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Conducting a College through COVID-19: The Evolving Leadership Challenge



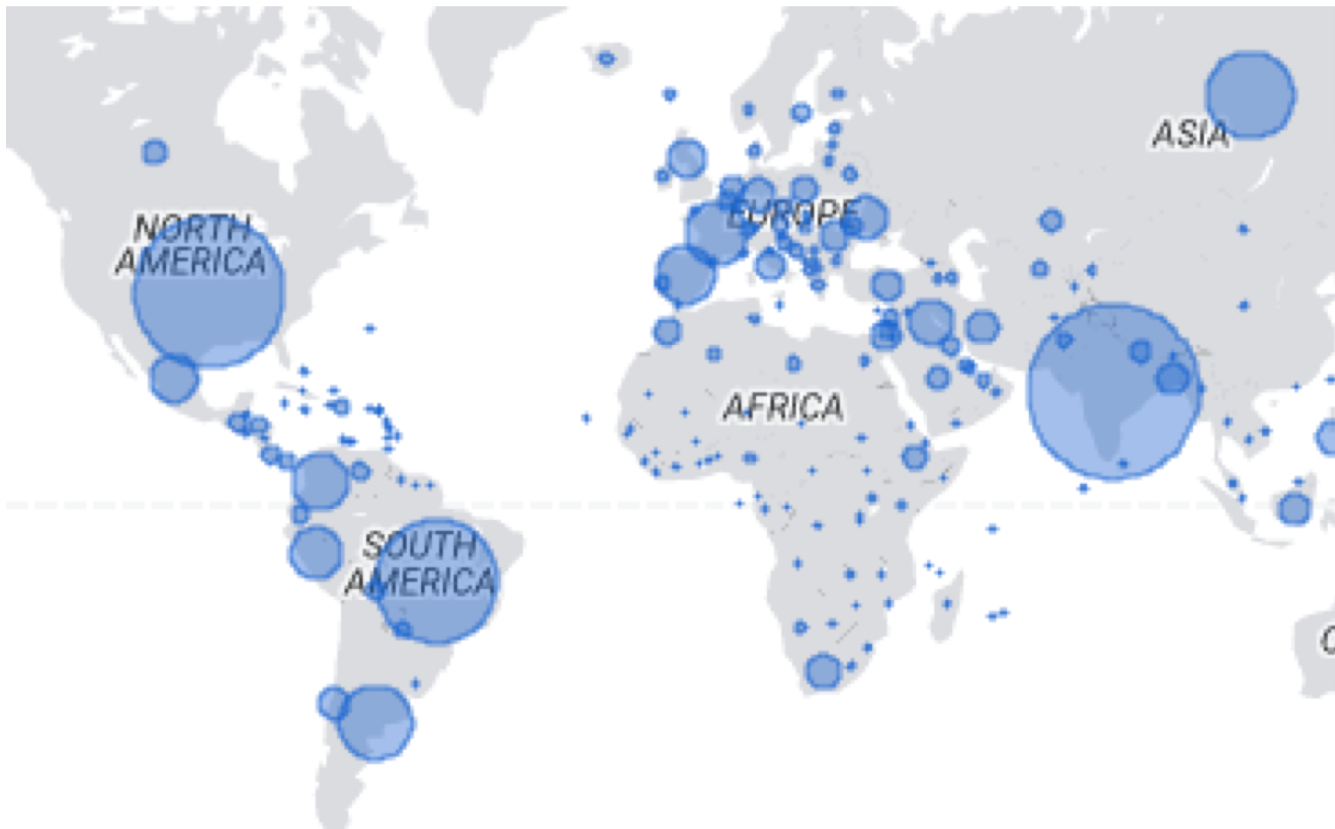
Introduction

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
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- 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

Dutch Leonard, Managing Through Crisis: What Is Crisis Management?
Harvard Business School, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1evSfmArTRQ>



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



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THANK YOU

