Emerging from the Shadow of COVID-19: What Will Be Different?

John O’Brien - jobrien@educause.edu
New Math…   1918 + 1929 + 1968 = 2020
What will be different?
What Got You Here Won't Get You There

MARSHALL GOLDSMITH
WITH MARK REITER

"The CIO: Plumber or Strategist?"

Point / Counterpoint

BRAD WHEELER
"The Strategist"

vs.

BRIAN VOSS
"The Plumber"
Core Data Service, 2002-2016
In a recent study, in our American college presidents survey of college presidents, only 12% of presidents regarded institutional research and IT as the important areas of strategic development going forward, 12%.

Ted Mitchell, President of ACE
In the 2017 Campus Computing Survey, the percent of respondents who say that "senior academic leadership understands the strategic value of institutional investments in IT" declined by 10 percent from the previous year.
More Than a Lifeline

Technology can no longer be seen as a utility working in the background, writes John O’Brien. It’s a strategic asset that’s vital to every institution’s success.

By John O’Brien // May 5, 2020

Over the course of days and weeks, higher education institutions around the world have moved with unparalleled speed and agility to serve students and work together in the shadow of a global pandemic. It’s an open question whether the crisis cascading throughout higher education will persist until, or even through, the fall.

In fact, this uncertainty and the intense difficulties ahead may be the only thing everyone agrees on completely. As one exasperated colleague told me a few days ago, “My problems have problems.”
“Let’s all acknowledge the contribution of our technology experts now and honor them going forward by recognizing a critical reality that actually existed long before this crisis: technology is not a utility. It is not just a lifeline that got us through a tricky situation. It is a vital asset, a differentiating value and a path to achieving institutional goals and stability. Not just in the future but now, technology must increasingly be understood as an integral, strategic part of any successful college or university.”
1. Digitize information
   Changing from analog or physical to digital form.

2. Organize information

3. Automate processes

4. Streamline processes

5. Transform the institution

Digital transformation
A series of deep and coordinated culture, workforce, and technology shifts that enable new educational and operating models and transform an institution’s operations, strategic directions, and value proposition.

EDUCAUSE Digital Transformation Study 2020
Institutional Engagement in Dx

Only 1 in 10 say their institution is currently engaged in digital transformation, but most are exploring Dx or preparing a Dx strategy.

![Percentage of respondents](image)

**EDUCAUSE** Digital Transformation Study 2020
What about CIOs?
The rise of the “integrative CIO” or “CIO+”

The role of IT departments has evolved to one that is increasingly defined by a simple concept: who has control. To be successful in the changing landscape of technologies and user needs, IT will need to become a partner rather than a gatekeeper.
Ability Gap for CIOs

- Ability to manage relationships within institution: 98% Important, 86% Proficient
- Ability to influence others: 97% Important, 81% Proficient
- Ability to negotiate: 92% Important, 74% Proficient
- Understand non-IT business processes/operations: 96% Important, 87% Proficient

The Higher Education IT Workforce Landscape, 2016
Campus technology is a strategic asset transforming our campuses. It's time for leadership to treat it that way.

I registered for college classes so long ago that the most advanced technology I experienced amounted to state-of-the-art clipboards. Today, I occasionally look around in awe when I consider how nearly everything about the student experience at our colleges and universities has changed. For today's students, technology is everywhere, involved in everything we do—and yet we are still in the early years of an inexorable digital transformation. Just as home appliances that communicate with one another on our behalf are reshaping our domestic lives, so too are emerging technologies such as predictive analytics, artificial intelligence, and the internet of things transforming the student experience.
Strategic IT
What Got Us Here Won’t Get Us There

By John O’Brien

In 2001, not long after the creation of EDUCAUSE itself, EDUCAUSE Review published “The Answer is Still Technology—Strategic Technology.” In the article, Milton D. Glick makes the case for the strategic potential of technology, concluding that the real value “is not technology per se but the strategic use of technology.” Based on a small survey of provosts, the article includes a “report card” on the strategic use of technology, and the scores weren’t high. In fact, half the grades were Ds, and “teaching and learning” managed an “incomplete.” In so very many ways, this article expresses hopes, dreams, exasperations, and impatience that could just as easily be quoted in 2019. One theme—that “information technology must be at the table when key decisions . . . take place”—has been repeated every year since. In conclusion, Glick argued: “Traditional higher education may be at an inflection point”—suggesting that the move to more strategic IT will be dramatic. As we continue the 20th anniversary year of EDUCAUSE, now seems a perfect time to consider whether information technology is finally acknowledged (and used) as a strategic asset or whether this realization continues to be an elusive milestone following an alluring horizon line.
Thank You

jobrien@educause.edu

www.educause.edu