

# The Risky Academy: Environmental Scan for March 2019

## ACADEMIC QUALITY

“The death of American higher education, as we know it, has been grossly over predicted, and consistently so ... [these institutions] change and adapt quite a lot, only on a time constant that’s much longer than many other institutions in our society.” [The future of higher education: A conversation with Lawrence Bacow, President of Harvard University](#)

The majority of Americans say state support for colleges has either remained steady (34%) or risen (27%) over the past decade, though such support has decreased by \$9B. Only 29% of people knew that funding had gone down. The disconnect makes it more difficult for higher ed to rally the public to support its needs. [Americans don’t realize state funding for higher ed is falling, new poll finds; 71% of Americans don’t know higher ed funding has fallen](#)

If you’re under 30 and went to college in the U.S., chances are you took on debt to do it. In 2017, 65% of graduates took out loans, on average, of \$28,000. And yet, 60% of those between the ages of 18 and 34 believe a 4-year degree is worth the cost. [Tens of thousands of dollars later, most college grads say the degree was worth it](#)

Three wishes: 1) That we are able to effectively destroy the false narrative that college is not a good investment. 2) That colleges take teaching seriously. Teaching is an art, but improving teaching is a science. 3) That higher ed would understand that it’s a system and start acting like one. [‘Begin to Take Teaching Seriously’: A Longtime Leader Shares 3 Wishes for Higher Ed](#)

The top reason was a lack of time to plan for teaching, on top of other responsibilities. Tied for second: tenure-and-promotion guidelines, which emphasize research over teaching, and classrooms with fixed seats, which inhibit active learning. Instructors also say that students often haven’t prepared for class, or resist active learning. And, if a faculty member says her department does not support active learning, she is less likely to try it herself. [Many Professors Want to Change Their Teaching but Don’t. One University Found Out Why.](#)

Gates hopes artificial intelligence (AI) will let us find what works in schools and reproduce that elsewhere. “We have not even begun to do that work of understanding motivation and engagement and teaching styles that would really improve the output of the system—better learning, less dropouts.” [Bill Gates says AI should improve education and medicine](#)

Turnitin’s next step is to become a platform for colleges and high schools to submit all types of student assignments, digital or on paper. It would then use AI to help instructors review that work to, among other things, spot at-risk students and devise remediation plans. The company is also developing Turnitin’s software to branch out into the STEM fields and detect plagiarism in coding, for example. [Why a Plagiarism-Detection Company Is Now a Billion-Dollar Business; Advance Publications to Buy Plagiarism-Scanning Company Turnitin for Nearly \\$1.75 Billion](#)

A “mini meta-analysis” of the experiments revealed that trigger warnings didn’t make any difference. Subjects who saw them, compared with those who did not, judged the videos to be similarly negative, felt similarly negative, experienced similarly frequent intrusive thoughts and avoidance, and comprehended subsequent material similarly well. [Death Knell for Trigger Warnings?; Trigger Warnings May Not Do Much, Early Studies Suggest](#)

Numerous public university systems and state flagships are planning ambitious online endeavors. How many succeed in a competitive marketplace will depend on pricing, execution and leadership. [How Many Public Universities Can ‘Go Big’ Online?](#)

Existing studies on college courses typically find negative effects of online delivery on course outcomes, and the online performance decrement is particularly large among academically less-prepared students. As a result, online courses without strong support to students may exacerbate educational inequities. [The promises and limits of online higher education: Understanding how distance education affects access, cost, and quality](#)

Vincennes U will offer a new computer science degree program to fill a growing need for skilled computing positions. The new program will be offered at the Vincennes and Jasper campuses, and online through VU Distance Education. [VU Adding Computer Science Degree](#)

Purdue’s College of Education is bringing back its former doctoral program in higher education after being suspended for nearly a decade. [Purdue Returning Doctoral Program](#)

The top 5 factors in picking a public flagship law school are financial aid (79.5%), reputation (77.4%), local career opportunities (55.8%), bar passage (56.4%), and job placement (50%). [Law Schools and Their Many Markets](#)

## **ADVANCEMENT**

Ron Wyden, Democrat on the tax-writing Senate Finance Committee, already plans to introduce a bill that would eliminate the tax deduction for donations to a college where the donor’s child is, or will be, attending. [After Scandal, Higher Ed Fundraisers Fear Efforts to Curtail Deductions](#)

American higher education received \$58.9B—the second largest share of \$410B in total given—in 2017, only behind giving to religion. Analysis reveals trends in who gives to higher education, when they give, and what size gifts they make. [Who Is Giving and Why? ACE, TIAA Institute Explore Philanthropic Trends in Higher Education](#)

## **AUDIT, COMPLIANCE, & LEGAL**

Where are the auditors? Presumably, admissions would be an area of great interest to boards, audit committees, and internal auditors. The Association of College and University Auditors is not aware of any report or statement indicating that thorough audits of the admissions function are typical or have ever occurred. [The Admissions Scandal: A Job for Internal Audit](#)

This scandal is a wake-up call for all institutions to refine and perfect their compliance and internal review processes. All colleges and universities are now on notice regarding these admissions schemes and must heed the warnings forecast by the indictment and complaint. [After “Operation Varsity Blues,” universities must reevaluate compliance](#)

What can executives and compliance learn? Influence needs oversight and daylight. Secrecy and complexity are the antithesis of transparency. Corruption takes a village. The road back to trust is paved with transparency. [Irony Lessons Learned From the Higher Ed Bribery Scandal](#)

Regardless of whether the California Consumer Protection Act applies to a school or not, with near certainty, their technology providers, such as their learning management system, will be subject to the CCPA. The right to erasure provided to “residents” presents particular difficulties for schools because many programs offered by institutions rest upon the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information. [What does the CCPA mean for colleges and universities?](#)

MSU officials are considering whether to authorize an independent investigation into how Nassar's decades of molestation and assaults were allowed to occur. The hope is that such a probe could satisfy demands for a full accounting while protecting sensitive information from public dissemination. [MSU trustees weigh independent probe into Nassar scandal](#)

## **DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

What happened 50 years ago changed admissions forever. Affirmative action has become more sophisticated over time, as diversity has become an established principle, and schools—barred by law from using racial quotas—have sought an ideal mix of students that is more reflective of society. [50 Years of Affirmative Action: What Went Right, and What It Got Wrong](#)

Nearly three-fourths of those surveyed oppose consideration of race in admissions. Only 7% say it should be a major factor—and 8% each say legacy status or athletic ability should be a major factor. [Most Americans Say Colleges Shouldn't Consider Race](#)

The number of hate-crime incidents targeting Jews increased 37% in 2017. Anti-Muslim crimes fell by 11%. Race or ethnic-based hate crimes jumped by 18%. Hate crimes targeting black people increased by 16% and were the most for any category of race, ethnic group, religion, or sexual orientation. [Anti-Semitic Incidents Fuel 17% Rise in Hate Crimes, FBI Says](#)

## **ENGAGEMENT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Questions of sustaining true community partnership built upon equity, inclusion, and even, in some cases, reparations remain pressing at most institutions and within most communities. It takes more than rhetorical commitments, no matter how well-intended or passionately made. [What Is the Future of Town-Gown Relations? These Researchers Think They Know](#)

## **ENROLLMENT**

Many are calling it the worst admissions scandal in higher ed, with federal authorities naming 50 indictments in a scheme that allegedly involved faux athletes, coaches who could be bribed, cheating on the SAT and ACT, million-dollar bribes and “guarantees” that certain applicants would be admitted to highly competitive colleges. The investigation was dubbed “Operation Varsity Blues” by the FBI. [Massive Admissions Scandal; College Officials Were Charged in the Admissions-Bribery Scheme. Now Their Campuses Are Cutting Ties.](#); [Bribery Scandal Reveals 'Weak Spots' in the Admissions System. Don't Look So Shocked.](#); [8 Universities. Millions in Bribes. 10 Corrupt Coaches. What You Need to Know About the Admissions-Bribery Scandal.](#); [Actresses, Business Leaders and Other Wealthy Parents Charged in U.S. College Entry Fraud; Federal Prosecutors Charge Dozens in College Admissions Cheating Scheme; Admissions Officers Didn't Cause the Scandal. But They Helped Shape the Culture That Spawned It.](#); [Higher Ed's Bribery Scandal Is Decadent and Depraved. Here Are 8 Truly Tasteless Allegations.](#); [College Admissions: Vulnerable, Exploitable, and to Many Americans, Broken; 'Pied Piper' of College Admissions Scam Had All the Answers;](#) [The Week That Shook College Admissions](#)

Hackers breached the system that houses applicant information for Oberlin College in Ohio, Grinnell College in Iowa, and Hamilton College in New York, demanding thousands of dollars in ransom from prospective students for personal information they claimed to have stolen. All three use a system called Slate. [Hackers Breach College-Applicant Databases, Seek Ransom; Hackers Broke Into Admissions Databases at 3 Colleges — and Then Offered to Sell Applicants Their Files;](#) [Admissions Files Hacked](#)

Fifty-nine percent of teens say they plan to attend a 4-year college after high school. Teenage girls (68%) are more likely than teenage boys (51%) to say they plan to attend a 4-year college after high school, which suggests the gender gap in 4-year college enrollment will continue to grow. [75% of teens plan to attend higher ed after high school](#)

Most universities concentrated recruiting visits in wealthy, out-of-state communities while also privileging affluent schools in in-state visits. Although most did not exhibit racial bias in in-state visits, out-of-state visits consistently exhibited racial bias. Since most made many more out-of-state visits than in-state visits, overall recruiting visit patterns contribute to a student composition where low-income students of color feel increasingly isolated amongst growing cohorts of affluent, predominantly White, out-of-state students. [Recruiting the Out-Of-State University](#); [Public Universities Work Hard to Make Up for Budget Cuts. But In-State Students May Be Paying the Price.](#); [Where Do Colleges Recruit? Wealthy and White High Schools](#)

“Right now, the system feels like it is crafted to keep low-income students like us out of college. If it is, it’s working. A documentary to be screened on Capitol Hill next month, in which I am featured, chronicles the experience of low-income students navigating college admissions.” [The Implicit Punishment of Daring to Go to College When Poor](#)

## **FACULTY RECRUITMENT & RETENTION**

Academe, in general, can be an unforgiving place. It’s a very competitive environment, in which people can be reluctant to bring up their own struggles. [A Prominent Economist’s Death Prompts Talk of Mental Health in the Professoriate](#)

Professors worry about discrimination but aren’t prepared to deal with classroom conflicts over diversity. Over all, about 25% reported “extensive” stress due to increased responsibilities at work. Other findings touch on mentoring, pay and politics. [What Faculty Members Think](#)

Unfair discrimination based on sex was reported by 48% of women, 22% faced bias for their marital status or caregiving responsibilities, 85 members reported assaults by other economists or students, 179 said they experienced attempted assaults, and 405 encountered unwanted attention from peers. [Almost Half of Female U.S. Economists Report Sex Discrimination](#)

The trend is striking in the life and health sciences, which award the most Ph.D.s. In 2017, only 23% of these Ph.D.s held a tenured or tenure track position in academia, a drop of 10 percentage points since 1997. Only math and the computer sciences have seen a larger drop, from 49% to 33%. Those 20-year shifts outpace changes in psychology and the social sciences (35% to 30%), engineering (23% to 16%), and the physical and earth sciences (22% to 19%). [In a first, U.S. private sector employs nearly as many Ph.D.s as schools do](#)

Adjuncts are paid an average of \$3,000 per course, but 60% receive less than that. More than 40% of adjuncts reported working for pay in addition to their college employment, and 75% of adjunct households carry debt, most commonly from credit cards and home mortgages. [Adjunct Faculty: Personal Finances and Retirement Savings](#)

College faculty were not defeated after great struggle, after a battle with a winner and a loser. College has simply been redefined, over and over, in ways that make faculty irrelevant. College teaching, as a profession, is being eliminated one small, undetected, definitional drop at a time. [This Is How You Kill a Profession](#); [‘This Was a Hell Not Unlike Anything Dante Conjured.’ Readers Share Their Stories of Fraught Academic Careers.](#)

They call themselves the nomination task force, and their goal is to nominate more women and underrepresented minorities for awards from the American Geophysical Union, a professional society for Earth and space scientists. “Any of the awards or honors are extremely impactful for your career, for how you might be received or treated at your home institution” [One Way to Fight for Equity in Science: Nominate More Minorities for Big Prizes](#)

## **FINANCE**

The investigations are being led by the DoE’s Student Aid Enforcement Unit. If the department decides that any of the schools violated federal education regulations, it could assess penalties, which at the most extreme would include cutting off an institution’s access to Pell Grants and federal student loans. [DeVos launches investigation into college admissions scandal](#)

Michigan State no longer has direct liability insurance covering sexual-misconduct claims. After MSU agreed to a \$500M settlement to more than 300 victims of abuse, its insurer, United Educators, reduced the coverage it offered the school when negotiating to renew the general-liability policy. [After Nassar Scandal, Michigan State Lacks Broad Sexual-Misconduct Insurance](#)

Indiana uses a “First Dollar” approach, where funds are provided to students before any other grants kick in. After using this money to cover tuition, they can apply their Pell Grants or other awards to pay for expenses like transportation, child care, food, and housing. [Confused About How ‘Free College’ Programs Differ? This Primer Can Help](#)

## **GLOBAL & INTERNATIONAL**

Even in colleges that enroll a majority of men, study abroad students are disproportionately women. Take Purdue: Men account for 57% of the student body but only 41% of undergraduates who go abroad. [Why Are So Few Male Students Studying Abroad?](#)

## **GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

A growing number of Democratic and independent voters are following the lead of Republicans with rapidly souring attitudes about higher education, although mostly for different reasons. As a result, policy observers say traditional higher education will face more scrutiny from Democratic politicians. [Varsity Blues, Higher Ed’s Image and Federal Policy](#)

The order directs 12 grant-making agencies to use their authority in coordination with the White House Office of Management and Budget to ensure institutions that receive federal research or education grants promote free speech and free inquiry. Other, unrelated portions of the order, “Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities,” are much more specific. [Trump’s Free-Speech Order Could Have Been Harsher. But Higher-Ed Leaders Still Don’t Approve.](#); [Trump signs executive order to promote free speech on college campuses](#); [What’s Consumer Information Doing in Trump’s Executive Order on Free Speech?](#); [Trump Signs Broad Executive Order](#); [Critics Worry Trump’s Free Speech Order Could Limit Expression, Research](#); [President Trump Issues Executive Order on Campus Free Speech](#)

President Trump’s proposed federal budget for the 2020 fiscal year includes a \$7B cut for the DoE, a streamlined repayment process for student loans, and the elimination of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. The proposal, for the fiscal year that begins on October 1, is unlikely to be enacted in a divided Congress. But, the wish list does signal the White House’s priorities, including those for higher ed. [Here’s What Trump’s 2020 Budget Proposal Means for Higher Ed](#); [Trump Seeks Billions in Cuts](#); [Trump Budget Today: Cuts, Loan Costs](#)



The White House released its first stand-alone proposal for higher education reform, urging the U.S. Congress to enact laws affecting accreditation, Pell Grants, and student-loan repayment. The plan repeats themes raised in President Trump's 2020 federal budget proposal. [Here's What the Trump Administration Wants to Change in Higher Ed's Landmark Law](#)

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

An additional 1.3 million Americans who work more than 40 hours a week would become eligible for overtime pay. The proposed rule—which would raise the salary threshold from the current \$23,660 a year to \$35,308—left many employers with a sense of relief, in part because the Trump administration's proposal sets the threshold far below the \$47,476 that President Barack Obama had hoped to institute. A federal judge in November 2016 halted that rule from being implemented. [Trump Administration Proposes Expanding Overtime Coverage; U.S. Labor Department Proposes Raising Salary Cap for Those Eligible for Overtime Pay; Proposed overtime rules take the middle road](#)

The Lessening Impediments from Taxes for Charities Act would repeal a provision in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that requires some tax-exempt organizations to pay federal taxes on benefits like parking, meals, or transportation. [LIFT for Charities Act Would Roll Back Tax on Nonprofit Employee Benefits](#)

## **INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

Uses of APIs, active learning classrooms, blended data center (on premises and cloud based), incorporation of mobile devices in teaching and learning, open educational resources, institutional support for accessibility technologies, technologies for improving analysis of student data, application performance monitoring, predictive analytics for student success, integrated student success planning and advising systems, and IT asset management tools. [Higher Education's 2019 Trend Watch & Top 10 Strategic Technologies](#)

## **INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS**

Who gets the biggest leg up in the U.S. higher ed admissions race? Not minorities or legacies, but jocks. [The Amazing Admissions Advantages for Athletes at the Apex of Academia](#)

An ex-Adidas executive and two others who paid families to get top college basketball recruits to play for schools sponsored by the brand were sentenced to prison by a judge who said he wanted to send a "great big warning light to the basketball world." [3 get prison in college basketball recruiting scandal; Ex-Adidas Executive Gets 9-Month Sentence in Basketball Bribery Case](#)

The NCAA is violating antitrust law by limiting payments to college athletes to scholarships covering the cost of attendance, a federal judge ruled. While the ruling dealt a blow to the NCAA, it fell far short of the plaintiffs' hopes. [NCAA Cannot Restrict Compensation to Athletes Related to Education, Judge Rules; Another Ruling Chips Away at NCAA Limits for Athletes](#)

"Jim has had an extraordinary impact on the Big Ten Conference, its member institutions, administrators, students and coaches since 1989. He has been a forward-thinking, collaborative and decisive leader in every aspect of conference proceedings. We thank him for his dedicated service to date and look forward to working with him through the conclusion of his contract." [Delany to Step Down as Big Ten Commissioner](#)

## **MEDICAL & CLINICAL**

Mumps vaccine has been part of routine childhood shots for decades, but research suggests that protection fades 10 or more years after the second dose. [Temple University Mumps Outbreak Swells to 74 Cases; 'We're Expecting A Third Wave': Over 100 Mumps Cases Reported Amid Temple University Outbreak](#)

## **ORGANIZATION, GOVERNANCE, & PLANNING**

This resource provides a comprehensive summary of the various entities that comprise postsecondary governance ecosystems in each state and the District of Columbia. [50-State Comparison: State Postsecondary Governance Structures](#)

College presidents overwhelmingly agree that Harvard is justified in defending affirmative action in admissions, but far fewer believe it will prevail in its lawsuit. They believe Obama administration rules on sexual assault paid too little attention to the rights of the accused, and that the Trump response would edge too far in the other direction. And presidents express more confidence in the 10-year financial stability of their campuses than they have at any point in the last 6 years, but nearly 1 in 7 says his/her campus could close or merge within 5 years. [The Mood Brightens: A Survey of Presidents](#); [Presidents Back Harvard but Aren't Sure It Will Win](#)

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

Nearly one-third of American employees and nearly 1 out of 5 HR professionals are currently unsure or don't know what to do if they witness or are involved in a workplace violence incident. [One Out Of Seven People Don't Feel Safe At Work](#)

## **SPONSORED RESEARCH**

UIC's Institutional Review Board, the committee responsible for protecting research subjects, improperly fast-tracked approval of Pavuluri's clinical trial, didn't catch serious omissions from the consent forms parents had to sign, and allowed children to enroll in the study even though they weren't eligible. [University of Illinois at Chicago Missed Warning Signs of Research Going Awry, Letters Show](#)

From 2006 to 2013, a research technician, Erin Potts-Kant, fabricated data that Duke used to get research funding from NIH and the EPA. Officials discovered the possible fraud only in 2013, after Potts-Kant was fired for embezzlement. The university did not initially understand "the extent of her research misconduct." [Duke to Pay \\$112.5 Million to Settle Scientific-Misconduct Lawsuit](#); [Duke University Agrees to Pay \\$112.5 Million in Whistleblower Suit Over Grants](#); [Duke pays \\$112.5 million in fake research case sparked by whistleblower](#); [Duke Whistleblower Gets More Than \\$33 Million In Research Fraud Settlement](#)

NIH has recently sent letters to dozens of major U.S. research universities asking them to provide information about specific faculty members with NIH funding who are believed to have links to foreign governments that the institute did not know about. [NIH letters asking about undisclosed foreign ties rattle U.S. universities](#)

New study of NIH funding says women over all get smaller grants than men, even when controlling for research potential. The findings have implications for their long-term success in academic science. [Smaller Pots for Women](#)

## STUDENT EXPERIENCE

What do we actually know about Generation Z, and what are the implications? 1) A growing proportion of students experience economic stress. 2) They lead very busy lives. 3) Campus diversity greatly enriches the student experience but it also creates acute challenges. 4) Students are far more likely than in the past to report being depressed, anxious, lonely, and plagued by stress. [Are Colleges Ready for Generation Z?](#)

The proportion of teens who reported symptoms of a major depressive episode within the past year rose from 8.7% in 2005 to 13.2% in 2017. Young adults ages 18-25 reported similar trends. It's very unusual to see changes this large happen in such a short period of time. [Rates of mental health challenges are still rising among teens](#)

Widely reported research has shown surprising levels of hunger and homelessness among college students. Some have been found living in their cars in campus parking lots; others rely on food banks, often stocked by classmates. Now colleges themselves are pulling together more permanent solutions, often in collaboration with local housing authorities and nonprofit partners. [Colleges start looking for ways to house and feed their students who are homeless](#)

## NEW ERM RESOURCES

Companies with high-performing risk functions from a digital perspective—labelled in the report as Dynamics—have a distinct advantage over those classified as Actives or Beginners. Dynamics ranked in the top quartile across several dimensions, Actives in the next quartile, and Beginners in the lower half. Companies with Dynamic risk functions separate themselves in the following ways: Their digital transformation efforts can move faster. They are more confident in taking risks. They more effectively manage transformation-related risks. They achieve a higher return on investment from digital initiatives. Companies with digitally fit risk functions not only have tools in place to collect information; they're taking steps to share that information with stakeholders such as their board of directors in easy-to-understand ways. The report showed that 82% of Dynamics use digital dashboard or visualization tools for comprehensive and strategic risk reporting to the board, compared with 43% of Actives and 23% of Beginners. Additionally, 79% of Dynamics influence strategic decisions about digital initiatives, compared with 48% of Actives and 24% of Beginners. [The benefits of a digitally fit risk function](#)

*This monthly publication is being sent to all IU Risk Owners and others participating or interested in the IU Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) program by Merri Beth Lavagnino, Director of Strategic Planning & Enterprise Risk for IU, in order to increase awareness of current trends affecting enterprise risk in higher education. Please reply to her at [mbf@iu.edu](mailto:mbf@iu.edu) if you would like to be taken off the mailing list, or if you have others you would like to add to the mailing list. Thank you!*