AAIR

Australasian Association for Institutional Research

From the President's Desk

by Dave Marr

As you'll recall, we held our inaugural Regional Dinner meeting on 16 March at CQ Melbourne. In the March *Newsletter* I indicated that we'd be running a survey of participants to evaluate the success or otherwise of the event. Those results are in and although the number of responses was small they did provide some interesting feedback.

People generally liked the 'informal, open discussion', 'excellent interactions' and the 'opportunity to network'. Some thought a group of less than 20 promoted good conversations and open discussions although one person thought the group of 15 was 'too small'. Surprisingly all respondents considered the length of the evening to be 'about right', so that's useful feedback.

An important question was whether there were other types of events that people thought AAIR could or should be running. The responses included:

- visits to other institutions' IR departments to see how they operate and how they use IT;
- SIG coffee or other casual events say around milestone occasions such as government reporting deadlines; and
- include speakers from outside universities to discuss IR related things such as churn scoring and attrition mitigation from say a retail perspective.

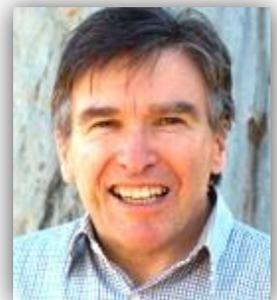All fabulous ideas and ones that we'll be considering I'm sure.

One thing AAIR is considering is a similar dinner event in Sydney in the second half of the year. Of course we're at the early stages of organising this and no particular dates or venues have been proposed. If you're in Sydney and you'd like to assist in organising this event or have a good idea as to where it could be held, please let me know at president@aair.org.au or Liesha at info@aair.org.au.

Organising for both the SIG Forum and Annual Forum is in full swing. You should have received quite a few notices now regarding the SIG Forum plus there's another notice on page 2 of this *Newsletter*. Make sure you register to be a part of it. But even more so, share your experiences with your colleagues. Both you and they will get a great deal out of doing that. The Call for Papers ends very soon so you'll need to let Victoria at Leishmans know pronto.

The Annual Forum will be held from 15-16 November at the Crowne Plaza, Coogee in Sydney this year. The formal program will be limited to just the two days although it is envisaged that pre-Forum workshops may be held on the afternoon of 14 November. Further information and a Call for Papers will be going out shortly.

It's that time of the year again but it's fast running out if you wish to apply for one of AAIR's two Fellowships which both close on 30 April. For further information please visit http://aair.org.au/pages/fellowships.

I'm always pleased to hear your views so feel free to drop me a line at president@aair.org.au, or via our Secretary, Andrea, at secretary@aair.org.au.

Dave Marr,
President

AAIR SIG FORUM 2016
FLINDERS UNIVERSITY, VICTORIA SQUARE, ADELAIDE
16 – 17 JUNE 2016

AAIR
Australasian Association for Institutional Research

Data Warehousing Business Intelligence & Analytics Load Management Government Reporting Surveys

OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Abelardo Pardo – The University of Sydney

Dr. Abelardo Pardo is Associate Head of Teaching and Learning and Senior Lecturer at the School of Electrical and Information Engineering, The University of Sydney. He has a PhD in Computer Science by the University of Colorado at Boulder. He is the director of the Learning and Affect Technologies Engineering (LATTE) laboratory specialized in educational technology, and co-director of the Learning Analytics Research Group. His areas of research are learning analytics, software for collaborative and personalized learning, and technology to improve the student experience and teaching practice. He is also research fellow at the LINK Research Lab (The University

of Texas at Arlington), manager of the Engineering and Technology Program at the STEM Teacher Enrichment Academy (The University of Sydney), and member of the executive board of the Society for Learning Analytics Research (SoLAR).

David Gunsberg – Griffith University

Director, INS Planning & Engagement, Information Services Division.

Stay tuned for more!

The AAIR SIG FORUM 2016

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Higher Education@home

by Louise Hargreaves

Higher Education Reform

1. [Higher education revolution off the table, for now.](#) Education Minister Simon Birmingham has worked to take the political heat out of higher education since the Abbott government set the sector on fire by proposing funding cuts, surprise fee deregulation and interest charges for HECS loans in the 2014 budget. The Turnbull government would much rather deal with university funding as a budget issue than an election issue.

2. [Pyne reforms still alive: Birmingham.](#) The government remains committed to a higher education funding reform with university students increasingly likely to pay more for their degrees, Education Minister Simon Birmingham has confirmed. Senator Birmingham told Sky News on Monday he wanted to "refine and improve" the original plan by former minister Christopher Pyne.

3. [Government and universities have not made the case for deregulation, says Professor Bruce Chapman.](#) Almost two years after controversial plans to deregulate the university sector were unveiled, the man credited with inventing HECS, does not believe the case has been made for change. Despite the headlines created by a report released by the Parliamentary Budget Office that showed the Government faced a billion-dollar [blowout](#) to the cost of student debt, Professor Bruce Chapman points out this was mainly due to plans to allow universities to set their own fees.

4. [Fee deregulation won't save taxpayers a cent in the long run](#) – Tim Higgins. The Parliamentary Budget Office last week [projected](#) increasing levels and costs of HELP debt under the assumption that the government's proposed higher education financing reforms will be passed. As my colleague Bruce Chapman emphasises, those projections aren't based on reality and there is currently no HELP catastrophe out there. But, that catastrophe may come if price deregulation proceeds. Why?

Policy & Regulation Watch

5. [Panel takes submissions on university entry standards.](#) Minister for Education and Training Simon Birmingham said he has asked the Higher Education Standards Panel to canvas options to improve information about the accessibility and comparability of course entry pathways and to ensure students are 'uni ready'. Input into the Higher Education Standards Panel's considerations should be submitted by Friday, 27 May 2016. For more information visit https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-standards-panel-hesp-0.

6. [TEQSA Consultation summary report: Reporting of provider key financial metrics.](#) TEQSA has released the summary report from its November 2015 sector consultation on the reporting of key financial metrics of registered higher education providers. The proposed information release aims to enhance and improve the level of publicly available financial information on the Australian higher education sector, with a view to better informing decision making by sector stakeholders.

7. [New TEQSA publication: Key financial metrics on Australia's higher education sector.](#) The "Key financial metrics on Australia's higher education sector " report is the first release of financial data analysed by TEQSA as part of its sector monitoring, providing a snapshot of selected key financial metrics covering the whole of Australia's higher education sector, information which has previously not been made public. The report is available for download at [TEQSA's publications page](#).

8. [TEQSA contextual overview of the new HES Framework.](#) The Commonwealth Minister for Education and Training has made new national standards for higher education in Australia – the *[Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015](#)* (HES Framework). The new HES Framework will apply for regulatory purposes from 1 January 2017.

9. The [International Education Strategy for Victoria 2013-2018](#) sets out a clear vision and four action areas to support growth of one of Victoria's most valuable export sectors. Victoria is not only a leading destination for international students, but Victorian educational institutions and providers are world leaders in off-shore delivery and international educational partnerships.

Higher Education Funding

10. [Budget should give universities more flexibility on student contributions](#). The Australian government is committed to making inroads into its [A$36 billion budget deficit](#) in the forthcoming May budget. Universities and students will not escape unscathed. While the [2014 fee deregulation plan](#) was shelved late last year, the 20% reduction in tuition subsidies is still baked into the budget forward estimates. The government is not likely to walk away from this and will be under pressure to provide universities with the means to recover at least part of the budget cuts.

11. [The increasing costs of higher education – Media Release Minister for Education and Training.](#) As the [PBO acknowledges](#) and as official Government figures show, the costs to taxpayers of higher education have, over recent years, grown dramatically. Since 2009, with the demand driven system, taxpayer funding for Commonwealth supported places in higher education has increased by 59 per cent as compared to 29 per cent growth in nominal GDP over the same period of time. Funding of university

students has, essentially, grown at twice the rate of the economy. This [report from the PBO](#) and many others all highlight that there are real sustainability pressures in the higher education budget.

12. [HELP for the future: fairer repayment of student debt – Grattan Institute Report](#). Reducing the thresholds at which former students repay their debt to the Higher Education Loan Program would increase repayments by an initial $500 million a year and more over time. Without change, HELP costs will soar, putting teaching and research at risk of cuts.

13. [HECS architect Bruce Chapman: recovering loans from dead students about politics, not economics.](#) Collecting student debts from the dead would not put people off university study, but any revenue gains could be undermined by creative estate planning, the architect of the HECS repayment system says. Fairfax Media reported that the Turnbull government is considering the controversial move of recovering HECS debts from deceased estates. The idea has been applauded by business groups, but blasted by Labor and the Greens.

14. [Rubbery figures no basis to abandon HELP](#) – *Bruce Chapman*. The Parliamentary Budget Office last week caused a stir by suggesting we could expect to see very large amounts of new student debt costs, perhaps as much as $6.5 billion by 2025-26. That raises the question: is it time to abandon the HELP scheme or find massive savings in other areas of government spending to avert a fiscal disaster? Simply, no. The figures revealed from the PBO are not real, and, unless I am completely unable to read the higher education tea leaves, there is little of interest here for the likely future of higher education funding.

15. [Should people use their superannuation to pay off HELP debt?](#) You would have to be a bit desperate use superannuation, on which you can reasonably hope to earn a 5-10% a year rate of return on average, to pay off a debt with 2-3% interest. But the proposals are about cash flow, not long-term financial advantage. Any HELP debtor who earns [the repayment threshold](#) has to repay more than $2,000 a year, and someone on $100,000 a year will have to repay at least $8,000. While people on these incomes are not poor by general community standards, they could

reasonably regard their current needs as more important than additional wealth or consumption in the future.

Sector News and Views

16. [Which students are most likely to drop out of university?](#) Almost since taking office, Education Minister Simon Birmingham has reiterated the Coalition's commitment to allowing universities to recruit as many students as they wish. Birmingham has, however, emphasised that universities should not admit students who are unlikely to complete their program. University [attrition rates](#) have increased from 12.5% in 2009 before the demand driven system was phased in to 14.8% in 2014.

17. [Universities still masters of learning](#). An MBA — long seen as an important stepping stone to a management career — is more popular than ever. And competition among universities to offer courses is fierce. Australian universities are still holding their own against the Ivy League players targeting the local market as well as the more recent rise of private operators.

18. [Are double degrees worth it?](#) Double degrees were the exception when I first studied at university in the '80s. One enrolled in a single bachelor's degree, completed it and sought a job. Apart from a few exceptions, such as in business and law, those with double degrees usually did so because they chopped and changed courses or enjoyed the uni lifestyle too much. Fast forward 20 years and double degrees are the norm for a growing number of students.

19. [Educators say Brexit would harm Britain, help Australia](#). When Australian university leaders look at opinion polls showing that British voters may soon decide to leave the EU they see Britain preparing to shoot itself in the foot. "The impact on their own university sector would be really severe and they would be surrendering some valuable advantages that they now enjoy over competing countries like us, " says Phil Honeywood, executive director of the International Education Association of Australia.

20. ['Dating service' will bring students and business together.](#) Data61, the CSIRO's new digital research unit, will soon launch an online platform for students to find internships and other study-related work opportunities with

business. The new platform, [ribit.net](#), now operating in beta phase but expected to formally launch in May, is branded as Australia's only free, student-only job service. It has about 1000 students registered looking for jobs and 100 employers seeking students.

21. [Academics fear new Defence powers will curtail academic freedom and research.](#) Australian academics fear new laws granting the Department of Defence power to veto international collaboration may have a chilling impact on academic freedom and research. The laws require Australian scientists researching projects of interest to military or intelligence services to seek permission from the government before consulting with overseas colleagues.

22. [Universities boost innovation by harmonising intellectual property rules.](#) Australia's five technology universities have standardised their approach to intellectual property in an effort to make it easier for industry to access their research. The Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN) – comprising the Queensland University of Technology, UTS, RMIT University, University of South Australia and Curtin University – said it would adopt seven principles to be used by member universities in commercialising their intellectual property.

23. [Student accommodation shortage attracts A$1.2bn investment in Australia and New Zealand.](#) A shortage of student accommodation in Australia is attracting large scale tranches of foreign capital, with two major property investments worth a collective A$1.2bn announced in the last month. Brisbane-based [Blue Sky Alternative Investments](#) has partnered with [Goldman Sachs](#) in a $1bn deal to fund between 5,000 and 10,000 purpose-build student beds across Australia and New Zealand over the next three years.

24. [Rise in cheating at South Australian universities due to greater student numbers, institutions say.](#) Universities have denied claims by South Australian independent MP John Darley that an alarming rate of students are cheating in exams and plagiarising assignments with minimal consequences. Mr Darley said he was concerned about how the institutions dealt with plagiarism after obtaining documents from the universities through the Freedom of Information Act.

25. Sydney 'simplifies' degree structure. Australia's oldest university is set to overhaul its degree structure, wiping out a range of popular five-year programs and replacing them with four year double degrees designed to embed life and work skills. The "simplified " degree structure, to come into place at Sydney University in 2018, will have a bachelor of advanced studies as its centrepiece. Sydney's new Strategic Plan available here.

26. Alumni rally over Deakin Warrnambool closure fears. Deakin University   is facing a grassroots revolt as it moves to dump its Warrnambool campus, sparking claims the move to gut the - regional Victorian city of intellectual firepower is aimed at improving the provider's status.

Big Data, Analytics & Technology

27. Investing in big data could improve research quality in Australia. The Productivity Commission is running an inquiry into whether the government can provide better access to the data it collects for universities and other groups. Commercial and public sector innovation alike can benefit from a better policy framework for data collection and publication. If access to datasets and the expertise to design, implement and extract information matter to business and government, this will also inform new research. Australia requires serious investment in this domain.

Graduate Outcomes

28. FactCheck Q&A: does it take 4.7 years for young graduates to find employment in Australia? The road from education to employment remains challenging for young Australians. A sluggish economy has dragged down the youth job market, and until very recently there have been few signs of recovery. These problems are not unique to Australia. Entrepreneur and CEO, Holly Ransom, told the Q&A audience that it now takes a young person 4.7 years to find employment after graduating. Is that right?

29. Panic over science education is overdone, says Andrew Norton. Andrew Norton, higher education program director at the Grattan Institute and a former adviser to Coalition education ministers, is a heretic in the first national church of STEM worship.

"There is a very strong political consensus that there is a shortage of STEM graduates; my view is that even though there are some issues in parts of STEM, overall that's not the case. To me it's seriously misleading students, " Norton says.

Rankings and Ratings & Benchmarking

30. Australian universities beaten only by US and UK in new rankings. Australian universities are the third-best in the world based on a ranking of subject disciplines. It is beaten only by the United States and Britain in the number of subject disciplines in which its universities are ranked in the world's top 50.

Research

31. ACOLA – Securing Australia's Future – Research System Training Review. Established by the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) as part of the Securing Australia's Future program, the Research Training Review's recommendations focus on creating incentives for increased industry involvement in Higher Degree by Research (HDR) training, developing an industry placement scheme for HDR candidates, providing prospective candidates with better information on career outcomes, developing new entry pathways to HDR programs, and creating more opportunities for Indigenous participation in HDR training.

32. Roadmap to research readiness. The Turnbull Government has named the group of experts who will map out Australia's research priorities over the coming decade. Minister for Education and Training Simon Birmingham said the new Expert Working Group would help set the future direction of national

research infrastructure after the Turnbull Government gave the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy $150 million a year of indexed funding certainty through the National Innovation and Science Agenda for the next 10 years.

33. Knowledge Nation 2016: Chinese link 'to boost GDP by $1.1bn'. The might of China's research and innovation sector will get a foothold in Australia after a $100 million agreement to set up an advanced materials and nanotechnology development centre at

the University of NSW was signed in Beijing. The new centre will put the cream of UNSW's researchers in contact with up to 50,000 leading Chinese hi-tech firms that could lead to attracting hundreds of millions of dollars in private Chinese investment into the Australian university research sector.

Student Recruitment & Mobility

34. 2017 New Colombo Plan Mobility Grants. In 2017, the New Colombo Plan will provide around $20 million in Mobility Grants, which are awarded to Australian universities to support undergraduate students to study and undertake work-based experiences in the Indo-Pacific. Further information on the Mobility Grants is available at www.dfat.gov.au/new-colombo-plan

35. WA unis agree maths bonus adds up. Senior high school students in Western Australia will receive bonus points toward their university entry if they study harder maths subjects at school from next year. The four public West Australian universities have agreed to give students a 10 per cent bonus on their advanced maths subjects' marks.

36. Group of Eight 8 move for transparency on admissions. The Group of Eight has made a pitch for Australian Tertiary Admission Rank transparency ahead of a government review into university entry standards. Under new arrangements each of the Go8 universities will commit to several principles so students are clear about why they were accepted or rejected for the course of their choice. The Go8 said it would have three separate ground rules, depending on student background: ATAR only, ATAR plus other criteria; and non-ATAR entry pathways.

37. Health insurance premiums 'a deterrent to foreign students'. Skyrocketing health insurance premiums may be jeopardising Australia's attempts to reposition itself as a destination for top-end study, international education experts have warned. Steep rises in premiums have revived medical insurance as a disincentive for foreigners thinking of joining Australian tertiary institutions. And the issue has moved beyond undergraduate study to higher degrees and research collaborations.

39. **Foreign students dominate postgrad STEM enrolment.** More than 50 per cent of engineering and information technology PhD and masters students enrolled in Australia are from overseas, outstripping the OECD average. Analysis by the OECD says research training programs are becoming increasingly internationalised particularly in science, engineering and agriculture programs, which attract about 60 per cent of students who travel overseas to undertake their higher degree.

40. **Queensland's university entry overhaul.** Queensland high school students will no longer strive for Overall Position scores to gain entry to university from 2019. Education Minister Kate Jones said yesterday those graduating in 2018 would be the last to receive the OP scores, to be replaced by an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank, bringing Queensland in line with other states.

41. **Sydney University makes maths compulsory for 62 degrees**. The University of Sydney has revealed a list of 62 degrees for which 2-unit HSC mathematics will become a prerequisite for entry. The list, which includes science, engineering, psychology and combined courses in music and medicine as well as commerce and law, is part of a wider push to halt Australia's plummeting maths standards after a 10-year plan to make maths compulsory was unveiled by the Federal Education Minister Simon Birmingham last week.

Who's on the Move (or not)?

42. **Bond to Welcome New Chancellor**. The Honourable Dr Annabelle Bennett AO SC has been nominated as the University's eighth chancellor, succeeding Dr Helen Nugent AO. Bennett retired as a Judge of the Federal Court of Australia in March 2016 after a distinguished career in law and practising as a barrister. She became a senior counsel in New South Wales in 1994. She is recognised globally for her expertise in intellectual property law. Bennett will be officially elected immediately following Bond University's AGM on April 19.

43. **Shergold reappointed as Chancellor of Western Sydney University**. Peter Shergold will continue as chancellor of Western Sydney University for a further four years, extending his term until 2020. The university's Board of Trustees made the expected decision yesterday. Former PwC partner Elizabeth Dibbs becomes deputy chancellor, replacing Gillian Shandwick, who is retiring. Professor Shergold became chancellor in 2011, replacing former Reserve Bank deputy governor, the late John Phillips.

Tips and Tricks

44. **Turning Off the New, Worse Twitter**. As part of its own ongoing confusion about what it is (which is both a cause and consequence of this problem, Twitter has been on a campaign recently to worsen its service. The current version of this is to make Twitter more Facebook-ish by giving control of your timeline to its algorithms. Last month, this was an opt-in "feature, " but it's apparently been switched on for everyone. Fortunately, this can, for now, be turned off (via BGR). SPSS: Using LAG to Identify/Remove Duplicates By Dale Amburgey, Assistant Director, Institutional Research, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

Mastery of SPSS syntax has long been a personal goal of mine because of the inherent analytical possibilities. Using SPSS syntax allows for customization of an analysis, the ability to document a process, and consistency in output. This tip utilizes the SPSS LAG function to assist in the identification and removal of duplicates in a data set. I like this approach because I can insert it into any of my SPSS syntax to assist with duplicate identification.

Frivolous Favourites

45. Punctuation Matters

@AcademicsSay

@PHDComics.com

Institutional Researcher's Corner

46. **Long Range Institutional Planning in a Time of Change: Seven Points of Consideration.** Long-term planning is critical for the viability and success of every level of higher education institutions today, but as long as senior leaders maintain a focus on institutional mission and remain cognizant of threats and opportunities, the plan will come together.

Positions Vacant

Seeking another opportunity in Institutional Research in Australia? Try our Higher Education Jobs webpage for current vacancies in the profession. If you are seeking an international career change see our American colleagues AIR Careers page.

Looking for some training and development?

See our **Training and Development** webpage focused on training for institutional researchers.

Looking for higher education conferences and events?

Here is a selection of upcoming events (or past events) that may be of interest. See our **Events/Fora** webpage for more national and international events.

Reminder:

2016 AIR Forum

31 May – 3 June2016, New Orleans

The AIR Forum, the Association's annual conference, is the world's largest gathering of higher-education professionals working in institutional research, assessment, planning and related postsecondary education fields. This four-day conference includes more than 300 presentations by colleagues representing all sectors of higher education and an exhibit hall featuring the latest tools and resources to support data use for decision making.

Tuesday afternoon kicks off the 2016 Forum with a series of invited sessions focused on a wide range of emerging and important topics and issues with impact for everyone in higher education fields. These sessions are open to all registered Forum attendees and will include lecture, and panel presentations followed by interactive discussions

ATEM 2016 Student Services Centre Conference – Navigating Change in Higher Education – How do we provide high quality customer service in an ever evolving environment?

1–3 June 2016, University of Western Australia

As rapid change continues to take place in the higher education environment, how do we ensure that we have the correct strategies to deal with this change?

How do we keep up with the latest concepts and technologies to ensure a seamless customer experience and how do we nurture the much needed culture of innovation in student administration and support?

As change fatigue increases and staff resilience declines, how do we address the issue of employee wellbeing and motivation?

The aim of the conference is to explore these themes and to share best practice amongst participants.

2016 Service Improvement and Innovation in Universities.

11–12 August 2016, Brisbane

In October last year, with guidance and support from a steering group of senior university sector leaders, the LH Martin Institute ran its first Service Improvement and Innovation in Universities conference in Melbourne.

This year's conference will take place in Brisbane on 11 and 12 August. Once again organised by the sector and for the sector on the principle of high quality – low cost to participants, our broad aim remains to build our capability as institutions, and boost the overall performance of universities.

Call for papers – submissions close 3 June.

HERDSA – The Shape of Higher Education

4–7 July 2016, Fremantle

On behalf of the conference planning committee and the Western Australian Branch, we invite you to join us for the 39th annual conference of the Higher Education research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA).

The theme for the conference is The Shape of Higher Education. This theme provides an opportunity to not only report and reflect upon and to critique and challenge the current shape and direction of higher education but also to look to the future and engage your colleagues in creative possibilities.

Enjoy Reading?

Here are a few recent releases:

Breakpoint: The Changing Marketplace for Higher Education Jon McGee

The challenges facing colleges and universities today are profound and complex. Fortunately, Jon McGee is an ideal guide through this dynamic marketplace. In *Breakpoint*, he argues that higher education is in the midst of an extraordinary moment of demographic, economic, and cultural transition that has significant implications for how colleges understand their mission, their market, and their management.

The **Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management** April edition is out now available via the Taylor and Francis website soon.

Data, Analytics and Student Learning

"Data, Analytics and Student Learning "is Inside Higher Ed's latest print-on-demand compilation of articles.

The booklet features articles about trends, debates and strategies of a range of institutions.

This compilation is free and you may download a copy here.

Rebuilding the Bachelor's Degree
[subscription required]. A credential rooted in the 17th century needs a makeover for the 21st.

Questions about the utility of the bachelor's degree come at an auspicious time. The American Academy of Arts and Sciences has convened a three-year Commission on the Future of Undergraduate Education "to ensure that individual Americans receive the education they need to thrive in the twenty-first century. " Its task, as well as that of every American college and university, is to ask whether the basic structure of the bachelor's degree — which still reflects the thinking of colonial days and the needs of the Industrial Revolution — is out of sync with a society that has become much more complex in the ensuing centuries. The answer to that question is yes.

Higher Education Abroad

by Louise Hargreaves

Global News & Views

1. How LinkedIn Views Its Role in Education [subscription required]. Many higher-education leaders are watching LinkedIn closely these days. On the one hand, colleges are big users of the professional social network, setting up university pages and encouraging graduates to set up profiles to get jobs. But some officials are also wary of how much the company plans to move into education, especially after it purchased the online-course library Lynda.com last year.

2. The GDP-Higher Ed Link. Expansion of higher education systems around the world is likely to continue, according to a study that found a strong correlation between opening universities and significantly increased economic growth. An analysis of data on 14,870 higher education institutions in 78 countries over six decades, presented at the annual conference of the Royal Economic Society, reveals that doubling the number of universities in a region results in a 4.7 percent increase in gross domestic product per capita in that region within five years, on average.

3. Human Rights Warning. Universities that deliver transnational programs in countries with dubious human rights records have been warned that they are putting more than their reputations at risk. Gearoid O Cuinn and Sigrun Skogly of Lancaster University Law School, in Britain, argue that institutions and accreditation agencies could potentially face legal challenges in their home countries if they do not use the course certification process to try to uphold human rights overseas.

4. Do College Degrees Appreciate in Value? Postsecondary institution degrees are supposed to fall into the safe bet for long-term appreciation. The value of a college degree plus work experience should be a growing combination. Of course, there is no real way of separating out the value of experience from the tangible value of a degree. Nevertheless, a degree is an asset that bears value that we expect will appreciate over time.

5. Designing Next-Generation Universities. Predicting the future is a fool's errand. But that shouldn't keep us from trying to imagine what lies ahead. After all, it is often an inspiring vision of the future that drives change. There has been much recent talk about the future of residential universities. Even though such forecasts are fraught with peril, let me offer several predictions of what lies ahead.

6. Table stakes: The link between food culture and student satisfaction. There are increasing indicators that food quality, cost, and familiarity can have a significant effect on a student's study abroad experience. Students are paying attention when food choices aren't up to par, and improving food services for visiting students is becoming a source of differentiation and competitive advantage for some institutions and schools.

7. What higher education can learn from the fall of the newspapers. Today, technology is also changing the way that even the most venerable institutions of higher education operate at a difficult time when even the value of the degree is being called into question.

8. How Data Can Help Shape Higher Education Policy. Much of the discussion about how to fix the broken higher education business model sounds a little like conversation about how best to squeeze blood out of a turnip. Where can the cuts occur? What can be delayed? What new programs can produce revenue quickly? These are legitimate questions.

9. Which philosopher would fare best in a present-day university? Today's philosophers are used to dancing to the tune of the Research Excellence Framework (Ref). They have to publish their articles in reputable journals and their books with university presses. They have to generate impact and contribute to their research environment. But how would the great philosophers of the past have fared under this system? Surely if they were truly great then they would have done well? Not necessarily.

10. The Push toward Outcomes-Based Institutional Strategies. In American higher education there is a growing push by policy makers and the general public for greater transparency and accountability. Recently the courts upheld the U.S. Department of Education's gainful employment rule, which was designed to measure the performance of job-related programs and ensure that graduates can be employed at a level that enables them to repay their federal loans.

11. NZ: Fair agent dealings part of care code revamp. New Zealand has released an updated version of its pastoral care code of practice for international educators that promotes fair agent dealings and student support services. Alongside the revamped code, the government has released a contract disputes resolution scheme that it says will strengthen the care of international students in the country.

12. US eases educational travel to Cuba, $1m for 100k Strong. Students in the US are now permitted to visit Cuba to conduct "people-to-people educational travel ", under new rules announced by President Obama in March. Obama has also announced new Cuba-specific funding for the 100,000 Strong in the Americas initiative to support regional cooperation and study abroad opportunities.

13. Yale pushed to take tax retreat. Three hundred years ago a small New England school upped sticks from its base in the village of Saybrook and moved 50 kilometres down the coast to the port of New Haven, where it became known as Yale University. Some believe it is time for it to move again. As Connecticut scrambles to fill a yawning budget deficit, a bill put before the state legislature proposes a tax on Yale's $US25.6 billion $33.4bn) endowment fund.

14. STEM news site for students launches. Science and Technology Research News (STRN), a site posting news with discoveries from researchers around the world, has been created for STEM students and faculty. Designed specifically for those students interested in pursuing science or technology careers, STRN's objective is to help students stay on top of the latest developments in of their area of study.

15. 'Beijing statement' lays principles for UK-China TNE collaboration. Leading international education organisations in the UK and China have developed a statement of principles with the aim of shaping collaboration and quality assurance in transnational education between the two countries.

16. While liberal arts decline in U.S., China and other economic rivals add them. Businessman Po Chung might seem an unlikely advocate for the virtues of a U.S.-style liberal education. Cofounder of the Asia Pacific branch of shipping giant DHL, Chung is a rags-to-riches entrepreneur whose success is emblematic of the former colony's hard-driving capitalist culture. But he's also one of the leading advocates for adding a big dose of humanities and social sciences to the curriculum of Hong Kong's universities.

17. Overseas students: new work visa rules make UK 'challenging'. International students may be put off from applying to UK universities by "challenging " new restrictions on employing foreign graduates, an expert on immigration law has warned. While higher education has won several exemptions from new proposals to limit the flow of skilled workers from outside the European Union into the UK, the new rules may still damage the university sector by increasing the perception that the UK is "too challenging " for foreign graduates who want to compete in the labour market against home-grown staff

18. EUA map charts refugees support across global Higher Education. The European University Association has created an interactive map showing realtime information about universities

and organisations that have action plans in place to support refugees in higher education. Launched last month, the Refugees Welcome map currently displays 191 initiatives across Europe and further afield and is continuously being updated with new programmes.

19. Chinese outbound growth slows as returnee numbers rise. More than half a million Chinese students studied abroad in 2015, but growth in outbound student numbers is slowing, the latest Ministry of Education Statistics show. The annual Blue Book report also revealed that the number of students returning to China after studying abroad is on the rise.

20. Growing Chinese middle class projected to spend heavily on education through 2030. China's working-age population is projected to increase by another 100 million people by 2030. Consumer spending within this group is expected to more than double over the same period, effectively making it one of the most important consumer groups in the world. Education is a major category for this increased spending, and education spending for those under 30 is projected to account for 12.5% of increased spending through 2030

21. University partnerships are vital to China's ambitions. China is using international university partnerships to cement its regional and global position, making higher education a jumping-off point not just for research collaboration but also for city to city and industrial partnerships. While the Asian giant is keen to bridge the quality gap between its universities and top universities overseas, it also needs to collaborate with top Western universities to boost innovation as it moves from being a manufacturing economy up the value chain.

22. Singapore adopting a more cautious outlook on education hub ambitions. Even as other countries in the region are stepping up their international recruitment efforts, Singapore is taking a step back. The city-state capped international enrolment in 2011, well short of a long-standing goal to attract 150,000 students by 2015. Public subsidies and grants for foreign branch campuses in Singapore are now more

constrained as well in the wake of several high-profile closures.

23. Revised Bill to Ease Regulation on S. Korean Universities' Overseas Campuses. The Education Ministry will seek to enable South Korean universities to set up campuses abroad in a bid to promote the advancement of universities into other countries.

24. 10 states support opening up to foreign HE providers. Ten of India's states have so far come out in favour of enabling foreign higher education institutions to operate in the country, but any new policy must ensure that foreign providers have something to offer domestic students, they have said. Meanwhile, the British Council has urged UK universities not to wait for new legislation to pass to collaborate with Indian institutions.

25. Russian government plans cuts to specialised university courses. The Russian government plans to make significant cuts to specialised courses that are currently available at Russian university, citing financial strain and ongoing reforms to the region's higher education sector as reason for doing so.

26. Germany on pace to attract 350,000 foreign students. We continue our "From the Field " series today in conversation with Andrew Geddes, the founding director of the Eurasia Institute for International Education in Berlin. Mr Geddes highlights the growing demand for German education among foreign students and makes some important connections between Germany's increasing foreign enrolment and overarching demographic and economic trends in the country.

Big Data, Analytics &Technology

27. How "blockchain " technology could influence education. Sony Global Education has adapted blockchain technology to the educational field and has developed technology that enables open and secure sharing of academic proficiency and progress records. Blockchain technology is a decentralized network technology in which the same data is recorded and maintained on multiple nodes (computers connected to the network) that are geographically isolated from one another.

28. The Blockchain for Education: An introduction. Is blockchain poised to be "the next big thing " in education? This has become a question I hear with increasing frequency about a technology that, up until quite recently, was primarily associated with the cryptocurrency Bitcoin. The subtext to the question, I suppose: do educators need to pay attention to the blockchain? What, if anything, should they know about it?

29. The Ideology of the Blockchain (for Education). Technologies, particularly the new computer and communications technologies of the twentieth century onward, help reinforce dominant ideology in powerful ways, but these technologies also have their own ideological underpinnings as well, ones that serve in turn to justify and reinforce the cultural and economic changes that society is currently undergoing. Think "Sharing Economy, " for example. This is also, in part at least, what Neil Postman famously described over twenty years ago as the growing pervasiveness of "Technopoly ":

30. How to produce future-proof graduates using big data. Big data has emerged as a prominent paradigm in the knowledge economy, as has predictive analytics, assisting practitioners and policy-makers with making data-driven decisions about the future. Both disruptive paradigms are now spread across a range of sectoral contexts that see the value and opportunities in capitalising on them and the higher education sector is not an exception.

31. The IoT smart school is coming. Close to half (46 percent) of K-12 and higher-ed IT leaders in a recent survey said they believe an Internet of Things smart school–a school using Internet of Things devices to transform learning environments–will have a major impact in the next one to two years.

32. Report: Universities must do better with digital resources. A new study aims to shed light on lack of university-provided digital media resources; negligence of copyright compliance. There is a major disconnect between student and faculty digital literacy perceptions, and institutions must provide better access to, and knowledge about, digital resources to improve learning outcomes.

33. Campuses beware! 4 types of bandwidth-sucking apps. Students, faculty and staff at higher education institutions today struggle with consistently bad internet access via an unsafe and unreliable Wi-Fi connection—mostly due to bandwidth-sucking apps. Far too often, campus-goers accept poor coverage, slow connections or drop outs as part of the game.

Credentialing

34. UMassOnline launches badge program. UMassOnline, the University of Massachusetts' online consortium, has announced the first non-credit badge program, in Project Risk Management, offered through the College of Advancing and Professional Studies (CAPS) at UMass Boston. University representatives say this is one of the first programs of its kind offered by a public higher education institution in Massachusetts.

35. Assessing the Impact of Emerging Credentials. When it comes to professional education, many of today's students are looking for flexibility, competency and recognition in the workforce from their programming. When Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) providers and other unaccredited education providers emerged on the scene and began offering their own microcredentials, college and university leaders prepared for the worst.

Competency Based Education

36. Why technology shouldn't be king for competency education. CBE expert pushes for the prioritization of content on competency education learning platforms. Competency-based education (CBE) is no longer a new concept in higher education. Community colleges, state university systems, private colleges and institutions around the country and globe are embracing the model, putting the final nails in the coffin of "one size, fits all " education.

37. Competency for the Traditional-Age Student. Accreditor approves Purdue's new competency-based bachelor's degree, which blends technical disciplines with the humanities and has a customizable approach designed more for a career than a first job. Competency-based education isn't for everyone, say even supporters of the emerging form of higher education.

Graduate Outcomes

38. EUA responds to EC consultation on New Skills Agenda. EUA and many of its member associations have responded to the European Commission's non-public consultation on an "Issues Paper" regarding the New Skills Agenda. The five-page paper, which has a strong focus on low achievers and entry into the labour market, suggests policies and measures to ensure "higher" skills for all.

Higher Education Funding

39. The history of student loans goes back to the Middle Ages. In 1473, Alexander Hardynge, who had finished his bachelor's degree at Oxford nearly two years previous, borrowed money through an educational loan service. The loan came with a one year repayment deadline. With some of that money, he rented a room at Exeter College and offered tutoring services to college students.

Online Learning

40. MOOCs move from free to fee as skills demand grows. Career development continues to be a large motivation for students to enrol in MOOCs, meaning demand for credit certification is growing. In response, a number of providers have introduced fees for a handful of course certifications and assessment services.

41. Learning Differences MOOC might help educators target instruction. Despite their passion for teaching and commitment to the field, educators around the world – with varying years of experience, teaching different subjects, at different levels, in a variety of contexts – are continually challenged to meet the diverse learning needs of their students. A new report suggests that the Learning Differences Massive Open Online Course for Educators (MOOC-Ed), provided by the Friday Institute for Education Innovation at NC State University, may help teachers around the world advance their knowledge of learning differences and better meet the learning needs of their students.

42. N ew online courses are for people wanting to progress their careers. Massive open online course provider Coursera has packaged new courses aimed at people wanting to move up in their careers. On April 18 students can begin the first unit in a series of three courses called *Market Yourself Professionally,* which show how to think strategically about your career, how to "self-coach " and develop your own brand, as well as promote and enhance your professional image.

Rankings and Ratings and Benchmarking

43. Scrutiny for Rankings Plea. In 2013, University College Cork, in Ireland, asked its faculty members to encourage people familiar with the university to register to vote in the survey of universities conducted by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), one of the major producers of international higher ed rankings. Many people at the time said recruiting people to vote would make the reputation reviews scientifically invalid, since the voting pool could be influenced by having more judges loyal to or familiar with one university than others.

44. Can a young university be a world-leading university? When it comes to universities, students and academics alike tend to think that the older an institution is, the better it must be. But is that really true? An analysis of the 800 institutions that feature in the *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings 2015-2016 suggests that it is – up to a point.

45. Universities face a choice between prestige and efficiency. How much is a Nobel prize worth to a university? Undoubtedly, the award of a Nobel prize confers and confirms prestige, but it is not possible to estimate the financial benefit of the award to an associated institution. And the need to measure benefit matters more than ever: efficiency and effectiveness in higher education are a key priority and the value of knowledge is held more in terms of utility, measured through learning outcomes and league tables.

46. The Times Higher Education 150 Under 50 Rankings 2016 is a ranking of the top 150 universities under 50 years old. It celebrates young universities that have made a great impact on the global stage in years rather than centuries and showcases the future rising university stars. The ranking was released in early April and may be accessed here.

47. US university dominance challenged by new ranking. The United States' dominance of the international university rankings is challenged in the latest edition of U-Multirank released on 4 April. Supported by the European Commission, U-Multirank claims to be the largest global university ranking and this year looks in detail at the diversity of strengths of more than 1,300 universities from some 90 countries.

48. Outcomes Over Exclusivity: The Ideal Rankings for Today's Students. Higher education rankings have become a feature of the postsecondary space. Measuring all kinds of different aspects of institutional performance, there are rankings available that speak to a wide variety of questions. However, the one question that's most important to today's students—and the one for which information is least available—is outcomes.

Research

49. Individualism 'explains UK's failure to translate research'. An ideology of individualism explains why Britain has lagged so far behind Germany in building a state-backed system to commercialise academic research, according to the man behind the UK's new Catapult network of research translation centres.

Student Recruitment and Mobility

50. 2015: A Year in Data – International Student Destinations – diversification of markets. Download this white paper to uncover insights and trends of over 23 million college-bound international students looking to study in the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom.

51. The Selling of the American MBA. As the U.S. appetite for the MBA degree wanes, many of the country's more than 700 B-schools are stepping up recruiting abroad, where regard for this American invention appears undiminished. (Harvard was the first institution to offer an MBA, in 1908.)

52. US OPT rules confirmed: Foreign STEM grads can now stay and work for up to three years. New regulations were introduced in the US earlier this month to govern post-study work rights for foreign students studying in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. STEM is a major area of study for international students in the US, accounting for roughly 40% of all international enrolment in American higher education.

53. Non-credit education abroad is on the rise, IIE says. US college students are pursuing a broader range of international educational activities despite not receiving academic credit for them, according to a new report by the Institute of International Education, or IIE.

54. US English programmes reporting declines in Saudi enrolment this year. Intensive English Programmes (IEPs) in the US are reporting notable declines in Saudi enrolment this year. Four in ten respondents to a recent English USA survey reported declines of 30% in Saudi student numbers over the past year; 20% reported drops of more than 40%. Programme directors are also reporting substantial drops in applications and inquiries this year, foreshadowing further enrolment declines to come.

55. Survey says employment prospects the key for postgraduate applicants. A global survey of international postgraduate applicants finds that employment concerns are figuring more prominently in the decision making of prospective master's and PhD students. Depending on global region, students may give greater (or roughly equal) weight to the institution's reputation in a specific field of study as opposed to overall institutional standing.

56. UK Ombudsman: universities admitting students with bad English. Universities are admitting international students who cannot express themselves properly in English, let alone study for a degree, the sector's outgoing ombudsman has warned. Rob Behrens, who steps down next month as independent adjudicator for higher education in England and Wales, said in an interview with *Times Higher Education* that English was a "challenge " for some overseas learners.

57. France aims to counter slowing international enrolment growth. France has seen its market share of internationally mobile students slip in recent years. Foreign enrolment in France continues to grow slowly but the increases booked since 2010/11 have been outpaced by those recorded by a number of other destinations, including the US, China, Canada, Australia, and Germany. The French government has introduced a package of new student life measures – including provisions to improve student services, ease visa processing, and expand post-study work rights – all of which are designed to boost France's attractiveness as an international study destination

58. Chinese students 'more open' when choosing university. Prospective students in China are no longer looking only at traditionally elite institutions, says director of British Council in the country. Chinese students have an increasingly "open attitude " when applying to university, with many now focusing on institutions' teaching quality and student satisfaction scores, according to the director of the British Council in China.

59. Taiwan Universities Recruiting More Southeast Asian Students. Taiwan's high-level education is facing problems of a reducing number of freshmen enrolled each year caused by the decreasing birth rate of the country and brain drain to universities in Hong Kong, Macau, China, Europe and the US. To mitigate the influences of the problems, National Taiwan University (NTU) is calling other universities in Taiwan to recruit more students from Southeast Asia.

60. Korea sees 14% rise in foreign students. Figures released this month from the Korean Ministry of Justice show just over 100,000 foreign students have enrolled in 2016, a 14% increase on students enrolled this time last year. The increase will come as good news to the Ministry of Education which last year revamped its campaign to attract international students after enrolments fell in three of the past five years.

61. Indian technology institutes open admissions to foreign students. The Indian government has approved a proposal to open admissions in the country's premier engineering institutes for up to 10,000 foreign students. The move illustrates an increasing emphasis on educational diplomacy, particularly within South Asia.

62. Russia's Project 5-100 launches study portal. Russia's flagship Project 5-100 has launched a new study portal for international students interested in completing a higher education course in the country. The website, studyinrussia.ru, provides information for students and parents on required documents, fess and funding, as well as events and academic contests.

63. Iran moving quickly to expand higher education links. Earlier this year, the international community lifted or eased long-standing trade sanctions against Iran. The Iranian government has moved quickly in the weeks since to establish new bilateral agreements with international partners, including in the area of higher education.

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A great way to get involved with the AAIR community is to share your thoughts and ideas. Do you have something you would like to share with your IR colleagues? The next AAIR Newsletter will be published in late May. Please send your contributions to the editor@aair.org.au by Wednesday May 18.

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AAIR eNewsletter Editor