

Portland state University in a post-Normal World

Update on the Futures Collaboratory Project – November 2020

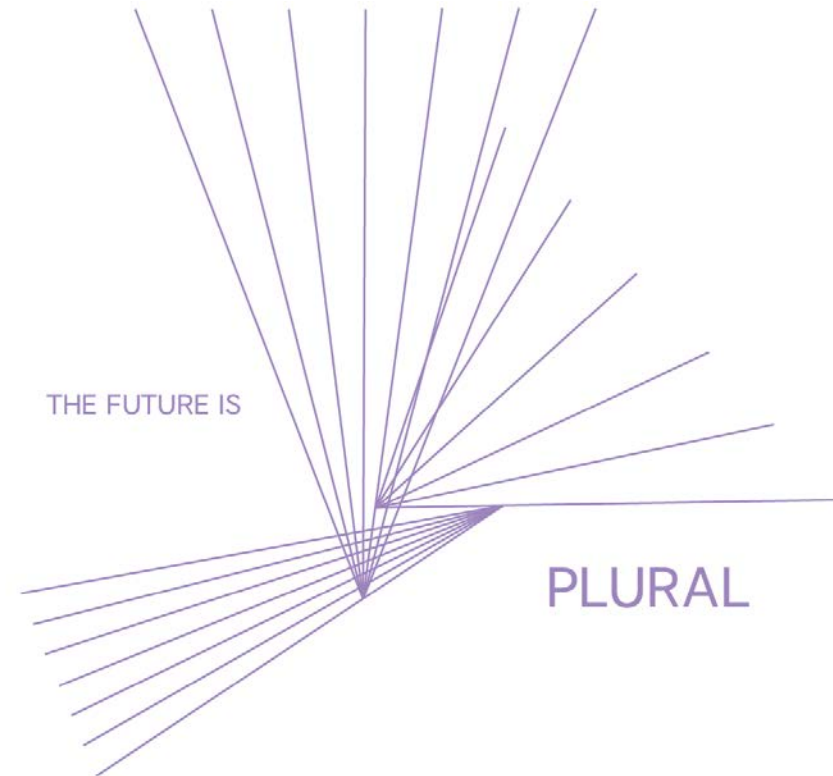
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Portland State University Futures Collaboratory Website:
<https://sites.google.com/pdx.edu/futurescollaboratory/welcome>

PSU Futures Collaboratory

- Launched in 2019-2020 – 30 members comprised of students, faculty and staff.
- Explored, experimented with and applied futures thinking/foresight methods to contemporary issues of higher ed in general and PSU specifically. Learn across topics and issues that intersect with contemporary and emerging challenges. Build foresight “muscle” institutionally.
- Year 2 JUST launched. 35 additional members – names posted soon on our website.



Recommendations from work Last year

Places we recommend greater PSU focus on cultivating “future readiness”

- Mission (are we future facing enough in our overall mission?)
- Structures (are we ready for new complexities, opportunities, risks and expectations?)
- Equity (are we meaningfully and effectively undoing racism in our structures and practices?)
- Pedagogy – teaching, learning and advising (are we utilizing best and emergent practices?)
- Community (are we revising our relevance and commitments to a city/region with evolving needs?)

Looking at this year

- Covid-19 is an accelerator of “post-normal times” - term used in the futures world. Refers to the in-between space between where we were and where we’re going.
- Working focus for this year’s work:
 - Deep reckoning, revisioning and recreation around racism and other isms in our university culture, structure and practices.
 - The future of work (experts suggest 85% of the top jobs of 2030 haven’t been invented yet). This is true for our students as well as us as “knowledge workers.”
 - Changing expectations and pressures of what education can and should be (personalized, accessible, affordable, flexible, lifelong).
 - Relationship with our regional community while increasingly competing on a national (and even global) stage.
 - Continue to clarify our evolving identity and value proposition for the times we live in – not relying on historical norms

Collaboratory Project 2020-2021

- Gather and analyze PSU artifacts from the last couple of years to “prepare” for things across a variety of parts of the university mission
- Compare, map and identify strengths and gaps
- Present to the university community in winter 2021
- Gather input on key commitments and needs for our future from faculty, staff and students
- Share results in spring of 2021 – and lay groundwork for additional university-wide planning

Invitation to faculty dialogues about what “future readiness” means for the professoriate

- Given the covid-19-related complexities of our time, what does it mean to be a “future ready” faculty member? This is related to but different than institutional readiness. Depending on your own situation – you may have 20-30 years of academic career ahead...how do you best prepare for what happens “next?” Are you ready to co-create the university system of the future you most want to be part of?
- Increasing literature about the “professoriate of the future” – what are emerging challenges, opportunities, demands? What can we learn about the way other professions (medicine, law, journalism and others) are starting to shift their educational tracks?
- This winter, we will sponsor a series of gatherings exclusively for faculty to explore, discuss, and consider how a foresight lens can create more agency and readiness for continuing complexity, accelerating change, and ongoing disruption in our higher education ecosystem. Look for an invitation early winter term.
- Practically, what are the best ways to plug into networks for support and evolution in “post-normal times” as a faculty member. Let’s continue to build community focused on this line of thinking – and in the process- hopefully increase our institutional vitality, readiness and agency.

Reminder – Resources

Link to ongoing “OPEN CHANNEL” of resources related to the future of higher education, future of work, future of related equity issues and other topics [available here.](#)