2021 European Learning & Teaching Forum
Embedding and facilitating sustainability

18-19 February 2021, online event

The path towards a sustainable future requires revolutionary technologies and, foremost, adequate education. The 2021 European Learning & Teaching Forum will explore how learning and teaching ensure access to the knowledge and skills needed to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to accomplish the transformations that our societies and economies require. It will also invite participants to reflect on whether the organisation of learning and teaching at their own institutions is delivered in an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable manner.

The Forum will provide a platform for discussion on how universities enhance learning and teaching, while presenting the work of the 2020 EUA Learning & Teaching Thematic Peer Groups. It will be an ideal event for vice-rectors for academic affairs, deans, and management involved in learning and teaching. It will also welcome students, policy makers and other stakeholders in higher education.

Draft programme (as of 9 February)

Pre-Forum sessions

EUA Webinar series: A strategic reflection on digitalisation in higher education:
- Webinar 1: Developing a high-performing digital education ecosystem: institutional self-assessment instruments, 26 January 2021, 14.00-15.00 CET. The full webinar recording is available.
- Webinar 2: Results of the survey report "Digitally enhanced learning and teaching in European higher education institutions", 5 February 2021, 14.00-15.00 CET. The full webinar recording is available.

Pre-Forum students' meeting, 17 February 2021, 16.00-17.30 CET. Please register for this meeting on the event page.

Thursday, 18 February 2021

All Forum sessions are free of charge and open to all interested parties upon registration. Each virtual room will open ten minutes before the start of the session, allowing participants to check the sound and video quality and to engage with each other in the chat. EUA President Michael Murphy and EUA Director of Institutional Development,Tia Loukkola, will guide the audience through the event sessions.

13.30-14.15   **Official Opening and Session I: Equipped to thrive – How can higher education facilitate the skills needed in sustainable societies?**
In this session, EUA President Michael Murphy and Joseph E. Aoun, President of Northeastern University, USA, will have a conversation about relevant, uniquely human skills and competences that remain in high demand, even at a time when an increasing number of tasks are being taken over by artificial intelligence. The session will be inspired by various topics addressed by President Aoun's book *Robot-Proof*, such as human literacy, and provide participants with an opportunity to explore how learning and teaching can be designed to equip students as highly skilled and adaptable professionals and active citizens.
- Fireside chat with Joseph E. Aoun, President, Northeastern University, USA

- Chaired by Michael Murphy, Chair of the EUA Learning & Teaching Steering Committee, EUA President

14.15-14.30   Break

14.30-15.45   **Session II: Four approaches in achieving the SDGs: Teaching towards sustainable development**
This session aims to provide inspiration for implementing environmental and sustainability education in the context of global efforts to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It does so by drawing on insights and experience from four institutions:
- Pascal Frank, Leuphana University of Lüneburg, Germany: Personal approaches toward sustainability – a new agenda for environmental and sustainability education
- Caroline Wilson, Coventry University Group, United Kingdom: Finding our place in the world with the Sustainable Development Goals
- John F. Barimo, University College Cork, Ireland: A dynamic and contextualised framework for integrating the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals across the learning landscape
- Sanna Kivimäki, Tampere University, Finland: Approaching sustainability in diverse ways in Tampere University
- Chaired by Romita Iucu, President of Board of Trustees, University of Bucharest, Romania

15.45-16.00   Break

16.00-17.00   **Session III**
Participants will have the choice between two parallel sessions:

A. Connecting the dots: How to transform education to generate comprehensive knowledge and skills
This session will explore approaches to creating a more holistic model of education provision, such as linking learning and teaching with research, as well as professional and entrepreneurial skills development. It will include contributions from:
- Edward J. Coyle, Georgia Institute of Technology, United States and Stephen Marshall, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom (in collaboration with University of St. Andrews, United Kingdom; Riga Technical University, Latvia; and Malmö University, Sweden): Linking research, education, and professional skills: Vertically integrated projects at four institutions
- Sybille Reichert, Reichert Consulting, Germany: Developing skills and competences for innovation and societal impact
- Chaired by Ruben Janssens, Executive Committee member, European Students' Union (ESU)

B. EUA Learning & Teaching Thematic Peer Group session on "Approaches in learning and teaching to promoting equity and inclusion"
Higher education is becoming an increasingly diverse context as student demographics are changing, demanding consistent approaches in learning and teaching that ensure equity and inclusion. To ensure the conditions necessary for successful experiences for all, higher education institutions must work across both institutional and national boundaries. They must provide clarity on how they expect to ensure an inclusive and equitable learning experience.

Aiming to address this challenge, the EUA Learning & Teaching Thematic Peer Group on "Approaches in learning and teaching to promoting equity and inclusion" is working to establish the principles of best practice in this regard. The group analysed the main challenges and gathered concrete evidence of activities and measures that higher education institutions can provide and adopt to address equity and inclusion in the broadest sense. In the course of their work, the group evaluated how to best manage digital poverty and inclusion, which have become even more evident during the Covid-19 crisis and across all contexts. The group found that the provision of support and resources were critical in supporting teachers in understanding inclusion and equity topics.

In this session, participants will be invited to share and discuss appropriate measures that higher education institutions can adopt to provide an inclusive and equitable learning experience and context. It will also provide an opportunity for feedback on the thematic peer group's initial findings through interactive group work and discussion. Reflections from this session will feed into the development of the principles of best practice and guidelines for all who teach, support and engage with students in their university learning experience.

Facilitators:

- Zoe Gavrilidou, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece
- Mary Fitzpatrick, University of Limerick, Ireland
- Manuel João Tavares Mendes Costa, University of Minho, Portugal

17.00-18.00   Virtual networking cocktail

Friday, 19 February 2021

09.00-10.00   **Session IV**
Participants will have the choice between two parallel sessions:

A. How to transcend disciplinary, institutional and national boundaries to work towards a sustainable world
This session will highlight the pedagogical benefits of collaboration in bettering the integration of knowledge and skills. Challenge-based learning in interdisciplinary teams working on solutions to real-life problems are an example, as are interinstitutional programmes and innovative staffing structures, as well as staff mobility. The session will include contributions from:

- Peter Ruijten, Eindhoven University of Technology, Netherlands: Towards constructive alignment of an inter-programme challenge-based learning course
- Gemma O'Sullivan, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland (in collaboration with Utrecht University, Netherlands): Transdisciplinary knowledge-creating teams for the inter-institutional design of a Master's in global challenges for sustainability: The CHARM-EU European University Initiative case study
- Aniko Makkai-Kovacs, European University Foundation (in collaboration with University of Alcala, Spain; Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary; Unilasalle Polytechnic Institute, France and UNICA – Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe): How to enhance and facilitate quality in teaching mobility in Europe
- Chaired by Marja Sutela, Vice-President, Tampere University, Finland

B. EUA Learning & Teaching Thematic Peer Group on the "Environmental sustainability of learning and teaching"

The work of this EUA Learning & Teaching Thematic Peer Group aims to promote and guide actions that enable the embedding of holistic sustainability into education and learning across higher education institutions, with a view to addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals. To achieve good practice in sustainability, the group argues that institutions must commit adequate resources, establish a common cause throughout its complex systems and be authentic in all their activities.

In order to enable the embedding of sustainability in education and learning, the group developed a framework of four phases of development, characterised by levels of institutional capacity and commitment:

1. Pockets of practice: The higher education institution demonstrates a low commitment to embed sustainable development and low staff capacity.
2. Emerging agenda: The institution has a public, high-level commitment to facilitating sustainability, while the infrastructure to promote capacity is yet to achieve transformation in practice.
3. Integrated impact: The institution has high capacity and commitment in place.
4. Declining support: The institution's commitment may be waning, perhaps due to other strategic priorities.

Institutions are likely to be able to self-identify with one, or a hybrid version, of these scenarios, and the group has proposed a series of clear actions along with case studies demonstrating how capacity and commitment to embed sustainable development in education and learning may be enhanced. These cover four areas of institutional activity: strategic governance; staff capacity and continuous professional development; programmes and modules; and extra-curricular opportunities.

This session will provide an opportunity to explore the proposed actions, as well as to learn from and contribute additional case studies to inform the group's working paper.

Facilitators:
- Julie Gwilliam, Cardiff University, United Kingdom
- Jacqueline Labbe and Andrew Reeves, De Montfort University, United Kingdom
- Natalia Timus, University of Côte d'Azur, France

10.00-10.30   Break

10.30-11.30   **Session V**
Participants will have the choice between two parallel sessions:

A. All on board? How to engage students in the sustainability debate
This session will look into ways to embed sustainability in learning and teaching in a way that truly engages students, alongside other stakeholders. It will include contributions from:
- Sandi Rizvic, Students Organizing for Sustainability International (in collaboration with the European Students' Union (ESU)): Embedding and facilitating sustainability in higher education: Challenges and solutions
- Jeanine Gregersen-Hermans, Thomas More University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands (in collaboration with Zuyd University of Applied Sciences and Wageningen University & Research, Netherlands): How to engage all students in the sustainability debate
- Chaired by Marta Žuvić, Vice-Rector for Quality Assurance and Enhancement, University of Rijeka, Croatia

B. EUA Learning & Teaching Thematic Peer Group session on "Meeting skills and employability demands"

There has been an increased focus on employability in higher education for some time now. The definition of employability has extended beyond a narrow focus on equipping students for future jobs, to include transversal skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and social responsibility. These skills and mindsets will equip them to thrive in the world following graduation and to respond to broader societal challenges, as articulated in the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The work of the EUA Learning & Teaching Thematic Peer Group on "Meeting skills and employability demands" is particularly relevant as it considers the related challenges and opportunities. In this session, the members of the group will outline the challenges relating to employability and share good practice examples to illuminate what is possible in a range of different higher education contexts.

Session participants will discuss issues such as curricular interventions, employer engagement, approaches to co/extra-curricular activities, and student and societal needs. Diversity and inclusion, including equal opportunities for a diverse student body, will be also a penetrating issue in the discussions.

Facilitators:
- Catherine O'Mahony, University College Cork, Ireland
- Irma Grdzelidze and Tinatin Gabrichidze, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia
- Wyn Morgan, University of Sheffield, United Kingdom

11.30-12.00 Break

12.00-13.00 **Session VI: Harnessing the potential of digitalisation**
This session will explore the benefits of the virtual world and present three approaches to reaping them, from online exchange courses over MOOCs to libraries supporting open scholarship and science. This session will include contributions from:
- Andrius Uždanavičius, Vilnius University, Lithuania: Learning to tackle sustainability challenges in international teams: Virtual exchange course leading to implementation of social innovations
- Daniel Pérez del Prado, Carlos III University of Madrid, Spain: Teaching sustainability and decent work (SDG 8) through MOOCs
- Cécile Swiatek, Association of Directors and Management Staff of University Libraries and Documentation, France: How libraries of higher education enhance sustainable teaching and learning in Europe
- Chaired by Manel Jiménez-Morales, Commissioner for Communication and Education, Pompeu Fabra University – Barcelona, Spain

13.00-13.05 **Concluding remarks by EUA President Michael Murphy**

A full and detailed list of abstracts, including some videos containing further information, is available.