

## 2013 URI Academic Summit

### Roundtable Discussion: What is the Longer Term Future for Higher Education?

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1. How might the student population change over the next 10 to 15 years as a result of technological advances - both the mix of students and how students of the future approach problems?
  - a. The technological divide is a socioeconomic issue which could be one which holds back future students and the progress of Universities.
    - i. Already the National High School graduation rate is down to 75%
    - ii. The URI graduation rate is 54%, median for the country
    - iii. The next generation, whose parents did not learn how to use/access the data we have, will be even more divided. The disparity between the privileged and the less fortunate will be even larger. Those who do not know how to use technology will be at a massive disadvantage
  - b. A counter theory: technology will be so widespread and accessible that for an inexpensive price, all people will have access to great amounts of data and information.
    - i. The question this raises: Where on the spectrum of "what is available", in terms of technology, data etc., will this type of inexpensive access fall?
  - c. There is a 30 year trend of the "haves" and have not's" becoming increasingly divided and it may continue
    - i. The "haves" will have access to data and will continue to go to Universities and will have an ability to analyze data
    - ii. The "have not's" will have access to data but will not have any knowledge of what they are truly dealing with
  - d. The thinking skills needed to analyze data will be the most important goal of Universities. The amount of data, the speed of your connection are only as powerful as the skills you have to analyze what you have access to.
    - i. We don't know what problems students of the future will face, yet we can teach them skills to solve all types of problems.
    - ii. Faculty can teach students of the future how to continuously learn.
2. How might the role of the faculty change in the 10 to 15 year time frame as a result of the dramatic changes anticipated in technology and learning?
  - a. Faculty can teach a student of the future where to access relevant data and what to do with it.
  - b. Students may have far more control over their curriculum and even individual courses
  - c. The faculty will be the certifiers of certain competencies
  - d. Future students may be looking to learn navigation of the world in an increasingly global society. Faculty can provide this.
  - e. Will faculty play a larger role in shaping learner morality and ethics in the future?

- f. Will Universities learn more about what an individual truly needs to be faculty? Is a PhD the most necessary criteria? What else should we be instilling in our educators at the University level?
  - g. The researchers may be needed more than ever. At a research institution, the researchers should improve the quality of the undergraduate education with their work and presence.
  - h. Students of the future will need to be able to define, articulate, and weigh values.
    - i. This is one thing Artificial Intelligence may never be able to do. Teaching ethics may be an inherently human thing.
    - ii. A University will be a place where everyone who has access to all of the relevant information on a subject, has studied this information and questioned it can go and discuss their different ideas
3. How might we, as faculty, and the University prepare for likely changes in the student population and in teaching/learning?
- a. The role of the researcher must be clearly defined
  - b. Continue the conversation on changing technology and the changing student population.
  - c. A Provost sponsored set of meeting on this topic may be highly beneficial to the University.