Steven R. Van Hook, PhD

CBEM & CAVO PITCH

April 25, 2025

Educator Introduction
to Virtual World Learning

Abstract & Bio

Abstract: This presentation provides a first-hand look at academia's introduction to virtual world learning and supportive steps ahead:

➢ Current research data assessing Virtual World learning
➢ Cost-effective program development
➢ Best VW teaching tactics and practices
➢ Benefits and necessities of immersive experiential learning
➢ Field-trip to the Educare VW campus

Bio: Dr. Steven R. Van Hook has designed and taught communication and culture classes for universities in the USA and abroad for 25 years, developing one of the first hybrid virtual courses for UCSB in 2000. He has led in academic positions including faculty senator, ombudsman, curriculum development, accreditation review, and instructor mentoring.

He is President of Educare Research, a nonprofit program serving international educators and students. He's been a newspaper columnist, radio reporter, TV news anchor, and science podcast host. He was a television producer and bureau chief in Moscow, USSR from 1989-91; and for three years directed public education media programs in Ukraine through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

He has served as a trainer and officer for organizations including VISTA, Head Start, as a licensed Master Captain by the US Coast Guard, and a private pilot. He has a PhD specializing in transcultural learning, and is published in scholarly journals including UNESCO's *Prospects*, and by SAGE.
He has presented on virtual world education to administrators and groups at UCLA, UCSB, VWBPE, VWEC, The Science Circle, and elsewhere. Research website: http://wwmr.us

Courses Designed / Developed / Taught
BA & MA On-Ground, Online, & Mixed

Steven R. Van Hook, PhD
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steven@wwmr.us

UCLA / UCSB Extension

- EmpowerEd Course Designer
- Writing for Marketing & Advertising
- Working with the Media
- Marketing Principles & Practice
- Writing for Public Relations
- Integrated Marketing Communications
- Global Communication Management
- Fundamentals of Global Management & Marketing
- Principles of Business Administration & Management
- Global Economies & Issues
- Speaking Skills for the Global Marketplace
- Communications Skills for the Business Professional
- Fundamentals of International Advertising

California Lutheran University

- Principles of Marketing
- International Marketing
- Cross-Cultural Marketing Communications
- Global Issues

National University

- Campaign & Program Management
- Campaign & Program Evaluation
- Legal & Ethical Issues
- Integrated Marketing Communications
- Strategic Writing
- Mediated Messaging
- Communication Technologies
- Persuasion
- Art of Public Speaking

Link

Educational Platforms & Programs

- Brightspace
- Blackboard
- Canvas
- Articulate 360
- Second Life
- EmpowerEd
- SMF
- Moodle
- Sakai
- iUniversity

- eCollege
- Captivate
- WordPress
- Desire2Learn
- YouTube
- iTunes
- Collaborate
- Adobe Connect
- GoToMeeting
- Skype

- Zoom
- FirstClass
- OpenCourseware
- Comcourse
- Sansar
- OpenSim

A Dimensional Sense of Space

Landmark

**Science Circle
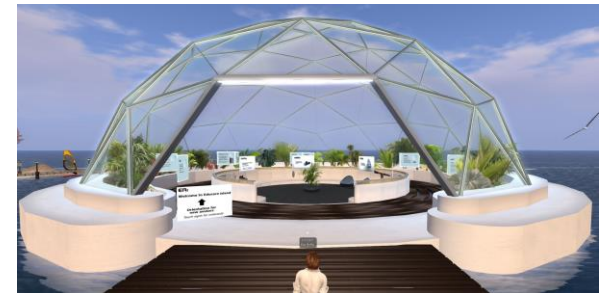Open-Air Auditorium
in Second Life**

Educare VW Island

- Nonprofit educational NGO
- Simplified experience
- Orientation for educators
- Introduction to VW teaching

Educare Research inc
Non-profit 501(c)(3)
Free Access

Landmark

Presentations

Virtual World Tours in Zoom

> *Low Lag*
> *Audio & Video Fidelity*
> *Single & Group Tours*
> *Zoom Familiarity*
> *No VW Curve*

Innovative Educators

A Tour Of The Virtual World: How To Engage Students & Create A Sense Of Belonging Online

DATE Wednesday, January 25

TIME 3:00-4:00pm (Eastern)

Innovative Educators
Online Services For Orientation, Support & Training

- 75+ years in Higher Ed
- 4,262 College Clients
- 600,000+ Educators Trained

Dr. Steven R. Van Hook has developed and taught mixed-format courses in cross-cultural communications and global affairs for the University of California and other universities in the United States and abroad. He was a spotlight speaker for the 2022 Conference of Virtual Worlds Best Practices in Education and has designed VW learning builds for over a decade, with a doctorate specializing in international transcultural educational tactics and technologies.

Link

Overview

Educators can be COVID-challenged to keep students and funds flowing, while promoting healthy and enriching academic options. Virtual World learning may provide immersive hands-on experience for engaging students and offering a sense of place and belonging, so important to student success and retention in online education.

This easy virtual VW visit through Zoom covers: evolution of virtual world learning, academic necessities for learning alternatives, socioeconomic drivers and gains, fulfilling student desires for immersive experience, benefits of experiential learning, providing dimensional sense of space, sample in-world learning centers, forming partnerships between academia and emerging technology, effective gamification of learning, bridging the digital divide, and a self-guided field trip to a Virtual World campus.

Objectives

- Learn about the evolution of Virtual World (VW) learning
- Examine best practices in VW education
- Learn about fulfilling student desires and demands for more immersive online learning experiences
- Discover how to provide a sense of 'place' in virtual world settings
- Critique samples of VW learning centers
- Explore new models of student engagement and interactive learning
- Discover the future trends and the holistic vision of educational possibilities
- Use a free field trip invitation to a virtual world campus

VW Presentation / Seminar Topics

- VW Teaching Tactics & Trends

- Transcultural Course Design

- Primers & Prompts for Enticing Lectures

- Handling Difficult Students

- Global Trends for World Solutions in Education

- More Topic Abstracts …
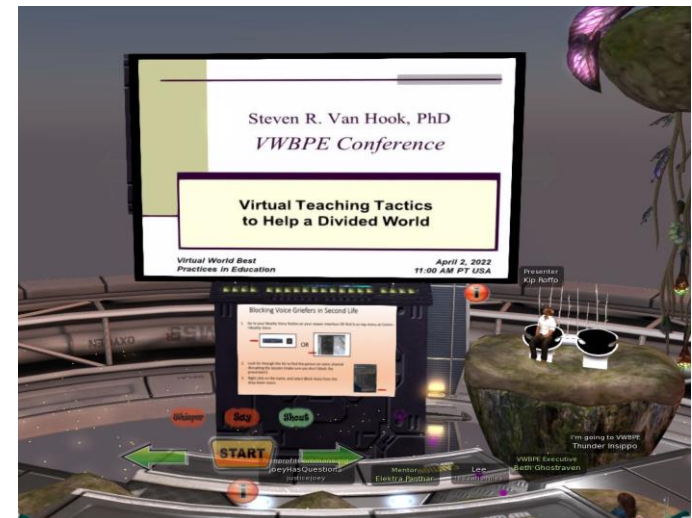
VW Commentary & Review

- University President / Officers
- SVP of Innovation
- Program Directors
- Course Designers
- Professors
- Domestic & International Students
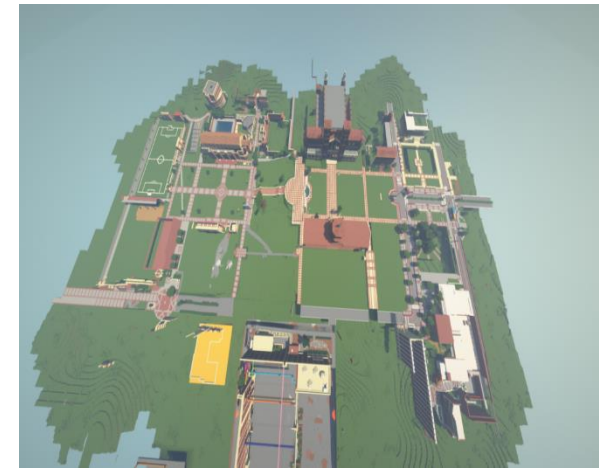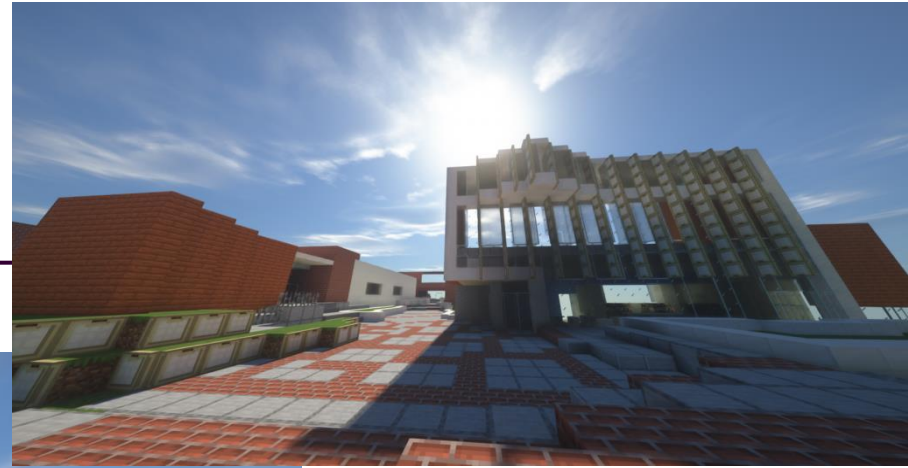- Educator Training Programs
- VW Education Groups

UCLA Custom Programs
Korean Students / Kerckhoff Hall

UCSB International Students

UCLA in Minecraft

Molloy and co-administrator Chris Ko, a second-year electrical engineering student, created the server with funding from the UCLA Bruin Gaming. Only a few days before, UCLA had announced that spring classes would be held online as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Article Link

NU Nursing 'Metaverse' Build

- With funding from a two-year, $200,000 grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration, this pilot program is designed to increase access to quality health care in underserved communities.

- $50,000 to purchase approximately 70 virtual reality headsets, and the San Diego County Board of Supervisors awarded $25,000 to cover the cost of software and programming for the virtual reality headsets.

- Students how to treat computer-generated patients in the Metaverse, preventing harm to real patients. National University's digital twin campus allows students to teleport to virtual classrooms, lecture halls, lounges, and parks.

Media Release

Rosedale & Scoble on Future Tech

- The 'sense of place' in VW is magical

- On producing quality VW activities: The budget for Grand Theft Auto 5 was $400-million, for the detail and experience of it. But costs for teaching, and dancing, and hanging out and giving talks on stage, those ideas are going to carry the day

- Best use may be in-world seminars and gatherings

Video

Scoble & Rosedale Transcript

'The Power and the Peril of Virtual Reality in HE'

- These tools stand to reshape higher education in some powerful ways. But the immense potential is still only that: potential.

- A future where universities and their learners are divided into virtual haves and have-nots is not difficult to imagine – and it must be prevented.

- After all, an institution may well be on the cutting edge, but for what purpose? Indeed, purpose must be a guiding force for institutions seeking to answer the most pressing questions about immersive learning.

- A well-designed VR curriculum might be entertaining and engaging, but if the strengths of the program are not tightly aligned with the needs of educators and students, it accomplishes very little.

- Equity, access and inclusion must serve as the driving force behind any conversations related to integration.

- This is not a case of using technology for technology's sake but a purposeful effort to create inclusive healthcare training for a diverse cohort of learners.

Mark Milliron
National University
President / CEO

Article

What Students Want per Survey

- Students expect 'total flexibility' in pandemic-era classroom

- 90% want to submit assignments online

- 68% want recorded asynchronous lectures

- 67% want online exams

- Majority (61%-83%) want some in-person interaction (small lab sections, group work, symposia)

Article   THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
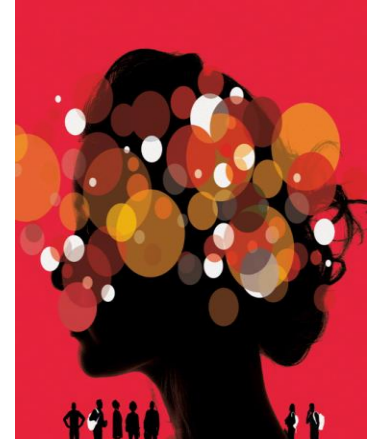
Students Demand Virtual Learning So Colleges Adjust

- 40% of college administrators prioritizing demand for online learning; 35% reexamining strategies considering student demands

- Older students are also demanding flexibility in learning, expanding across student population

- This growing demand for online and hybrid education has likely not yet reached its peak

- Most administrators looking for balance by 2025 for a more-balanced in-person, hybrid, online courses

Article

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

VR Labs Boost Grades & Retention

- A new large-scale, longitudinal study shows that Arizona State University's recent investments in virtual reality education are paying off

[Article](#)

- A randomized study of about 500 students **showed virtual reality's initial promise** in alleviating the historically high attrition rates—especially for low-income, female and nonwhite students—in introductory STEM classes that have long plagued ASU and universities nationwide

- Students in the virtual reality group were 1.7 times more likely to score between 90 percent and 100 percent on their lab assignments compared to students in the conventional groups
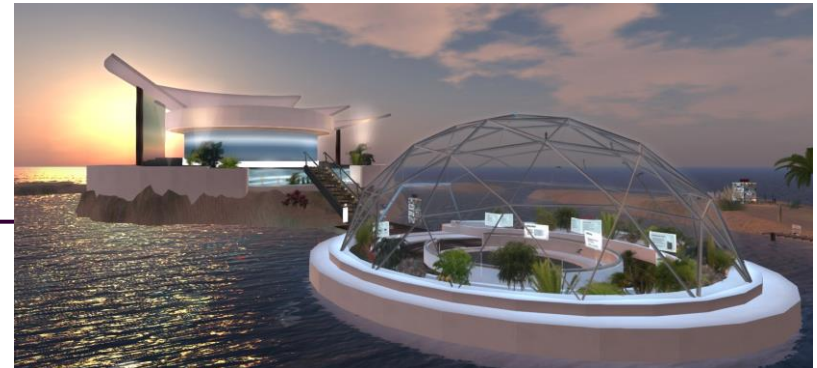
Key Educare Landmarks

EDUCARE LANDMARKS
A Nonprofit Program for International Educators & Students
Steven R. Van Hook, PhD / Kip Roffo in SL
http://wwmr.us

Welcome to Educare
First steps for a new avatar

Educare Tour
Guided flight of the island

Main Hall
Our large-group meeting space

Workspace
Smaller gatherings and conferences

Treehouse Meet Spot
Chill and chat by the beach

Educare Sandbox
Rez and build your own stuff

Sunset Cove
Campfire chat, tai chi, healing hypnosis, touch the Buddha
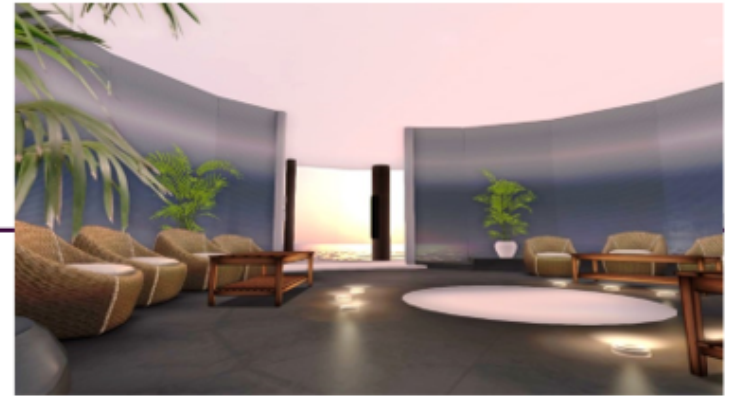
Access

Budget / Plan

Monthly Expenses:

$ 100 Nonprofit Platform Rate
$ 80 Design Costs
$ 70 Event Security
$ 50 Software / Gear
$ 300 Total

Receipts:

- Donations / Grants
- Loans
- In-Kind Contributions

Six-Month Plan:

- Ongoing Educator Outreach
- Produce Introductory Video
- OER Materials on Best Practices
- Grant Writing

ERɪ

Educare Research inc (ERi) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) educational program, since 2013 promoting resources for independent international educators, transcultural teaching methods, and appropriate educational technologies; to expand accessible learning opportunities for a global student body.

Contact

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California, USA

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Sense of Place

"Students expressed their higher-education experience through images of where they have been, and where they are ... The common theme: broadening horizons."

"A Sense of Place" slideshow
The New York Times

Walk in Another's Skin

Participants develop increased empathy for differences and suffering by VR immersion and experience

- *Gender Switch*
- *Race Switch*
- *War Zone Experience*
- *Wheelchair Accessibility*
- *Etc.*

Stroking a black rubber hand reduced a participant's implicit racism score

He refers to virtual reality as an "empathy generating machine" to give people experiences they can't have in any other way.

Article

Cosplay

Superhero cosplay makes you a better person for one science-backed reason:

- Heroic stories and experiences can create a unique emotional response: elevation

- Ninety-one percent of participants who saw a superhero poster stayed afterward to help, whereas only 75 percent of people who saw the neutral poster did.

- In a virtual reality study, half of the participants were given the power of flight, like Superman. The second half got to fly, too — but as passengers in a helicopter. Flying participants generally helped more quickly than helicopter participants

Inverse
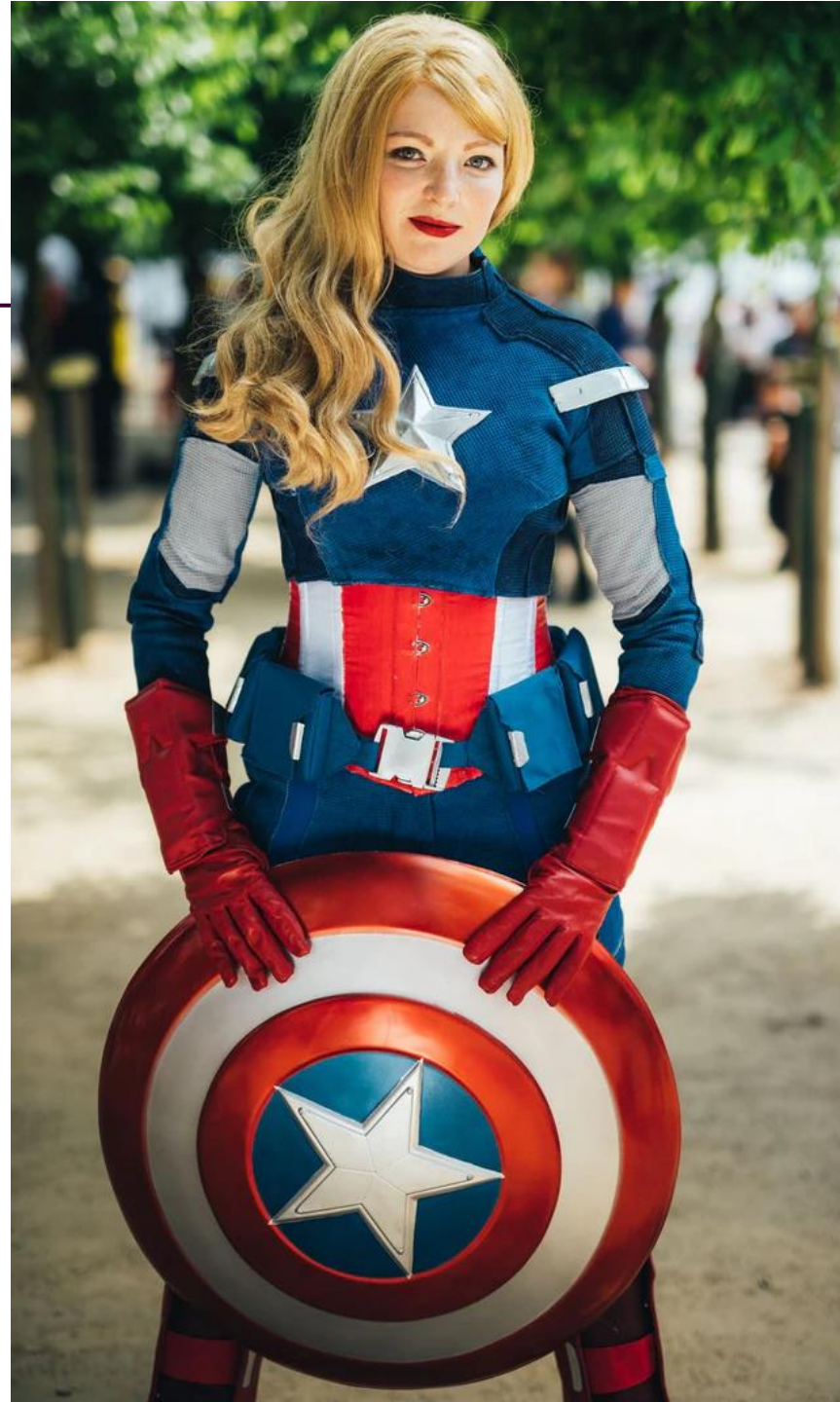
Visualizing 'Doing' Helps Us Learn

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN.

- 'Visualization and action are intimately connected, involving the motor cortex. Thinking about our body doing something—raising an arm or walking forward—activates the motor cortex directly.'

- 'This ability to trigger the motor cortex by imagining an action offers great promise in therapies for patients recovering from stroke and for athletes or dancers working to develop expertise in their craft.'

- 'As we get older, the motor cortex has to work harder to imagine actions, so exercising our visualization skills remains important throughout our lives.'

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN MIND   [Article](#)

[Avatars & Personality Link](#)   **ELSEVIER**

Virtual Job Fairs & Exchanges

The State of Virtual International Exchange
Inside Higher Education

"There are many more than one ways to engage young people online in collaborative projects and in dialogue."

Virtual Job Recruiting Expands Access to Students
Inside Higher Education

"A new survey from the National Association of Colleges and Employers found that graduates from historically marginalized populations benefited from virtual job recruiting."

'Students Want Virtual-Learning Options'

■ The share of students enrolled only in online courses nearly doubled since 2019.

■ "Having everything transitioned to Zoom was actually the world opening up and not closing down."

■ "Remote/hybrid learning plays a vital role in our mission to provide high-quality, accessible education that is affordable and tailored to the needs of our diverse student population."

■ "Remote classes offer an affordable and time-saving way to continue learning."

■ "Virtual learning makes taking a meaningful stand more difficult, because we're not breathing the same air and we can't see the nuances of one another's expressions and reactions as we can when we're present, live, together."

Article

■ "College leaders, she said, need to answer to "how they are supporting their faculty not only in developing their online pedagogy, but also in these questions of burnout, trauma, and stress."

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Universities Unsure How to Use New Tech

- University administrators see the need to implement education technology in their classrooms but are at a loss in how to do so

- While administrators are excited about offering new ed-tech tools, they are lacking knowledge and data to help them make informed decisions that benefit students and faculty

- Nearly 80 percent believe institutions will offer more hybrid courses in the future

- Almost all the administrators (92 percent) agreed more time will be spent in future classrooms using ed-tech products
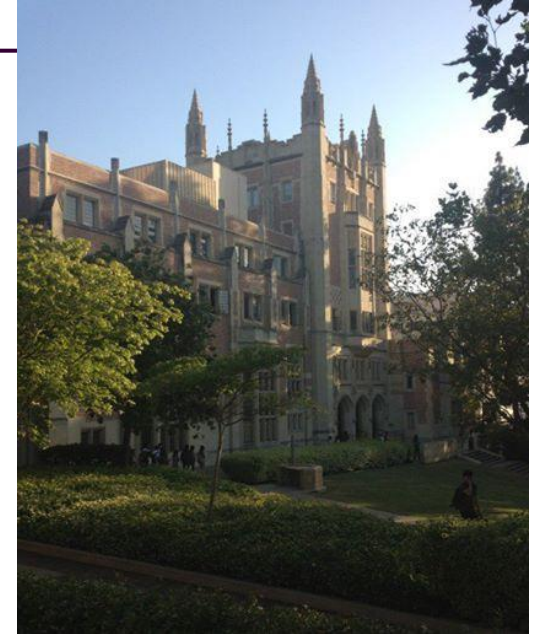
IHE Inside Higher Ed

Article

Academia Realities

- Lower state funding
- Demographic dip
- Lower enrollments
- Stressed administration
- Limited budgets
- Adjunctification of faculty
- Demand for course conversions
- Costs of new tech
- Cuts into dining and campus revenue

The Year That Pushed Higher Education to the Edge
Chronicle of Higher Education

What Must VW & Ed Tech Do?

■ **Prepare for show-time**
Online is here to stay: Some students will demand it. Administrators are looking for options and have a budget.

■ **Understand demands of academia**
Costs, student overhead, Title IX, privacy, harassment, performance standards, etc.

■ **Ease of access**
Instant teleport for nonmembers, limited function, prebuilt facilities

■ **Rich functionality**
Just as Zoom, Skype, TikTok

"The affordances and resilience of online delivery in this pandemic have permanently embedded online distance education as the advancing partner in the mode of delivery of learning."

The Speedy Future of Delivering Online Learning
Inside Higher Ed