Three U.S. Post-COVID Legislative, Regulatory, and Higher Education Recommendations: Future Considerations for Policy, Compliance, Accreditation, and Curricula

1 | INTRODUCTION

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has dramatically altered teaching and learning for the foreseeable future. In addition to economic and workforce effects, the present predicts gaps from learning deficiencies for current K-12 students (Education Journal, 2021). Therefore, the direct syllogism anticipates fewer numbers of qualified college applicants in the coming generation. Arguably, society requires bold measures to mitigate negative potential future social disruption impacts like a pandemic or social unrest.

2 | RECOMMENDATION 1: PREPARE CANDIDATES OF ALL FIELDS TO PRACTICE VIRTUALLY

To provide some context, I began noticing and tracking several proposed bills and regulations related to telehealth in 2019. I realized that for the sake of proactivity, collegiate healthcare programs would soon need to teach practitioners how to deliver health care virtually—conversely, instructors would need similar training regarding the delivery of their instruction. This necessity will most likely require expedited action in light of COVID-19, its variants, and potential future social disruptions. This need will undoubtedly apply to educators and other high-need fields. Thus, the prioritization of pedagogical content knowledge will be a factor for all disciplines. There is profound evidence that some of the deepest forms of learning surface when one teaches the related content (Jarrett, 2018). Therefore, realities will require practitioners to expertly understand their craft while addressing all learning modalities in a virtual context for their pupils.

3 | RECOMMENDATION 2: ADOPT OR EXPAND RECIPROCAL LICENSE AND PROGRAMMATIC COMPACTS

COVID-19 and other potential future disruptions necessitate practitioners and instructors to serve regardless of location. Particularly with pandemics, mobilizing to places of high need is paramount. However, with talent distributed across territories, all instructors must adequately instruct learners despite their location and that of their students. Tangentially, if a program and its licensure exam have approval in one jurisdiction, consent should apply to the rest of the nation. The regulatory burdens of local, state, and regional-level approval consume significant resources in terms of work hours, available practitioners (increasing workforce shortages), and the economic impact of communities writ large. National trust in discipline experts can facilitate more readily available, better-prepared, and more rapid replenishment of the workforce across disciplines—and reduce costs for all parties [the public (consumers), providers (practitioners), and future providers (student candidates)].

4 | RECOMMENDATION 3: ADOPT COMPETENCY-BASED INTERDISCIPLINARY CURRICULA

As society strives to create the best-prepared practitioners, utilizing self-paced individualized learning could be most beneficial. Yet, learning a craft in a vacuum, without considering other fields, may not adequately serve future societal needs (Greef et al., 2017). With these recommendations considered, all disciplines will rely on Information Technology to support the virtual practitioner needs of educators, healthcare professionals, and business leaders of all stripes. If candidates can begin cooperatively learning in an interdisciplinary fashion across colleges and fields, then perhaps innovative interventions can be gleaned from candidates understanding their craft within the context of other disciplines and practices.

5 | CONCLUSIONS

One can only speculate as to the future disruptions that will result from COVID-19 and its variants. However, the past and present offer unique insights into distant possibilities. As a globally connected ecoverse of humanity, accepting and supporting societal symbiosis can best serve future needs. Through holistically meeting the needs of every individual, the effort concurrently addresses collective well-being. Educating and preparing to instruct all learners and practitioners at one’s best can ensure quality practitioner mobility and the ability to meet the workforce needs of all fields across the nation—at local, state, regional, and national levels. The societal
imperative of these implications may very well dictate the fate of the future and the world’s ability to improve everyone’s living standards for the remainder of this century and beyond.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
Alton James is a Regional Manager of Regulatory Affairs within the Academic Engagement Department at Western Governors University. The author has no conflict of interest to disclose.

Alton James
Academic Engagement, Western Governors University, Salt Lake City, UT, USA

Correspondence
Alton James, Academic Engagement, Western Governors University, Salt Lake City, UT, USA.
Email: alton.james@wgu.edu

ORCID
Alton James https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7909-4956

REFERENCES
(2021) COVID learning loss will cost the US trillions. Education Journal, 441, 37.
de Greef, L., Post, G., Vink, C., & Wenting, L. (2017) Designing interdisciplinary education: A practical handbook for university teachers. Amsterdam University Press.
Jarrett, C. (2018, May 4). Learning by teaching others is extremely effective - a new study tested a key reason why. Retrieved March 23, 2021, from Research Digest.

How to cite this article: James A. Three US Post-COVID Legislative, Regulatory, and Higher Education Recommendations: Future Considerations for Policy, Compliance, Accreditation, and Curricula. Competency-based Education. 2021;6:e01252. https://doi.org/10.1002/cbe2.1252