

dancker



How Education Can Thrive in a Post COVID-19 Era

We continue to be mired in uncertainty of what comes next and realize that no one has all the answers yet. We decided to bring together the great minds across our education clients to share learnings, thoughts, ideas and concerns for successful learning experiences in our post COVID-19 world.

Enclosed is a summary of our recent discussion around education and how to not only survive, but to thrive in the post-COVID-19 era.

dancker's President and CEO, Steve Lang, facilitated a conversation with industry leaders who have dedicated their careers to creating environments that inspire, engage and support education.

dancker



Steve Lang
President & CEO

Steve's customer-centric philosophy informed the clear, strategic blueprint that was developed to build a strong and sustainable market leadership position for dancker, a nearly 200-year old commercial interiors organization that provides architectural, furniture, technology and logistical solutions for the spaces where people work, learn or heal.

Steelcase®
HEALTH



Marisa Sergnese
Principal

Marisa's extensive experience as a certified teacher, school administrator and education consultant support her interactions with both teachers and higher education instructors to develop and implement active learning environments.

 **DLR Group**



Jim French, FAIA
Senior Principal, Global
K-12 Education Leader

Throughout his career, Jim has exclusively served school districts and education clients, offering unparalleled expertise in the planning and design of future-ready environments that support the whole child. Through his research-informed practice, Jim has gained a thorough understanding of how students learn, and the impact of design on student engagement and achievement.

 **DLR Group**



Danile DeBoo, AIA
NE Higher Education Leader

Danile's 30-year career has fostered whole campus development to promote thriving learning and living communities. Danile guides projects while mentoring architects to be global designers embracing sustainability, timelessness, and economic responsive practice.

Attendees included: Professor and Provost Emeritus, Director Center for University Excellence – American University; Dean, School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences – Fairleigh Dickinson University; Assistant Dean for Student Affairs & Programmatic Effectiveness – Fairleigh Dickinson University, School of Pharmacy & Health Sciences; Executive Director – Newmark School; Facilities Coordinator – Verona Board of Education

We're thankful to those who were able to join despite Hurricane Isaias and missed those who could not.

**Steve Lang:**

Good morning everyone. How are you, thank you for joining us. My name is Steve Lang. I'm the president and CEO of dancker. I am acting today as your host and moderator for the next hour. This webinar is next up in our educational series, discussions on and with a handful of our clients.

I have with me today an esteemed panel of three experts who focus on education and the educational environment. So, I'm going to start with Danile and allow them to introduce themselves and share a little bit about themselves.

Danile DeBoo:

Thanks so much. I greatly appreciate that. I'm Danile DeBoo and I am with DLR Group out of the New York office. I am heading up higher education in the northeast region.

I have to say, I've been living in the tri state area for the last 30 years practicing architecture. I really started in K-12 in the early 90s and we had the pleasure of seeing those students move on to college and working on campuses. It has been a great opportunity to really see how students are continuing their education, and what kind of support they really need. I'm very excited about today's discussion and looking forward to hearing from you all. Thanks so much.

Jim French:

Morning. My name is Jim French. I'm the global sector leader for DLR Group K-12 and I have been designing schools for over 30 years. I lead a group of about 450 people in DLR Group, one of the largest providers of K-12 in the world.

This pandemic situation has been a very interesting thing for all of us to go through. So hopefully we can share some things today with all of you that are insightful, and things we've learned along the way. Obviously, it seems to change every day. Thank you.

Marisa Sergnese:

Good morning everyone. I worked for a number of years in a variety of education settings as a teacher, consultant, adjunct faculty, as well as a school administrator. As a learning strategist I focused on designing engaging, inclusive learning sprints to support educators' attention, specifically to the use of physical space so that they can enhance opportunities for meaningful authentic student learning experiences. I'm currently a part of the Steelcase education consulting group and so working with schools – K-12 and higher ed – around the practice of change management in developing growth mindsets that influence school culture.

As many of you were working in both virtual and face to face interactions with faculty and leaders to effectively shift to more learner centered teaching and learning environments, I'm happy to be here with you this morning. Excellent, thank you.

Steve Lang:

So, to kick off our discussion, we thought one of the ways to perhaps engage the group a little bit and give our three panelists a little bit of perspective on where everyone is coming from, we have a couple of simple polls and ask the audience to engage in the participation.

Q:

Where are you in planning what comes next?

- a) we are ready for the Fall with plans in place and shared with staff, students & parents
- b) we are reviewing options but have not yet determined our plan for the Fall
- c) we are on this call to get us started with planning

A:

83% are ready for the Fall with plans in place and shared with staff, students & parents

Like many of us, you all have plans in place to think through things and that's really good because we're going to get into some of that today, and kind of dissect that a bit to double check your plans and make sure that we're thinking not only about what happens when we start the plan, but how we modify the plan as we move forward.

Q:

How would you rank your ability to deliver a great learning experience virtually?

- a) We have mastered our digital transformation
- b) We are a work in progress and delivering an adequate virtual experience
- c) We are still trying to figure it out and not successfully delivering virtual experience

A:

80% are a work in progress and delivering an adequate virtual experience

Only 1 organization has mastered their digital transformation

We only have one that's mastered the digital transformation; we can hear from them later. Most everyone is in that general bucket where it's still a work in progress, thinking about virtual, but you know it's going to evolve, just like this pandemic is evolving. How we attack it from a work perspective, and from an education perspective is evolving.

Thank you for your feedback and giving our panelists a little bit more insight as to where you are and how you might be thinking.

Steve Lang:

To any of the panelists, so far as you think about your work with clients and some of your contacts:
What is one surprising discovery or insight that you've gained so far from the experience about rethinking education and the educational environment?

"there's a whole different appreciation for teachers today than there was before the pandemic"

- Jim French

"Campuses are about more than education: it's the full support of the student. They missed their colleagues, the support of faculty in one on one conversations, and the infrastructure."

- Danile DeBoo



"we're not going to come out of this thing the same way we went into it"

- Jim French

Danile DeBoo:

Beginning in April and May, we conducted an interview process with a survey of about 100 institutions, talking to both students, faculty, and administrators to really understand how they were feeling or addressing the pandemic in particular last Spring, and then moving forward in the Fall. We've been continuing those conversations.

The thing that I think was most interesting was how quickly individual administrators and faculty were able to pivot and move online with their students. And then secondly, the student response. What we really heard is that the students really wanted to get back on campus. They are eager to be with their communities.

Lastly, the students and their struggle for an equitable environment. Campuses are about more than education: it's the full support of the student. They missed their colleagues, the support of faculty in one on one conversations, and the infrastructure. They had trouble finding Wi-Fi in some instances, or they didn't necessarily have access to the software that they were accustomed to having on campuses, things like that.

Jim French:

To add to Danile's comments, what I've heard a lot is there's a whole different appreciation for teachers today than there was before the pandemic. I think people always appreciated educators, but every parent that we talked to shared the same sentiment. We surveyed over 150 school districts across the United States that represented about 2.6 million students. They all said that we now understand how hard teaching is and we don't necessarily like teaching our children! Because it's a lot of work. Parents were okay with a little bit of support but realize it's an awful lot of work.

I don't know if this is surprising, but from our standpoint, after all the conversations we've had is that we're not going to come out of this thing the same way we went into it. And I think in some ways that's a good thing. I'd like to think that we, as a society, and what we do for a living with our educators, that we will come out of this thing stronger than when we went into it. We all know that school districts don't change real quickly, and there's a lot of reasons for that. I think this is a great opportunity for us as designers to work with our partners in the educational world to actually figure out how do we do that, how do we come out of this thing better.

Steve Lang:

What advice, if any, would you have for the educational leaders – the superintendents of schools, the folks that are running the universities and colleges? They're a little bit distanced from the actual problem on site having to manage through it, and that includes not just the physical environment, but some of the social challenges. So when you think about decision making, through the lens of the leadership of the school district or the university, any thoughts about what advice you might give them with your experience and perhaps things you've seen from some of the leading organizations that are addressing this in the most appropriate way?

Jim French:

I would say that in our interviews the thing that we heard most from educators, was that the increasing communications that administrators were having with their educators and their teachers was of high importance. In many cases, one of the things we've learned over the years is that modifying and changing our learning environments in some cases is very new and we're trying to be visionaries where we can to create great spaces for teachers and students to learn and teach.

Staff Development, I think, is going to be a really important thing. If you think about it, we've been doing virtual learning for some time. We've done some virtual conversations with our clients, but today I would say that probably about 95% of what we do is virtual, and we had to go through a learning curve to get here. I wouldn't take staff development lightly. I would do as much of that as I possibly can for your staff because they're learning something, quite frankly, in many ways that they've never done, and I think that's really important.

Marisa Sergnese:

I would echo much of what both Jim and Danile have said. With our research and in the interactions that we've had and done over the course of the past six months or so, the key drivers at the school level being alignment, access, pedagogies, familiarity, and communication. We know those were the things that made significant differences in the experience for both faculty and students.

Danile DeBoo:

I agree with you, Jim, I think most universities have some form of virtual learning one way or another. I also think that students have been taking universities down that path. When I look at the universities that I've been talking to, the ones that have been very successful at growing and expanding are the ones that got organized laterally, horizontally across their administrators, students, and had their faculty gather information about what was happening and then strategize. What's the right way to pivot, and then continuing those conversations throughout the semester as they were finishing last Spring.

I know some of those universities continued those committees this summer to really put together a very strong plan, but also a plan that allowed them to adapt and flex. A couple of them did have to change their plan late in the game. Most of the universities put something together in June and they've adapted it as things were changing this summer. Being able to take in information quickly and modifying plans allows them to grow and expand very quickly and react, and I think this will be critical this Fall.

"Communication was really key: the ability to be transparent, meaningful and have open channels of communication between different departments, in higher ed and even in K-12. That communication with students, the faculty and the parent community were incredibly important. Those were the things that really helped people when they had to pivot, and they continue to be successful."

– Marisa Sergnese

Steve Lang:

When you think about it in that vein, you're seeing some of this learning being very distributed or decentralized to smaller groups. Learning in pods and also the virtual versus the physical, what challenges does that pose to the actual educators themselves? I'm thinking through the lens of the educator. **How do they make sure that what they're teaching is taught in a way that's consistent with all of the students in higher ed or K-12?**

Marisa Sergnese:

You know, we've worked with a number of schools that had already done a lot of work and had great familiarity with the digital tools that had been selected. That really influenced everyone's adoption and full use of tools to be able to do remote distance learning.

At the higher ed level, the centers for teaching and innovation and learning, they were critical and they mobilized immediately to put programs into place, where they were identifying tools, providing training right away, so that worked really well.

We did see other institutions with the mindset of "we're going to get back to our normal really quickly," and so they weren't mobilizing as quickly to put those kinds of programs in place. Those are the folks that we've seen struggle in getting up to speed. Familiarity with the tools was key. Also, the pedagogy where people were given time to practice it and to learn new techniques for that virtual realm is where we've seen greater success.

"Teachers who were more familiar with the tools and platforms, it's been proven that they provided a much better experience for students."

- Marisa Sergnese



Jim French:

The only thing I might add is just from a pure cleanliness standpoint, I don't think that's going to go away. As we've kind of looked at this whole thing as the now, near and far I think in the real near – this Fall – is that for parents to feel safe for their kids coming back to school, they're going to need to believe the environments that their children are in are safe. Today there's not a lot of evidence we're going to see on a wall a little green light that says, 'You are now COVID-free,' but I wouldn't doubt that it is coming very soon.

I would recommend to administrators out there that cleanliness thinking is not going to go away. I'll reference a little bit of what happened when we helped the Joplin School District rebuild from the F5 tornado that hit them. Those of us that live in the Midwest, the conversations about tornadoes has up ticked since we went through a couple situations where schools were hit by tornadoes in the last five to ten years. I think with relation to COVID, the whole cleanliness of learning environments, fresh air and air quality is what you should anticipate your parents are going to ask a lot of questions about. I'm sure there'll be a huge uptick on that to ensure the environments are really clean.

Steve Lang:

Excellent. So guys, I think we're going to do our own pivot here because of the storm that's heading up the East Coast - I'm looking out my window of my home office and it's pretty bad and I know it has sent a couple of people home because of the state of emergency. So, our pivot will be to open up the lines. We have about five or six clients that are engaged here and we have a few more people from Steelcase on the line.

Our group has suggested that it might be a good idea to just open it up to everyone. I'll still have some questions, but I think the audience will enjoy a more open and frank discussion with everybody, so it's not me asking questions and the three panelists sort of answering them at you. We're going to answer them together.

Before we pivot, I'm going to ask another question.

What about the in-between spaces. When you think about any educational environment, K-12 all the way up through higher ed, it's not just the material itself but it's learning about your social interaction. It's socializing the learning so that you can create a perspective or gain additional perspectives from others. How does the built environment support that in a way that is COVID friendly, and are there any new thoughts or new innovations or new ideas to make sure that, to the extent we can, we accommodate that social learning as well?



"One faculty member we spoke to actually changed their curriculum. It was a sociology class and to organize the students to do just that, they were asked to help their community and find what they could do to embed themselves safely."

- Danile DeBoo

Danile DeBoo:

What we've seen is the virtual space has actually been a very good tool for the students to create those in-between spaces. We immediately started seeing them creating groups and cohorts themselves to talk about what they were doing, whether academically or personally, to deal with COVID-19 and how they were keeping up or not keeping up.

Students intuitively will do that. It would be very advantageous probably for faculty to be able to participate and or to also do that as well. Just as students learn from one another, faculty could equally learn from one another, especially when it comes to the tools, what's being effective and what's not with your pedagogical approach to learning and teaching online.

As far as physical space, it was interesting. There were still a great number of students and faculty that stayed on campuses. They lived off campus. They did not necessarily go back home. We found groups that were getting together if nothing else to help their community.

So, I think it's the fabric that you work in becomes that space, taking advantage of outdoor spaces was also very strategic for a number of campuses.

Steve Lang:

So, I want to welcome Chadwin, Joe, Michael, Scott and Regina. Welcome, you are now officially part of the panel! This is our version of a pivot.

The five of you are engaged in your own expertise and in your own worlds, and I believe that learning happens in all ways at all times. If you're willing and open to engage in it:

What questions do you have for the group, or do any of you have anything to share about where you are currently or a new insight that maybe is evolving in your organization as you think through navigating this global pandemic when the Fall comes?

Scott Bass:

Let me begin. I'm Scott Bass. I'm the former provost at American University with about 15,000 students in Washington, DC. Our faculty worked throughout the summer, but it is not possible to provide the kind of safety needed in terms of the physical environment. There are three different constituencies, you have staff who work within residence halls and those in other sectors that prepare meals or drive buses. We have professional staff and faculty all in different spheres and different ways of traveling back and forth to campus.

And then you have the densification of students coming. If you think of undergraduates who are first year students who had their high school disrupted, who have been cooped up for months and are going to come here and you're not sure if they'll follow the rules while in classes or during the day. We couldn't control them in the past, you know, every week we would have kids we would rush to the hospital to have their stomachs pumped because of alcohol poisoning and near death. So, if we can't even communicate about smoking and drinking in the best of times, can you imagine what we're going to encounter at 11 or 12 o'clock at night with kids who want to be with each other?

As we look at this situation, knowing the virus is not going to just go away, the question of how we mitigate it, even with the vaccine, that is probably a year before we get to that point. And then we have deniers who will not take the vaccine which currently looks like about 30%. Now that may not be our student population, but it may affect the number of workers who have their webs, whose families are in direct service work. How do we change the built environment and modify a traditional campus of residence halls? There's some customization in there, but our revenue base to pay the cost of those buildings over many years is generated by revenue from students.

I was in the buildings yesterday and our faucets, our doorways, they're all touch kinds of spaces with a flow of traffic in the facilities. Sure, we would love to have students and faculty come back. But in a post-virus or post-mitigated virus world, what will our institutions be like, and how do we build a safe environment because people do want to have the residential learning experience?

We're doing fine online. Online is not new at American. We have a number of different learning management companies that provide advanced support, but you know it's not easy to make the pivot, but we're doing okay – not great. We want to teach in a regular classroom. How do we do this, because just wearing masks isn't going to get us through this.

Steve Lang:

Thank you for your feedback and painting a picture of what most in your shoes are dealing with. I'm curious of the original panelists, or anyone else on the call now, if anyone has any thoughts or insights to any of Scott's points because there were many?

Marisa Sergnese:

Scott brought to light the concept of well-being, which at Steelcase, we've been studying for a long time. We talked about fostering positive health within six pillars - how do we create meaning, belonging, authenticity, mindfulness, optimism and vitality? As I was listening to Scott, it's really about how do we create meaning in terms of creating a purpose for what we're doing? How do we allow this one that we want to have happen in such a way that students can really thrive, so there's that sense of belonging?

A lot of folks have really struggled with what is the virtual realm, adopting those tools, whether it's breakout rooms or whatever it might be to create that social connectedness. Even in terms of mindfulness, really focusing in optimism, focusing on how do we shape mindset, so that students and faculty are adapting to this new virtual realm that is dominating as opposed to the physical structure for those folks that haven't gone 100% virtual and are doing some type of hybrid or high flex. That's really hard to manage that core group that you're face to face with as you've got others, who are needed, to have that same experience. I am really curious as to how many of the others are focusing on well-being within the spaces as you're moving forward.



"The concept of well-being, which at Steelcase, we've been studying for a long time. We talked about fostering positive health within six pillars - how do we create meaning, belonging, authenticity, mindfulness, optimism and vitality?"

- Marisa Sergnese



Regina Peter:

This is Regina Peter and I'm the Co-founder and Executive Director of a K-12 private school program in New Jersey. Steelcase, you guys were very instrumental as well as dancker, in our facility design and opening, and we still work with dancker for equipment in our building.

I think the piece that you're talking about is certainly paramount. Our program is for kids with special needs - high functioning autism, ADHD, mood disorders, depression, anxiety, you know, everything that COVID would hit upon, our kids experience on a day-to-day basis without the virus.

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Regina Peter:

We've obviously been virtual since March, like every other school in the state of New Jersey. We have a very strong counseling program, and all the things that you hit on were already a part of our school program.

I think what we did is whatever was a real strong component of our school program before, we just continued with virtually.

We're not a college so we did not have any online learning platforms. Why would we need to come to school? The whole premise of them being there is shaping their behavior and working on social skills and all the other things that we work on with our kids. Them not being here is a whole different world for us and for K-12. But with that being said, all the things you discussed are very strong components of our program. So, we were able to take those virtually: we still do mindful moments in the morning. I think what might be hard, because we've seen that with our counseling team, is for people to start those practices potentially while we're in this. You have to be very disciplined to do that, and I also think it depends on how old you are, because a 20 year old is different than a 10 year old who is different than a 30 year old, and you have a different mindset of invincibility or what you need.

So I think for us, and I'm sure for the colleges, whatever we were really good at we strengthened during this online crisis to some level, and we will look to continue to strengthen that with the two options that we have, whether you want to be in school onsite or all virtual. We're fortunate we have small programs – we only have 12 students in our class so we don't need to do some of the A/B scheduling that public schools need to do, but I think we found that whatever we were really good at, we stuck with that and moved it to an online model.

Danile DeBoo:

Just to add on that, one of the things that we've been doing with our master plan is really looking at the whole campus and the whole person. And so we have this wellness wheel that as we plan a campus, we're really looking at the larger picture and all aspects.

It's for resiliency and this situation, it really is about making sure that whatever you've been doing you continue and augment, it's even more important now probably. Especially in a residential hall, simulating socialization and staying as connected as you can to your students so that they have that continued sense of community from the larger campus and from the larger institution. You know, just as Scott had said, there were problems before that we cannot control. We're not necessarily controlling, but guiding your students and making sure that they're healthy. This is only going to augment that, so it probably means more communication, more activity and really addressing the whole student. We've also talked about financially what campuses are doing today, not just to mention the physical and the social.



Steve Lang:

So quick poll for the five of our new panelists. If you had to rank these, if you had to pick the top three among these eight, what would they be? That is, what are you struggling with the most?

Jim French:

That's consistent with a lot of the interviews we've been doing across the country in K-12 – the social piece and the emotional piece is what people are most worried about.

Danile DeBoo:

That's not surprising to me.

Chadwin Sandifer:

Hey Steve, hey, Danile. So, for those who I don't know I'm Chadwin, the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and Programmatic Effectiveness at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

I actually didn't answer your poll, so if you're waiting for my response, I wasn't one to answer! And I think the reason that I didn't answer is because for us, I haven't seen us lacking in any of these areas, but that's not to say that we are perfect. We're doing things correctly, but even just taking the social component that was just mentioned, we've been able to transition our social and our community engagement to an online platform.

Community engagement has been seamlessly moved into an online arena. So for example, every Thursday night we had a cooking channel with one of our faculty who was talking about the ingredients and how they related to the sciences and so forth.

Our transition into learning has been pretty seamless. We are a smaller program; we have about 320 students.

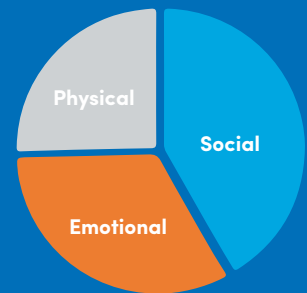
The one challenge with our students is about 70 to 80% of the students are out in the field practicing, but our in house students, I don't think that we struggled with providing the emotional, intellectual, the physical and environmental, financial, vocational support, because we were ready to do it. I think one of the things that people throughout the pandemic have really focused on is what we can do, and what we saw was an opportunity, a great time for us to examine what we can do. We started with providing an online platform for students to learn, which encourages our faculty to think in new and creative ways. Their confidence has been built, and they feel that they can do this. Going into the Fall semester, we're struggling because I think a lot of people have devoted a lot of their summer to creating these great modules of learning students can really engage in. And now we're questioning, do we go in person, or do we stay online?

What do we do with some faculty? We're having mixed emotions on how do we transition because we had such a good, a large success. I know Michael is on the call; he and I met with students at the end of the semester to assess their learning and what happened throughout the semester – what worked well, what didn't work well.

QUESTION:

Among the 8 areas where resiliency is critical, which 3 are you struggling the most with:

- a) Financial
- b) Vocational
- c) Spiritual
- d) Emotional
- e) Intellectual
- f) Physical
- g) Social
- h) Environmental



"No surprise – social takes the cake, followed by emotional and then physical."

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Chadwin Sandifer:

Do you think moving into the Fall semester, are you ready for an online platform? Many of our students were happy to continue online learning and thought it was really beneficial. What we've seen across all platforms, students, faculty, staff, and I include staff because they were responsible for the social, the community development and online engagement, is that everyone's confidence has been built.

This has been such a great opportunity for institutions of higher education, in particular, and I would say all K-12 and all educational institutions should build confidence in what they can do and I wish that as we progress into the Fall semester, people would see this as an area of opportunity as opposed to what we can no longer do. We can still do a lot of things, it just needs to be done in a creative way.



"all educational institutions should build confidence in what they can do and I wish that as we progress into the Fall semester, people would see this as an area of opportunity as opposed to what we can no longer do"

- Chadwin Sandifer

Steve Lang:

You know it's early in the pandemic in the sense of how it's going to change the educational environment. But one of the questions I have is what of these experiences will we put into a systematic change? At some point, right, it will be a manageable problem that is no longer a problem, it will be flu-like as opposed to pandemic-like at some point. So, given that that's true, does everything and all the work that we've all been engaged in just disappear?

So that's a big question, what sticks right, and what's actually better than previously?

Chadwin Sandifer:

I hope most of it sticks. I think a lot of the things that we're doing are really great. If faculty members and if educators can only talk and they can only teach in the traditional ways, I don't think we have a place for that anymore. We need to be engaging in our curriculum, meeting students where they are at their own life. If we can create that sense of community, and I'm confident that we are able to, then I don't think that everything needs to go away.

I hope our institutions don't go back to the way they were. I can go into a classroom and teach for three hours and talk at students. It doesn't engage them with the content. So, my hope is that through this we've built competence so that the good pieces continue. The engagement, the emotional and physical space, and the vocational training that we provide, I hope those things stick. But I hope that the curriculum and many, many institutions don't go back to the way they were.

Steve Lang:

You know that when you're smaller, theoretically, it's easier to pivot. Right, it is, so I'm curious, Joe or Scott – any insights there about pivoting and what ultimately do you think will stick in your organizations and what will you not go back to? In other words, hey, this is good. We're going to keep this post-pandemic or not.

Scott Bass:

I think the question for all of us is what type of institution you envision three years from now, or four years from now, and how do you get there. You have to make a number of decisions that are immediate, short term and I think we can manage through that.

While making choices, leadership needs to step back and ask, what do I want to have come out of this?

One of the things we've seen historically in higher education is those institutions... *[we apologize for the gap in recording – due to Hurricane Isaias, we experienced some connection and audio interruptions]* ... say 1980 was another recession in terms of how they're going to make it as an institution. So, a number of leaders decided to actually make cuts deeper to have resources to invest. Now is the time for people to begin thinking, what will the institution be like, and how do I make allocations to support that? There was a survey of presidents I read that recently came out and just over 50% said this is a moment to examine their operations. I can tell you that the institutions I monitor and keep pretty close tabs on, I certainly know Dickinson well, I paid tuition there for four years, that the choices are very short term, even some of the conversations.

It's not a question of online or face to face; good teaching takes place certainly involving use of the modalities that are available to us in the classroom asynchronously or in a synchronous basis in the classroom. More of the challenges that we're facing, and I'm working on a book on this, has to do with our overall infrastructure that we've created, this really 100 year old system and the capacity for a digitized generation coming into the schools that are faced with a very archaic support system. You're talking about belonging and this kind of thing that is very much a focus of my 10 years as a provost and building resources and models that are supported by Mellon Foundation and others is that the bureaucracy that we have to provide those services is fragmented.

We have 35 different databases, just for support services to our undergraduate students. You're really talking about an institution which is built on a model that took place between 18 and 1910 at a time that the nation was building bureaucratic structures. You can go back in time and you'll see most of the things that we have in place today reflect those structures. They fit for a generation of kids who are used to apps and dealing with technology, who have just gone through a 2008 recession, an environmental crisis and are going through a public health crisis and a racial crisis. They are very different in a highly at-risk population.

And so those are the things that we're going to have to talk about and think about as we move forward in building institutions.

Michael Avaltroni:

I'm Michael, Dean of the School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences at Fairleigh Dickinson University, and Chad and I work together. A major challenge you'll encounter is that higher education is built as one of the most risk averse institutions, and is slow to change. The rules of business apply to that when you throw in an environment that is very difficult to adapt to because of the people involved.

I think that what we're seeing right now is probably no different than when we have a time of major upheaval – mergers, acquisitions, closures happening. I'm concerned because the players in this game aren't particularly adept at navigating it, and I think that's going to be a struggle. It's complex and I don't see a lot of success for a lot of places because there's an unwillingness to be able to learn and acknowledge that.

Although we have what may be a very noble cause, the reality is if the balance sheet doesn't work, the business model doesn't work and the business closes. The unwillingness to adapt to that is something I see across the industry.

Jim French:

What do you think of the tipping point being COVID-19? I'm always kind of curious that if COVID didn't take us to a place that, and I agree with you that there are some that just will want to adapt. In fact, I mean just even K-12, it's an institution that doesn't move very fast for change. But do you think COVID could be that tipping point where we could come out stronger?

Danile always reminds me that for me to come up an interview in the higher ed world, it is very difficult because my message is very different and difficult to hear, but I do think that our secondary kids 9-12, that the conversations between higher ed and K-12 are really important as we move forward. I think some of the shifts that'll be made in higher ed, we need to support down in the secondary level K-12 when it comes to design, and just learning.

Danile DeBoo:

We're definitely seeing that universities that were having issues before COVID-19 put together a plan and was trying to adapt and react, that pre-work is really what set them up to foster change within their own community and to recognize we need a new model. And so completely understand that, education for the longest time was probably the best product that the US produced; you can go back to the 80s and the 90s. We were the number one place for education to go to. I would agree that those who do not take this opportunity to adapt and really just see this as a game changer probably will not see the other side.



"I think what you're going to see is that there's going to be some innovators who are going to thrive because they do things differently. And the ones that aren't willing to are going to struggle to adapt and, in some cases, not be able to make it."

- Michael Avaltroni

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"The biggest concern that you have for students at this point is their social ability and their ability to survive and rise above it. That's it. Nothing else. If we can provide that emotional support that would be the biggest thing for students."

- Danile DeBoo



Danile DeBoo:

But to really do that, I think that we're looking at change on a per semester basis to make sure that you continue, not just through the Summer, not just through this Fall. This will be at least a couple of years to really adapt and improve, refine, and really craft an outcome that takes you to the next side, for the next 10 years because these are very different students. You look at the last 20 years, there's been significant changes. It's been a fascinating century so far, lots of challenges in the students born in 2001, they've seen it all. And they're the ones entering college right now. They're the ones in K-12 so they know what it means to be able to adapt.

Steve Lang:

I know a few of the institutions on the call. And, you know, Regina's organization is one that has a different set of challenges and had that set of challenges before COVID. I feel in her organization and probably the folks from Fairleigh is that it's somewhat cultural and if you align the leaders and the educators along a path that says this is not something that's happening to us, it's something that we are creating in this environment to sustain the organization to the future and that's why some of the, I think, most interesting questions are around the idea of what's going to stick - what makes us better longer term.

Necessity is the mother of invention and there are a lot of good things that I think will come out of this for the educational environment. I think we're hitting on some today, but I think everyone on this call should give themselves a round of applause because I would say, by and large, it's a forward thinking group, all of the folks that have chimed in. I'm happy for you and for your organizations, but it's an uphill battle in the sense that you've got to align everybody. And you know, it's the 80/20 rule. if you get 80%, the 20% eventually come along and you can't necessarily deal with the 20%; you have to deal with the 80% and get the rest to migrate, so that's the real challenge.

So, along that stream. We have a couple minutes left. Any thoughts there about the organizations that are leaning in and leading? Any advice to others? And that goes for Steelcase, the DLR Group and dancker too. What can we, what should we talk to other clients about from your perspective?

Jim French:

I think it's important that we all keep communicating with one another and our clients. When we completed our study and research, we went back and talked, we had a webinar with all the clients who participated. We asked them if they wanted to continue the conversation on what we call the far – what the future will look like.

95% of them said, I want to stay connected, because I do believe we've got to change and now's the time to do that.

I don't think any of us have all the answers right now, but what I do think is that we need to take this opportunity to rethink what we're doing, from an educational standpoint, and even our learning environments because I just don't see how we go back the same way we came out of it. And I think that's a great thing, quite frankly.

Regina Peter:

I think the social emotional piece is really paramount. You can see it from young children to the elderly, really struggling with the lack of human contact. Honestly I would much rather be around a conference room table meeting with everyone, than I would be on screen. There are different energy levels that you get. There are different ideas that get generated. People can interrupt each other and hear each other at the same time, it's hard to do that on screen. There's etiquette online that some of our staff have not learned yet. So, we're working on that. But, I think as different as the digital platform is, you can get a lot done digitally with an independent learner.

But for kids that are not independent learners, they need coaxing. College students – hopefully they're there, and they're independent learners. I'm not in that same situation with our students. So, for us it's really that live piece. Someone mentioned earlier about the archaic systems of education, where you have 35 different platforms. It's so funny. Again, we're a small school. But that is exactly what we're doing away with. It's a huge undertaking that I've been doing for a good two to three years in really just making everything connect, because if it connects you use it. But if it doesn't connect, you don't use it.

To make teachers and have things more meaningful for them is to make it easy so that they can teach to their craft.

If we can shift that thinking for people and make things easier and simpler, whether that be in a facility, whether that be online, wherever that may be – teaching happens everywhere and anywhere.

And then that social aspect, you're giving two kids a whole different realm. It doesn't have to be an English class; it can be in a whole different space. I think the change could really be a great one, and I'm thrilled. In my head I go, we don't ever have to have a snow day anymore. Or a kid never has to be absent if they have a doctor's appointment at 10 and school's too far, they can always get online later. They never really have to miss something unless they're really too sick to get online. For me, that is something that we'll look at, okay, wait a minute. What do you mean you're going to be absent? Do you just need the blood work? Can you hop online, maybe mom and dad couldn't drive you because their work schedule, but potentially you could still be here without physically having to be here. So, I think for us, that's a big eye opener with that.

Steve Lang:

So unfortunately, we are a little over our time, so I think unless anyone else has anything to add, we're going to wrap up.

Thank you for your willingness to pivot and share your ideas.

We have several resources available for you. There's a really good overview of the evolution of the campus from the DLR Group. There's some rethinking K-12 spaces there from the DLR Group. Steelcase's put together Navigating What's Next for Education. We have some other webinars and learning series available as well.

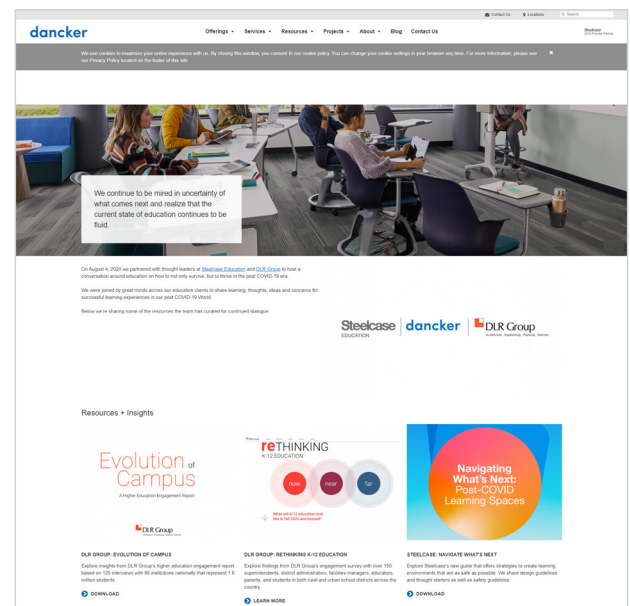
We all have been on several of these webinars I'm sure, and you know when you get there, and you start to get your brain thinking that's a good time to go check some of these out and share with colleagues. So, if you're so inclined to do that today you get a better chance of focusing and following up on it because it's fresh in your mind.

With that, I want to thank everyone again for your time and for those that participated and for all of the folks that were on the call today and folks that help set it up. Thank you very much. Please be safe and be healthy, and hopefully we will have a successful Fall back to school – the only way we'll do that is if we're open and we're apt to change and ready to pivot.

We're grateful to those who were able to join us despite Hurricane Isaias and look forward to connecting with others to learn more about what the future might look like.

Additional Resources

dancker.com/resources/education/



dancker



How Education Can Thrive in a Post COVID-19 Era

We are excited to continue our dialogues with forward-thinking clients and partners.

Together we will ideate what comes next to shape our futures.

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