



Circ.CoPGr/50/2020

São Paulo, June 15th, 2020.

CGCJ/lzp

International Forum For discussion - Heading to the New Normal

**Held by Postgraduate Office of the University of São Paulo
Supported by Fulbright Brasil and Instituto de Biologia-UnB**

We hope you are keeping safe in this challenging time.

In light of the changes that universities worldwide are undergoing to deal with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the Postgraduate Office of the University of São Paulo (USP), Brazil, is promoting an International Forum for Discussion: Back to the New Normal?

Universities cannot control or predict the level of government-imposed lock-downs, domestic travel and transportation restrictions, national border crossing barriers, or non-immigrant visa issuance for students and researchers. Universities, however, are able to exercise control and establish good practices in areas for which they have traditionally assumed responsibility: teaching and mentoring; integrity of academic processes such as testing and assessment; access to information; the ability to conduct research and prove theories in the laboratory; and the sharing of knowledge with a wide community.

By sharing various perspectives about the success, we have had - and the challenges we have overcome less well - as we have confronted the virus over the last few months, we can learn from other Universities. During these forum, we will be allowed to know several institutional plans for moving ahead.

At this time we have a series of editions programmed, with the first **at 11 am, BRT, on the 30th of June**. On this day we have two representatives from USA and two from Brazil: the chancellor of University of Texas System **Professor JP Milliken**, Vice President and Associate Provost for Internationalization **Professor Michael Pippenger** from University of Notre Dame, **Chancellor Evilázio Francisco Borges Teixeira** from Pontifical Catholic University from Rio Grande do Sul, hosted by **Professor Vahan Agopyan**, president of the University of São Paulo.

Youtube Link: bit.ly/forum-usp-higher-ed

The other International Forum dates are **21st of July, 18th of August and 22nd of September**. We expect to have a continuous and dynamic program for additional events along the year. We also hope that all universities will participate and contribute to all these events, and the events will be open to all-comers.

Each university would have 15 minutes to talk, followed by at most half an hour for discussion.



Themes to be discussed:

- 1) What have we learned from this first semester coping with COVID-19 and how can we build on this in the near future so that universities can continue contributing to a new pandemic reality within higher education worldwide.
- 2) With the virtual elimination of in-person, classroom/lecture hall instruction and the almost universal shift to distance education since March, what have we learned about the techniques essential to maintaining an excellent learning environment?
- 3) In line with a growing understanding of essential teaching techniques in a largely online environment, how do we manage the availability and access our students have to technology, and other technology associated problems? It seems essential, also, that we assess the limits and flexibility of our institutional structures and traditions (appropriate oversight of teaching, learning and assessment changes in the provision of university education)
- 4) With the return to campus teaching, or the maintenance of exclusive distance learning, or the introduction of hybrid models combining in-person and distance learning, we need to understand the challenges facing our students and teachers especially with mandated physical distancing.
- 5) What are effective ways to maintain the integrity of examinations in lecture hall situations where social distancing is required, and close proctoring may be difficult, or in on-line testing where verification of the test taker's identity may be challenging.
- 6) While some research can be conducted from home, laboratory- based studies need to be looked at differently. How can we maintain high-quality research under social distancing?
- 7) As well as looking at small classroom-based seminars, conferences, tutorials, workshops, or reading groups, and various changes in campus life and engagement activities, we need to examine the rules for engagement and use of research facilities, including priorities for reopening and health guidelines.
- 8) How can we maintain international high-level collaboration in research under social distancing?

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