

An Executive Summary

WELCOME to our second annual *Trends Report*. The past year has seen plenty of upheaval in higher education — student protests over racial inequality, controversies over free speech and so-called trigger warnings, rising complaints over the handling of campus sexual-assault cases, scandals involving academic research, questions about the value of a degree, and more. Look at some of the words that describe this year's trends: “beware,” “productivity,” “reactive,” “scrutiny,” and “survive.” If there's a pattern here (or a meta-trend?), it's that higher education continues to be on the defensive, under growing pressure to respond to critics on and off campus. To stay ahead of their critics, college leaders need to stay ahead of the curve. We hope *The Trends Report* can help.

Our coverage spells out 10 key shifts in higher education. We examine what's working (and what's not), and offer case studies, expert commentary, and resources you can use to start a conversation or a program on your own campuses. Think of it as a briefing on what informed college leaders need to know in 2016.

Meanwhile, the trends we identified last year haven't exactly faded into oblivion. You'll notice that several of them — most notably, challenges to free speech, an emphasis on helping students build careers, and the influence of social media — have evolved and taken on new forms for this year's list.

Here are the 10 higher-education trends identified by our reporters and editors, with help from people whose jobs put them on the front lines of academe every day:

- **A fresh wave of attacks on free speech, often coming from students.** Instructors (and even student debaters) are under pressure to provide students with trigger warnings, meant to warn them of potentially upsetting topics. Also contributing to the trend are student protests denouncing a hostile campus climate, and the emergence of watchdog groups that scrutinize campus speech for bias. Some colleges are fighting back.
- **Efforts by colleges to combat sexual assault by creating new cultural norms on the campus.** Under pressure to make sure their handling of sexual-assault cases will stand up under Title IX, some institutions are proactively educating students about the meaning of consent and the importance of intervening to prevent sexual violence.
- **The growing use of metrics to measure faculty productivity.** Colleges have new tools to see how their

professors stack up, and they're not afraid to use them. Faculty critics say the tools provide an incomplete and inaccurate picture of their jobs.

- **The need for college leaders to react quickly to events that could quickly spin out of control.** “Reactive” used to be seen as a negative label, but in the age of social media, when leaders can no longer control the campus agenda, the ability to react has become a survival skill.

- **Widespread attacks on shared governance.** The traditional model of shared governance is eroding as more governing boards make unilateral changes that ignore faculty opinion, such as appointing someone from outside academe as president. Boards are reacting to fiscal pressure, political heat, and complaints about the cost and value of a degree.

- **The outsourcing of services that are a core part of a college's mission.** It's not unusual for colleges to turn the operation of campus bookstores and cafeterias over to private companies, but now they're also outsourcing some key academic services, like advising and even teaching.

- **Increased scrutiny of academic research.** Corporate influence and outright fraud have undermined the credibility of scientific research. Meanwhile, some fields have been tainted by research scandals involving fabrication and the inability to replicate results.

- **A movement to overhaul the college transcript.** Some colleges are adding new types of information to transcripts to better reflect what students have learned and accomplished. An expanded and digitized transcript may lead to “the quantified student,” but it could also provide a powerful accountability metric that allows colleges to track graduates.

- **The rise of the instructional designer.** As online learning and new classroom technologies spread, the demand for instructional designers — who develop courses that others may teach — is growing.

- **A reliance on better marketing to survive enrollment challenges and create a stronger institutional identity.** The golden rule: Know who your students are, and figure out how best to serve them.

We hope you find *The Trends Report* helpful. Let us know what you think at chronicle.com/trends.

—THE EDITORS

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SPECIAL REPORTS

An Executive Summary

The Editors | FEBRUARY 27, 2017

✓ PREMIUM

Welcome to *The Chronicle's* third annual *Trends Report*. With the political uncertainties of the Trump administration, it's a dicey business trying to project into the future these days. Last year our *Trends Report* reflected the growing upheaval in higher education; this year it reflects broader tensions evident throughout the nation — for example, the need to combat fake news, the growing activism among athletes, the movement to protect undocumented students, and the cultural divide that is widely seen as separating academe from rural America. It's worth noting that several trends relate to how colleges are trying to bridge differences, whether political, racial, or socioeconomic.

Making the Most of The Chronicle's Trends Report

As you read about each of the 10 trends featured in this issue, consider the following questions:

- Are we more likely or less likely to be affected by this trend than other institutions are? Why?
- Are we on top of this trend? What are we doing already? Should we expand our efforts, and if so, how?
- Is there anything in this report that we might profitably adopt for ourselves?
- If we decide to make one of these issues a priority, how will it fit in with our existing priorities? Are we willing to make the necessary commitment in time and money?
- How should we communicate about this trend to faculty members, students, parents, and the public?
- How can we get our faculty to recognize the importance of this trend, and to respond quickly?
- Will this trend create new competitors?

In our coverage of 10 key shifts in higher education, we examine what's working and what's not, and we offer case studies, commentary, and resources you can use to take action or start a conversation on your own campus. We think of this as a briefing on what college leaders need to know. But for the foreseeable future, it seems, college leaders are also going to need patience, agility, and good reflexes.

Here are the 10 trends our reporters, editors, and sources have identified for 2017:

A growing movement to teach students to separate fact from fiction. After a divisive election in which false news played a large role, many academics believe they must stand up for reasoned discourse, scientific evidence, and even truth itself.

Displays of activism by college athletes. College athletes are increasingly using their power to protest not only social injustice but also perceived financial inequities. They're taking a knee, threatening not to play, and, in the case of one team, providing a display of unity with fans of all backgrounds.

Efforts to provide a safety net for hungry and even homeless students. Often surprised by the numbers of financially needy students on their campuses, more colleges are creating food pantries and short-term financial help to help them get by.

An increased demand for cybersecurity programs at all levels. Colleges can't produce enough graduates to keep up with the job market. The field's importance was underscored by security leaks during the election, but many experts say the best programs provide students with a broad education, not just instruction in coding.

The designation of campuses as "sanctuaries" to protect undocumented students. Some colleges are pledging to protect such students in the wake of President Trump's promise to crack down on illegal immigration, while other institutions, wary of the label, are looking for different ways to help.

Efforts to bridge the cultural divide that many believe separates academics and people from rural and conservative backgrounds. Some colleges are responding to the complaint that they're liberal bubbles, even as many academics renew their resolve to defend academic values, diversity, climate-change research, and more.

The need for careful assessment of admissions policies designed to advance diversity. After the Supreme Court ruled that colleges could use race as one of many factors in admissions if they could demonstrate the educational value of the approach, more institutions have been collecting data to make sure their programs could withstand a legal challenge.

Confronting an institution's history. Colleges are finding that they can no longer ignore troubling parts of their past, such as a history of slaveholding.

More emphasis on the rights of the accused in Title IX sexual-misconduct cases. After the Education Department recently found, in an apparent first, that an accused student had not received due process in an investigation, some observers predicted a greater emphasis on due process. While it is unclear how the Trump administration will handle oversight of such cases, many colleges say they will not back off.

Increased efforts to limit sexual harassment within the academic profession. Many colleges and scholarly groups are becoming more vigilant about preventing harassment of female scholars. They're emphasizing schmoozing over boozing, planning wholesome group activities, like hiking, and raising the issue at their annual meetings.

We hope you find *The Trends Report* helpful. Let us know what you think at [chronicle.com/trends](https://www.chronicle.com/trends).

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The 2017 Trends Report

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SPECIAL REPORTS

Inside the Trends Report

The Editors | MARCH 04, 2018

✓ PREMIUM

Welcome to *The Chronicle's* fourth annual *Trends Report*. At a time when colleges, like much of the nation, are experiencing deep political and social upheaval, it's easy to become distracted — and reactive. But instead of putting innovation on hold, some college leaders are seizing the opportunity to respond to pressing problems in imaginative ways — making a stronger case for the value of a degree, removing obstacles to graduation, helping improve job prospects for doctoral candidates, and more. Our coverage of 10 key shifts in higher education will tell you how they're doing it.

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10 key shifts in higher education that innovative college leaders are responding to in imaginative ways. Hover over the circles below to see the trends. Click the circle to read that article.



In this report you'll find case studies, analysis, and commentary that you can use to try new initiatives on your own campuses. If uncertainty is the new normal, *The Trends Report* can give you an edge. We've been covering higher education nationwide for more than 50 years now, enabling us to examine shifting political, cultural, and economic trends with historical perspective and nuance.

Drawing upon insights from our reporters, editors, and sources like you, we identified these trends for 2018:

The American Campus, Under Siege: Colleges have faced growing scrutiny in recent years — from legislators, members of the public, and parents concerned about value. But the 2016 presidential election led to fresh political attacks on colleges for being elitist and out of touch. A survey found that GOP voters thought higher education actually had a negative impact on the country's direction. Perhaps the last bastion of liberalism, colleges must learn to weather attacks from far-right groups.

How to Make the Most of *The Chronicle's* Trends Report

As you read about each of the 10 trends featured in this issue, you may want to consider the following questions:

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Students in Charge: Student influence on campus has been growing for a while, as colleges compete for enrollments and as students' demands — for better amenities and a greater say in campus policies — increase. "Lazy river" swimming pools on some campuses have become a visible symbol of how far colleges will go to satisfy students, but students are also using their voices to demand trigger warnings, power over hiring, and more. Some conservative groups, meanwhile, are encouraging them to rat out "politically correct" professors.

Loss of Global Prestige: Studying in the United States appears to be losing some of its luster among international students, as growth in their enrollment slows down. While the latest overall numbers were higher than ever, for the first time in a decade, the number of *new* international students actually dropped in 2016-17 from the previous year, and graduate applications and enrollments were also down. The Trump administration's policies on immigration and other issues aren't likely to help.

Peer Review in Flux: Peer review has long been considered the "gold standard" of scientific reliability, but the internet era has led to a proliferation of open-access online journals that have weakened the notion of peer review. It isn't yet clear whether scientific leaders will agree on a new approach that encourages transparent scientific sharing, while reserving the highest-quality peer review for where it is most needed.

Era of Deregulation: If one word can capture the essence of the Trump Administration's higher-education policy, it's deregulation. The Education Department has announced plans to abolish or rework several key Obama-era programs, including guidance for handling sexual-misconduct cases and regulations meant to

hold for-profit colleges accountable. While many college leaders are confused by the constant reinterpretations, some say they welcome less regulation.

Student Success Up Front: Many colleges are intensifying their efforts to improve student success and graduation rates, responding to changing demographics and new technologies that allow for early intervention. One strategy that's spreading: awarding "completion grants" to struggling students close to graduation. A grant as small as \$1,000 can determine whether some students make it to the finish line.

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Spotlight on Hazing: The high-profile hazing death of a Penn State student named Timothy Piazza raised hopes that this time, colleges would really do something about fraternity hazing. But it hasn't been so simple: One president worries that stricter rules will simply push bad behavior underground — and pressure from the Greek system, alumni, and even parents of fraternity members has made the task tougher.

Rebranding the Ph.D.: As graduate enrollments fall and academic programs are criticized for accepting candidates in a weak faculty job market, more universities are taking proactive steps to demonstrate the value of the Ph.D. Some are offering career-diversity programs to better prepare doctoral students for jobs outside academe.

Data Scientists in Demand: Data science is a hot field, as companies look for experts who can mine data and uncover social-media trends. The number of graduate programs in data science has spiked over the past decade, but some critics have questioned the value of these programs, and expressed concerns about whether students are learning to use data ethically.

Black-College Renaissance: Enrollments at many historically black colleges are rising after years of decline. But it's not just because of recent racial incidents, which may lead some black students to feel more comfortable at an HBCU. A number of black colleges have been recruiting both black and Hispanic students more aggressively, and selling the supportive environment that many HBCUs offer.

We hope you find *The Trends Report* useful. As always, we view it as a work in progress, and are eager to hear from you. We're tracking a number of important issues that didn't make it onto this year's list — for example, small colleges' efforts to develop distinctive programs to stay viable, cybersecurity challenges, and the rise of artificial intelligence on campuses. You'll find coverage of those issues all year.

To see the report online, visit chronicle.com/trends.

— THE EDITORS

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