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# Strategic planning: Review of external data/information

## Introduction to stream of work

### Background:

- The University of Calgary is currently in the process of developing the next strategic plan to guide the institution from 2023-2030.
- The IECB framework is being used to develop the strategic plan, bringing in internal information and data, external information and data, consultation, and best practices.
- This briefing package summarizes the external inputs that have been compiled to inform the strategic plan.

### Methodology:

- Between November 2022 and March 2023, members of the campus community were invited to submit documents through an online dropbox that they thought should be considered as inputs towards the development of the next strategic plan. 28 documents were received.
- In addition, the Working Group searched through the following types of databases and publications:
  - Statistical data (e.g. Census, Government Databases)
  - Academic peer-reviewed literature (e.g. Journal of Higher Education)
  - Academic opinion pieces (e.g. HBR)
  - Media, op-eds, blogs (e.g. NYT, G&M, HESA)
  - Consultant publications (e.g. EAB, McKinsey, Deloitte)
  - Public opinion research (e.g. Leger, Angus Reid, IPSOS)
  - Think tank reports (e.g. Higher Education Policy Institute)
  - Podcasts (e.g. WorkLife, Freakonomics)
  - Videos (e.g. TED Talks, Webinars)
- The Working Group summarized the learnings into key trends as we went.
- These are presented in the form of eleven distinct briefings, organized by topic, as follows:
  - Global Societal Trends & Geopolitical Context
  - Shifting Demographics
  - Educational Attainment & Post-Secondary Education Demand Projections
  - Teaching & Learning
  - Research & Innovation
  - Community Engagement
  - Growing Role in Economic Development & Diversification
  - Emerging Competition in Higher Education
  - Changing Funding Landscape
  - Hybrid Learning & Working Environments
  - Technological Disruption & Digital Transformation
- The goal was to produce relatively succinct briefings, that are easily digestible. Each briefing is approximately 3-4 pages in length. While an attempt was made to capture the main points, these are certainly not exhaustive summaries of every trend in a given topic area.
- Every attempt was made to keep the briefings factual and objective, not adding any of our own analysis or commentary to them, but simply stating trends that exist in the sector. Part of how we tried to do that was by keeping the words that the thought leaders used intact in many cases. Citations are provided in the endnotes.

- Note that we have ignored some trends and phenomenons occurring in higher education in other parts of the world – such as the ‘great resignation’ and reduced enrolment trends being experienced in the United States – as that hasn’t been the experience in Canada. In addition, we haven’t remotely touched on the content that the university teaches or our areas of research focus, although both of those have of course been impacted by the pandemic in their own right as well, they were deemed out of scope for the purposes of this paper.

### Analysis:

- The purpose of summarizing all of these external inputs in this way, is to develop a better understanding of the trends that might shape post-secondary education in the years to come. It’s not to say we need to accept or follow all of these trends as stated, but rather we need to be aware of them and consciously thinking about them as we embark on developing the next strategic plan.
- Further, these are the trends today, in some cases we go so far as to comment on whether these trends are expected to continue or accelerate or not, but it's not to say all of these will be the trends in 2030.
- Note that although the trends were broken down into topics for ease of readability and usability, much of the value of interpreting these trends lies in the opportunity to think about how these trends are inter-related. Thus in the analyzing these trends, it is critical to think about where these trends intersect and possibly have a compounding, or conversely neutralizing, effect.

### Conclusion:

- In reviewing what has been written about the trends in higher education over the years to come, we have come to appreciate the extent and breadth of the disruption that may lie ahead.
  - As one author put it: *“The university that expects students to battle with traffic, find a parking place, go to a lecture, write examinations by hand, get a seat in a crowded library and then go home again will be riding its luck.”*<sup>i</sup>
- The hope is that these briefings can be used to spark conversations and discussions among our community, and serve as a valuable input into the development of the next strategic plan for the University of Calgary.

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<sup>i</sup> KPMG (2020). The future of higher education in a disruptive world. Retrieved from <https://home.kpmg/ca/en/home/industries/government-public-sector/education/the-future-of-higher-education-in-a-disruptive-world.html>.