Research Roundup for Higher Education CIOs Responding to Disruption

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By Analysts Robert Yanckello, Tony Sheehan

Initiatives: Education Technology Optimization and Modernization and 1 more

The COVID-19 pandemic has tested the business continuity capabilities of many institutions. This research helps higher education CIOs focus on those critical areas impacted by the pandemic and effectively prepare for any crisis now and into the future.

Analysis

The global COVID-19 crisis has surfaced operational and tactical issues critical to enabling agile delivery and scaling of institutional services. Higher education CIOs can address these issues in a proactive manner. This collection of research is designed to help higher education CIOs and their teams prepare their institutions to be more fit and respond effectively with three strategies that can positively impact unforeseen global or regional crises. Leveraging this research can help CIOs to:

- **Respond** — Immediate needs that are most likely operational or tactical in nature
- **Recover** — Midterm and near-term activities, opportunities and stabilization efforts
- **Renew** — Longer-term modernization and optimization

Initially, the COVID-19 crisis saw higher education institutions globally adopt a virtual approach across their learning and workforce activities. Education institutions were focused on maintaining the continuity of education activities and remote workforce capability (see “CIO’s Research Collection for Online Teaching and Learning in Higher Education”). However, it quickly became apparent that other routine administrative and student-related activities would require similar support and attention. The replacement for the traditional face-to-face mode of operation for most institutions and migration to online put a severe strain on resources. Many institutional leaders realized they were not ready to handle traditional activities, including graduation, recruiting and campus visits, online faculty training and development, student advising, customer service and help desk, and secure and scalable remote connectivity.

The new emphasis on social distancing has placed new pressures on the CIO. The CIO and the institution's modern technology platform have moved to the front and center of every institution's capability to deliver and sustain the future student experience. Whether institutions like it or not, technology is now and will be the lifeline for many institutions. The modern technology platform
has accelerated institutional strategy and transformation, with little hope of returning to past operating practices.

It is with that frame of mind that CIOs should prepare and focus on modernizing and optimizing their organizations’ technology strategy. Using the checklist below, CIOs can develop modernization strategies across critical areas that drive and sustain technology changes in support of the institutional mission.

Checklist of Seven Operational Challenges for Higher Education CIOs

Table 1 shows the seven operational challenges for higher education CIOs.

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<td>Customer service and help desk</td>
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Source: Gartner

Research Highlights

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Developing a resilient and agile operations strategy involves linking operational delivery to institutional goals and mission-critical priorities (see “2020 CIO Agenda: A Higher Education Perspective”). Furthermore, creating strategies across these seven operational IT areas will prepare the organization for more effective and resilient response at any crisis level.

**Application Delivery: How Do We Deliver Modern Application Delivery?**

Higher education CIOs can ensure that enterprise applications, critical to institutional responsiveness and optimized business processes, can handle short-term disruptions. CIOs can prepare for long-term application delivery by improving operational efficiency.


“2020 Strategic Roadmap for the Future of Applications”

**Infrastructure, Communications and Network Services: How Do We Balance Performance With Internal Capacity?**

Maintaining a scalable, reliable and secure infrastructure is critical to the institution's ability to respond to changing business demands, especially with uncertainty over an end to the pandemic and how institutions will deliver services.

“Limit the Business Impact of COVID-19 Coronavirus Outbreaks by Improving Infrastructure Resilience”

“Infrastructure Operations Improvement Toolkit”

“2019 Strategic Roadmap for Networking”

**Mobile Services: How Can We Ensure Good User Experience and Preserve Device Security?**

An agile mobile strategy to sustain student and constituent engagement is critical, especially now with the evolving student experience and uncertainty over the future. Institutions must keep pace with the changing landscape.

“How to Choose the Right Service Provider for Your Mobile Application Development”

“Magic Quadrant for Multiexperience Development Platforms”

“Advance and Improve Your Mobile Security Strategy”

**Enterprise Risk Management — Security, Access, Privacy and Cybersecurity: How Do We Create a Safe and Reliable Environment That Is Agile and Responsive to User and Organizational Needs?**

Enterprise risk management encompasses a broad spectrum of collaborative activities like establishing governance, education and training, compliance, and continuous evaluation. Higher education CIOs must prepare for these challenges and evolving expectations.

Cross-functional agility and continuous learning will be key aspects of workforce development, as institutions prepare for an evolving higher education ecosystem. To prepare for this evolution, CIOs need to manage both the risks of remote work and development of short- and longer-term plans to respond to future disruptions. Institutions also must prepare the faculty and staff to work with disruptions in unexpected settings.

Customer Service and Help Desk: How Can We Balance the Needs of Our Customers With Institutional Capacity?

Service delivery continuity and client support can be negatively impacted during a crisis. Establishing service management priorities and practices will maintain stakeholder trust and improve service delivery through any disruption.

IT Procurement: How Can We Accelerate Action, While Preserving Standards?

During times of crisis, procuring new or additional products and services often takes on a new sense of urgency and apprehension. CIOs must be prepared to address institutional needs and supplier alternatives to ensure they gain appropriate perspective and results.

Recommended by the Authors

Navigating Change — The CIO’s Role in Creating an Adaptive Higher Education Institution

Higher Education Ecosystem 2030: Planning in the Face of Radical Uncertainty
2020 Strategic Roadmap for Higher Education Student Information Systems
Higher Education CIOs Can Build a Digital Platform to Modernize for the Future
Survey Analysis: Insight to Initiate Your Legacy Modernization in Higher Education

Recommended For You
Case Study: Client-Centric Technology Implementation Protocols (ATB Wealth)
Innovation Insight for Event Brokers
Innovation Insight for Event Thinking
Consider Your Purpose: Reinventing Your Way Out of the Crisis
Cool Vendors in Sourcing and Procurement for Supply Chain

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