

Voices of Innovation: Higher Education

Contributor Quick Start Guide

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Publishers Taylor & Francis (Routledge)

Publication Date: April 2027

Manuscript Deadline
August 31, 2025

Welcome

Thank you for considering a contribution to *Voices of Innovation: Higher Education*.

Higher education stands at one of the most consequential moments in its history. Artificial intelligence, demographic change, evolving learner expectations, new models of research, changing workforce demands, and growing expectations for public value are converging to challenge many of the assumptions upon which universities have operated for generations.

This volume explores how higher education is responding to one of the most consequential periods of change in its history. While AI is an important catalyst, the focus of this collection is institutional reinvention — how universities are rethinking leadership, learning, research, partnerships, and public purpose. We invite presidents, provosts, CIOs, chief digital officers, faculty leaders, researchers, innovators, policymakers, and industry partners to share the ideas, experiences, and leadership practices that are reshaping higher education for the next generation.

This collection brings together diverse voices from across higher education who share a commitment to exploring how universities can evolve in response to profound technological, societal and institutional change. Contributors approach these questions from different perspectives, but all are helping shape what comes next.

Editorial Thesis

Artificial intelligence is often described as another technology revolution.

We believe it represents something much larger.

AI invites higher education to reconsider many of the assumptions upon which the modern university was built: how learning is designed, how knowledge is created and shared, how talent is developed, how institutions organize themselves, and ultimately how universities fulfill their public mission.

For decades, educational technology focused on digitizing existing practices. Today's challenge is fundamentally different. AI is changing the relationship between technology and education. Intelligent systems are beginning to influence how learning is designed, how knowledge is created and shared and how institutions organize themselves.

This transition — from EdTech to TechEd — signals a broader institutional and cultural transformation. Technology is one part of that story. Leadership, organizational design and public purpose are equally important.

Throughout this volume, we return to one central question. Every contribution should help readers think differently about this question:

How should universities redesign, reinvent and reposition themselves to better fulfill their mission in an age of abundant intelligences?

Contributors are encouraged to think beyond tools and examine the broader questions of leadership, governance, organizational culture, partnerships, talent, public value and institutional purpose.

Technology is the catalyst. Institutional transformation is the work. Public value remains the purpose.

Why This Volume Matters

Universities have always co-evolved alongside society.

Today's convergence of artificial intelligence, data, digital infrastructure, demographic change, economic uncertainty, and new expectations for lifelong learning represents more than another technology cycle. It challenges the operating assumptions of higher education itself.

This volume seeks to capture this historic moment through the experiences of leaders who are actively shaping the future of universities.

Our goal is to document emerging practice rather than predict the future. We do not expect contributors to arrive at the same conclusions. Instead, we hope this volume sparks thoughtful conversation about how universities are evolving in response to AI and broader societal change. Above all, we are interested in how institutions can become more adaptive, more human-centered, more collaborative and more aligned with their public purpose.

Contributor Guidance

We invite essays that are thoughtful, practical, and forward-looking.

Contributions should:

- Be approximately **1,500–2,500 words**
- Draw from leadership experience and practice
- Share lessons learned, challenges, successes, and unanswered questions
- Offer practical insights for institutional leaders
- Be accessible to a broad audience across higher education
- Focus less on technology products and more on institutional transformation
- Connect innovation to mission, culture, leadership, and public value whenever possible

The most compelling chapters will leave readers with a new question, a practical insight, or a perspective they had not previously considered. We welcome essays that challenge assumptions, share lessons from experiments — successful or unsuccessful — and reflect honestly on the tensions, tradeoffs and unanswered questions leaders are navigating today. We are not seeking literature reviews or theoretical overviews. We are interested in perspectives shaped by practice, leadership, experimentation, and lived institutional experience.

The strongest essays will combine thoughtful reflection with practical experience. They will offer readers something useful to carry forward: a new idea, a lesson learned, or a question worth pursuing.

Section Themes

The themes below are intended to help contributors identify where their perspective may fit within the volume. They are guides rather than rigid categories, and many essays may naturally

connect to more than one theme. We encourage you to choose the section that best reflects the primary contribution of your chapter.

1. Why Reinvention? Why Now?

Higher education has reached a defining inflection point. Artificial intelligence, demographic shifts, public expectations, financial pressures, and changing models of learning are challenging long-held assumptions about how universities create value. Contributors should explore why institutional reinvention—not incremental improvement—has become essential to the future of higher education.

2. The Great Inflection Point: Understanding Higher Education's Current Moment

Every generation experiences disruption, but some moments fundamentally redefine institutions. This section examines why today's convergence of AI, economic change, workforce transformation, and societal expectations represents a uniquely consequential moment for colleges and universities.

3. From Mainframes to Machine Intelligence: The Technology Journey of Higher Education

Technology has evolved from automating institutional processes to becoming a strategic partner in learning, research, and decision-making. Contributors are encouraged to reflect on this journey and examine how AI changes not simply the tools universities use, but the assumptions upon which they operate.

4. Beyond IT: The Evolution of Digital Leadership in Universities

Technology leadership has expanded beyond infrastructure and operations to encompass institutional strategy, organizational design, governance, and cultural transformation. This section explores the evolving roles of CIOs, chief digital officers, provosts, presidents, and other leaders shaping institutional change.

5. From EdTech to TechEd: Meeting the Moment

The transition from EdTech to TechEd reflects a broader shift toward learner-centered design, intelligent infrastructure and new models of educational experience. Contributions in this section around learner agency, designing around the student journey, student experience, personalization, belonging, advising, lifelong learning, credentials, learner-owned data

6. Core, Context, and Competitive Advantage in the AI Era

Artificial intelligence challenges universities to reconsider what capabilities should remain core, what can be shared, automated, or outsourced, and where institutions create distinctive public value. This section explores strategic choices about investment, governance, differentiation, and long-term institutional advantage.

7. The Connected Campus: New Models of Institutional Partnership and Public Value in the AI Era

Contributors are invited to examine new forms of collaboration among universities, industry, government, philanthropy, communities, and global networks that enable greater impact than any institution could achieve independently. Focus: inclusive excellence, underserved learners, regional impact, digital equity, community responsibility and how AI expands or narrows opportunity.

8. Universities and Industry: Co-Creating the Future

Universities and industry are becoming long-term innovation partners rather than occasional collaborators. This section explores research partnerships, workforce development, entrepreneurship, AI innovation, civic engagement, and new models for creating shared public value.

9. Talent as Strategy: Building the Workforce Higher Education Needs

Institutional transformation depends on people more than technology. Contributors should explore how universities recruit, develop, empower, and retain talent while building cultures of continuous learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, adaptability, and responsible innovation.

10. Leading Through Ambiguity: The Mindset of Transformational Leadership

Leading in periods of profound change requires more than strategic planning. It requires humility, curiosity, resilience, trust, and the ability to make decisions amid uncertainty. Contributors are encouraged to reflect on the leadership practices and organizational cultures that enable institutions to thrive through continuous transformation.

Our Invitation

The future of higher education will be shaped by the choices leaders make about institutional purpose, organizational culture, human capability and the courage to redesign universities for a new era.

We hope this volume captures a wide range of perspectives on that work — from institutions large and small, from established leaders and emerging voices, and from people willing to share both successes and lessons learned.

We invite you to add your voice to that conversation. Write the chapter you wish someone had handed you five years ago.