# Welcome to today's WCET Webcast

**September 15**

*The webcast will begin shortly.*

*There is no audio being broadcast at this time.*

*An archive of this webcast will be available on the WCET website next week.*

September 15

Narrowing the Digital Divide: Pragmatic and Student-Centered Approaches

# Welcome!

*Use the question box for questions and information exchange.*

*Archive, PowerPoint, and Resources will be available next week.*

*PowerPoint can be downloaded via the link in chat.*

*Follow the Twitter feed: #WCETWebcast.*

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# Live Captioning Provided by Our Sponsor

# Questions from the Audience

*If you have a question during the presentation, please add your questions to the question box.*

*We will monitor the question box and have time for Q&A at the end of the webcast.*

# Moderator

**Sharon Leu**

*Senior Policy Advisor, Higher Education Innovation*

*U.S. Department of Education Office of Educational Technology*

# Speakers

**Mordecai Brownlee**
Vice President for
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St. Philip's College

**Jarret Cummings**
Senior Advisor, Policy and
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EDUCAUSE

**Robin DeRosa**
Director, Open Learning &
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**Nate Southerland**
Provost and
Chief Academic Officer
Coconino Community
College

**Jarret Cummings**

*Senior Advisor, Policy and Government Relations*

*EDUCAUSE*

# The Digital Divide Comes to (All) of Higher Ed

- Many institutions have felt the Divide directly/persistently, but for most, campus networks and computer labs limited the impact.

- Beneath the surface, though...
    - 2018 study: 20% of students surveyed "had difficulty maintaining access to technology (e.g., broken hardware, data limits, connectivity problems, etc.)."
    - Microsoft, 2019: Nearly 163M Americans not at broadband speeds.

- Then, COVID-19...
    - No access to campus labs or networks (except from the parking lot).
    - Students without (good) personal devices returning to unserved/ underserved areas, homes without (good) devices or with only one for all.
    - No library access, no Starbucks WiFi, maybe data-capped mobile access.

- Campuses shipping computers, WiFi hotspots; ISP donations/deferrals.

# Fed. Policy: Options Now, Solutions Later?

Near-term: Address student device/broadband access in relief funding (EDUCAUSE & 29 associations comments to Congress)

- Pass the *Supporting Connectivity for Higher Education Students in Need Act:* $1B fund for institutional grants to support student devices/access.

- Add Pell Grant eligibility to Lifeline criteria; ensure that schools/libraries work with higher ed to promote any new community access via E-Rate.

Long-term: Include broadband in national infrastructure plan

- Fund broadband to unserved/underserved areas (urban and rural) and ensure affordable service once the connection gets there.

- Don't forget research and education (R&E) networks.

In the meantime: Well, my new friends have some suggestions…

# Mordecai Brownlee

*Vice President for Student Success*

*St. Philip's College - Alamo Colleges*

# Closing the Gap on the Digital Divide

- ["Here's How Colleges Should Help Close the Digital Divide in the COVID-Era" (July 2020) – EdSurge.](#)

- Digital divide is a term used to describe the gap present in society between those who have access to the internet and technology and those who don't.

- COVID-19 has exacerbated a societal issue that has been present for years, especially in our rural and low-wealth communities.

- It is imperative that institutions develop intentional strategies to ensure that students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, [students of color](#), students with disabilities, active military, and veterans can make progress on their academic pathways toward economic and social mobility.

- Now is the time for institutions to innovate their approaches to access, engagement, and responsiveness.

# Tips on How to Close the Digital Divide

- Know your students – Dive into the data.

- Know the voice of your students – Create opportunities to receive student feedback and incorporate your students into process improvements.

- Know the challenges of your students – Pivot according to student needs.

- Make no assumptions – Institutions should be prepared to offer an array of student services and supports through the duration of the student's career.

- Clear the pathway for student success – Credential attainment is the gateway towards the elimination of poverty and social/economic mobility.

- Career and Technical Education (CTE) must innovate as well – It is time to revolutionize what we consider to be "hands on" education.

- Community Colleges Have Long Powered the Economy. To Sustain That Role, They Must Innovate.

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**Robin DeRosa**

*Director,*

*Open Learning & Teaching Collaborative*

*Plymouth State University*

# "Ed" vs "Tech": How to Drive Decisions

- Frictionless solutions can create problems for the long run.

- Who should develop, build, own educational infrastructure?

- What is the role of institutional mission in crisis management?

- Unmet learner need is an opportunity for innovation.

- Alignment enables scale.

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# ACE Framework: colab.plymouthcreate.net/ace

## Adaptability

*We have a responsibility to create learning experiences that can adapt for different learners and different learning contexts.*

## Connection

*Our students are best-served by learning experiences positioned within relationships and real-world contexts.*

## Equity

*We must strive to reach and teach every student, regardless of barriers they face.*

ACE-Informed Practices

**Assignment Level**

### Flexible Deadlines
Assignment Level
+ Description

### Student Design & Choice
Assignment Level
+ Description

### The Internet As Classroom and Community
Assignment Level
+ Description

### Reduced Disposability
Assignment Level
+ Description

### UDL Baselines
Assignment Level
+ Description

### Rethinking Fairness
Assignment Level
+ Description

**Course Level**

### HiFlex Design
Course Level
+ Description

### Module-Based Schedule
Course Level
+ Description

### Foster Classroom Community
Course Level
+ Description

### Curriculum Linked to Context
Course Level
+ Description

### OER Adoption
Course Level
+ Description

### Basic Needs Syllabus Integration
Course Level
+ Description

**Institution Level**

### Flexibility through Policy
Institution Level
+ Description

### Pedagogy-Driven Tech Adoption
Institution Level
+ Description

### Supporting Instructional Design
Institution Level
+ Description

### Portals for Community Partnerships
Institution Level
+ Description

### Digital Divide Amelioration
Institution Level
+ Description

### Integration with Basic Needs Services
Institution Level
+ Description

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**Nate Southerland**
*Provost and
Chief Academic Officer*

*Coconino Community
College*

# Lessons Learned:

(1) Know your students.

- Coconino County: 18,661 sq. miles | pop. 145,00 | 1/3 tribal land | tourism #1.
- CCC Students:
  - 60% first generation college students.
  - Most in need of remedial math & English.
  - Many have never learned online before.
  - Significant levels of housing & food insecurity.
  - Many live in areas with little infrastructure – roads, water, electricity, cell service.
  - Those with access to infrastructure are often competing with others in their households or communities for limited bandwidth.
- IMPLICATIONS: Design and deliver with the audience in mind – "low tech" or low-bandwidth solutions might work best, and teach students how to learn remotely in their context.

# Lessons Learned:

## (2) Know your faculty.

- By instinct, faculty tend to teach how they were taught. There's a steep learning curve that can't be ignored.
- Faculty often extrapolate from their own experience – "if it works for me, it will work for the students."
- Faculty live in the same community with the same limitations as students.
  - Limited infrastructure
  - Competing for limited bandwidth with other household members
- IMPLICATIONS: Focus on teaching and learning, train on tools and strategies.

## (3) Know your partners.

- Other local entities (K-12 schools, gov't agencies, businesses) serving the same residents with the same challenges.
- Partner with economic development efforts (gov't agencies, private business) on infrastructure projects and advocacy efforts.
- IMPLICATIONS – Share resources and work together!

# Questions from the Audience

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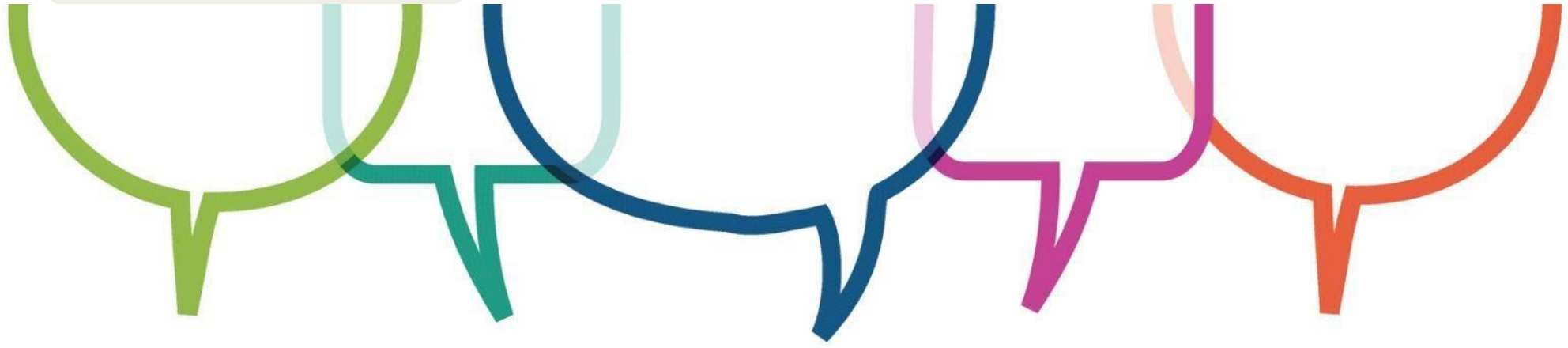
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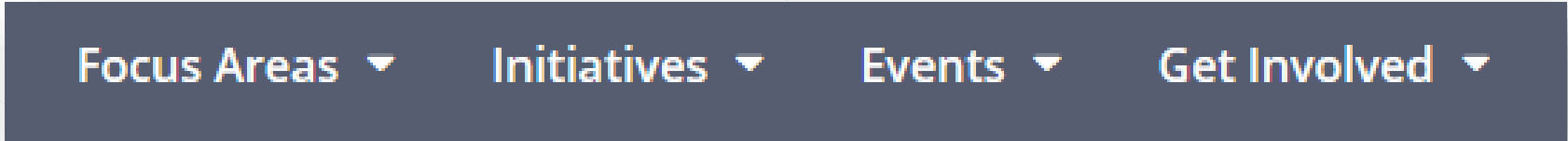
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# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Access to the resources discussed during this webcast, including the archive, will be available next week.

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