

# Rapid-Response Strategies for Higher Education in a COVID-19 World

**Remote learning was just the start.**

**The key to success is adaptive strategies, seamlessly tied to execution, tapping into the best available information, accessible by everyone—NOW.**

Higher education, like virtually every sector, was turned upside down by the COVID-19 pandemic. Colleges and universities shut down their campuses and shifted their students and faculty to remote learning with blinding speed—literally in a matter of *days*.

That's just the first of many challenges institutions needed to manage—and fast—to deal with this jarring new reality. The entire value chain of higher education is threatened. **The 2020-2021 academic year is upon us, yet conditions change constantly.** How does a major shift to online and remote learning affect your perceived value? How are you handling the ongoing uncertainty around enrollment? What about your low-income students with no internet connectivity or computer at home? You face a gauntlet of unanswered questions.

## How will you know your strategies are working?

**Be ready to make course corrections as you go.**

While institutions have always conducted planning, the priority now is far broader and more urgent. What's needed now is adaptive strategies across a host of imperatives, with rapid, iterative cycles, built by tapping into the best thinking across the institution and the best information available.

Unlike traditional institutional plans, adaptive strategies are nimble enough to change as conditions change and information becomes available. Borrowing a page from the software development and project management fields, short term goals are planned and carried out in "sprints," and the outcomes informs the content of the next sprints. Fast-changing situations like the COVID-19 crisis demand such agility, so institutions can address critical situations despite constant fluctuations.

Adaptive strategies require visibility into how they are working, and you need that visibility up and running in days, not months. That's essential, because your time to act is *now*.

**You have a natural culture of curiosity—now is the time to use it.**

We've never seen conditions like this. However, in a sector filled with the brightest minds, we are equipped with a natural culture of curiosity—one that relishes exploration and innovation. Your mission is to quickly stand up a process that captures the best thinking and gives faculty and staff insights into your most relevant information, so you can address these challenges together.

We see many organizations using concentric circles of communication and strategy development, starting at the cabinet level and their direct reports. As time goes on, they are expanding at their own pace to bring in other contributors.

**"Nothing about this crisis is static, and there's no time to wait for a perfect plan. Effective, adaptive problem-solving requires quickly moving from data to analysis to meaning."**

Richard Staisloff, rpk GROUP



### Mapping progress against the plan for nimble adjustments.

Critical to success is the ability to map the progress against the plan and make necessary adjustments on the fly. Now is not the time to wait for a shiny new data warehouse or artificial intelligence tool. Now is the time to use the business intelligence and reporting systems you already have and link them to your plans as you build and execute them.

Daunting? Certainly.

Possible? Absolutely—and needed now more than ever.

### Where to start?

For the moment, of course, the mental and physical health of students, faculty, and staff are top priorities. Planning for operational efficiencies must come next.

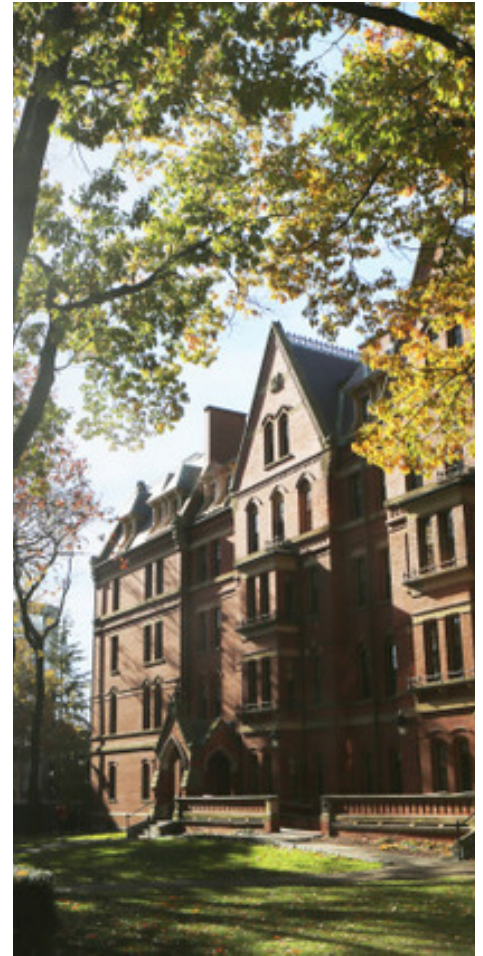
“An amazing 96 percent [of presidents and chancellors] are planning to re-engineer processes and look for efficiencies related to the higher-education operational model,” states an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, citing a March 2020 survey of the President’s Trust of the Association of American Colleges & Universities conducted by ABC Insights and rpkGroup.

The institutions are focused on a short list of key areas, such as:

- + Overall financial stability
- + Student enrollment fluctuations
- + Remote learning challenges

To tackle these challenges, institutions are turning to Nuventive for:

- + A single place to access relevant information for any plan, tied to execution
- + Information tied to business purposes, linked to any plan at any level
- + Adaptive and integrated problem-solving and planning
- + Timely feedback loops on what is and isn’t effective
- + Ability to identify and share best practices within and between institutions
- + A data-informed, rapidly executable planning process



### How Nuventive can help you.

Nuventive helps you turn your plans into progress. These existential initiatives can't live in silos. They need to be connected to your existing analytics and reporting systems, so your teams can map their progress against each sprint, determine what leads to good outcomes, identify best practices, and change what isn't working.

Nuventive puts relevant operational data next to your plan—in the same screen—so you can drill down to understand your progress with live or snapshot-in-time information. Because your people can solve problems with the best information available in the moment, your initiatives have their best chance to deliver progress.

**Now's the time to get started.** Contact Nuventive's higher education rapid response support team at [LearnMore@Nuventive.com](mailto:LearnMore@Nuventive.com) to see how to set up adaptive planning at your institution. This is the time for action.



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Nuventive enables higher education institutions to turn their plans into progress through the better use of information. Its cloud-based platform-as-a-service brings business process and information together to support any improvement initiative, including overall strategy, accreditation, graduation rates, retention, learning outcomes, general education, housing, sustainability, administrative outcomes, program review, and diversity.

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