first developed by Ronald Heifetz, the founding director of the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard Kennedy School. Heifetz contrasts what he calls technical leadership, or applying traditional, top-down leadership to resolve a given issue, with the adaptive model, a more flexible and collaborative approach to problem solving. Adaptive leadership can be viewed as a means for organizations to bring many different minds together to apply creative problem solving in addressing multilayered challenges—such as those that bubble up in disrupted or fast-evolving environments. Rogers describes adaptive leadership as occurring when groups collaborate to tackle issues together, accepting shared responsibility for outcomes. Adaptive leadership, Rogers writes, “presents an opportunity to mobilize major stakeholders into a common vision for the institution.” For higher education, adopting the adaptive methodology might require new mind-sets about how an institution approaches problem solving.

### About the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP)

The Society for College and University Planning is a community of higher education planning professionals that provides its members with the knowledge and resources to establish and achieve institutional planning goals within the context of best practices and emerging trends. For more information, visit [www.scup.org](http://www.scup.org).

### What is Integrated Planning?

Integrated planning is the linking of vision, priorities, people, and the physical institution in a flexible system of evaluation, decision-making and action. It shapes and guides the entire organization as it evolves over time and within its community.