

APAIE 2022  
**'Brave New Realities for Higher Education in the Asia Pacific'**

Theme: Recovery, Transformation and International Higher Education

*Never the Same Again:  
Adapting Academic Strategies Following Student and Faculty Feedback from COVID-19*

Neil Mort, Pedro Cortina & John Daniel<sup>1</sup>

Abstract

The Acsenda School of Management (ASM) is a private, for-profit, Australian-owned, postsecondary institution in downtown Vancouver. Its motto is *International Thinking; Individual Focus* and international students count for over 90% of its enrolment. The paper describes how ASM came through the successive phases of covid-19 pandemic, focusing on how student and faculty attitudes evolved between March 2020 and January 2022. These new perspectives, created by the experience of the pandemic, will alter the nature of ASM's future operations, notably in relation to teaching/learning strategies, student services and faculty working. They will also foster greater institutional equality and reciprocity in international higher education, encouraging the development of partnerships around joint programmes and the emergence of mixed-mode teaching blending campus attendance with distance learning in different countries.

We outline briefly the phases of ASM's response to the restrictions imposed by the public health authorities as the pandemic ebbed and flowed. After moving from classroom instruction to emergency remote teaching in a few days in March 2020, ASM gradually refined its ability to use this new approach over the succeeding 18 months. It focussed on helping faculty become more skilled at remote teaching and on projecting student services and support off campus. Faculty development began with training in the use of live teaching on Zoom, notably the optimal use of breakout rooms, and later with sessions about asynchronous remote learning. Providing student support at a distance meant making it easy for them to consult faculty and providing, virtually, some of the social events that had previously occurred on campus.

The paper describes the significant evolution of faculty and student attitudes to teaching, learning and the campus during the pandemic. Both groups came to prefer some aspects of remote activity, which generated pushback against a complete return to operating on campus once covid-19 restrictions were lifted. This posed a challenge for ASM, which had highlighted personal attention to students and small, face-to-face classes in its pre-pandemic marketing. In

---

<sup>1</sup> Respectively: President; Vice-President, Academic; and Chancellor. Acsenda School of Management

the final part of the presentation, in which we plan to involve three students with different perspectives, we show how ASM is trying to combining the best of the pre-covid-19 tradition with the new approaches that have emerged since March 2020.

Learning objectives:

Participants will:

- gain insights into how a higher education institution (HEI) adapted successfully to organization-disrupting change;
- discuss the challenges and opportunities for HEIs as they learn from these experiences and progress global higher education in radically changed circumstances;
- explore how to prepare HEIs for future crises that might disrupt international education.

(450 words)