



I, We, All of Us.

The GRI Deans & Directors Cohort

Check-in 27-28 August 2020

- **Introduction**
- **Collected Themes & Comments**
 - Break-out 1 (Me) - What have you learned, or are you learning from your experience over the last six months? What leadership capacities in yourself are proving to be most useful right here right now?
 - Break-out 2 (We) - What has helped or hindered you and your organisation in responding to “certain uncertainty”?
 - Break-out 3 (All of us) - What can we do together that will make a valuable and enduring contribution to how we all think and act our way into a better shared future?
- **Deans Cohort Participant Updates**
- **Participants list**

I. Introduction

Background

**“Perhaps this crisis can enhance sustainability, our empathy, our sense of responsibility & peer-to-peer learning. Business as a force for good means something different now - a moral imperative.”
- GRLI Deans Cohort Check-In Participant**

This report synthesizes two days of conversation held via zoom on 27-28 August as a “connect and collaborate” check-in meeting of the GRLI Deans & Directors Cohort.

This brief paper sets out the themes, dilemmas, and opportunities shared by the meeting participants. The notes and curated themes that follow are a snapshot of the reflections of those in attendance (see participant list at end). As business school deans and directors, as well as their invited colleagues, this community is well-suited for a nuanced and substantive discussion of current and emerging systemic challenges.

As part of an established learning community of senior leaders, Deans & Directors Cohort participants find support for Globally Responsible action at their own institutions and communities. Perhaps more importantly, the Deans Cohort provides a fertile space for Deans to collaborate on systems-level change initiatives to benefit the entire Management Education ecosystem. This ability to effect change on a systems level is a true differentiator for the cohort.

We invite discussion on this paper with participants (listed below) and our collected communities for further input. Join the conversation at [GRLI.org](https://www.grl.org).

About the Cohort

The idea for a “Deans roundtable” was suggested by Julia Christensen Hughes during the GRLI’s 2016 AGM held at Kemmy Business School in Limerick, Ireland. The stated purpose was to help academic leaders develop an emergent understanding of globally responsible management education, as well as share tested strategies for facilitating transformation towards the achievement of that end.

Since forming in 2017, and now known as the GRLI Deans & Directors Cohort, the group has grown into a collaboratory comprising **70+ deans, directors, and learning partners** acting as catalysts of change. As a growing participant-driven co-learning initiative, participants collaborate with new open research, start new centres and programmes, and explore initiatives aimed at transforming management education. See this [EFMD Global Focus](#) article for more information.

The Cohort’s ongoing collaboration has been energized through in-person meetings in Canada, France, the United States and most recently in November 2019 for its fourth in-person meeting in Portugal.

The 5th event – held online during the pandemic on 29-30 April – was first and foremost about connecting as individuals with global peers, all of us in our own homes and offices, and to start processing the shifting landscape under lockdown.

The 27-28 August meeting discussed in this report served as a “check-in” for participants starting a new school year under extraordinary circumstances, and as a touchpoint for the next full virtual gathering in November 2020 to be hosted by Antwerp Management School and facilitated by the GRLI.

[View the 27-28 August Agenda](#)

For more information on GRLI’s approach to whole person learning and convening of collaborative action-oriented dialogues, see these resources on the [GRLI Website](#):

- The Collaboratory Book
- Learning for Tomorrow
- WPL (Whole Person Learning) Manual

Collected Themes and Comments

With a heightened awareness of “zoom fatigue” and the time pressures for Deans at the beginning of a semester like no other, the sessions held on 27 and 28 August (to accommodate global participation) compressed a lot of connections into an under-2-hour format.

The conversation - flowing between three break-outs with discussion questions and back into plenary - was designed to offer a **check-in and connection**, rather than the deepening that happens in the fuller Deans Cohort gatherings.

The comments below represent “points raised” or observations, as steps in a collective, collaborative process to connect and collect emergent themes from three break-out sessions. They should not be taken in any way as the unanimous position of the group.

Session I (Me): What have you learned, or are you learning from your experience over the last six months? What leadership capacities in yourself are proving to be most useful right here right now?

The first break-out focused on the “Me”, and participants shared their individual insights and recognition of strengths. The chart below is a summary of themes and comments.

Theme	Comments
How we adapted successfully and quickly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● We learned quickly on the fly - a struggle but amazed how quickly and how often we adjusted.● Tolerance and integrity was really important and we had to adapt fast. Helping folks be flexible and able to adapt.● We invested millions over a decade to get good online and that took years but then COVID and all of sudden, we were good and fast!● Radical change is possible when it is necessary.
Pride in co-workers' solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Incredibly proud of faculty and staff who rose to occasion, trained for being online and restructuring/ redesign of jobs to be more efficient as a virtual org.● Staff created new roles as “navigators” to support

	<p>students and faculty in an online environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Faculty were very adaptable, preparing teaching for 4 different modes.
<p>Planning for the long haul of uncertainty & remote learning & teaching as status quo</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foresee zoom and other virtual tools to be utilized much more post pandemic, resulting in more flexibility. ● Learning to sustain energy from an early adrenaline high and great exciting challenges. ● Confronting financial challenges.
<p>Casting an eye forward to the long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teaching effects from being online: Can you motivate all? ● Increasing demands for courses in social justice and sustainability programs. ● How do we want to be as a school? What about staff as well as faculty? ● Mental stress is a real thing; lots of questions being raised; faculty and staff concerns for job security in light of declining enrollment. ● Look at the school beyond research/ publications--having us take a deeper look; make a difference to the communities we live in.
<p>Leadership Capacities We Drew Upon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Authenticity, vulnerability, inclusive leadership. ● Surround yourself with people you can trust, including people who push back on decisions, to make sure all perspectives in a decision-making process are examined. ● Focus on communications. Relationship building skills. Checking in with people, finding ways of doing this online. ● Patience, empathy, trust. ● Resiliency is required of every leader. Must be a willingness to adjust and deal with change. ● Dean's role has shifted to relationship-building internally, less about strategic planning, fundraising, and innovation.

Break-out 2 (We) - What has helped or hindered you and your organisation in responding to “certain uncertainty”? Given the changed current context, what are the key questions that arise in relation to your work?

In the second breakout, participants *shared their questions and experiences* relating to their institutions’ context in “certain uncertainty” by exploring **what has helped** them and **what has hindered** them over the past few months.

In addition to the “helped” and “hindered” responses, participants also shared their worries for the future, dealing with grief and loss, and concerns about the long-term wellbeing of staff, faculty and students.

Key questions that emerged included: **“How do we keep supporting each other going forward?” & “Is this sustainable?”**.

The chart below is a summary of themes and comments.

What Has Helped...	Comments
Acknowledging the “new normal” & that there is no going back to before	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● When you do not have a choice, it mobilizes people and reduces the pain associated with change. It was the only way to move forward.● Shift from short-term thinking (this will be over fast) to long-term thinking - this is something to be adapted to rather than “waited out”.● Moving the conversation to: What is the next crisis? What is the world facing? Helping people to think differently about the world and the new challenges in a post pandemic world.
Focusing on flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Shift how responsibilities are handled.● Expect the unexpected: practice good personal resilience.
Focusing on leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● As a leader, go back to the mission: the mission to serve, what is the purpose of what you are doing. Is this what we are about/what we aspire to?● Supporting faculty/staff as powerful champions for the “New Normal”.● A motivated staff creates a supportive culture.

Increasing communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Constant communication (even if you do not know what you are going to say). Experiment with different ways. ● Communicate, educate, persist
Creating unusual partnerships from necessity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is comfort and reassurance in being “in this together” as a sector. Leadership contacted colleagues from competitors. What is possible: collaboration vs competition.
Decentralizing decision-making for on-the-ground realities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase in communication/transparency and reliance on stakeholders, rather than containing control for higher leadership. ● Decision to return to campus made by individuals, based on circumstances.
What Has Hindered...	
Wishing to go back to “normal”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acceptance level by faculty for online teaching was not as great as hoped.
Fiscal crises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Faculty disconnects with financial challenges; severe cuts to funding and programs.
Lack of personal connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tough to make personal connections in a virtual world.
Assessing viability of certain programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some programs are impossible to provide online.
Ramping up home technology capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognition that home work environments (space, tech, broadband) often are not adequate to the work being done/required.

Break-out 3 (All of us): What can we do together that will make a valuable and enduring contribution to how we all think and act our way into a better shared future?

In the third breakout, participants explored how we might “share the learning forward” with collective actions for a better shared future.

Two of the possibilities that emerged include: 1) The need for a **working session to co-create a Responsible Leadership course** and 2) Since the sessions’ check-ins were under 1 minute, there is support for **more regular online sessions** for co-working and discussion.

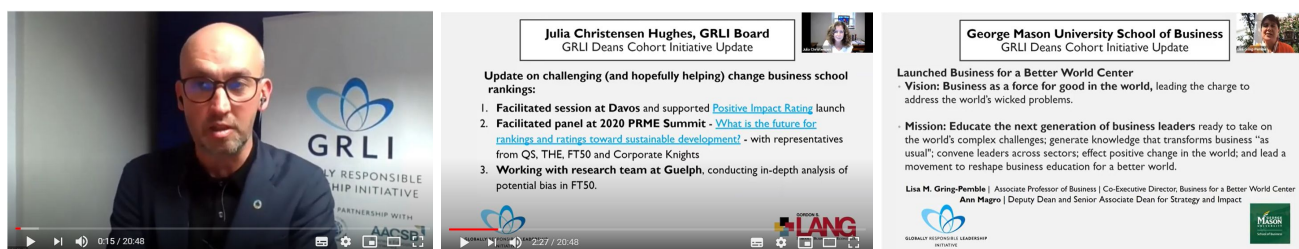
Summing up the potential for co-created positive impact, one participant said: “Perhaps this crisis can enhance sustainability, our empathy, our sense of responsibility. Peer-to-peer learning. Business as a force for good means something different now - a moral imperative.”

Proposed Collective Action	Description/Supportive Quote
Host a dedicated working session for a co-created course	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Several people expressed interest in co-creating a cross-institution Responsible Leadership course (being coordinated by Wayne Visser).
Schedule more regular sessions for connecting, co-working and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership is a lonely job, why don't we build a buddy system to meet more regularly and have an opportunity to talk?
Engage our business community partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bring different movements together (B-Corps, Conscious Capitalism, etc.) to learn from the experiences each one has and build networks between the enterprises that are members to accelerate change and positive impact.
Support for the GRLI Deans Cohort peer-led, systems focused, “Me/We/All of Us” way of working	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deans should be working together to support one another instead of behaving competitively. Witnessing the passion of others. We cannot do this work alone.• If we know what others are doing, we know what part of the whole we are contributing to. We must look for gaps to see where we fit.

Reports from Deans Cohort Participants

During the session, 15 participants gave very short, 1-minute updates on key actions and initiatives underway since the last Deans Cohort gathering in April 2020.

These updates can be viewed here as a [PowerPoint presentation](#) and by watching this [YouTube video](#).



27-28 August 2020 GRLI Deans & Directors Cohort

Check-In Participants

Attendee Name	Institution	Role
Amy Hietapelto	University of Minnesota Duluth	Dean
Anne Magro	George Mason University School of Business	Deputy Dean
Anthony Hendrickson	Creighton University	Dean
Cathy Dubois	Kent State University	Associate Dean for Administration Chair, Council of Responsible Enterprise
Cheryl Kiser	Babson College	Executive Director, The Lewis Institute & Babson Social Innovation Lab, Interim CEO Arthur M Blank School for Entrepreneurial Leadership
Christiane Molina	EGADE	Research Professor in the Strategy and Leadership
Dayle Smith	Loyola Marymount University in	Dean of the College of Business

	Los Angeles	Administration
Don Minday	Rennes School of Business	Senior Lecturer and Department Head, Management & Organization Department
Elizabeth Bagger	Institute for Family Business UK	Executive Director
Emma Wilcox	Society for the Environment	CEO
Enase Okonedo	Lagos Business School	Dean
Eunice Mareth Querol-Areola	Beyond Individual Good (BIG) Institute	Dean
Hanna-Leena Pesonen	University of Jyväskylä School of Business and Economics	Dean
Ilke Inceoglu	Exeter University, Business School	Professor of Organisational Behaviour and HR Management Programme
Jae Wook Kim	Korea University Business School	Dean
Jeffrey Thies	Loyola Marymount University	Director, Institute for Business Ethics and Sustainability
John Elliott	University of Connecticut	Dean of School of Business
Joseph DiAngelo	St. Joseph's University	Dean
Julie Waggoner	University of Colorado Boulder	Interim Director, Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility
Justin Xavier	Monash University Malaysia	Head Professional Services
Lisa Gring-Pemble	George Mason University School of Business	Senior Associate Dean for Strategy and Impact; Co-Executive Director Business for a Better World
Lynn Bell	Bakke Graduate University	Director of MBA Program
Mike Ewing	Deakin University	Executive Dean
Marie Stenseke	Gothenburg School of Business Economics & Law	Deputy Dean of the School of Business, Economics and Law
Mary A. Gowan	Mike Cottrell College of Business, University of North Georgia	Dean
Mary Watson	The New School	Executive Dean, Schools of Public Engagement
Pervaiz Ahmed	Monash University Malaysia	Head of School
Rachel Ashworth	Cardiff Business School	Dean

Rumina Dhalla	University of Guelph Lang School of Business	Associate Professor and CSR Coordinator
Sanjay Sharma	Grossman School of Business, University of Vermont	Dean and Professor of Management
Sofia Salgado-Pinto	Catolica Porto Business School	Director of the Faculty of Economics and Management
Sook Yee Tai	Aitia Institute	Executive Director and Mindfulness Practitioner
Thomas Wahl	Malardalen University	Dean
Vana Zervanos	Saint Joseph's University	Associate Dean
Wayne Visser	Antwerp Management School	Chair in Sustainable Transformation / Professor of Integrated Value/ Academic Director of the Sustainable Transformation Lab
Anders Aspling	GRLI	Founding Secretary General GRLI
Claire Maxwell	GRLI	Oasis School for Human Relations
Claire Sommer	GRLI	GRLI Associate Communications
John North	GRLI	GRLI Associate with Executive Responsibilities
Julia Christensen Hughes	GRLI	Founding Dean: Gordon S. Lang School of Business and Economics, University of Guelph