Higher Education will Never be the Same!
The Digital Demand on Campus—and Beyond
Seventy percent of higher education students and recent graduates want their institutions to use more digital tools according to the Accenture 2014 Global Value of Higher Education Survey. But if universities think that digital engagement is simply about offering online courses and live chats—they should think again.

In a class by themselves

The higher education environment is not like it used to be. Neither are students. While their parents saw a degree as an assurance of success, students are not so confident today. Most (74 percent) higher education students and recent graduates say they considered alternatives to a university or higher education. And they are more connected than ever. A powerful force shaping their daily lives, digital influences how students learn and engage with others.

Making the grade in digital

To remain competitive, the higher education community must attract, engage, satisfy and sustain relationships with always-on students. This means more than digitizing what universities have done for years. It is reinventing teaching, administration and alumni relations for a holistic approach to digital engagement across the entire student journey.

Deliver on-demand learning:

From taking time away to learn to learning all the time

The majority (80 percent) of university students say that digital capabilities were important when deciding which institution to attend. Yet only 13 percent of those surveyed believe that their institution provides appropriate digital tools. This disconnect suggests that many higher education institutions have yet to fully seize the potential for digital tools to transform learning.

Digital natives learn efficiently in real time, not just in the lecture hall or the library. Familiar with the immediacy and interactivity of online, mobile and social tools, students expect on-demand, self-led learning and opportunities to learn from one another. Unlike sequential course materials, their learning is fluid as they make connections and pursue unexpected lines of thought.

Higher education institutions must enable anytime learning inside and outside the classroom—using mobile, social, video and content curation to make learning more engaging and effective. This does not mean abandoning in-person learning, but rather blending digital and in-person training both in and outside the classroom. In fact, 89 percent of students still find face-to-face learning with teachers and tutors to be effective.

The key is to balance and blend digital and traditional learning models effectively. The Center for Digital Engagement has recognized Purdue University in the United States for use of mobile apps in and out of class. These apps support virtual student discussions, online study groups, digital content storage and performance monitoring among other functions.

Work with new teaching partners:

From the ivory tower to the virtual community

Education innovation such as on-demand learning models requires different educational delivery systems. Higher education institutions can build a digital ecosystem that extends beyond the campus. This means collaborating with other universities, the private sector and government to fill resource gaps and extend learning opportunities.

While such collaborations are not always new, the imperative for a flexible digital backbone to support them is. Consider that the use of digital to improve collaboration is now part of the strategic plan of the decades-old Five Colleges Consortium in the United States. The goal is that no matter the channel—physical or virtual—or the partner that students engage with, their journey is administered seamlessly and efficiently.
As Gartner recommends, “Education CIOs need to accelerate the implementation of a ‘digital first for flexibility’ strategy. The expanding education ecosystem and its multitude of choices feed on digitization. There will be no scalability and no personal learning at a reasonable cost without digitization.”

We believe this kind of multi-player ecosystem powered by a strong digital core is increasingly common across industries. For example, employment agencies including the German National Employment Agency are successfully using virtual labor markets to integrate the ecosystem of government agencies, job seekers, recruitment firms and employers.

Cultivate lifelong learning:
From learning on campus to learning for life

It is not only current students who benefit from these digital ecosystems. By using digital tools, higher education institutions can extend and strengthen alumni relationships around the very thing that brought people to them in the first place—education. Alumni can get new value from on-demand learning from an ecosystem of partners that can meet their learning needs.

This approach takes the university-alumni relationship beyond traditional branding and fundraising efforts, positioning the alma mater as graduates’ trusted continuing education resource. This is particularly powerful considering the need for ongoing skills development in the job market. Boston College in the United States is one university looking to support alumni learning. The alumni association provides free webinars to alumni on topics such as evaluating a job offer and the quarter life crisis.

Prospective students are also interested in the university as a lifelong learning resource that can improve their employability. Most (59 percent) students and recent graduates say that one of their main motivations in pursuing higher education is to gain skills needed to get a job after graduation. It is important for universities to show students—from prospects to alumni—that their mutual investment extends past graduation.

The digital decision

There is no turning back from digital in higher education. Eighty-five percent of high school seniors, 81 percent of higher education students and 72 percent of higher education graduates say that how well a higher education institution embraces innovation is an important factor in deciding which institution to attend. The digital demand is real, and higher education institutions must start making the grade or risk irrelevance in the digital era.
About Delivering Public Service for the Future

What does it take to deliver public service for the future? Public service leaders must embrace four structural shifts—advancing toward personalized services, insight-driven operations, a public entrepreneurship mindset and a cross-agency commitment to mission productivity. By making these shifts, leaders can support flourishing societies, safe, secure nations and economic vitality for citizens in a digital world — delivering public service for the future.

About Accenture

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with approximately 319,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world’s most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. The company generated net revenues of US$30.0 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2014. Its home page is www.accenture.com.

For more information, contact:

Lai Yee Ng
Managing Director
Health & Public Service - Accenture Singapore
lai.yee.ng@accenture.com

Connect with us to learn more on delivering public service for the future on Twitter@AccenturePubSvc

About Delivering Public Service for the Future

What does it take to deliver public service for the future? Public service leaders must embrace four structural shifts—advancing toward personalized services, insight-driven operations, a public entrepreneurship mindset and a cross-agency commitment to mission productivity. By making these shifts, leaders can support flourishing societies, safe, secure nations and economic vitality for citizens in a digital world — delivering public service for the future.

About Accenture

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with approximately 319,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world’s most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. The company generated net revenues of US$30.0 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2014. Its home page is www.accenture.com.

For more information, contact:

Lai Yee Ng
Managing Director
Health & Public Service - Accenture Singapore
lai.yee.ng@accenture.com

Connect with us to learn more on delivering public service for the future on Twitter@AccenturePubSvc

About Delivering Public Service for the Future

What does it take to deliver public service for the future? Public service leaders must embrace four structural shifts—advancing toward personalized services, insight-driven operations, a public entrepreneurship mindset and a cross-agency commitment to mission productivity. By making these shifts, leaders can support flourishing societies, safe, secure nations and economic vitality for citizens in a digital world — delivering public service for the future.

About Accenture

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with approximately 319,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world’s most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. The company generated net revenues of US$30.0 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2014. Its home page is www.accenture.com.

For more information, contact:

Lai Yee Ng
Managing Director
Health & Public Service - Accenture Singapore
lai.yee.ng@accenture.com

Connect with us to learn more on delivering public service for the future on Twitter@AccenturePubSvc

About Delivering Public Service for the Future

What does it take to deliver public service for the future? Public service leaders must embrace four structural shifts—advancing toward personalized services, insight-driven operations, a public entrepreneurship mindset and a cross-agency commitment to mission productivity. By making these shifts, leaders can support flourishing societies, safe, secure nations and economic vitality for citizens in a digital world — delivering public service for the future.

About Accenture

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with approximately 319,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world’s most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. The company generated net revenues of US$30.0 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2014. Its home page is www.accenture.com.

For more information, contact:

Lai Yee Ng
Managing Director
Health & Public Service - Accenture Singapore
lai.yee.ng@accenture.com

Connect with us to learn more on delivering public service for the future on Twitter@AccenturePubSvc

About Delivering Public Service for the Future

What does it take to deliver public service for the future? Public service leaders must embrace four structural shifts—advancing toward personalized services, insight-driven operations, a public entrepreneurship mindset and a cross-agency commitment to mission productivity. By making these shifts, leaders can support flourishing societies, safe, secure nations and economic vitality for citizens in a digital world — delivering public service for the future.

About Accenture

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with approximately 319,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world’s most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. The company generated net revenues of US$30.0 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2014. Its home page is www.accenture.com.

For more information, contact:

Lai Yee Ng
Managing Director
Health & Public Service - Accenture Singapore
lai.yee.ng@accenture.com

Connect with us to learn more on delivering public service for the future on Twitter@AccenturePubSvc