

Problems of higher medical education during pandemic

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Higher education in the modern society is no less important social structure than the economy. Economic crises and recessions, despite their depth and destructive, alternate recovery and growth, the emergence of more efficient economic models. The system of higher education plays an important role, providing training of the necessary specialists, scientific and technological developments, and innovations, helping the economy to get out of the crisis and adapt to new realities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused and continues to cause many social changes and transformations. Discussing them, first of all, we mean negative economic consequences, problems of the health care system and medicine, problems of a psychological nature, generated by a sharp restriction of social contacts.

To a lesser extent, but quite noticeably, the issues of education are discussed, primarily from the angle of its transition to a distance format and the problems arising in connection with this among students and teachers.

However, the situation of transformation of higher medical education, under the influence of the pandemic, in our opinion, is much more complicated in terms of fundamental social consequences.

Higher education also has the ability to independently recover from emergencies, however, due to its less flexibility, programmed for long-term cycles of the scientific and educational process, dependence on external funding, this ability is limited and under certain critical conditions may not work. So, the existing models of higher education may experience very profound changes under the influence of the pandemic and will not be able to recover in their previous form.

Obviously, in a pandemic world, public funds will be redistributed in favour of medicine and social protection. At the same time, for the formation of highly qualified medical personnel, proper funding of medical universities is necessary.

A global problem appeared the drop in the income level of the population and the ability of students and their parents to pay for education, which led to an

inevitable decrease in international academic mobility and a decrease in the number of foreign students.

It is already clear to us that there will be no return to the "previous normality"; it will be replaced by some other, new, "normality" to which we will have to adapt. We must prepare not for the restoration of the usual format of higher education, but for its fundamentally new forms of design and organization.

Changes in higher education, in turn, will affect other social institutions and overall sociocultural dynamics.

The impact of the pandemic on higher education has already been the subject of a number of interesting studies: a survey of college and university presidents from Inside HE Ed, a report from QS on how COVID-19 affects international students around the world, and International Association of Universities (IAU) research on the impact of COVID-19 for higher education in the world and others.

The topics of discussion about higher education mainly concern several topics: online learning; internationalization of education; scientific research and scientific and practical conferences; financing in a pandemic; strategy, quality of education in general and interaction with the state. This list shows which problems of higher education have become more relevant since the beginning of the global pandemic.

About 30% of articles on the reorganization of higher education in a pandemic are devoted to global strategic issues. These are discussions about the future of higher education, the essence and permanence of educational institutions, transformation processes and their impact on the general approaches of universities. Despite the challenges and difficulties, there is an opportunity for positive transformations and shifts in the field of higher medical education.

Since the pandemic was unexpected for all of us, higher schools required the rapid development of strategies and tactical decisions to help foreign students who found themselves in the country during the pandemic. Another strategic issue was how to attract new applicants in the face of uncertainty, how to reorient to the domestic market with a decrease in the number of foreign students. In higher education, the following trends are intensifying: growing understanding of the importance of planning the vision of universities; developing a blended form of learning, which will include the best practices of offline and online learning; cooperation between universities on global problems will increase; Heads of universities have to delegate and trust the staff more in the development and implementation of the necessary decisions, because in times of crisis, flexibility and adaptability, the ability to make key decisions quickly, are most valued.

Since the start of the lockdown and the closure of borders, the internationalization of universities has suffered - more than 20 percent of publications are devoted to this topic. With the development of global processes, international academic mobility has reached a significant scale: according to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, in 2019 there were about 5.5 million foreign students in the world, 72,000 of whom are studying in Ukraine. The pandemic has mixed all the cards: international programs and student exchanges have been suspended, many foreign students have been forced to return home.

It is obvious that the coronavirus affected the plans of half of the students who wanted to study abroad. Therefore, universities are looking for new ways to attract international students. Virtual exchanges are becoming increasingly popular, which allow applicants for higher education from different countries, without leaving their homes, to gain experience of studying in foreign institutions. One of the most common methods is Collaborative online international learning (COIL). According to a survey by the International Association of Universities, 60% of higher education institutions reported that COVID-19 has increased virtual mobility and / or online coeducation as an alternative to student physical mobility.

There is also the problem of the quality of education. Due to hybrid and distance learning forms, worries about the decline in the quality of teaching and the overall level of education. About 15% of articles are devoted to this topic. Particular difficulties in many higher educational institutions were caused by the issue of conducting final exams. Another pressing issue was how to organize laboratory and practical exercises during a pandemic.

According to a survey by the International Association of Universities, almost all universities have introduced distance or blended learning. But many were not ready for full-fledged work in a pandemic.

The impact of distance learning on the mental health of students and teachers is in concern.

The biggest challenges for educators are to maintain student engagement, prepare less experienced teachers to use digital learning channels, and ensure high academic standards. Despite certain difficulties, the forced transition to distance learning offers more flexible learning opportunities, namely: it allows you to combine synchronous learning with asynchronous learning.

There are problems with online learning. First of all, there are problems with networks. The teachers adhere to the usual working hours, however, there are problems with the Internet, or the quality of communication is insufficient due to

the simultaneous participation of many participants on the same platform. One way to solve this problem is to be able to upload your own instructional video course and quizzes so that students can study at their own pace and on their own schedule. Teachers can only organize lectures and workshops synchronously. There are also problems with resource selection. Instructors should keep track of the best learning resources and recommend them to students. The amount of teaching material should be moderate, otherwise its use will be ineffective, create pressure on students and lead to a deterioration in their mental health. Problems with student engagement are also relevant. To actively engage in learning, teachers can encourage students to include not only audio, but also video during class. Professors could also credit part of the final grade for active participation in online classes to motivate students to be proactive. The final exam should be used as a way to test the effectiveness of daily online teaching.

Universities are forced to monitor changes in the quarantine legislation and introduce appropriate solutions. It can be assumed that the crisis caused by COVID-19 both exacerbated existing problems and created a number of new challenges for higher education.

We do not know yet how long the pandemic will last, the associated uncertainty, social and cultural chaos, improvisational attempts to respond to new challenges in higher education. We don't know how long it will take until we find ourselves in the post-covid world. However, some probable features of higher education in this world are already being traced.

First, higher education is expected to be dominated by distance (online) teaching and learning. This means a radical change in methods, didactic and psychological models of teaching, the formation and development of digital pedagogy. This is a huge challenge for higher education, which is not fully understood today. In addition, the Higher School, unfortunately, expects a significant decrease in live and direct communication within the university walls, the impoverishment of a full-fledged student life, for the sake of which (and not only for the sake of knowledge and professional training) students have long gone to study at universities, gaining experience there of social and cultural interaction. This undoubtedly devalues the value of university education, actualizes the demand for new massive online courses, such as Coursera, Udacity, Khan Academy, Future Learn, edX, Canvas Network and others.

It is possible that the process of global internationalization of higher education will stall, and foreign students will begin to give preference to distance enrolment and learning.

Already, both the general trends of higher education in medicine and its place among the basic social institutions, its relationship with the general social, political, and economic environment are changing. Visible transformations are taking place in the inner life of universities, in management, relations between the administration and employees, and the stratification of the teaching staff by age, scientific effectiveness and digital competence is increasing.

It is obvious that a return to the old positions is impossible. Therefore, it is important now to reorient the strategic vision of adapting higher medical education to the conditions of the new reality.