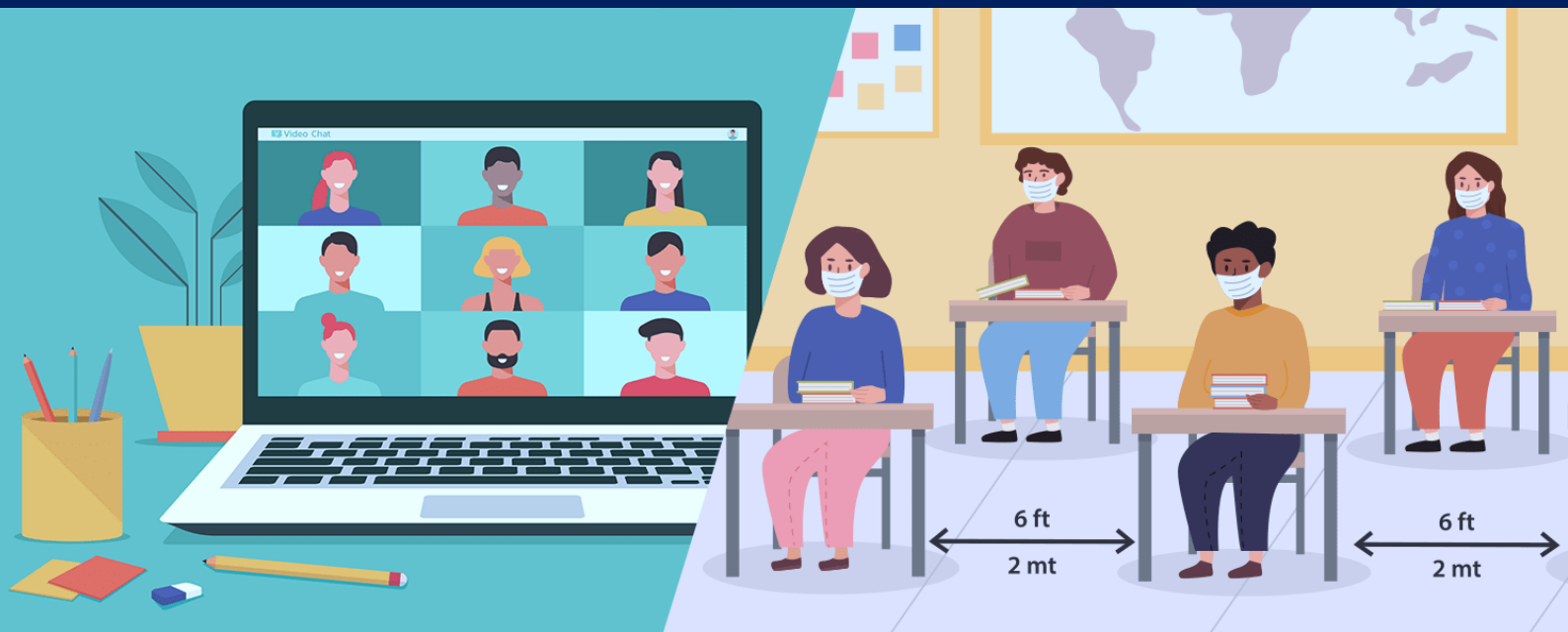


AMDISA Network Responses *on*

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Challenges for Management Education



**Association of Management Development
Institutions in South Asia**



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1. How things look now and how practices would be modified in the foreseeable future?

Presently most of the educational institutions and educators are in a puzzled state. Most are still having trouble accepting the new normal and waiting to return to the previous customs. In comparison, only a handful institutions and educators in the nation are taking preparation to accept the new normal. However, this preparation is also not up to the mark in comparison to the actual necessity. In fact, this preparation demands efforts not from individual level only but from national level as well. The sooner a nation understands the necessity and gets onboard with the initiative to accept the new normal circumstances, the better result they can achieve in the near future. In Daffodil International University, we did not waste a single day after the lockdown due to the pandemic and immediately moved to platform-based education utilizing our Blended Learning Center (BLC) Platform and continued our academic functions online. This was possible because of our preparations even before we faced the pandemic but as there is no national policy to accommodate these changes and online education, we are being limited in terms of functionalities. To sustain in the future, I completely believe that there are no alternatives but to moving towards online and blended teaching and learning systems. Also, academic curriculum, delivery methods, pedagogy, platforms and even skill requirements for teachers will require major adjustments and we need to do it without making much delay to prevent lags on student and national development. Automation of the educational institution and its processes is also a vital element to consider here. New partnerships are also to be formed with the industries because a lot of changes are already in place in the industrial fields due to the pandemic. Policy makers may collaborate with universities to formulate necessary national policies in this regard.



2. Articulation on new formats, new content and new delivery channels

In Daffodil International University, we introduced the Blended learning Center (BLC) platform in around 2016. Since then, our academic departments have been engaged to develop online course repositories. However, that time students were mostly engaged through the traditional face to face class system. When the pandemic started in Bangladesh and we faced the first lockdown, we took immediate steps to onboard all students and

One Student One Laptop
Knowledge and Technology across Borders



Since 2010, with a view to making every student of DIU dynamic and fit with global challenges, DIU distributed around 40,000 laptops to students under "One Student One Laptop" project first time in Bangladesh

teachers to online education through the BLC platform. Teachers could easily adopt the platform due to their previous preparations in developing online course repositories and students were also equipped as they received free laptop devices from the university as part of the One Student One Laptop Project.

On top of that the university offered 100s of webinars and circulated different digital guidelines to both teachers, students and administrators on how to take preparations at individual level to cope up with different initiatives and changes done by the university. Because of these initiatives, the majority of the teachers became well equipped to take classes online, could create and circulate online courses, contents and materials through the BLC platform for the students to study, engage the students through different interactive contents and discussion forums to further enhance their learning process, assess the students learning from creating online quizzes, assignments and online workshops. Not only that, we worked in collaboration with prominent course providers like Coursera,



Edx, LinkedIn Learning and Sailor Academy to offer our students with quality online contents as an opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills. The Career Development Center (CDC) and Human Resources Development Institute (HRDI) of Daffodil



International University was highly engaged during this time to offer necessary training to the faculty members and students of the university. Even in the pandemic, The CDC is functional in making arrangements for placing jobs for the students and graduates in different industries in collaboration with one of the pioneer job portals in Bangladesh called Skill Jobs. On top of that we have started collaborating with goedu.ac



and iou.ac platforms to offer bit sized and modular supplementary professional courses for the students beyond the university border as a national contribution. Apart from that all the process of the university (administrative) is made digital through SmartEdu ERP developed by Daffodil Computers Limited which is a concern of

Daffodil Family which even covers the digitization of different reports, digital communication, digital meetings, HR management, transport management, policy management etc. I believe all these initiatives can contribute to developing models for new formats, contents and delivery channels for other educational institutions and national policy makers.

3. Addressing issues, social and emotional, in faculty and student engagements.

We are well aware that there are social and emotional issues among both faculty members and students. However, it is mostly because of the lack of preparations for the new normal circumstances. There are also financial issues, especially for students as there is a drop in the economy due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. To address such matters Directorates of Students' Affairs (DSA) is functional in the university where we have dedicated professional psychologists to counsel both teachers and students in need. To find out striving students we have initiated an AI based digital mentoring and counseling platform and assigned batch wise mentors to all the students among the faculty members.

To recover financial issues of the students, we have initiated special waiver and scholarship for students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and also initiated insurance to cover any unintended loss of the students. On top of that we are arranging regular digital programs and events to connect the students with their peers, to their faculty members and with industry leaders so that they do not feel separated from their peers, faculty members and the university. For students who would love to stay on campus during the pandemic, we have taken steps to take all the safety measures to our halls. Hall facility is given to even a lot of faculty members so that they can equip themselves better and continue their services without any hassle. These initiatives worked well for our favor in managing the social and emotional issues among students and faculty members during the pandemic. I believe these, if replicated properly, can work for others as well for this context.