

## Message from the Publisher

**Densil A. Williams**

Welcome to the first volume of our newsletter. It will inform you on trends and developments in the higher education sector. Using the STEEP model, this publication from the University Office of Planning will provide the most up to date developments in the Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental and Political arena that will impact on the higher education sector.

The information is useful for managers in the higher education sector who are tasked with designing initiatives to achieve their organization's strategic vision and mission.

This volume focuses on the social trends that are shaping developments in the higher education sector. It looks at issues from Access to Internationalization. I do hope you find the information useful and that you enjoy reading the volume, as well. We look forward to your feedback.

## Editorial

There are many issues that impact the higher education sector. Adapting the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) planning model- with special emphasis on the Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental and Political (STEER) changes which affect the planning landscape, this volume provides critical information to the UWI on these trends and developments.

The UWI must be cognizant of these international developments along the line of the STEER model that will impact the sustainability of the regional institution, especially in the context of this new strategic planning cycle (2017-2022). It is for this reason, the University Office of Planning is introducing this newsletter with a view to keeping the senior leadership and the wider UWI community abreast of some of the major trends which are developing outside the Caribbean and that will impact on the overall strategic and operational management of the University.

In this inaugural issue, we look at the social trends occurring outside the region which are likely to affect our access and enrollment of students in the future. Future volumes will focus on the other areas of the STEER model.

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# Social Trends in Higher Education

## Access and Enrolment

*“70% of top US campus officials named enrolment decline as the biggest worry in 2017 and the most popular student success initiatives being started or enhanced in 2017 were career preparation, graduation rates and guided pathways”*

**UNIVERSITY BUSINESS**, a reputable education magazine, indicates that 70% of campus officials surveyed in some of the top US universities, identified enrolment declines as the number one issue out of 20 potential issues that could harm the institution’s name or stability in the future (UB 2016).

**THE NATIONAL STUDENT CLEARINGHOUSE RESEARCH CENTER (NSCRC)** demonstrates that for Spring 2017 overall post-secondary enrolments decreased by 1.5% from the previous Spring. For the sector overall, the Report highlights the following:

- enrolment by programme level: undergraduate enrolment for all sectors declined by 1.9% between Spring 2016 and Spring 2017, while postgraduate enrolment increased by 1.1%;
- enrolment by intensity: full-time students declined by 2.0% and part-time by 0.7%;
- enrolment by age: students 24 and under declined by 0.2% and over 24 by 3.6%; and

- enrolment by sex: males declined by 2.1% while females declined by 1%.

The NSCRC also collected data on academic programme enrolment which showed that at US four year colleges and universities, business programmes followed by health care and allied health continue to dominate enrolment.

**THE US NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS (NCES)** indicates that between the period 2000 to 2015, even though total undergraduate enrolment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions increased by 30% (from 13.2 million to 17.0 million), this trend is not expected to continue in the future. Projections for 2026, indicates that total undergraduate enrolment is expected to increase by only 19.3 million students, much lower than 2000-2015 period. While total enrolment in postgraduate degree programmes was 2.9 million students in 2015, by 2026 this number is expected to increase minimally by only 12% (from 2.9 million to 3.3 million students).

	2015	2026 (projected)	% change
Undergraduates	17.0 m	19.3 m	14%
Postgraduates*	2.9 m	3.3 m	12%

\*Includes Masters and Doctoral programmes a programmes such as law, medicine, and dentistry.

Source: NCES. The Condition of Enrollment – Undergraduate Enrollment and Postgraduate Enrollment. May 2017.

Over the last three decades, demographics and changing labour market have also

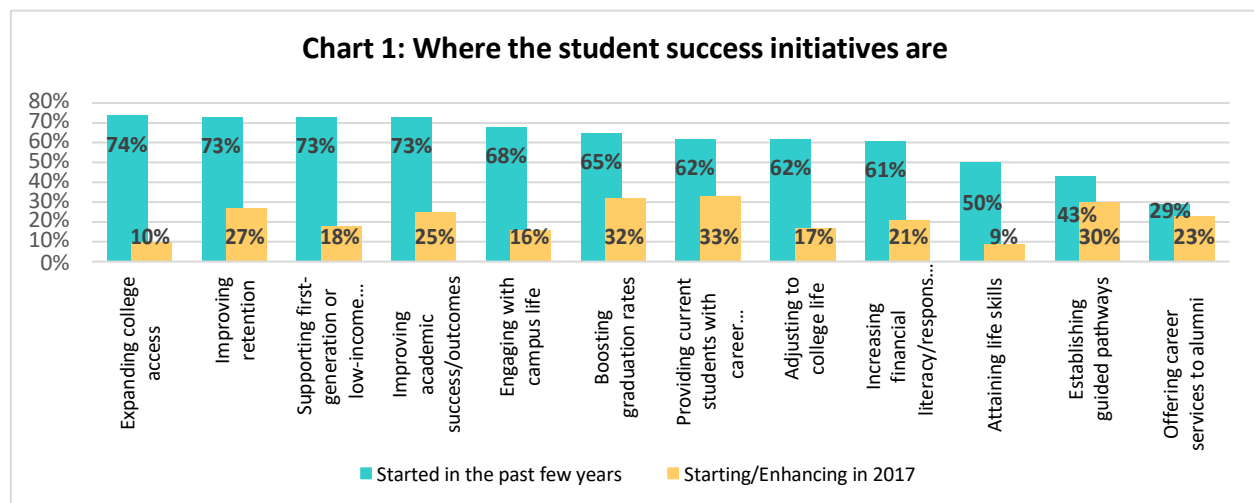
impacted enrolment at US universities and colleges. A recent study by Pearson, a UK based learning company which surveyed over 1,600 adults, between the ages of 25–64 who are pursuing or planning on continuing education, reported that:

- 72% of this group anticipate needing more education over the next five years
- 67% expect to pursue a degree or certificate
- 51% expect to change professional fields.

**DATA FROM THE HIGHER EDUCATION STATISTICS AGENCY (HESA, UK)** demonstrates that in 2016, more than 29,000 full-time students (7.4% of the intake) were no longer in higher education after 12 months (Richards and Mullan 2017). Respondents from the UB 2016 survey were generally optimistic about retention – 7% said it will increase significantly, 64% said it will increase modestly, 24% said it will stay the same and 5% said it will decrease

moderately. Boosting retention is an area where learning analytics could play a huge part. Evidence shows that when learning analytics were employed at Columbus State University College (US), retention rose by 4.2% (and 5.7% among low-income students) (Richards and Mullan 2017). The authors cite the examples of the pilot schemes at the University of New England (Australia) which saw drop-out rates fall from 18% to 12% and the Open University (UK) which resulted in a 2.1% boost in retention.

Student success is one of the top four priorities of college leadership teams according to University Business magazine (UB 2016). Approximately 88% of top campus officials in the UB survey noted student success as priority in 2017 compared to 84% in 2016. The most popular student success initiatives being started or enhanced in 2017 were career preparation, graduation rates and guided pathways, while the least popular were boosting life skills attainment



Source: University Business. 2016.

and expanding college access (see Chart 1). Student success encompasses academic,

emotional, physical and financial goals and requires a cross-departmental collaboration.

Approximately 55% of 74 admissions, enrolment and financial aid administrators in the UB survey indicate that they will be crossing department lines to bolster student success and completion in 2017.

Recognising that student populations are becoming more diverse, many universities are developing more inclusive policies such as supporting students who may identify as transgender, gender nonconforming, non-binary, or intersex. SCUP (2017, 3) notes that it is important for educators to create more gender-inclusive spaces for all students regardless of their sexual orientation. This may require institutions to develop a gender dictionary, develop gender-sensitive code of conduct, offer gender sensitive and gender diversity training to faculty and staff particularly those who interact with students.

### Catering to a new generation of learners

*“The top-three factors that influenced Gen Z in choosing a college were career preparation, interesting coursework and professors that care about student success. For them, college is seen as the pathway to a good job.”*

HEIs will soon have to grapple with the Gen Z (persons generally born between the mid-1990s and early 2000s) learners, whose members are in high school or college. A study of 1,300 middle and high school students in the US (13-18 year olds) by Barnes & Noble College, the bookseller’s higher education retail division, found that more than 89% of respondents rated a

college education as valuable. The top-three factors that influenced Gen Z in choosing a college were career preparation, interesting coursework and professors that care about student success. For them, college is seen as the pathway to a good job. Post-college more than 40% of respondents envisage careers in technology such as computer science and video game development.

Moreover, the study showed that almost half of older teens (16-18 years) have taken advanced placement classes for college credit. An estimated 51% of this cohort said they learn best by being hands-on while 38% learn by seeing (reading course materials) and 12% by listening (classroom lecture). When it comes to classroom learning, these students find class discussions are the most beneficial (64%) followed by working through examples of a problem and study guides (60% each). However, they expressed a high preference for studying with friends. Respondents also feel that more ed-tech tools would not only make learning fun and interactive, but also positively influence their learning. As such, smartboards, DIYL (Do-It-Yourself-Learning), digital textbooks, website with study materials, and online videos topped the list. Interestingly, game-based learning systems was midpoint in the list of eleven helpful ed-tech tools.

According to SCUP (Fall 2016, 3), researchers have shown that games can help students retain knowledge and keep learners engaged in learning. They cite the work of Italian researchers who found several studies that demonstrate that students in the health professions who practiced serious game training have better results than users experiencing traditional learning processes as an example. Universities such as University of Southern California, Rochester

Institute of Technology, University of Utah are offering undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in game design, while others are offering courses in games development. SCUP (Fall 2016, 3) highlights the importance of institutions not only offering courses or programmes, but understanding the science that connects games and learning, effectively integrating games into the curriculum and investing resources in gaming pedagogy. This maybe because there is not sufficient evidence of how it can achieve learning objectives or how to integrate such into the curriculum.

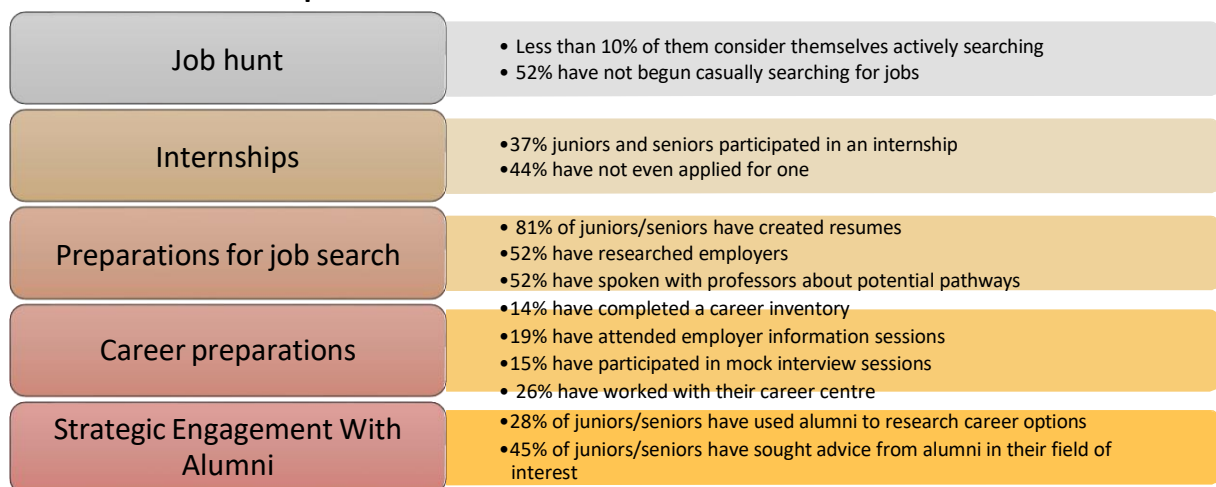
Based on these trends, it means that HEIs will have to re-evaluate their pedagogy to support the learning preferences of Gen Z and learning spaces will have to be repurposed to support the ways Gen Z prefers to learn. Note will have to be taken of the career interests to ensure proper alignment with the labour market thus, suggesting a more critical role for academic advising and career counselling.

## College and Post-college readiness

*“About 42% of incoming college students get referred to remedial courses. Given that over one-third of incoming college students were not prepared for college”*

SCUP (Fall 2016, 3) notes that in the United States, about 42% of incoming college students get referred to remedial courses. Given that over one-third of incoming college students were not prepared for college, it means the HEIs may direct more attention and resources to developmental programmes. US colleges are “redesigning their remedial programmes with the goal of ensuring that many more academically underprepared students take and pass college-level gateway courses and enter a programme of study as quickly as possible” (Belfield, Jenkins, and Lahr 2016, 1). As such, there is a shift from pre-requisite remedial to co-requisite remedial courses, in which

### Chart 2: Graduate Prospects



Source: Barnes & Noble College 2015, 6, Barnes & Noble College 2015 Infographic.

students take entry-level college courses simultaneously with remedial academic support. Using the findings from a study of 13 community colleges in Tennessee which implemented corequisite remediation at scale for math, writing, and reading, Belfield, Jenkins, and Lahr (2016, 6,7) found that:

- Co-requisite math remediation is significantly more cost-effective than prerequisite math remediation. The co-requisite model requires 50% less resources than the prerequisite model does to enable an academically underprepared student to succeed in completing the college-level gateway course
- Co-requisite writing remediation is significantly more cost-effective than prerequisite writing remediation. There is an efficiency gain or savings of 11% per successful student.

Already the core of the US student population, Millennials – those born between 1980 and 2000 – are becoming the predominant force entering the workplace. They are expected to comprise 50% of the workforce by 2020 and 75% of the global workforce by 2025 (Barnes & Noble College 2015, 2). The vast majority (96%) of the 3,000 students at two-year and four-year US public and private institutions who participated in the Barnes and Noble College survey said that that they plan to enter the workforce immediately after graduation in addition to traveling, volunteering, internship or grad school. The results also showed that students want to feel personally fulfilled with their work, and as such, they ranked personal fulfilment as the top indicator of how they define their success. Specifically, they want a career where they can make a difference and have

an impact on society and their community. Public recognition, achieving my desired title and meeting financial goals were among the lowest-rated indicator of success for students (Barnes & Noble College 2015, 5). The Report further states that while students have a clear vision of what they want, relatively few are taking the necessary action or maximising all available resources to be successful in their job search and career preparation (see Chart 2).

The survey also asked students to identify what they perceive as critical skills for success. ***Clear communication skills and critical thinking were ranked as the two most important skills for success by all students.*** However, critical thinking was not often listed as a greatest strength, and clear communication was designated as “needs improvement” by many students. The skills identified by the students in this survey aligns with the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills identified by the World Economic Forum (WEF). The Report notes that students feel least confident about their own skills related to communication, leadership, critical thinking and initiative and this places them at a disadvantage when positioning themselves for opportunities (Barnes & Noble College 2015, 7).

The findings from this survey suggest that HEIs have an opportunity to:

- encourage student-private sector/IDPs/NGOs partnerships through business competitions thereby providing students with connections to private sector/IDPs/NGOs to create globally minded and service-oriented graduate;
- create/enhance intra-university partnerships between campus career centers and academic departments and



- faculty for earlier student career preparation to ensure student success and positive post-graduation job placement rankings for the school; and
- integrate job readiness skills into the curriculum and create more programmes including co-curricular courses and organise events that will help students become more knowledgeable about these skills and how to develop them (Barnes & Noble College 2015, 5-7).

### Internationalisation

*“81% of students who had studied abroad were more interested in global issues and 69% said they had become more interested in national political issues after study abroad”*

**THE BRITISH COUNCIL IN ITS *BROADENING HORIZONS 2016* REPORT** assessed how UK students perceived the overseas study experience, particularly its impact on their employability, institutional engagement and global awareness. A survey of 245 students and 14 students who participated in the focus group found that:

- 91% of returned students said study abroad made them more inclusive and welcoming to international students citing greater empathy towards international students and the challenges they may face;
- 83% of students believed that study abroad had strengthened their job prospects;
- 91% were likely to recommend study abroad to other students and would emphasise positive value to their social, personal and professional lives;

- 81% of students who had studied abroad were more interested in global issues and 69% said they had become more interested in national political issues after study abroad; and
- almost one third of respondents would ‘definitely’ apply for job abroad and 54% stated they were now more open to the option.

The Report concluded that returned students can be a valuable resource to promote overseas study with returned students largely believing they are more employable than those who had not studied abroad and many identifying other benefits of the experience such as improved communication skills and increased confidence. Study abroad programmes also develops/enhances the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills which the WEF (2016) found to be most important for success.

### Programme Changes and Development

*“Both personality and structured higher education experiences contribute to cultivating innovation potential among college students.”*

HEIs are developing/expanding entrepreneurship programmes focussing more on skills required for using data to make a business case for innovative ideas and encouraging experiential learning that helps students put innovation into practice. As HEIs are offering programmes in entrepreneurship it raises the question as to whether the capacity for innovation can be taught.

**A RECENT STUDY BY NEW YORK UNIVERSITY STEINHARDT SCHOOL OF CULTURE, EDUCATION, AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT** examined the cultivation of innovative entrepreneurial intentions among students in three different settings: a US undergraduate four-year environment, a US MBA two-year environment, and a German five-year business and technology environment. Findings indicate that participation in both the German and the American education settings positively influenced innovative entrepreneurial intentions. The findings also demonstrates that:

- Personality played an important role in predicting an intention to innovate, albeit with variations across educational settings. Entrepreneurial intentions were statistically related to a personality that is extroverted and conscientious for US undergraduates; a personality that is extroverted, conscientious, and open to new experiences for German students; and a personality that was open to new experiences for US MBA students.
- Confirming earlier findings, undergraduate male students, as well as students to separate fact from fiction has become a priority” as it was found that many students had trouble identifying partisan or paid-for content online and assessing the credibility of sources (*Chronicle of Higher Education* Feb 2017). As such, information literacy encompassing critical thinking as well as digital, media, and news literacy became important. At the University at Albany, State University of New York, every department has been responsible since 2014 for teaching information literacy and the librarian works with faculty members to bring the subject into discipline-specific courses.

students identifying as Asian or politically conservative, were more likely than their peers to demonstrate innovative entrepreneurial intentions.

- For US undergraduates, a family history of entrepreneurship was also related to innovative entrepreneurial intentions (NYUs Steinhardt News 2016).

The researchers note that both personality and structured higher education experiences contribute to cultivating innovation potential among college students (NYUs Steinhardt News 2016).

In the Barnes & Noble College survey of 1,300 middle and high school students in the US more than one-third of Gen Z students currently own their own business or plan on having one in the future. This suggests that interest in entrepreneurship programmes may remain high in the short-term which presents an opportunity for colleges to grow their entrepreneurship programmes.

Political events also have an impact on the programme development and/or focus. In the aftermath of the US elections “teaching

Given that computer systems of American companies have been/are routinely getting hacked, costing hundreds of billions of dollars annually, there is a demand for cybersecurity experts in the labour market. Cybersecurity job postings grew 114% from 2011 to 2015, with 86% of the jobs requiring at least a bachelor’s degree however, colleges are meeting only about 24% of the entry-level demand for those with four-year degrees (*Chronicle of Higher Education* Feb 2017). HEIs are therefore presented with an opportunity based on demand for cybersecurity graduates.



## Conclusion

These global issues and trends in higher education suggest that the region will have to pay close attention to improving access and increasing enrolment. To this end, HEIs will have to examine their programme offerings and modalities, (re)design their curriculum to address the needs and mentalities of Gen Z learners, provide avenues for the internationalisation of their programmes. Additionally, student success initiatives will have to be prioritised to ensure just, equitable and inclusive access.

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