

An Economist's View of COVID-Related Concerns for University Systems [VIDEO]

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In this exclusive expert video briefing from the IMS COVID-19 Research Insights Series, we speak with economist Donald House about how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted universities and higher education.

Don House: I'm wondering about some of the consequences of COVID-19 and what is happening and to meetings, and to training, and into education. You wonder about say the university. Where the people had paid pretty handsome tuition for say, eighteen-hour load this last spring. But then they had to turn to online education. And you would stay at home. And you would use what we would certainly call a second best. That is, you're taking your course online. You're not there having the reaction with other students. You're not one-on-one with the professor. Everything is online. You don't have the student life that you had. You don't have the other students that form study groups that give you a real help in preparing for the next day's lecture. Much of that is gone, but the tuition is the same.

So, you have a degraded service that is being rendered, not because of a choice by the university, but it is a consequence of COVID-19. So, you ask yourself, okay, there's an injury there. There's an injury there on the part of the student not getting the quality education that was paid for. No fault of the university. But you wonder how far this goes where you were forced to go into second and third methods of training of education. But what are the consequences of those? And I don't know. And what is the long-term effects of those? We talk about the class of 2020 and all that they missed in their last several months of school. And what are the consequences of that as well? There are a lot of graduates that are not finding jobs. So, they're taking other paths.

And you ask yourself, okay, what are the consequences of that as well? So, the questions are almost endless. And this COVID-19 is really an event that perhaps we will never see again, and I don't know that anyone has seen it to the extent that we have. I mean this was worldwide, has had a bigger impact on the economy than perhaps anything we've ever seen before. We don't know how long it will take to finally straighten everything out, if ever. So, there are all kinds of consequences, negative consequences that are out there that we have not even uncovered yet.

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