

RESEARCH SURVEY

# AN EVOLVING STUDENT EXPERIENCE:

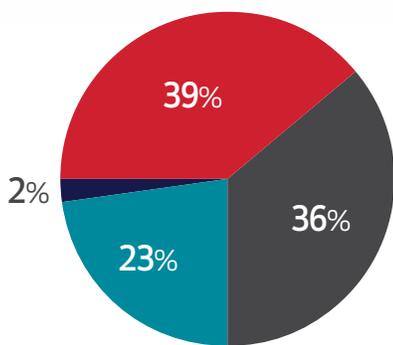
Technology Trends in Higher Education



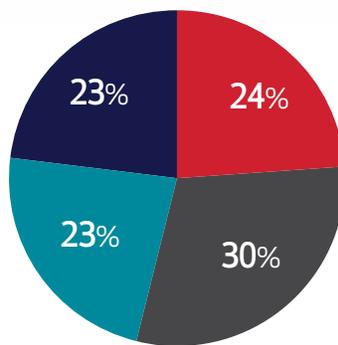
As colleges and universities embrace technological innovations, their priority is improving the student experience — and providing high-quality learning tools for the growing number of diverse learners. A recent survey of 62 higher education decision-makers conducted by the Center for Digital Education (CDE) identified the following technologies as vital to digital transformation: digital content (58%), student information systems (SISs)/learning management systems (LMSs) (44%), and automation technologies (39%). This focus on digital curriculum and automated systems illustrates a common theme: higher education leaders want to provide students with technology tools to enhance their learning experiences, both on campus and off. In order to do so, they are also realizing a need to improve back-office and administrative workflows to free up more time for faculty and staff to dedicate to this important mission.

## RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

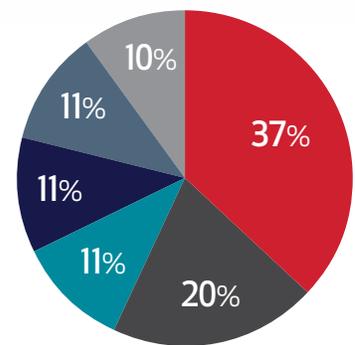
INSTITUTION TYPE



NUMBER OF STUDENTS



JOB ROLE



- FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES OR COLLEGES
- TWO-YEAR PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGES
- FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES OR COLLEGES
- TWO-YEAR PRIVATE COMMUNITY COLLEGES

- LESS THAN 2,500
- 2,500 - 9,999
- 10,000 - 19,999
- 20,000 OR MORE

- FACULTY/INSTRUCTOR/EDUCATOR
- LEADERSHIP, ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF, NON-IT
- IT SUPERVISORY/MANAGERIAL
- IT SUPPORT STAFF
- NON-CLASSROOM STUDENT SUPPORT
- IT LEADERSHIP

## HIGHER EDUCATION IS WARMING UP TO INNOVATION

Higher education leaders don't see themselves as far down the digital transformation path as their K-12 counterparts. Nearly an equal amount of respondents considered themselves innovators/leaders (26%), early adopters but not leaders (27%) and late adopters (27%). Despite this, they are still using technology for innovative things like enhancing accessibility for all students and improving recruitment efforts. For instance, nearly half (48%) are improving the design of their websites to make them easier to navigate for prospective students, and 37 percent are recruiting through social media.

### TOP 3 WAYS DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IS IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

CREATING AN ONLINE TEACHING PLATFORM THAT MEETS ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS



CREATING MORE ACCESSIBLE VIDEO/AUDIO SERVICES



PROVIDING REMOTE ACCESS TO COURSES



### TOP 3 WAYS CAMPUSES ARE DIGITALLY TRANSFORMING STUDENT RECRUITMENT

IMPROVING THE DESIGN OF WEBSITES



RECRUITING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA



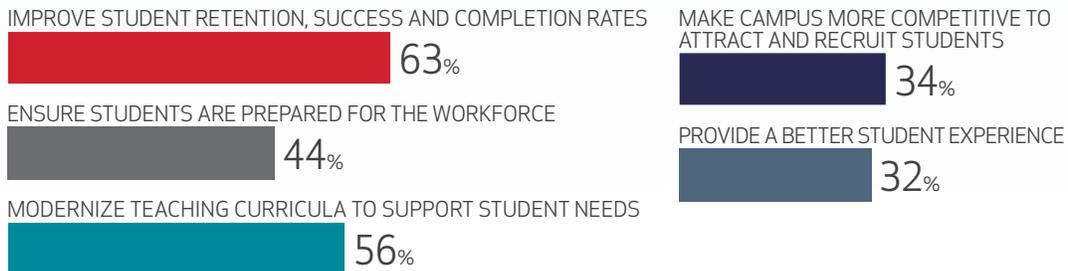
UTILIZING ONLINE ADVERTISING



## STUDENTS ARE AT THE CENTER OF TRANSFORMATION EFFORTS

Student expectations are driving digital transformation efforts at colleges and universities. Technology permeates most aspects of their daily lives and they expect to find the same variety and capacity of digital services on campus. At the same time, campus leaders recognize students have a choice in which college they want to attend and that access to current technology is high on their priority list. These factors are driving a focus on experience to ensure students get the most out of their time on campus and are prepared for the workforce when they leave. In fact, the top drivers for digital transformation are all focused around students — from improving completion rates (63%) to making campus more competitive to attract and recruit students (34%).

### DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION DRIVERS

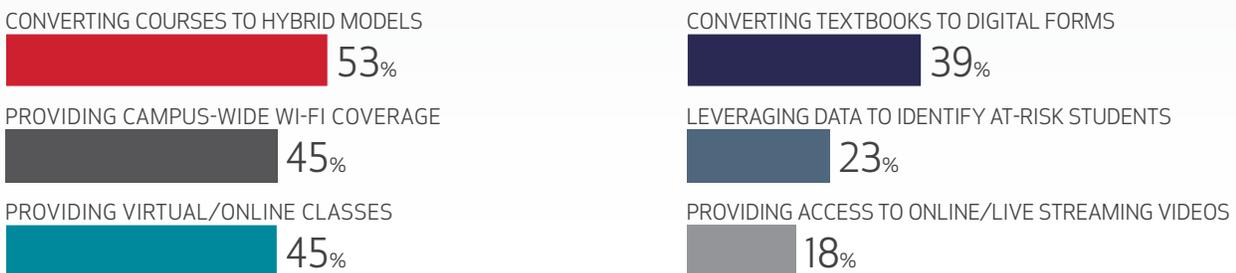


## ONLINE COURSES AND REMOTE LEARNING TOOLS LEAD THE WAY

Although 58 percent of respondents see lecture halls as the area in greatest need of transformation on campus, the data shows leaders are also looking to serve an increasingly diverse student population online — students who choose to pursue advanced degrees while engaged in their careers, students who have families and need to take online courses at night, and distance learners.

Because of this, higher education institutions are offering more flexibility around their courses and programs. More than half of respondents (53%) said they are converting existing courses to hybrid models, while 45 percent said they are working to provide virtual/online classes.

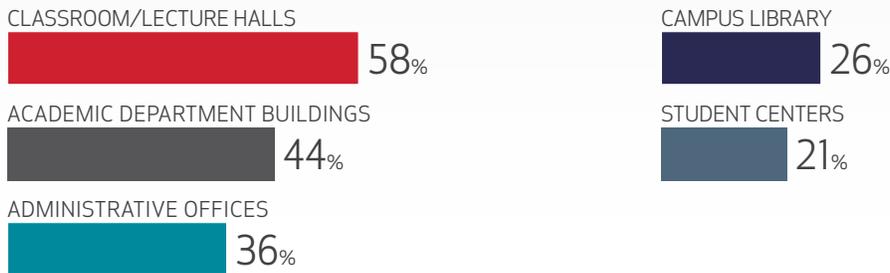
### HOW CAMPUSES ARE DIGITALLY TRANSFORMING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



## BACK-OFFICE AUTOMATION IS ALSO A PRIORITY

Higher education leaders know that in order to provide the experience students desire, faculty and staff need to digitize their own workflows as much as possible. When asked about the areas in greatest need of digital transformation on their campus, academic department buildings (44%) and administrative offices (36%) were high on the list. It comes as no surprise that automation technologies (39%) and data security tools (34%) were also prioritized as important transformation technologies. When information is easy to access and secure, and time-consuming processes are automated, faculty and staff have more time to focus on improving student success.

## AREAS IN GREATEST NEED OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

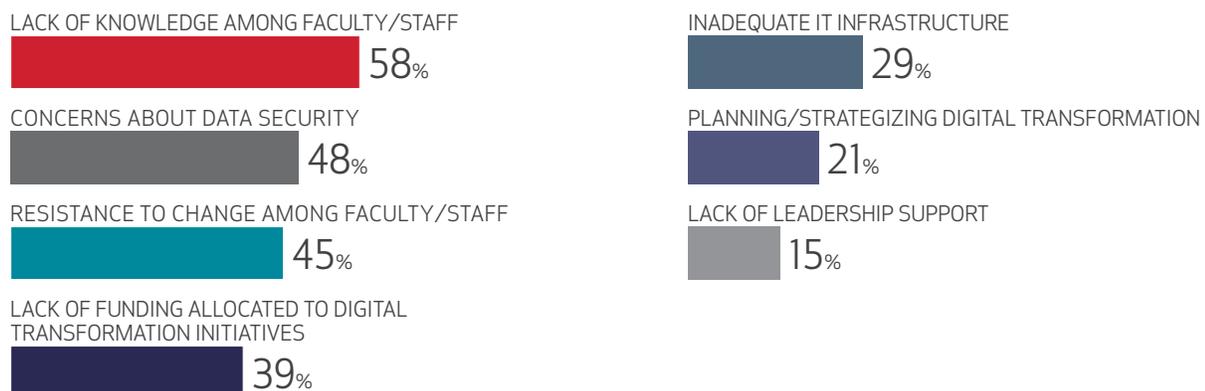


## FUNDING AND TRAINING POSE A CHALLENGE

Fifty-five percent of respondents said they need more funding to continue pursuing digital transformation. Institutions with strong alumni fundraising and development programs are more likely to find the resources they need to invest in new technologies. But regardless of how much leaders have in their IT budgets, they must work to develop a plan for their digital transformation journey that fits with the campus' mission and is financially sustainable. It's critical to remember digital transformation can be done in steps as funding is available — it doesn't have to be an all or none implementation. Even small initial investments can pay off down the road, as the efficiencies of new technology can result in long-term cost savings.

When asked about some of the challenges they may face during digital transformation, the top responses involved campus faculty. Fifty-eight percent of respondents are concerned about a lack of knowledge among faculty and staff, and 45 percent are worried about resistance to change. Altering decades-old practices and systems can be challenging, so adequate training is key to getting employees on board. The CDE survey shows higher education institutions recognize this need and are addressing it: 52 percent of respondents are already providing faculty support in redesigning lectures for a digital curriculum and 42 percent are providing technical skills training. Some (26%) are hiring dedicated technology specialists to support the transition to digital curriculum or providing informational meetings about changes due to digital transformation, while others are hiring faculty or staff with existing digital skills (23%). A well-thought-out change management strategy will also help support faculty and staff throughout the process.

## DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION CHALLENGES



## CONCLUSION: ONGOING TRANSFORMATION

Digital transformation will be a continuous process at higher education institutions for years to come. While it can seem overwhelming, the right partner can help leaders determine their areas of greatest need to start and then help ensure all processes work together seamlessly in the end. Successful institutions will keep the campus experience top of mind by prioritizing the automation of back-office processes, as well as the creation of secure, high-quality online learning tools, to make higher education accessible to a growing number of students.

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