

## Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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I am delighted to introduce Volume 15, Number 3 of the International Journal of Higher Education. As we move through 2026, the global academic landscape continues to be redefined by rapid technological shifts and a renewed focus on the holistic wellbeing of our students. This issue brings together a diverse range of perspectives that challenge us to rethink how we teach, how we research, and how we foster inclusive communities within our institutions. For scholars dedicated to student success and social justice, these articles offer vital insights into the structural and pedagogical shifts necessary to support a modern, diverse student body. In this issue we will read seven articles from the USA, Canada, South Africa, DR Congo, and Belgium with the integration of digital tools remaining a central theme of our current discourse. The research presented in this issue further complicates and enriches this conversation, moving from the technical capabilities of generative AI to the profoundly human experiences of academic stress and community values.

The first article from Opara and colleagues critically evaluates the role of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in reshaping academic research by examining adoption patterns, productivity gains, support for creativity, and the ethical challenges it raises. Their work highlights the critical need for ethical frameworks and responsible usage as these tools become increasingly embedded in scholarly inquiry. The second article from Alcalá and team reported on their effort to measure academic stress and to see how it is associated with other stressors such as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). To address this gap, their study adapted the Perceptions of Academic Stress Scale (PAS) and evaluated the psychometric properties of the PAS, and examined the associations between the PAS and ACEs. This study is particularly relevant for those of us working with marginalised groups, as it underscores the importance of trauma-informed support structures in higher education. The third article from Sirvan Karimi explores the political and structural implications of the digital shift, specifically looking at how technological change affects labour relations. This article provides a necessary perspective on how institutional governance must adapt to preserve the rights and roles of academic staff.

The fourth article in this issue is from Claydon and Trainor who offer a practical case study on the importance of institutional culture. Their research demonstrates how clearly defined community values can serve as a foundation for excellence in teaching and learning environments. The fifth article is from Millard and Breukelman who synthesised contemporary literature examining teaching and learning approaches within sport science programmes, with a specific focus on student expectations, pedagogical practices, and emerging challenges shaping the student experience. Their article discusses how sport science educators are navigating new challenges and using innovative methods to prepare students for the future of the field. Their article emphasises the need for pedagogically intentional, student-centred programme design that balances scientific rigour, applied learning, and relationship-rich education to support student engagement, retention, and graduate readiness in sport science higher education. The sixth article is from Dunn and colleagues who propose a creative approach to interdisciplinary collaboration. By using the concept of memory as a shared binder, they illustrate how large institutions can break down academic silos to foster more cohesive teaching and research outcomes. Their findings suggest that memory may function as a latent conceptual bridge across disciplinary teaching and research, while also revealing how disciplinary vocabularies shape whether faculty recognise and articulate shared concepts. The final article in this issue is from Kapinga-Mutatayi and Elen who focus on the fundamental relationship between teacher and student. Their research validates specific scales for measuring how students perceive different pedagogical styles, offering a valuable tool for those seeking to enhance learner-centred practice.

Based on this issue, I continue to invite researchers and educators from around the world to contribute to IJHE and to join us in building a scholarly community grounded in intellectual rigor, integrity, and global perspective. Together, we can advance research that strengthens higher education's role in fostering knowledge, opportunity, and social progress. I hope that this issue has stimulated reflection, inspired innovation, and contributed meaningfully to the ongoing development of higher education worldwide.

With appreciation and anticipation for the work ahead,

Associate Professor Ingrid Harrington  
Editor-in-Chief  
International Journal of Higher Education