



INFLUENCER

SOCIAL INNOVATION
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

July 26-27, 2012 in Washington, DC

Insights and Ideas from the Event

Rationale & Context

#Influencer2012  



...rising costs...

...lack of relevant curricula...

...increasing student debt....

Many claim that colleges and universities are becoming obsolete, but higher education may be our best bet for empowering society to innovate at the rate the world is changing.

...funding continues to dwindle...

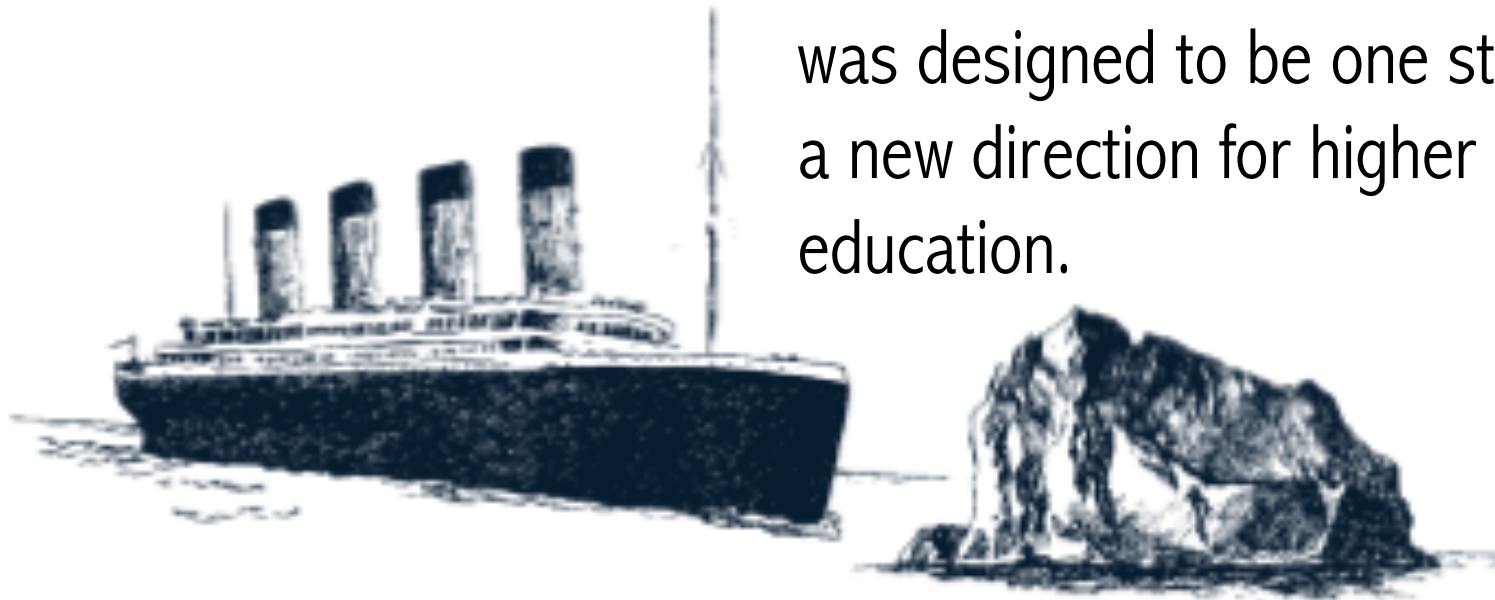
...disconnected ivory tower...

...no job preparedness....

Purpose

The challenges we face today in higher education may only be the tip of the iceberg, but we believe we have some time left to turn this ship around. To do so, we want to take coordinated action – across institutions, stakeholders, and sectors – to change the course of higher education.

Ashoka U's Influencer event was designed to be one step in a new direction for higher education.



Opportunity

#Influencer2012  



Ashoka U explores social entrepreneurship as a force for personal and social transformation and as an approach to innovation in higher education.

Within Ashoka U's network, emerging models of university-based social innovation are addressing some of the rising concerns about higher education's relevance.

At the Ashoka U Influencer event, we reached out to a broader network to explore together:

How might we apply social innovation to tackle some of higher education's biggest challenges?

Strategy

Ashoka uses its network of 3,000 social entrepreneurs to zoom out, map patterns of innovation, and identify opportunities to trigger change at a systemic level: with impact on an entire field, sector, country, or region.

Similarly, by activating some of the most experienced and entrepreneurial professionals in higher education at Ashoka U's Influencer, we began to map the most promising innovations and opportunities – and used them as a foundation to develop new ideas.



Before the Event



- Created a framework of seven challenges
- Researched expert influencers in higher education
- Selected and invited a diverse set of innovators and higher education thought-leaders

At the Event



Seven Challenges & Emerging Solutions

STEP 1) Seven Ashoka U Changemaker Campus leaders kicked off the afternoon by sharing ways in which university-based social innovation initiatives address some of their institutions' biggest challenges.

STEP 2) Then, carefully selected higher education experts and thought leaders shared their ideas and insights, inspiring us to collectively envision innovative, systems-changing ideas that tackle these challenges at scale.



Top-level Takeaways

- THE NEED FOR COMPELLING EVIDENCE:

In order to encourage more colleges and universities to embed social innovation as a core value, we need compelling evidence to make a strong case for how social innovation strengthens an institution's value proposition. On a sector-wide level, we need to demonstrate the ways in which social innovation programs make higher education more relevant and socially impactful today.

- FOCUS ON INFLUENCING “THE DEMAND SIDE”:

To encourage higher education to adopt a social impact focus, we must work to influence “the demand side of higher education,” creating change strategies that aim to leverage admissions practices, accreditation, federal & state funding, college & university rankings, employer demand and recruiting practices.

Challenge 1: Achieving the Civic Mission



How might we better support colleges and universities to fulfill their civic mission?

Stephanie Barksdale, Special Assistant to the President for Social Entrepreneurship Initiatives, shared the powerful story of how Tulane University refocused the entire institution on its civic mission after Katrina.

Tulane has built a collective of community initiatives called “Tulane Empowers” to ensure the institution takes responsibility for the wellbeing of their communities both local and global. Initiatives emerge from all schools and disciplines, and include programs on service, urban and cultural renewal, community health, disaster response and resilience, as well as many other public education programs. Learn more at <http://tulane.edu/empowers/>



Challenge 2: Advancing Student Access & Success



Jacqueline Smith, Executive Director of University Initiatives and Advisor to the President for Social Embeddedness at Arizona State University

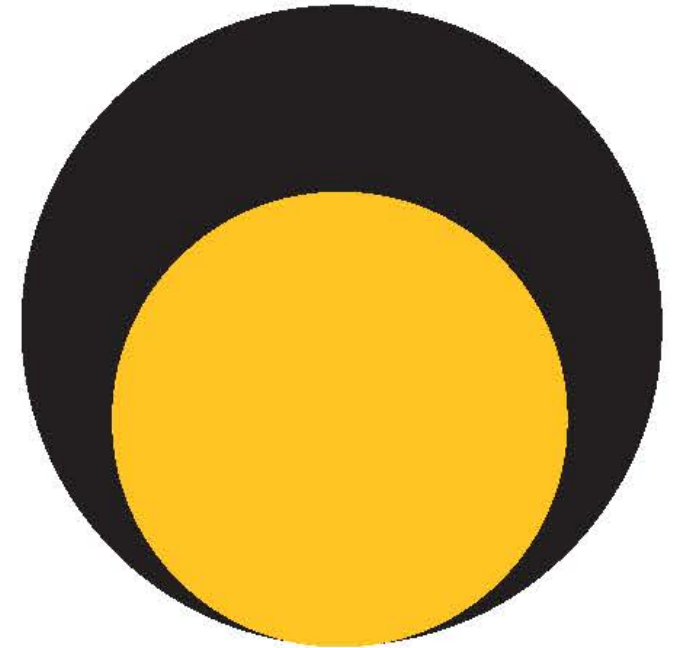
ASU is committed to excellence, access, and impact. We measure ourselves by those we include, not by those we exclude.

Learn more: <http://newamericanuniversity.asu.edu/#1>

How might we ensure access to all qualified students seeking a higher education degree?

A mindshift is needed.

- **34,950** students applied to Harvard for Fall 2010
- **6%** of students who applied to Harvard were admitted



- **35,499** students applied to ASU for Fall 2010
- **71%** of students who applied to ASU were admitted



Challenge 2: Insights & Ideas

Advancing Student Access & Success: A mindshift is needed.

Adam Bush, College Unbound

“It is false to say that students are not college-ready.
In fact, colleges are not student-ready.”

Giadha Aguirre de Carcer, Grassroots Innovation Network

“Schools should focus on measuring success by student standards. To accomplish this we need to reach out and ask students to honestly assess what success means to them.”

Margaret Meagher, MasterCard Foundation

“What if, instead of measuring success on a monetary scale, we measured the number of jobs created by every graduate? What if instead of measuring how many students go on to work on Wall Street, we measure how many become teachers or enter other service oriented careers?”

Challenge 3: Innovations in Cost and Funding



How might we deal with the rising costs and financial burden of higher education?

Phil Auerswald, Associate Professor of Public Policy, George Mason University; Editor, Innovations Journal; Author of “The Coming Prosperity”

George Mason University in partnership with Ashoka U launched a Massive Open Online Course on “Entrepreneurship & Globalization” this summer offering over 800 students enrolled from around the world a new, no-cost opportunity to learn how to be changemakers.

Phil argued that higher education truly is facing its “titanic moment.” There is a temporary surge of demand for higher education that will precede a back swell. What will cause the back swell? Students go to college for three reasons: 1) learning; 2) credentials, which are later resold to an employer; and 3) connections. The reality is that each of those things can be had at a lower cost than higher education is currently offering. The way forward is inclusion and opportunity for more students to receive learning, credentials, and connections at lower cost. Technology is making this possible, if we can only move quickly enough to take advantage of this opportunity.

Challenge 4: Designing the Work Force Connection



How might we create a more effective architecture for connecting employers with skilled graduates that are “job shapers” rather than “job-takers?”

Melissa Carrier, Assistant Dean, Global Programs and Social Value Creation and Lecturer, Department of Management and Organization, University of Maryland – College Park

Melissa works with students and faculty to identify and develop many pathways for graduates to launch careers that are focused on social value creation. Creating a ladder of engagement for employers, helps employers to discover the talent they are looking for, by coming to campus for symposia and recruitment fairs, into the classroom, and getting to know students through student consulting projects.

2500 Students engaged
80 Speakers brought to campus
10 Events and Forums
39 Social Venture Consulting Projects
(**120+** since inception)

60+ Core, Elective & Global courses contain
25-100% “social value creation” specific content
40 Faculty trained in “social impact”
curriculum integration workshops
6 Faculty Committee Members



Challenge 4: Insights & Ideas

Derek Ellerman, SHIFT

“One of the hardest gaps to leap is graduation, To bring your venture into the real world. It’s easier to run a venture as a student. After graduation, people may get burned out in the process of developing their venture. We need more incubator programs that help during the bridge period after graduation.”

Jonny Dorsey, Clinton Global Initiative

“Students want to go into national service programs like Teach for America and Americorps. Applications are way up. Unemployment is more expensive for the federal government than national service programs. There needs to be more opportunities for young people in national service. Universities have immense power in pushing for those sorts of opportunities.”

Branka Minic, Manpower

“Higher education and the business sector need to collaborate. Employers should provide commitments for jobs if institutions can be more agile at tailoring programs for positions that exist in the economy and be accountable for placements so it’s not acceptable for students to graduate without jobs.”

Challenge 5: Learning for Real-World Challenges



How might we ensure that students gain the ability to apply their knowledge and skills to real-world issues, rather than abstract problems?

Jon Isham, Faculty Director, Center for Social Entrepreneurship and Professor of Economics, Middlebury College

In 2008, a group of students and community partners launched 350.org — a large-scale global climate action campaign now present in over 100 countries — right out of Jon’s classroom. Jon knows from experience that a college education need not be removed from the real-world.

Jon argues that for college learning to address real-world challenges, faculty need to shift to “open-source learning” that is characterized by

1. Lack of **hierarchy**
2. Working in **groups**
3. Working in **networks**
4. Knowledge in **real time**
5. Knowledge for the **common good**



Challenge 5: Insights & Ideas

Anke Wessels, Center for Transformative Action, Cornell University

“We need long-term commitment from universities to the community. It is important to reverse the traditional power imbalance. The community folks need to be recognized and honored as teachers and collaborators through these learning engagements. Sensitivity is required to do this well by ensuring that university people involved are well trained. “

Mathilde Verdier, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill

“Faculty need to be incentivized to look outward into the community for opportunities for student learning.”

Gail Robinson, American Association of Community Colleges

“More service learning should be supported through federal funding. Data surveys and focus groups already show how service learning gives students a leg up when looking for a job.”

Challenge 6: Supporting Research with Impact



How might we creatively envision new incentives for research and publication for social impact? How might we support an academic exploration of social innovation?

Matt Nash, Executive Director, Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship, Duke University

The Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship (CASE) at Duke University seeks to bridge the gap between business and the social sector, and between theory and practice, so that knowledge will be translated effectively for use by front-line social entrepreneurs, nonprofit leaders, and philanthropists.

CASE offers many opportunities overseas (Brazil, South Africa, India) to create communities of dialogue and research that cross boundaries between academics and practitioners. There are also more opportunities to engage more students (both undergraduate and graduate) in research now than before.

Learn more at: <http://www.caseatduke.org/> and <http://dukeengage.duke.edu/>



Challenge 6: Insights & Ideas

Bobby Hackett, The Bonner Foundation

“Social impact focused research isn’t enough. It’s important to ask who is using the research? It is important to focus on research that the community requested.”

Mike Carroll, Creative Commons

“Why are we talking about papers, and publishing papers, and data sets...We need to reinvent what the scholarly article is in the digital era.”

John Chubb, Education Sector

“In the last 20 years, what has happened is that a whole generation of young people is getting involved on public education (Teach for America, AmeriCorps, etc.). At the university level, especially in those with an entrepreneurial approach, universities are creating programs that respond to the needs of the students with public service interests.”

Matt Nash, Duke University

“Venture capital funds could be a piece of this puzzle...They are starting to pour some funds into research. But how do we accelerate those contributions? Maybe a more open approach to research/ knowledge sharing could work.”

Challenge 7: Growing a Culture of Innovation



How might we sustain a culture of continuous innovation in higher education?

Patricia Márquez, Director, Changemaker Hub and Associate Professor of Management, University of San Diego



Changemaker | HUB
UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

Patricia is developing a Changemaker Hub at the University of San Diego to provide a space and mechanisms that build and support a culture of innovation.

• What it is

- A HUB that connects people & initiatives for social change
- A collaboration mechanism for developing and supporting initiatives
- A proactively inclusive community
- An enabler of innovation and creativity

• What it's not

- A Center or an Institute focusing on a specific area of social change
- An endeavor that supplants existing ones
- Another silo in a system



Moving Forward

- This Fall: Ashoka U Influencer focus group calls on
 - 1) “Collecting evidence of the efficacy of a social innovation approach for higher education.”
 - 2) “ The demand side: admissions, rankings, and employers as levers for change in higher education.”
- Next Spring: February, 21-23, 2013: Ashoka U Exchange at the University of San Diego. Learn more at <http://ashokau.org/exchange/>
- Summer 2013: Ashoka U Influencer – Volume 2