

HESI+10 Webinar 1 - Transformation of higher education post COVID-19.

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Submitted by: Louise McLeod, WG-USA Representative to the United Nations

The latest concept note and agenda are available [here](#). The link to the recording will be posted on the events [webpage](#).



Higher
Education
Sustainability
Initiative

HESI+10
Celebrating 10 years
with Higher Education
Sustainability Impact

**HESI+10
GLOBAL FORUM**
6 July 2022

HESI+10 Webinar

Transformation of higher education post COVID-19

The Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) is an open partnership between several United Nations entities and the higher education community to highlight the critical role of higher education in achieving sustainable development.

Each year, HESI organizes a global forum as a special event to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)¹ – UN’s main platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level. The 2022 HESI+10 Global Forum, which will be held on 6 July 2022 as a virtual event, will place a particular focus on deepening the understanding of the challenges and opportunities the higher education community can play in building back better from the COVID-19 while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in line with the theme of HLPF in 2022.

Three open webinars on topics related to the theme of HLPF will be held in the lead-up to the forum. The output of the webinars will feed into the discussions of the forum.

The disruptions that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused to societies, including in the education sector, is unprecedented. The webinar will explore how the pandemic has transformed higher education’s approaches to education and learning, its ability to reach and engage students, including challenges and inequalities for those that lack capacities for rapid digital transformations and online learning.

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

Moderator: Ms. Lotta Tähtinen, Chief, Outreach and Partnerships Branch, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, UN DESA

- HESI Forum at High Level Political Forum: 6 July 2022 - **Transforming Education Summit**
 - Ms. Won Jun Byun, Programme Specialist, UNESCO
The Transforming Education Summit will seek to renew our collective commitment to education and lifelong learning as a pre-eminent public good
3 Workstreams: national consultations, thematic action tracks, public engagement
5 Action tracks
Track 2 Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development: foundational learning, skills for employment and entrepreneurship. Education for sustainable development
140+ organizations including HESI
- **HLPF Focus SDGs for 2022: SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 14, SDG 15, SDG 17**

Disruptions in the education sector due to COVID-19 has been profound.

Thematic feedback from audience

Ms. Florencia Librizzi, Senior Advisor, Sulitest

Questions asked in survey mode to the audience, results are in order of % response:

Which of the following challenges did you experience while teaching and learning during the pandemic?

1. **Difficulty to nurture a sense of community and belonging**
2. Increase of mental health issues
3. Lack of access and availability of technology etc.
4. Other question results to lesser degree

Which of the following opportunities did you manage to leverage during the pandemic?

1. **Access to greater diversity of global experts and educational resources beyond the traditional platform.**
2. Flexibility in work and education patterns
3. Others question results to lesser degree

Panel discussion - Transformation of higher education post COVID-19

Guiding questions

- *What are the main ways in which the higher education landscape and teaching and learning have changed as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic?*
- *What are the challenges and opportunities that you have observed?*
- *What lessons learned can you share with the audience? How would you like to see them shaping the future of higher education?*
- *How has the COVID-19 pandemic changed the ability to reach and engage students?*

Panelists

Ms. Mette Morsing, Head of PRME, Principles for Responsible Management Education, UN Global Compact

The pandemic has pushed boundaries in areas of higher education particularly exposing vulnerabilities.

Mr. Paul J. LeBlanc, President, Southern New Hampshire University

Ms. Susan Rundell Singer, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Provost, and Professor of Biology, Rollins College

Ms. Weena Gera, University of the Philippines Cebu

Ms. Romeela Mohee, Commissioner of the Higher Education Commission

Mr. Estrada Merino Alfredo, Universidad de Lima

Moderated by **Dr. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi**, Chancellor, Nelson Mandela University

Ms. Weena Gera, University of the Philippines Cebu

Emerging from the pandemic the landscape is very different:

- highlights very much needed transformative and innovative changes.
- Pandemic has been the catalyst for the creation of more agile methods in teaching and learning and away from the more traditional methods.
- Teachers were required to fully utilize and maximize digital learning and management systems that teachers have been resistant to using. Compels us to face and act on this underdevelopment ecosystem and address unequal access issues.

Observations of needs:

- Ensure the quality of education especially for life-long learning that is flexible and open to all. ... highlight the efforts for inclusivity.
- Institutionalize hybrid forms of delivery. Rethinking about more immersive learning, design thinking, assessment methods (performance based in real time). For example:
 - .. flipped classrooms
 - ... redesigning courses into MOOKs
- Taking stock and analysing the different needs and requirements of learners.

Ms. Romeela Mohee, Commissioner of the Higher Education Commission (Mauritius)

3 aspects: Teaching, learning, regulatory body perspective

Mauritius experienced 2 lockdowns of 2 months long duration with no face-to-face classes.

1st lock down → ppts, pdfs, use of What's App etc. online

2nd lock down → real online classes

Observations of needs:

- must continue motivating students not to drop out;
- most of the international students could not come back so international business models had to be developed really quickly including access to digital libraries.

- 2x vaccination was required in order for them to come back and study in-person and/or do field work.
- Still adapting to a hybrid model but the trend is to revert to the original methods.

What has been the learning experience (student survey)

- no problems with interacting with staff through What's App etc.
- no problems with access to materials / resources
- regulatory procedures needed to be adapted to the new methods ie the regulatory environment needs to change

The pandemic has indeed created inequalities. How do people who don't have electricity, electronic devices or must share them ... how do these students NOT fall behind?

Mr. Paul J. LeBlanc, President, Southern New Hampshire University

The university now has 180,000 students, 40,000 of whom attended for the first time during the pandemic.

It doesn't take much to disrupt learning for marginal students.

Emergency remote learning successfully took place. Students adapted but missed the opportunity to be on campus. Mental health issues have increased.

Inequities within our system were spotlighted.

During the pandemic, we lost 1m students from the higher education system mainly²:

- .. low income students
- .. students of color

Who were less well served than normal during the pandemic. Few of them had opportunities for them to work remotely and education became more challenging.

The great resignation

People are not going back to jobs where they are not paid well and have irregular schedules whereas there are other employment opportunities where wages have increased. Low-income earners are making choices about going back to school or going to work at somewhere like Amazon where hourly wages HAVE increased as a result of the pandemic³ leading to a new demand for shorter-term learning, with quicker, certificates-focussed skills in high-demand jobs such as STEM, health care.

64% of workers have chosen not to return to in-person jobs and have been given the choice to work from home. This is particularly true for campus / faculty staff.

The pandemic reminded us the learning is human centric and we need a holistic approach (ie mental health issues) and needs to be more flexible. There is a rising up of new providers (such as Google)

² <https://hechingerreport.org/more-students-are-dropping-out-of-college-during-covid-and-it-could-get-worse>
Of the 2.6 million students who started college in fall 2019, 26.1 percent, or roughly 679,000, didn't come back the next year

³ <https://hechingerreport.org/proof-points-many-young-adults-choose-work-over-college-report-shows/>

with micro-credentials that are fast to achieve. Financial solutions are also needed for providing these shorter time framed credentials.

Faculty and staff are tired. They are retiring in massive numbers. Some stayed on during the pandemic but are now ready to leave.

Ms. Susan Rundell Singer, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Provost, and Professor of Biology, Rollins College

There is a great need to pay attention to our faculty and staff many of whom have been helping students with mental health crises.

In higher-ed we can move more quickly than we previously thought and we mustn't miss this moment in time to seize the opportunities.

Students are counting on us to provide the right answers → no student left behind. **Students are anxious to get back to campus.**

Observations of needs:

- opportunities for people to come together and learn globally from each other - eg. computer science teachers came together to share ideas / tools for working collaboratively and teach online. Need to find ways to share and know how to help on another through collaborative tools etc. (carried out at this university the first summer of the pandemic)
- **Attend to the overall holistic well being of students, not only improve the cognitive learning but attend to the social aspects of learning.** Create a sense of belonging for students. How to support resilience and get past resilience fatigue everyone is experience right now.
- Relevance – students need to understand that what they are doing is relevant; Why is this valuable?
- Re-think the models and be agile, innovative, brave, bold and act globally. We have the research and case-studies to do it.

Mr. Estrada Merino Alfredo, Universidad de Lima

Main challenge is: student / teacher interaction

Academic strategies and the organization of the curriculum impacts the student dynamic. The teacher is a manager and needs a new way to work with the students as well as teach the subject. Empathy in the learning environment is key. Empowerment of the students and the confidence of both teachers and students. If we don't address the human elements in the hybrid model, we won't succeed.

Students want to be actives agents of change.

Students need to experience relevance.

Bios of speakers

Speaker	Brief bio
<p>Ms. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi</p> <p>(moderator)</p>	<p>Geraldine Joslyn Fraser-Moleketi is the Chancellor of the Nelson Mandela University, Chairman of the Advisory Council of the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA); Chair of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) an expert body of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); Lead Independent Director for Exxaro; NonExecutive Board member of Standard bank Group and Standard Bank South Africa. Fraser-Moleketi previously served as Special Envoy on Gender of the African Development Bank; former Director of Global Democratic Governance Practice of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Former Minister of Public Service and Administration; and Minister for Welfare and Population Development in South Africa’s first democratic government. In, 1996. Whilst serving as the Deputy Minister of Welfare and Population Development, she was Deputy Leader of the South African Delegation to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, in 1995. She has worked in inter- governmental structures, interacted with political leaders, business leaders and civil society, and have been involved in complex negotiations across different issues and sectors. She also served as a member of the Reference Group on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (OCPR) of the United Nations Development System.</p>
<p>Ms. Mette Morsing</p>	<p>Dr. Mette Morsing is the Head of PRME (Principle Responsible Management Education). In her role as the Head of PRME, Mette oversees the strategic development and implementation of the PRME initiative and its entire programmatic work and operations. She has been the Mistra Chair of Sustainable Markets and Scientific Director at Misum between 2017 and 2020. She also has been a professor at Copenhagen Business School (CBS) since 2007, where she was Founding Director of the CBS Center for Corporate Social Responsibility for 10 years. She also served as an Academic Director of the CBS Sustainability Platform. Mette teaches sustainability management and corporate social responsibility in Executive Education at SSE and at PhD level. Her research work is positioned in research traditions of governance, management scholarship and communication/media studies in the context of CSR and sustainability, drawing from research traditions of sociology, communication studies and management scholarship as well as other areas. She is a Member of the Board of Directors of the LEGO Foundation; the Claus</p>
	<p>Meyer Foundation: Melting Pot; Copenhagen Business School; and the International Advisory Board of the Amsterdam School of Communication Research at Amsterdam University. Her PhD in organization theory at Copenhagen Business School was awarded the Tietgen Gold Medal in 1993.</p>

<p>Mr. Paul J. LeBlanc</p>	<p>Dr. Paul J. LeBlanc is President of Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) and author of <i>Students First: Equity, Access, and Opportunity in Higher Education</i>. Under the 18 years of Paul’s direction, SNHU has grown from 10,000 students to over 165,000 learners and is the largest non-profit provider of online higher education in the country. Paul serves on the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine’s Board on Higher Education and Workforce. In 2018, Paul was awarded the prestigious TIAA Institute Hesburgh Award for Leadership Excellence in Higher Education. Paul immigrated to the United States as a child, was the first person in his extended family to attend college and is a graduate of Framingham State University (BA), Boston College (MA), and the University of Massachusetts (PhD). From 1993 to 1996 he directed a technology start up for Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company, was President of Marlboro College (VT) from 1996 to 2003 and became President of SNHU in 2003.</p>
<p>Ms. Susan Rundell Singer</p>	<p>Susan Rundell Singer is the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost at Rollins College and a Professor in the Department of Biology. Immediately prior to joining Rollins, she was Director for the Division of Undergraduate Education at National Science Foundation (NSF) and coordinated 14 Federal agencies in implementing the undergraduate strategic objectives of the first Federal STEM Education 5-Year Strategic Plan. Previously, she served as the Laurence McKinley Gould Professor, in the Biology and Cognitive Science Departments at Carleton College for 30 years, where she had the opportunity to direct the Perlman Center for Learning and Teaching. She has served on numerous boards, including the NSF Education and Human Resources advisory committee and the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine’s (NASEM) Board on Science Education, where I chaired the committees responsible for America’s Lab Report, Promising Practices in STEM Undergraduate Education, and Discipline-based Education Research: Understanding and Improving Learning in Undergraduate Science and Engineering. Currently, she serves on the NASEM Roundtable on Systemic Change in Undergraduate STEM Education and am chair-elect for the AAAS Education Section.</p>
<p>Mr. Lloyd Waller</p>	<p>Prof. Lloyd Waller is a Professor of Digital Transformation Policy and Governance in the Department of Government at the University of the West Indies (Mona Campus). In the last ten years, Prof. Waller has published over 100 articles, books, book chapters, scientific research papers, and technical reports covering areas such as: digital transformation, ICT for development, electronic governance, innovations in governance as well as advanced</p>

	<p>research methods. Prof. Waller has received several UWI Principal's Award for research with the greatest business/economic/development impact from the University of the West Indies (Mona Campus). Prof. Waller has also managed several local, regional, and international research projects which focused on harnessing information and communication technologies for the development of Jamaica where he worked for 5 years with the United Nations Development Programme (1997-2003) as well as his 6 years as Chairman of the Board for eGov Jamaica Ltd (The Government agency which manages the ICT infrastructure and digital systems in Jamaica. Prof. Waller sits on several national, regional and international committees, boards and commissions.</p>
<p>Ms. Weena Gera</p>	<p>Dr. Weena Gera is an Associate Professor of Political Science and former Vice Chancellor for Administration at the University of the Philippines Cebu (Feb 2019- Jan 2022). She has published and consulted on various governance analyses in the Philippines and Southeast Asia, including the politics of bureaucratic representation, public participation, central-local relations, as well as governance for sustainable development and urban resilience. Dr. Gera received her PhD in International Development from Nagoya University (2009) under the Monbukagakusho scholarship. She has been awarded the JSPS-UNU (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science- United Nations University) postdoctoral research fellowship at the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS), Tokyo and the Integrated Research System for Sustainability Science (IR3S) of Tokyo University (2012-2014), and the OeAD-Ernst Mach Grants-ASEA-UNINET postdoctoral research fellowship at the Institute of Forest, Environmental and Natural Resource Policy (InFER) at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Vienna (2016-2017). In 2018, she was among the five recipients of the Gro Brundtland Award for Women in Sustainable Development, established by Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland in 2014 to recognize the contributions of distinguished female researchers in the developing region, in the field of public health and sustainable development. Then in 2019, she was conferred the Bernd Rode Award in the Senior Researchers category by the ASEA-UNINET for her research project on ecosystem services toward sustainable mineral development in the ASEAN. She is currently back in Austria as OeAD-ASEA-UNINET-Ernst Mach Grant Research Fellow at TU Wien, doing research on energy system transition toward sustainable digital transformation in ASEAN.</p>
<p>Ms. Romeela Mohee</p>	<p>Prof (Dr) Romeela Mohee is the Commissioner of the Higher Education Commission, Mauritius, a Professor in Chemical and Environmental Engineering and former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mauritius. Prof Mohee is an experienced Education Specialist with a demonstrated history of working in the development of higher education models and policies. She has worked at the Commonwealth of Learning from 2017 to 2020 as an Education Specialist and has assisted many Commonwealth member states in their</p>

	<p>development of higher education policies and strategies. Prof Mohee has 25 years of academic experience as a Professor and Head of Department in the field of Chemical and Environmental Engineering, as well as, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering from 2009 to 2012. She has also held the position of National Research Chair in Solid Waste Management at the Mauritius Research Council. Prof Mohee's expertise has been recognised both at national and regional level. She has been Vice President of the Maurice Ile Durable Steering Committee She has also held the position of Environmental Assessor for the Environment and Land Use tribunal (ELAT) from 2011 to 2013.</p>
<p>Mr. Estrada Merino Alfredo</p>	<p>Alfredo Estrada Merino holds a PhD in education, and a master's in research, in senior management and in international business and foreign trade management. He holds the position of responsible member of the Global Business Research Group of the Scientific Research Institute of Universidad de Lima. He is a member of PRME Anti-Poverty Working Group. Coordinator of Social Responsible Network in CLADEA, currently is Director of Sustainability Center of Universidad de Lima Peru.</p>