

## Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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The journal *International Journal of Higher Education* is a vital platform for interdisciplinary discourse, aimed at advancing the understanding of the complex dynamics within the global higher education landscape. This journal focuses on the exploration of contemporary issues, innovative practices, and transformative policies that shape the experiences of students, educators, and institutions alike. Through the publishing of rigorous empirical research, comprehensive reviews, and theoretical contributions, the journal fosters scholarly dialogue and collaboration among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in the field of higher education. As such, the strength of the journal IJHE is reflected in this issue's eight research articles with a strong representation from the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia and South Africa.

The first article by *Richard Cotterill* explores how non-Western international students may perpetuate an ethnocentric view of Western academic approaches as superior, disadvantaging and suppressing valuable intercultural exchange, by opting to study in the US, UK, Canada, and Australia. Using a Foucauldian view that education systems perpetuate ideologies and exercise power, shape knowledge production and define truth, he argues that this creates a distorted picture of accepted knowledge, subordinating international students to Western norms. The next article by *Nompumelelo and Mathunjwa* engaged with communities in the King Cetshwayo District of KwaZulu-Natal to establish a self-care, self-paced intervention strategy for individuals living with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus. The objective of their study was to explore how community engagement influenced the team's approach, processes, and outcomes. The study contributes to the growing recognition of community engagement as a formal pillar of academic achievement in higher education. The third article is from *Hughes* and colleagues who investigated the design and delivery of a portfolio of project-based, online graduate programs tailored to working professionals at a private technological research university in the Northeastern United States. Their study examined the holistic perceptions across an integrated portfolio spanning multiple disciplines. Their findings found that supportive faculty mentorship, project-based coursework, and real-world application were key strengths of the learner experience. Areas for improvement centred on refining course pacing, ensuring clear alignment between materials and deliverables, and providing more timely feedback on project milestones.

The fourth article by *Renee Harrington* sought to understand undergraduate students' perceptions and experiences of resilience following their participation in a 15-week, two-credit physical activity course that included an embedded resilience curriculum. Her findings identified strategies for future use that include mindfulness practices, emotional regulation, and time management. Additionally, she highlights the effectiveness of integrating resilience education into higher education curricula, and how such integration can foster self-reflective growth and equip students with practical strategies to support their long-term well-being. The next article by *Oliver Mbhalati* addressed the fact that no coherent approach had yet arisen in the analysis of financial sustainability for South African public universities. His finding showed that government funding, supported by a diverse range of funding sources, plays a positive significant impact on the financial sustainability of South Africa's public universities. The next article in this edition is from *William Schonberg* who presents the results of a study that investigates how some universities have diversified promotion and tenure paths to be inclusive of broader faculty accomplishments. His recommendations include steps to update or develop promotion and tenure policies and procedures that give credit for a wider spectrum of faculty activities. *Mewani* and colleagues provide the next article that engaged an autoethnographic approach of members of an academic leadership team, leveraging personal narratives and institutional experiences to explore the

complexities of academic leadership at a Hispanic-Serving Institution. Their findings confirmed that the role of leadership is a multifaceted approach, and leaders must balance several moving parts simultaneously. Effective leaders need to possess certain leadership qualities and harness support from several sources. These findings will help to inform future leaders of their expectations when they assume leadership roles in higher education.

The final article in this issue is from Meng and Hunter who investigated how Chinese international students' (CISs) use of WeChat influenced their ability to acquire and use different forms of capital – particularly cultural and social capital – while studying at an Australian higher education institution. Drawing on Bourdieu's theory of practice, they examined how these forms of capital shape and are shaped by students' experiences. They reported three significant findings: 1. WeChat helped many CISs overcome language barriers which are an immediate and prominent marker of the cultural capital they often lack but need to navigate the Australian higher education field. Second, WeChat supported the development of social capital by enabling CISs to maintain and form new social networks. Third, while CISs show agency in identifying and acquiring capital, the ongoing interaction between field (the university context) and habitus (their internalised dispositions) also shaped their success.

I sincerely hope that the broad range of topics and information shared are of benefit to our readers. Importantly, I would like to thank all contributors and reviewers who continue to make the timely publication of the current issue possible. I look forward to receiving more contributions from researchers and practitioners for our future issues. Wishing all readers all the very best with their research studies.

Warm regards and the season's greetings,

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