

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

# Attitudes on Innovation In Higher Education:

*How College Leaders and  
Faculty See the Key Issues  
Facing Higher Education*

Chronicle of Higher Education



ATTITUDES ON  
**INNOVATION**

How College Leaders and  
Faculty See the Key Issues  
Facing Higher Education

Underwritten by  
  
Adobe

A survey of 1,200 faculty members and 80 presidents at four-year  
colleges throughout the U.S.

# The Context

- Stagnant economy
- Less public subsidy for higher education
- Rising tuition
- New technology and the rise of the “edupreneur”
- Tension on campuses with more no-confidence votes on presidents taken in 2012-13 than in any other year
- New federal ratings system to promote access, completion, and innovative approaches

# Survey Themes

## Value

Is a postsecondary credential worth it?

## Direction

In which direction is higher education heading?

## Innovation

Is it needed? Who should be driving it? How fast and pervasive?

## Focus

What are we focusing on?  
What should we be focusing on?

## New Ideas

Of all the innovations out there?  
Which hold the most promise?

# Is Higher Education a Good Value?



In 2001 it took less than 25% of the average family's income to pay the typical tuition bill in the U.S.

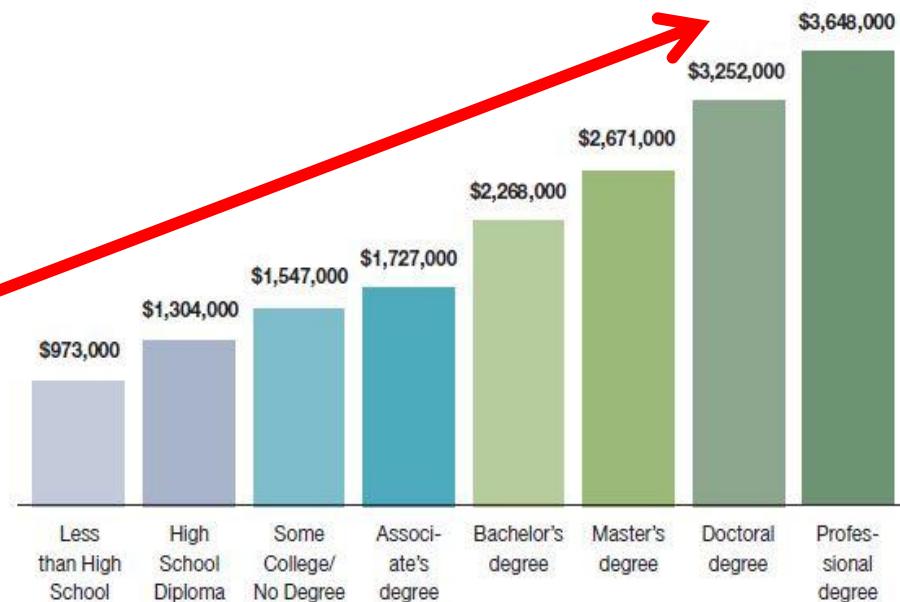


In 2012, the typical tuition bill consumed nearly 40%

**50% of presidents and 33% of faculty believe that American higher education provides a very good or excellent value**

*"Obtaining a postsecondary credential is almost always worth it, as evidenced by higher earnings over a lifetime."*

- Anthony Carnevale,  
Georgetown University Center  
on Education and the  
Workforce



# Direction in Absolute Terms

Perceived direction of the overall higher-education system in the United States

  
**Faculty members in the humanities, those at public research universities, and those who have been teaching more than 20 years are the most uncertain about the future**

**The faculty teaching in the STEM fields are most optimistic about the future**

# Direction in Global, Relative Terms

- Both professors and presidents believe that the rank of the U.S. higher-education system in the world is likely to decline in the next ten years.
- But **presidents see this as a slight decline** from a very strong position while **faculty see it as a more severe decline** from a moderately strong position.

The most pessimistic predictions came from faculty at research universities and baccalaureate colleges



# A Risky Direction?

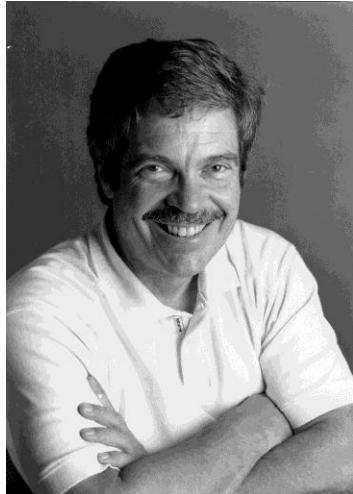


The sectors of higher education most at risk in the next 10 years.

Faculty and presidents see public four-year colleges and private non-profit colleges as the most at-risk, with both groups being most concerned with the future of institutions like their own.

Harvard business professor Clayton Christensen said he could imagine half of the colleges in the U.S. going out of business in the future because of enormous financial pressures.

# Innovation



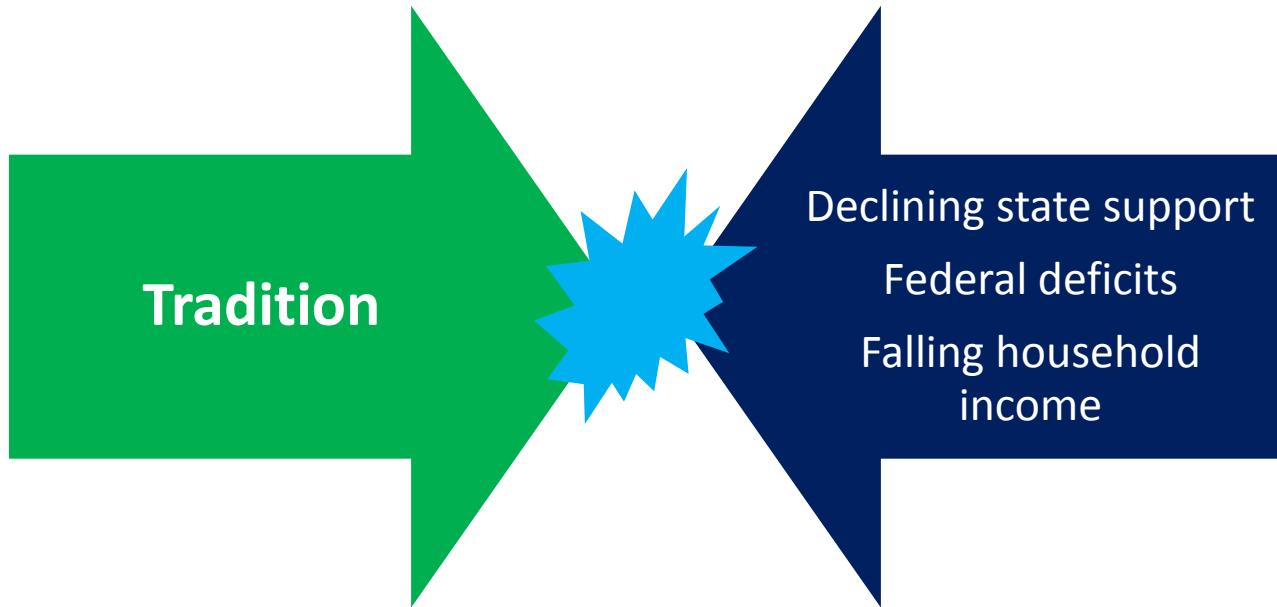
*“The best way to predict the future is to invent it”*- Alan Kay,  
internationally renowned  
computer scientist and professor

**Who** should be inventing the future of higher education?

**How** fast and pervasive should the changes be?

**What** innovations hold the most promise and which ones do not?

# Is Innovation Needed? To What Extent?



Most presidents and faculty members think only a moderate amount of *evolutionary change* is needed.

Only 10% think *massive disruption* is needed.

# How Fast and Pervasive?

54% of presidents and 57% of faculty members say change is “too slow” or “far too slow.”

**SAME**



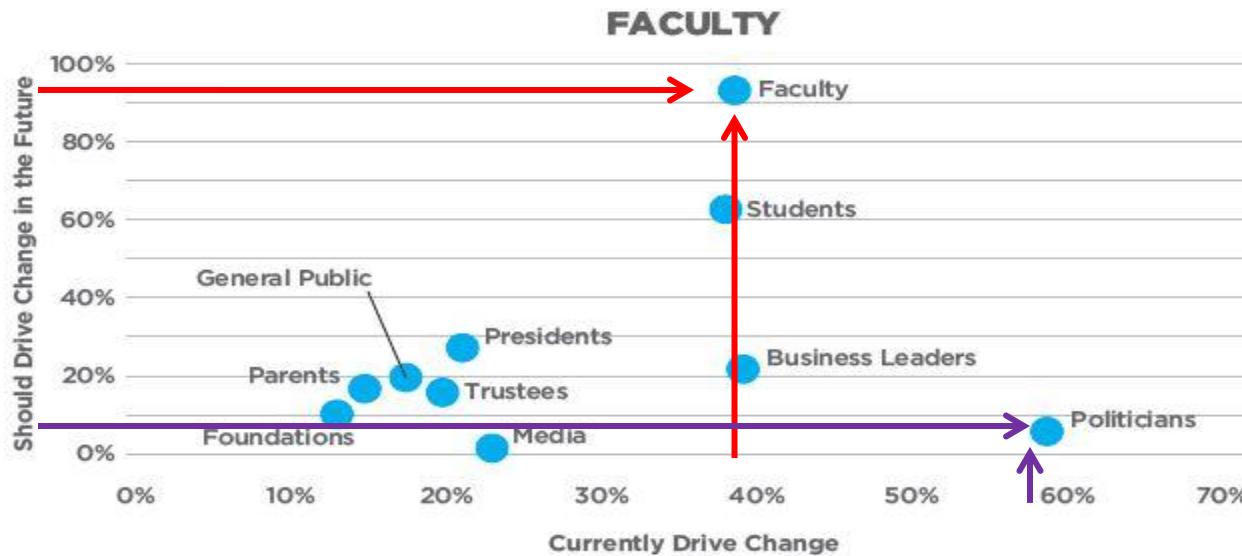
**CHANGE**

# A Cautionary Tale?

The ouster and reinstatement of UVA president Teresa Sullivan highlighted the existing tension between advocates for incremental change and those promoting a swift revolution and raised questions about who should be driving change in higher education

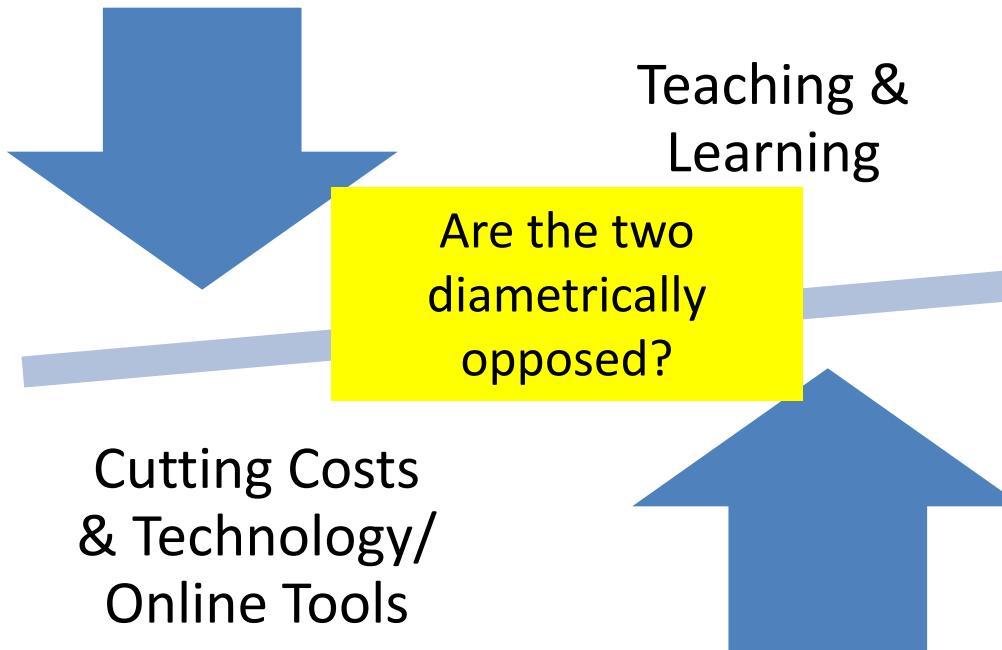


# Who currently drives Innovation and who should drive innovation?



Faculty and Presidents believe Faculty should be the drivers of innovation.

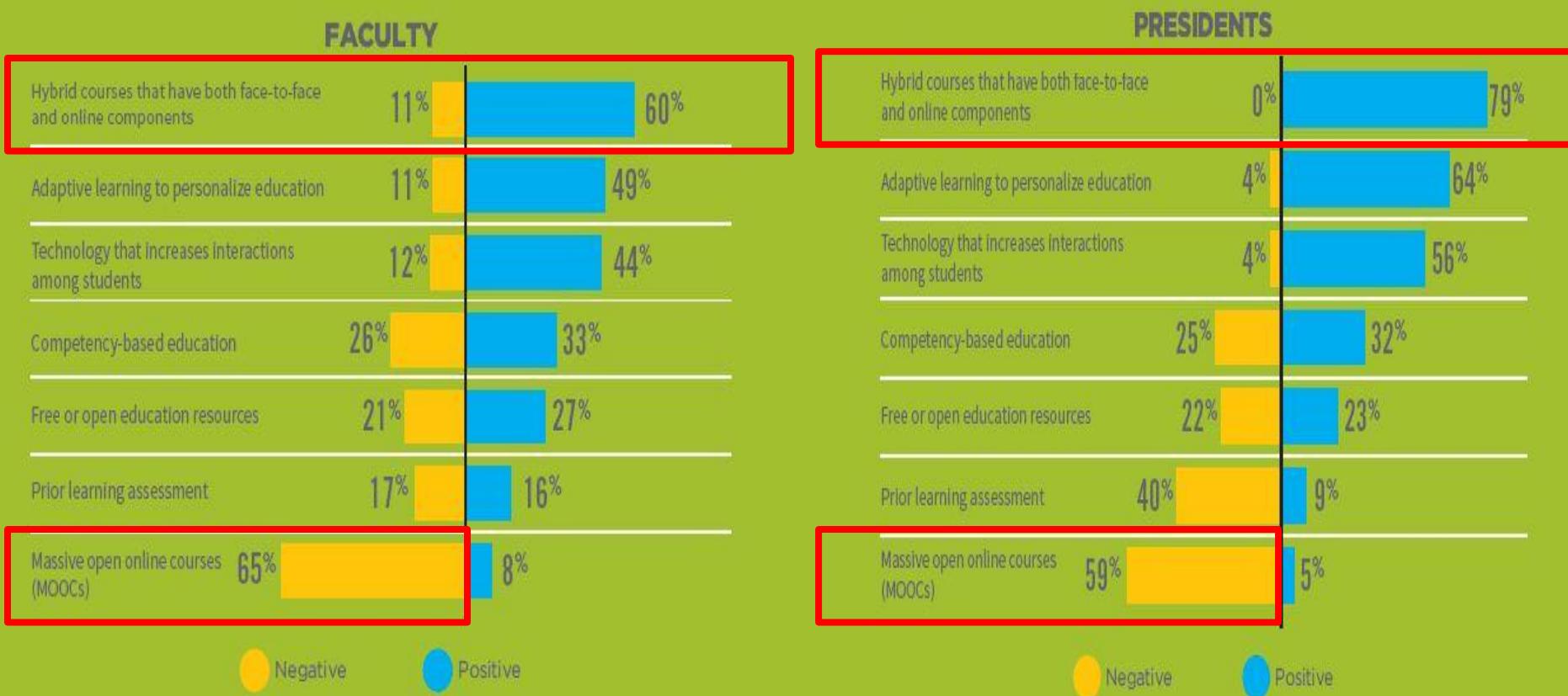
# What are We Currently Focusing on?



# What Should We be Focusing On?

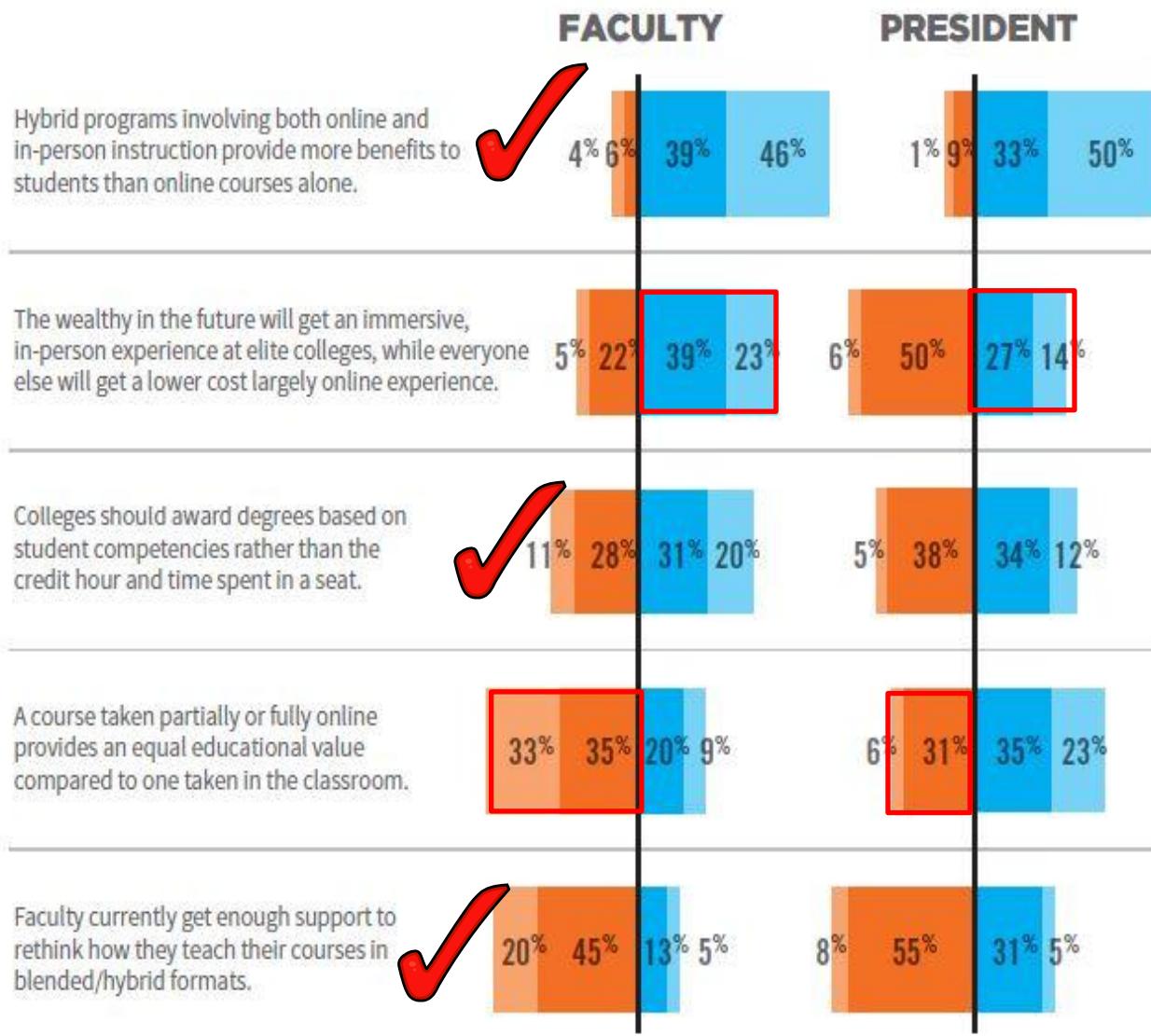
Both professors and presidents agree that the focus of discussions on innovation should be around changes to the teaching and learning model, but current discussions are instead focused on technology and cost cutting.

# Which Innovative Approaches Will Have the Most Positive and the Most Negative Impact on Higher Ed?



**Both presidents and faculty are most negative about MOOC's and feel most positive about hybrid courses that have both face-to-face and online components**

# Attitudes Towards Hybrid Learning



Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**Faculty are much more sure about a growing socioeconomic divide in higher education**

**Faculty are much more skeptical of online-only courses**

# Overarching Conclusions

- Presidents and faculty members are in agreement about more things than many perceive
- While the public, politicians, and business leaders might think higher education is in need of massive (revolutionary) change, most presidents and faculty members believe more evolutionary change is needed
- Presidents and faculty believe faculty should be leading change efforts
- Both presidents and faculty believe any change effort should have as its focus improving teaching and learning

# Remaining Questions

- Revolutionary change vs. evolutionary change- how do we know when which type is needed?
- Are improvements in teaching and learning diametrically opposed to the bottom line?
- How do we engage faculty so that they become the ones driving change?