The Post-Pandemic University

Thomas Fisher, Professor, School of Architecture

Director, Minnesota Design Center, College of Design

University of Minnesota

tfisher@umn.edu

SPACE, STRUCTURES AND DESIGN IN A
POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

THOMAS FISHER

Pandemics:

1. Accelerate us into the future and magnify trends

2. Reveal inequities and dysfunctions in existing systems

3. Bring renewed attention to public & personal health

3. Create opportunities for those who grasp the change

The 19th Century Cholera pandemic revealed the overcrowding and poor infrastructure of growing cities

NOTICE.

PREVENTIVES OF

CHOLERA!

Published by order of the Sanitory Committee, under the sanction of the Medical Counsel.

BE TEMPERATE IN EATING & DRINKING!
Avoid Raw Vegetables and Unripe Fruit!
Abstain from COLD WATER, when heated, and above all from Ardent Spirits, and if habit have rendered them indispensable, take much less than usual.

071269 THE GHETTO, NEW YORK, N. Y.

which led to the rise of public parks, water utilities, sanitary sewer systems, and indoor plumbing requirements.

The 1918 Influenza Pandemic prompted a demand for social distancing, single-family housing, and private automobiles,

which led to a demand for single-use zoning, side-yard setbacks, and automobile-oriented infrastructure.

The COVID-19 pandemic shifted the balance between the digital and physical worlds and revealed inequities

The impact on work

- **42% of the workforce is now working from home full-time, accounting for 2/3rd of U.S. economic activity.**

- **91% of the employers surveyed found that their staff is more productive working from home.**

- **75% of employees working from home want to continue to do so at least one or more days a week, with 32% wanting to work fulltime from home even after the pandemic.**

Remote work will become more common, occurring in places where there is a high quality of life and home-like environments.

Co-working spaces may need to curate remote and in-person collaborations and provide services that don't exist at home

The interiors of homes will likely change as telecommuting, online shopping, distance learning, and the sharing economy become widespread.

The impact on services

- **America has over 10 times the number of stores per capita than Germany and 5 times the number in the U.K., with store closures at an all-time high.**

- **As many as 40% of small, locally owned businesses will not re-open after the pandemic, accelerating the trend toward national chains dominating the retail in cities.**

- **Buying groceries online has almost doubled since the pandemic, with more than 50% of people surveyed planning on continuing to grocery**

In-person retail may need to focus on what online shopping cannot offer, such as immersive, memorable experiences

Bricks-and-mortar stores may need to see customers as co-creators in helping make better products and services.

The interaction of the digital and physical world may take various forms, with each complementing the other in different ways.
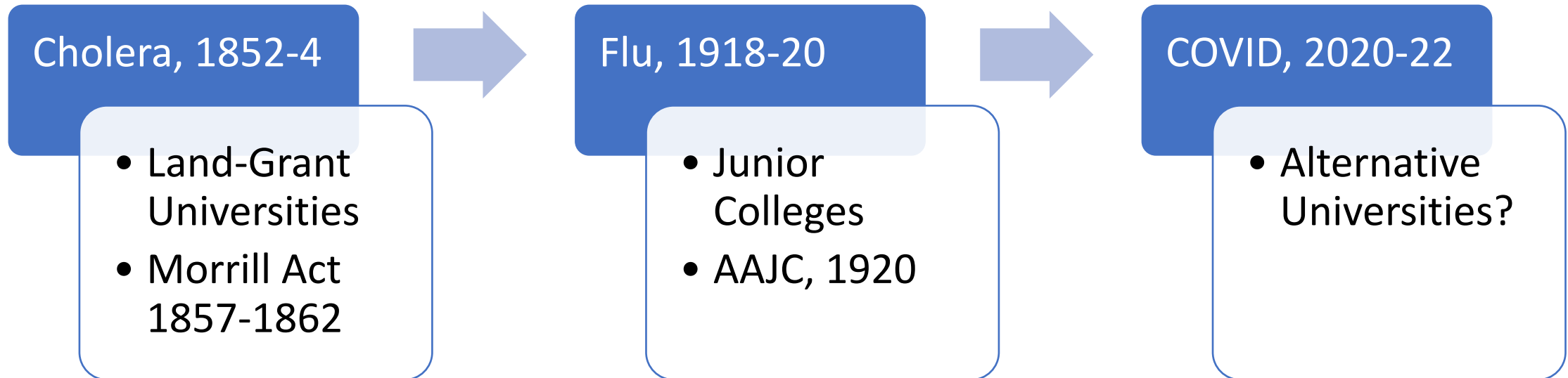
The impact on education

Cholera, 1852-4
- Land-Grant Universities
- Morrill Act 1857-1862

Flu, 1918-20
- Junior Colleges
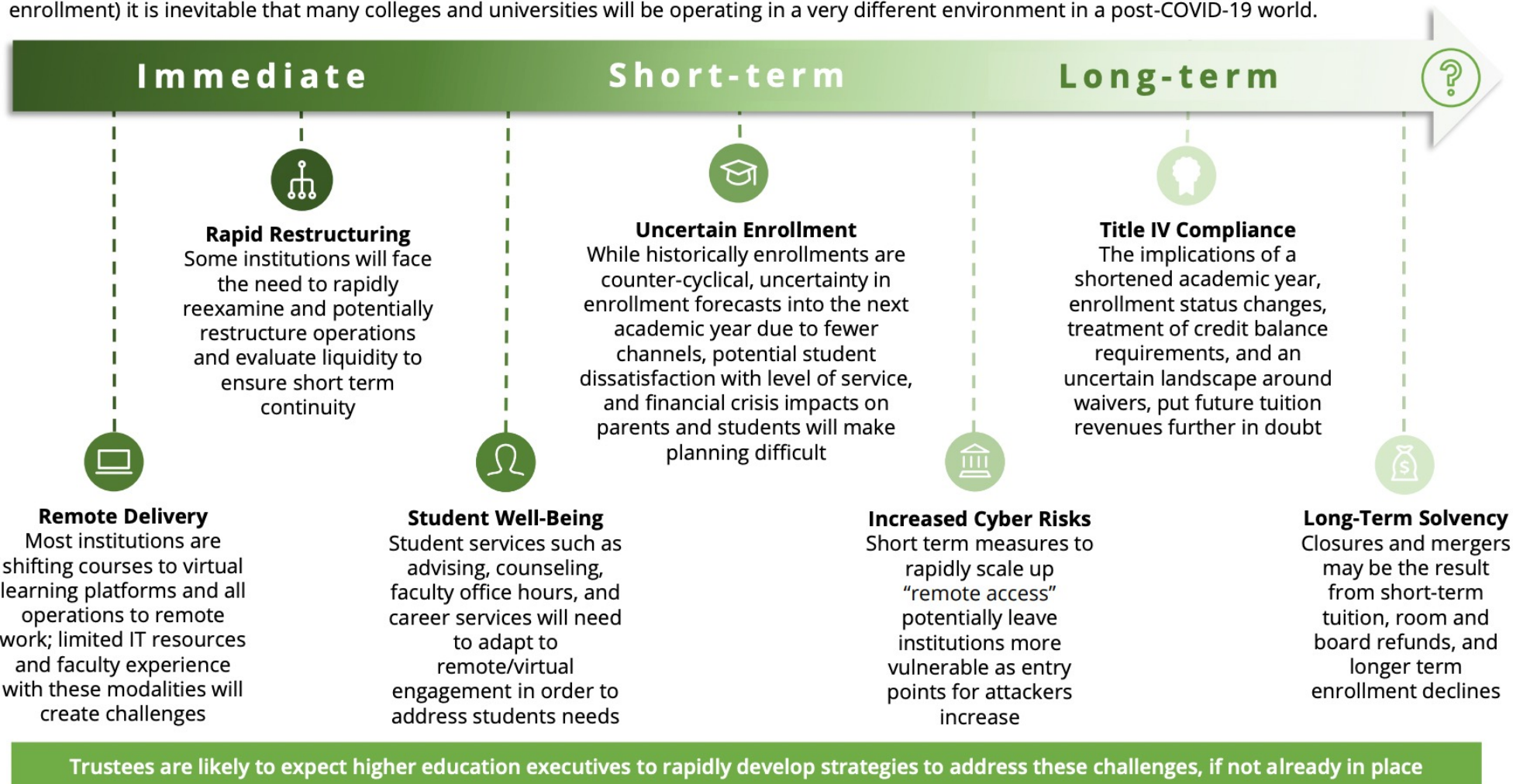- AAJC, 1920

COVID, 2020-22
- Alternative Universities?

Deloitte.

Higher Education in a post-COVID-19 world

While uncertainty pervades all aspects of higher education right now (e.g. virtual learning, remote work, uncertain financial conditions, constrained enrollment) it is inevitable that many colleges and universities will be operating in a very different environment in a post-COVID-19 world.

Immediate   **Short-term**   **Long-term**

Rapid Restructuring
Some institutions will face the need to rapidly reexamine and potentially restructure operations and evaluate liquidity to ensure short term continuity

Uncertain Enrollment
While historically enrollments are counter-cyclical, uncertainty in enrollment forecasts into the next academic year due to fewer channels, potential student dissatisfaction with level of service, and financial crisis impacts on parents and students will make planning difficult

Title IV Compliance
The implications of a shortened academic year, enrollment status changes, treatment of credit balance requirements, and an uncertain landscape around waivers, put future tuition revenues further in doubt

Remote Delivery
Most institutions are shifting courses to virtual learning platforms and all operations to remote work; limited IT resources and faculty experience with these modalities will create challenges

Student Well-Being
Student services such as advising, counseling, faculty office hours, and career services will need to adapt to remote/virtual engagement in order to address students needs

Increased Cyber Risks
Short term measures to rapidly scale up "remote access" potentially leave institutions more vulnerable as entry points for attackers increase

Long-Term Solvency
Closures and mergers may be the result from short-term tuition, room and board refunds, and longer term enrollment declines

Trustees are likely to expect higher education executives to rapidly develop strategies to address these challenges, if not already in place

Who are our students when a digital platform like Zoom allows up to 300 participants, of any age or location, to audit a class or lecture?

Who are our faculty when experts from around the world can log on to a class to teach and interact with students?
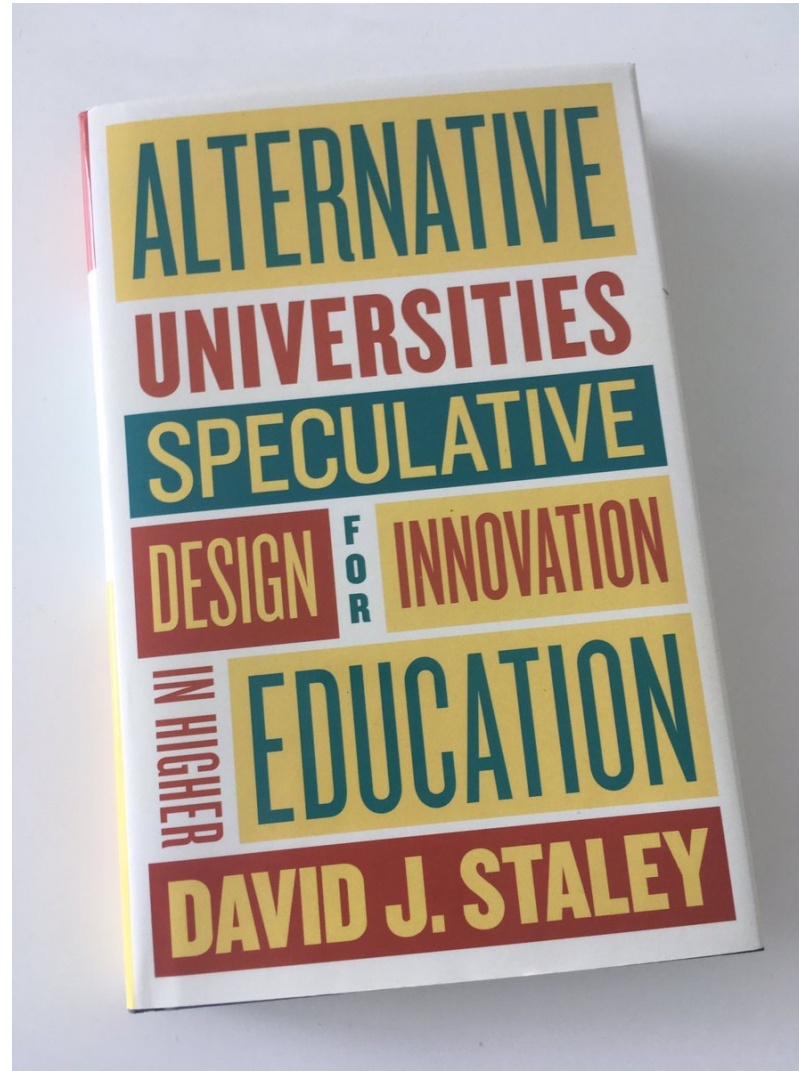
Why have a campus when professors and students can teach and learn from almost anywhere in the world?

Credit: elenabsl / Shutterstock.com © 2021

What is the value of in-person, on-campus education and how will universities compete (or collaborate) with remote, on-line institutions?

The Platform University is the metaphorical idea of a supermarket open 24/7 for anyone to get the education they need and leave whenever they want, and it applies not only to students but also to professors.

PLATFORM UNIVERSITY

The <u>Nomad University</u> exists everywhere and does not have a specific localization, which helps to prepare specialists for a cosmopolitan world, with temporary teams formed for specific projects.

Knowmads

Netherlands

Experiential learning

Learning by doing

Co-creation

Dreaming, designing and
doing it together

Human-centred

Putting people at the core of
everything we do

Community

Learning from and in community

Diversity and inclusion

Striving to make our programs
accessible for everyone

Choice

Empowering people to make
their own choices

The <u>Neo-Liberal Arts College</u> focuses on seven basic skills: solving complex problems; generating meanings; productive activity; imagination; multimodal communication skills; intercultural competence; and leadership.

A system of **Micro-colleges** that can include an unlimited number of micro institutions dispersed in a wide variety of spaces.

The **Humanities Think Tank** (HTT) that gives a new status to representatives of the humanities and social sciences.

The **Interface University** combines and synthesizes human and artificial intelligence (AI) to develop new forms of knowledge.

The **University of the Body** is based on visual, tactile, oral, kinesthetic, and olfactory objects, using all the senses, as a way to learn.

The **Institute for Advanced Play** relies on games, imagination, and the construction of alternative worlds as a way to think about the future.