Presenters:

Neil Mort, President
Acsenda School of Management

Sir John Daniel, Chancellor
Acsenda School of Management
Conducting a College through COVID-19: The Evolving Leadership Challenge
Introduction

The Acsenda experience

► Beginning – a Change Management Process

► Crisis – rapid response and change

► Moving Forward – A new focus and approach
THREE APPROACHES TO CHANGE

- Strategic Planning: Change Management
- Pandemic strikes: Crisis Management
- The New Normal Change Leadership
State of the Pandemic
Background to Acsenda

- Private institution in Vancouver, BC Canada
- Began in 2004
- Two Undergraduate degrees
  - Business (Accounting, Human Resources, International Business and Marketing)
  - Hospitality Management
  - Introducing a graduate degree
- Over 1600 students
- 98% international
- All face to face instruction - until March 2020
The Covid Crisis

- 2020 off to a good start
- Enrolment growing
- First indications of Coronavirus globally February/March
- March 7 - Another Vancouver institution has a possible case
- Campus closure for final week of classes and exams
  - ...We have remained closed and shifted entirely to online delivery of programs
Global Impact

- Challenge for Education systems globally
  - Immediate shutdown of campuses
  - Switch to online learning
  - Adapting to fully online services
- International Education and Student Mobility
  - Shutdown of borders
Guiding Principles

Acsenda will:

• place the health and safety of its students and employees above all other considerations
• provide the best possible learning experiences for students
• provide the best possible supports and services for student success
• support its faculty and staff with training, technical support and resources
• ensure regular and open communication
Key Considerations

- Government health and education guidelines
- Immigration and travel restrictions
- Student retention - especially new student engagement
- Time sensitivity - lead times for enrolment
- Faculty/staff level of comfort
- Student level of comfort
- Guidelines set by the Building where the campus is located
ASM Approach in 3 phases

- Change Management
- Crisis Management
- Change Leadership
Change Management

- A controlled process to move from one state to another.
Change Management Theories

- **Lewin**
  Unfreeze the organisation - make changes - freeze again

- **Kubler-Ross**
  Grieving: Denial; Anger; Bargaining; Depression; Acceptance

- **Kotter**
  Eight-step process

- **Kezar & Eckel**
  Help people make sense of change
A Plan for Progressing Towards Blended Learning

Strategic Planning initiative

- By 2022 to have a blended learning component in every course so that:
  - ASM students develop competencies for using technologies that support continuing education throughout their lives.
  - Technologies enhance the quality of programme curricula, improve flexible access to courses, and improve learning effectiveness.
  - ASM can adapt to obstacles to the delivery of classes
  - ASM achieves efficiencies in the deployment of institutional resources.
Strategic Technology Plan
November, 2019

Achieve these impacts between 2020 and 2022:
- Efficiencies in the deployment of institutional resources;
- Enhance the quality of programme curricula, improve flexible access to courses, enhance learning effectiveness;
- Graduates demonstrate competencies with technologies to support their continuing education.

Key outcomes:
- 3-hour block format for all courses;
- Students and faculty competent in using common business technologies;
- Improve efficiencies of scheduling and facilities use.
Crisis Management Theories

Leonard on crises:
- Unfamiliar, no playbook
- Rapid innovations, under stress and in fear
- Crisis management does not need answers, it needs a process
- Needs a critical incident team

The Stockdale Paradox:
- Be honest about realities, but offer hope

➤ Entrepreneurial approaches: Strategic or Tactical
➤ Adaptive approaches: Planning or Fire-fighting

It’s not about the response but the process for anticipating and preparing

Bahcall: A state of agitation facilitates reconfiguration

Acsenda’s Two Day Plan

- **Transform:**
  - methods of instruction
  - admin, student and support services

- **Information gathering and evaluation**

- **Elements of success**

  - Good leadership at all levels; senior team met daily and made decisions quickly, benefiting from previous planning for going online;
  - Effective communication across the organisation;
  - A collegial, caring and collaborative work environment with a strong focus on individual support and care for students;
  - Competent and well-networked professional staff;
  - An owner, EduCo International Group, that gave consistent support and encouragement.
Change Leadership

Change leadership means:

- Modifying the underlying principles
- The ‘what’ of change, not only the ‘how’
- Influencing people to engage in change
- Be part of the system being changed, not the controller
- Helping people develop meaning
Return to Campus

- ASM will offer a limited number of Classes on campus
- Classes will be delivered in a hybrid model and only some students will come to campus at one time
- We will maintain restricted hours on campus
- A core essential service staff will be on campus, allowing some additional presence on a part-time rotating basis
- Restricted health and safety measures in place
- Additional provisions for cleaning and sanitation
Challenges

- People have become accustomed to working and learning online
- Health concerns about coming to work and school
- Sustaining enrolment levels
- Sustaining levels of student engagement
- COVID-19 Fatigue
- Not getting ‘Frozen’
- Being able to respond quickly to future change
Making Sense of What is Happening

ASM, like all HEIs, faced a crisis in an unprecedented situation
Unlike a routine emergency,
  ▶ We are operating in real time
  ▶ It requires rapid innovation
  ▶ It takes place under stress and fear
We can’t predict the future – constantly changing
  ▶ There aren’t always answers to everything, sometimes we don’t even know the questions
  ▶ We learn as we go
  ▶ We need creativity, innovation and RESILIENCE
The Role of Leadership is to guide our organizations from responding to change to moving forward in new directions
THANK YOU