Attitudes on Innovation In Higher Education:

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

Chronicle of Higher Education

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.”
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.
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.
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

Faculty are much more skeptical of online-only courses.

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