

# Education Ecosystems and Platforms: A New Perspective on the Role of Business Schools

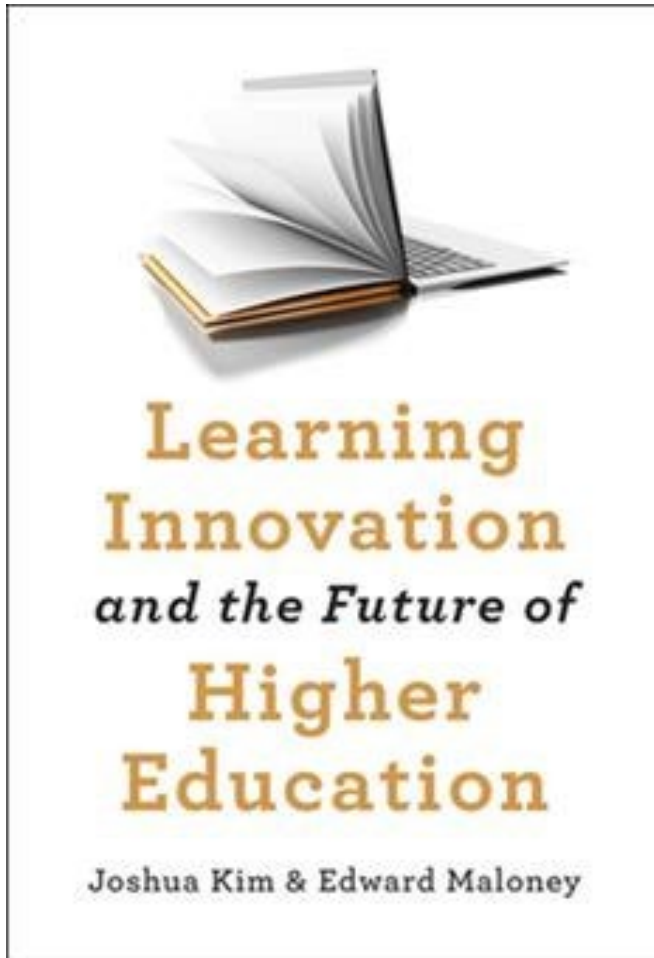
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# Education Ecosystems and Platforms: A New Perspective on the Role of Business Schools

- Investigates how Business Education (BE) can respond to the external and internal forces changing the nature of business schools and education
- Use concepts from platform based thinking of businesses and ecosystem based conceptualizations of the environment
- Explores how to deepen engagement between business schools' stakeholders and to balance relevance and quality

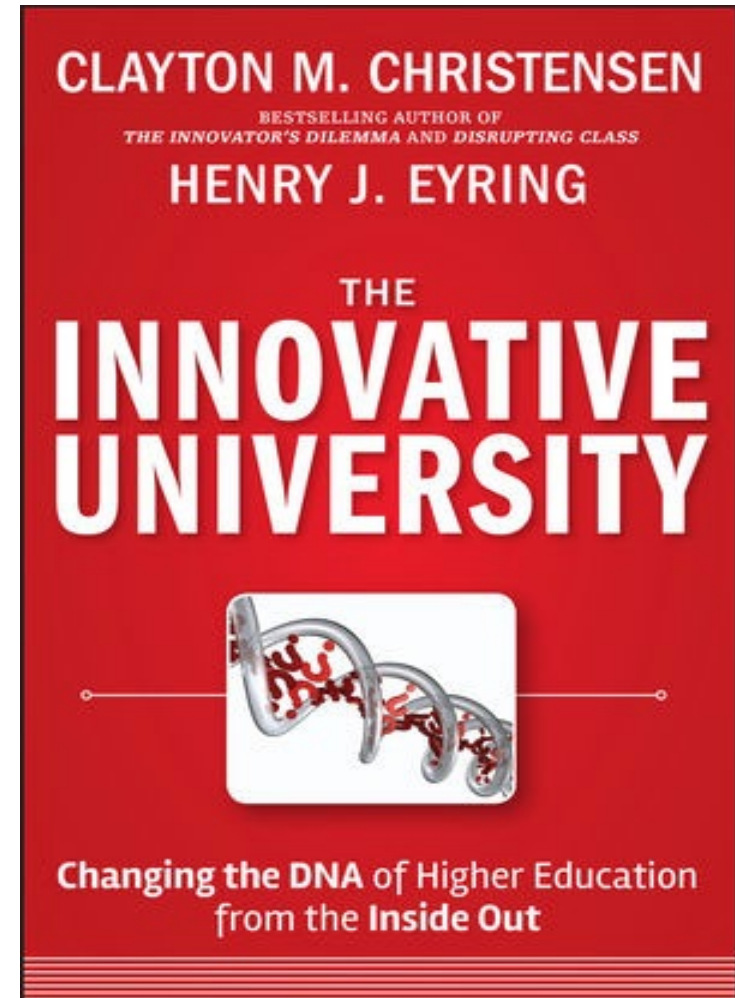
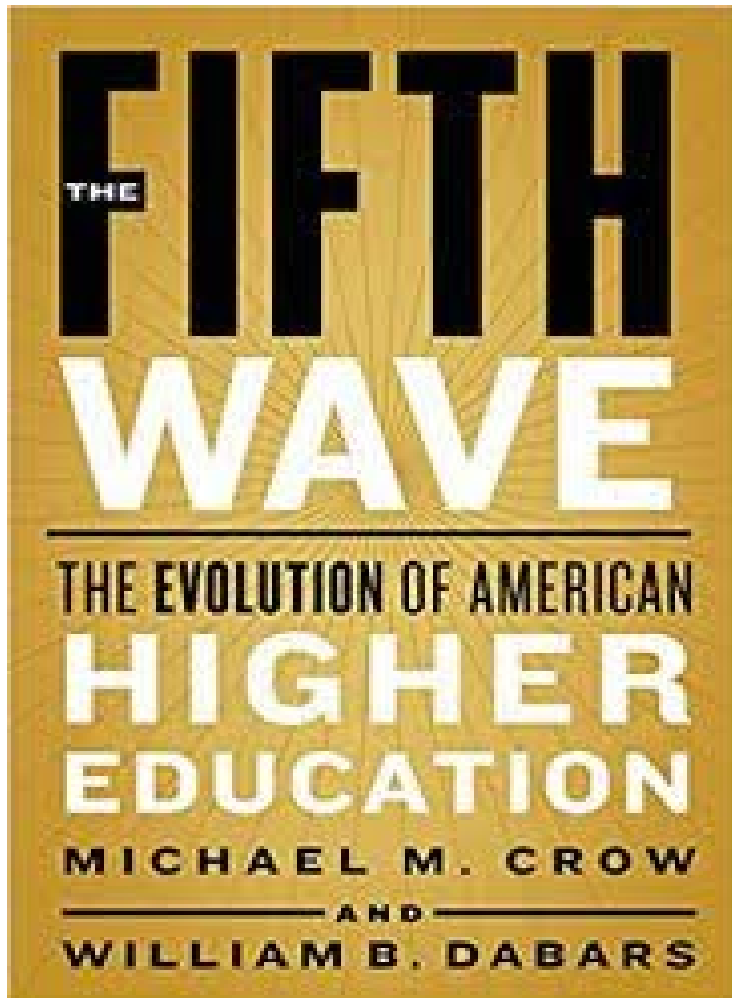
# Project Outline

- I review some of the key external challenges for BE.
- I consider the internal challenges and responses associated with recent critiques of BE and the need for business schools to redefine their identities in the current context.
- I explain the basics of platform based businesses and draw parallels to education.
- I suggest how business schools can act on potential development initiative with stakeholders and how they might best balance the twin objectives of greater significance and enhanced quality through radical innovations.
- I consider a couple of examples of recent promising contributions to the future of BE.
- I bring in some student ideas and opinions on this topic.



- Learning innovation: “The interplay between the complex set of practices, methods, and design that are part of the attempts made by higher education to improve teaching and student learning” (Kim & Maloney, 2020, p. 6).
  - As much importance should be given to institutional structures, relationships, policies and investments as to innovation in the classroom, courses, and curriculum.
  - Thus, the scholarship of teaching and learning needs to expand its boundaries from it’s current state to incorporate the wider innovation movement (Kim and Maloney, 2020).

# Background reads



# Other Sources

- Literature review of articles in the business education arena
- Reports from AACSB
- A 2-day global webinar on the future of business education
- Feedback from students

# Why Business Schools?

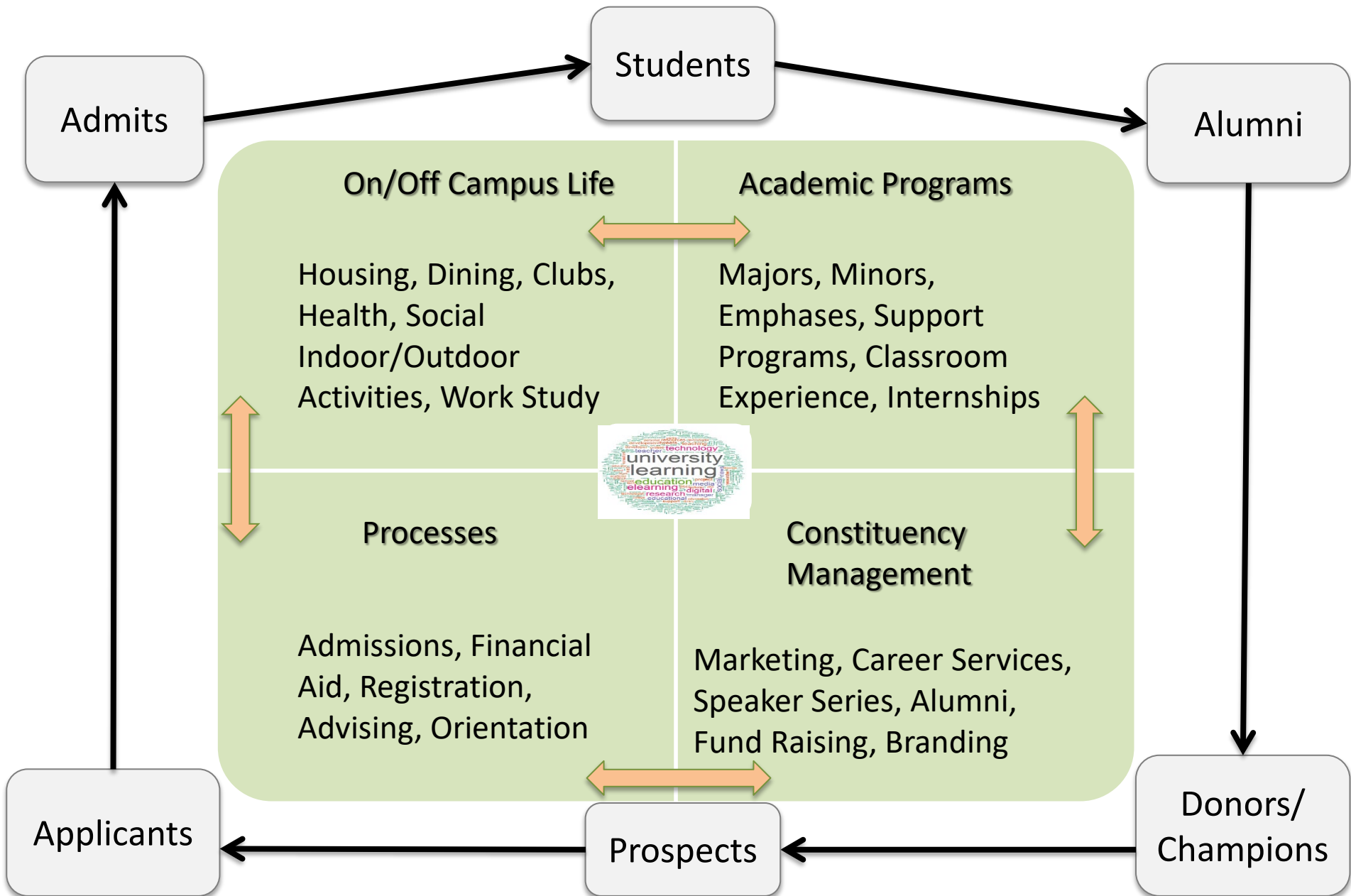
- Business schools exhort their students to assess market dynamics, adjust to changing environments, develop strategies to manage organizational change, and foster an environment of innovation.
- Business schools do not seem to do for themselves what they teach their students to do.
- Calls have been made by several researchers that business education needs to evolve.

# Platforms

- Interfaces—often embodied in products, services, or technologies—that can serve to mediate transactions between two or more sides, such as networks of buyers and sellers (e.g., eBay) or complementors and users (e.g., Linux in enterprise server software) (Rysman, 2009).
- A pipeline business model creates value in a linear manner through preset activities along a chain. (Kortmann and Piller, 2016).
- Platform based businesses, on the other hand, are networked and non-linear, they have no direct control over the production or content of a transaction (i.e., product or service) (Van Alstyne, Parker, & Choudary, 2016).



# Pipeline conceptualization



# Building Bridges and Conduits

## Inside out

- Internships
- Study abroad
- Consulting practicums
- On campus business cells

## Outside in

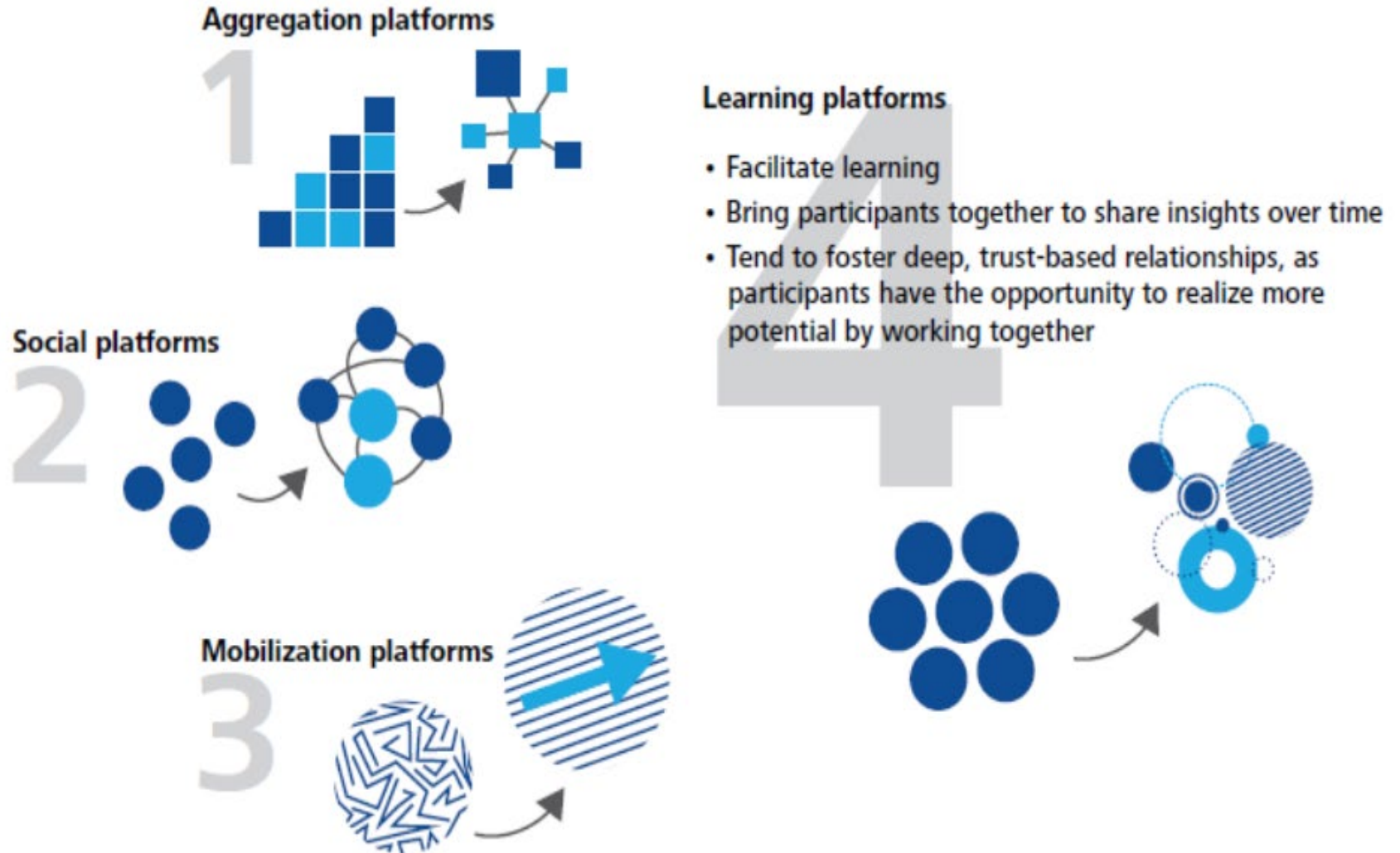
- Guest speakers
- Competition (judges, sponsors)
  - Cases, sales pitches
- Innovative courses



# Business Schools as Platforms

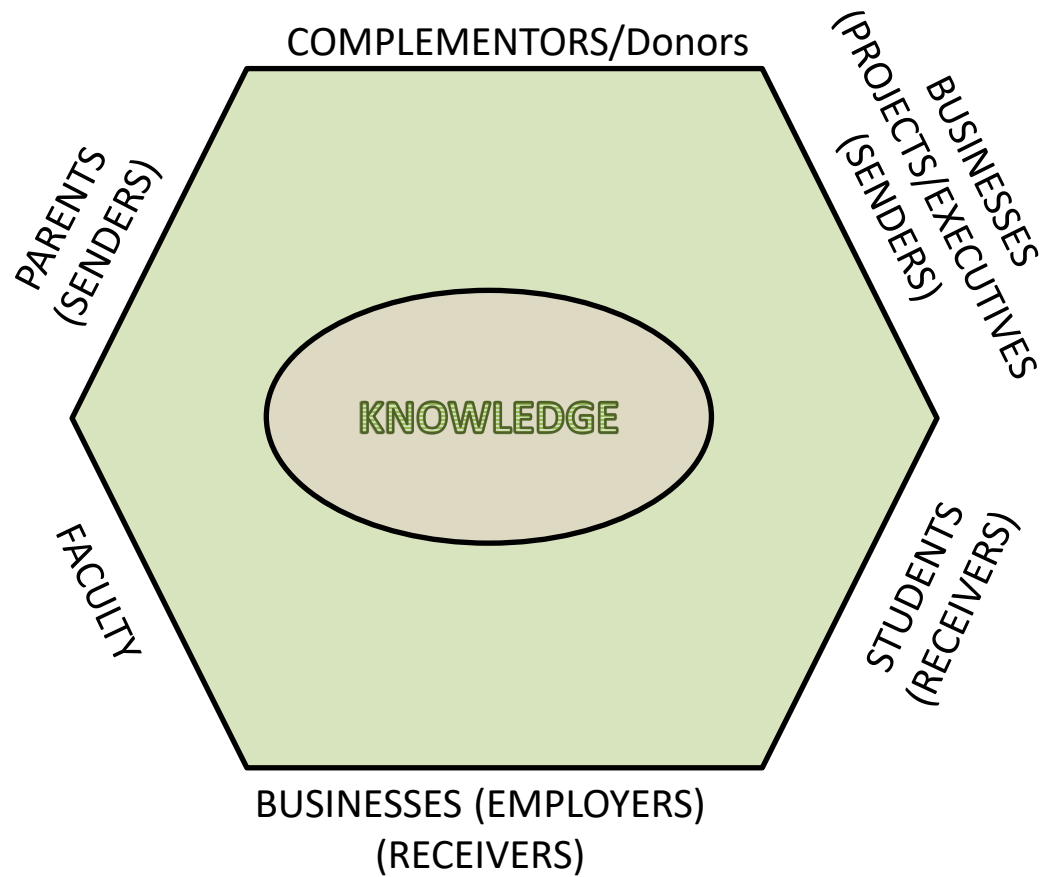
- Resource orchestration is more important than resource control, and facilitating interactions and managing relationships has a higher priority than internal optimization.
- Successful platforms seek to maximize the overall value of the whole system in a circular, revolving and feedback-driven process.
- If one replaces the word “resource” with knowledge, “producers” with faculty and “consumers” with students and employers, we are looking at the very essence of educational institutions.
- Universities have several characteristics of a platform business but have erroneously functioned as pipeline organizations. They have been overly focused on one group of users (students), misused their knowledge creators (faculty) and underutilized their partners (employers and other stakeholders).

# Comparison of various platforms



Source: The Power of Platforms by John Hagel, Deloitte University Press.2015.

# UNIVERSITY SIX-SIDED PLATFORM

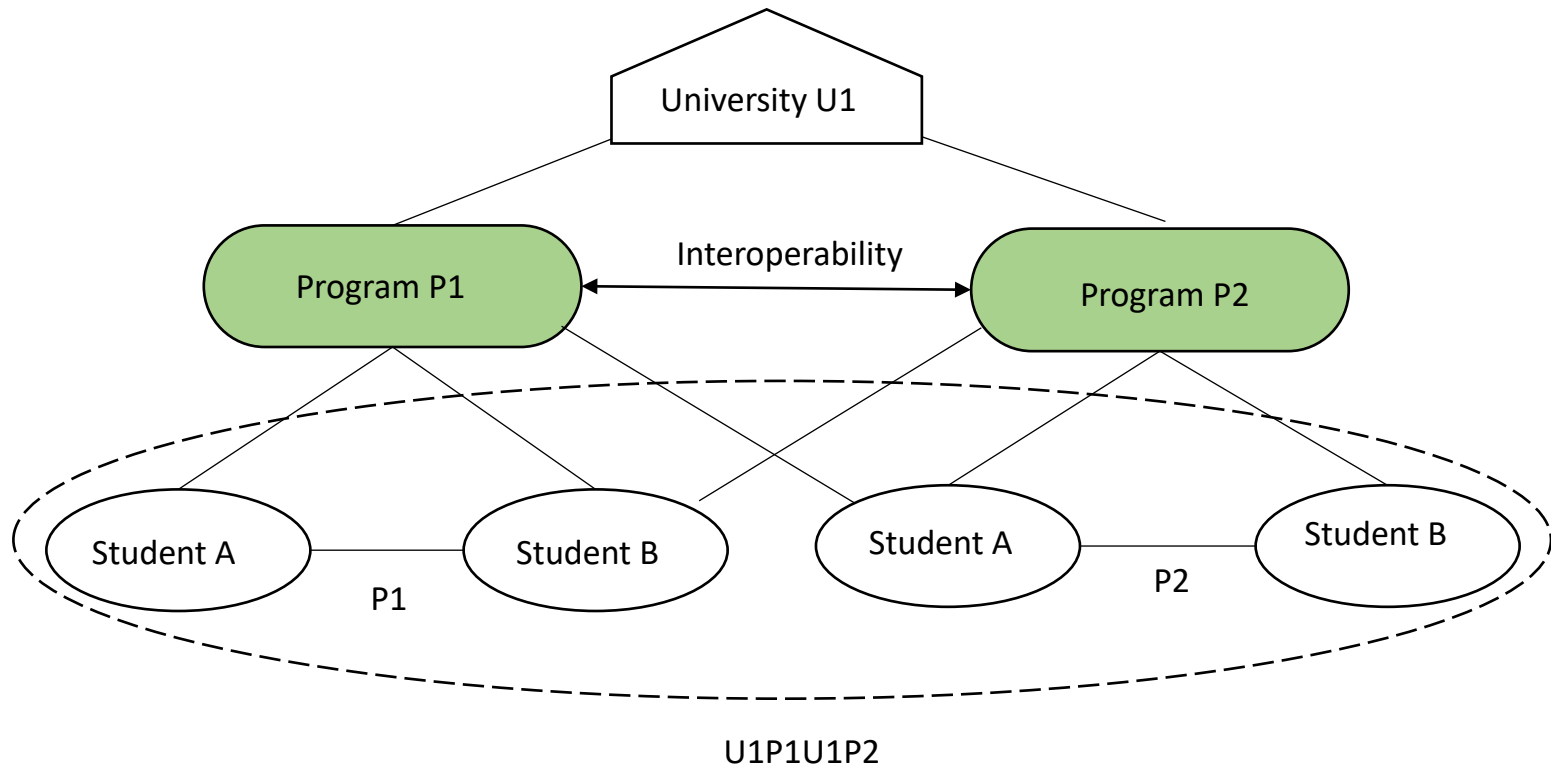


# Some of the Institutions Engaged in Platform Based Innovation

- Davidson University
- Arizona State University
- California State University (Channel Islands)
- Southern New Hampshire University
- BYU- Idaho

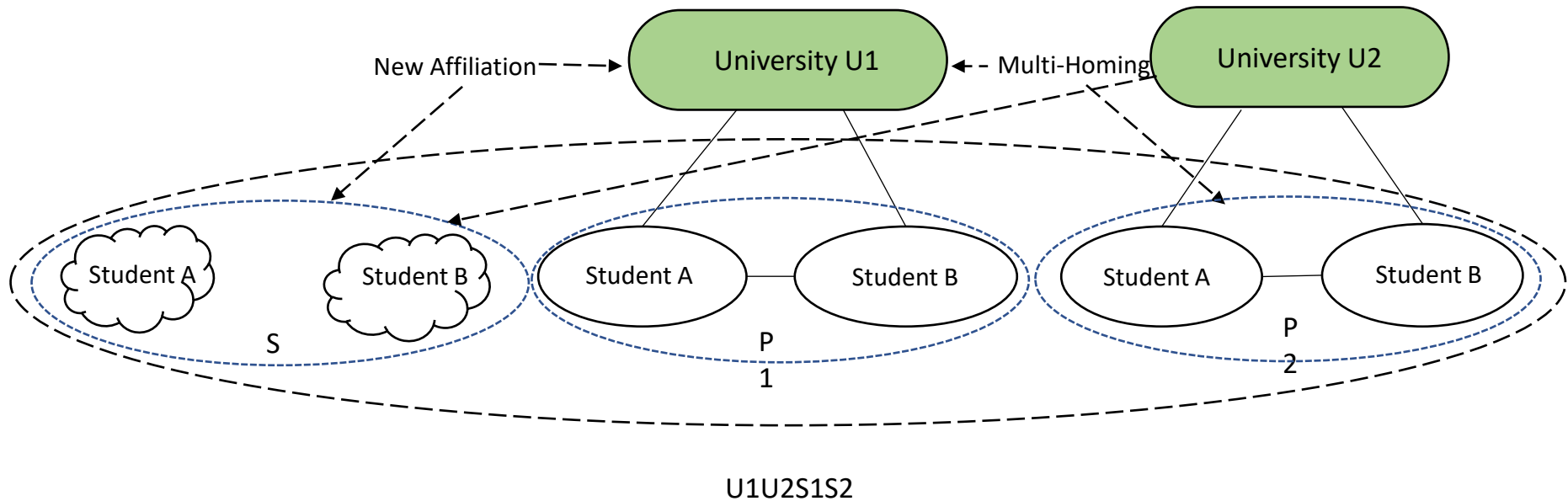
# An Example: Participant Related Change Using Platform Approach

# Openness at the Program Level

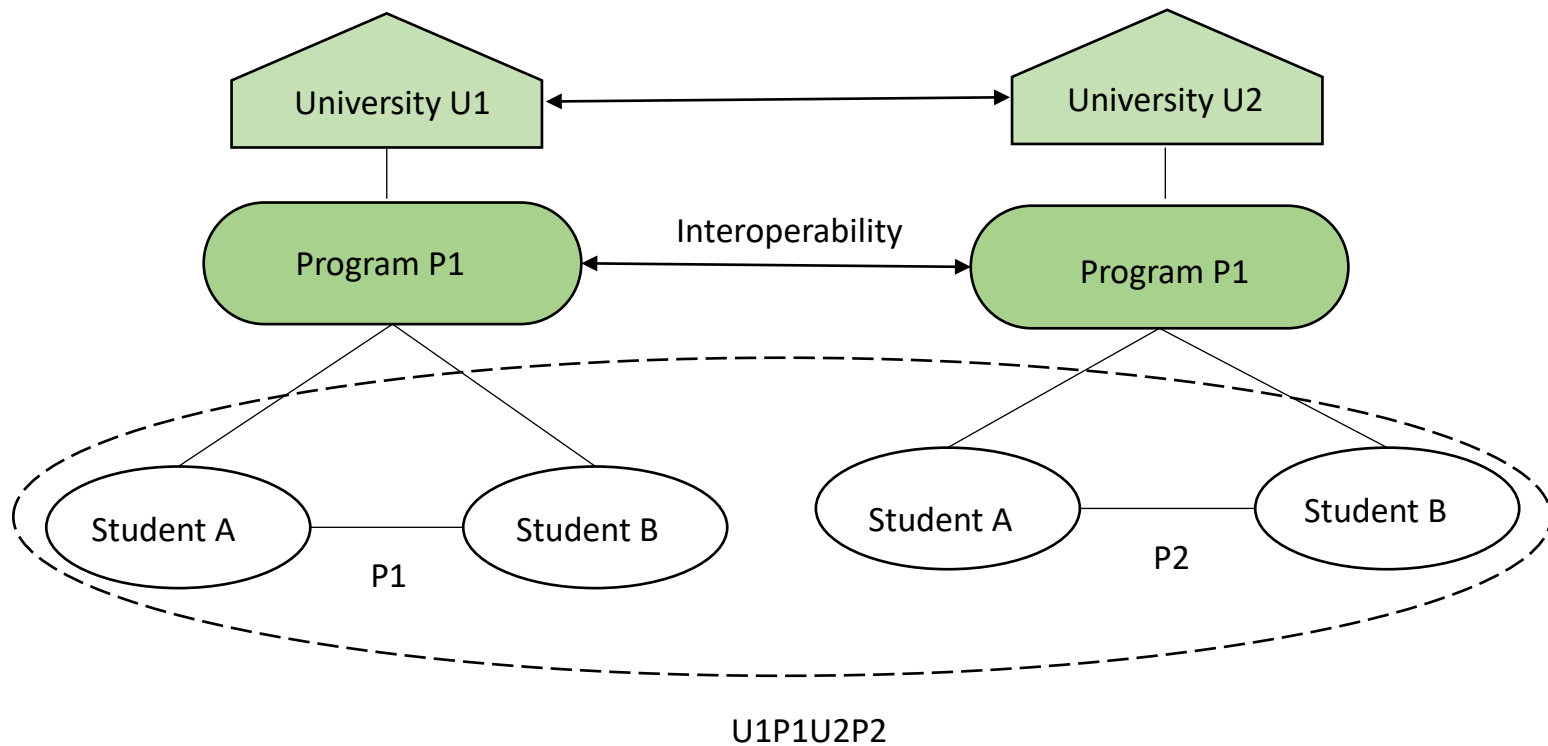




# Openness at the User Level



# Openness at the University Level



# Setting the Stage

- **Collective understanding that there is a necessity to evolve**
  - Conscious raising of the voices calling for widening of the accreditation guidelines
  - Initiatives championed by the faculty are more likely to gain support than those perceived as being externally driven
- **Shorten program and curriculum development cycles**
  - Balance their need for stability and introspection with the need for quick adjustment
  - Innovation in business education is taking place with schools unrestricted by the precincts of cumbersome approval processes
- **Side step lack of resources**
  - Outside constituencies are seen as partners and access to their resources is fair game
  - Shifts the resource related discussion onto finding ways to manage resources effectively
- **Provides a stage for specific innovation opportunities and allows us to build upon successes/failures**

# Steps in Innovation

- Begin with a reputed program
  - Build on a position of strength not weakness
  - Platforms are successful only if they provide value to all participants
- Change the mindset from store to share
  - Universities cannot abandon the classroom but should redefine what a classroom is
  - “Product mindset” views the value pie as comparatively fixed and thus leads to a focus on claiming as much of that pie (e.g. student tuition dollar) as possible
- Focus on growth in network rather than growth in enrollment
  - Shift narrow focus from meeting needs of a particular customer group to maximizing the number of interactions

# Obstacles as Identified by the Students

- Governance/Administration
- Resources
- Culture
- Faculty
- Students
- Accreditation

# Student Ideas (Academic)

- Form formal consortiums with other universities/technical schools
- Credit for work experience
- Use LinkedIn (and other) courses as replacement for some class assignments
- Accounting department could work with Baker Tilly on creating an eBook and giving it to the students for the semester

# Student Ideas (Non-Academic)

- Student run businesses (e.g., booth at Farmer's market, Oshkosh Co-op, environmental product store, food joint in the student unions)
- Partnership with Airlines and Airbnb for travel and lodging.
- Exclusive agreement with 3-4 different companies. They do "X" and they get priority access to our top students (e.g., GPA of 3.7 and above)

Thank you!

