



Lee Iacocca Institute for Global Leadership

LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP INTERACTIONS

Welcome to the Inaugural Issue

We are pleased to present the inaugural issue of Global Leadership Interactions, the newsletter of the Lee Iacocca Institute for Global Leadership (LIIGL) at Lehigh University. Each issue will report recent, ongoing, and anticipated activities, and relevant updates within LIIGL including our Executive Fellows, global professional partners and alumni communities. The newsletter is in three sections: Updates, In the News, and Dialogue Expressions. We hope you enjoy reading this issue and welcome your feedback and contributions.



Lehigh University's Lee Iacocca Institute for Global Leadership publishes *Global Leadership Interactions*, a newsletter that reports professional and scholarly contributions and updates focusing on the Institute's activities and communities including Executive Fellows, global partners and affiliated stakeholders. For information, contact: lms424@lehigh.edu.

UPDATES

Executive Fellow Dialogues Now Available on YouTube

Executive Fellows are invited to present a Dialogue in which they discuss their perspective, scholarship, or practices concerning an issue of global leadership or related topics. Dialogues are facilitated by Executive Fellow Roland Kushner and include a Q&A session. Dialogues are conducted via Zoom on the last Thursday of each month from January through October between 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm EST.



To participate/attend current Dialogues, contact the Institute for access to the Zoom link.

Previously recorded Dialogues were held on a private YouTube site, but this has now been moved to an open site. To watch previously recorded Dialogues, [visit this link](#); and click Global Leadership Practice on the dropdown Menu or go directly to the Iacocca Institute [YouTube](#) page.

Welcome New Executive Fellow

[Asha Castleberry-Hernandez](#) has become the 32nd Executive Fellow of the Lee Iacocca Institute for Global Leadership at Lehigh University. A U.S. national security and foreign policy expert with over ten years of experience working on U.S.–Middle East policy, Asha currently serves on Congressman George Latimer’s (D-NY) Citizen Task Force as the Chairwoman of the Foreign Policy and Military Affairs Committee which supports Congressman

Latimer’s contributions as a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Asha earned a master’s degree in international security policy with a specialization in the Middle East Region from Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs, and she is an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University’s Walsh School of Foreign Service. Asha presented an [Executive Fellow Dialogue](#) on April 30, 2026.



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Welcome New Program Manager

Sean Sakdiponephong has joined the Institute as Program Manager through the summer, focusing on the Institute's precollege program, the Iacocca Global Entrepreneurship Intensive. Sean previously worked as Community College Internships (CCI) Coordinator and English as a Second Language Instructor at Northampton Community College in

Bethlehem, PA. He earned his undergraduate degrees from Temple University in English Language and Literature and in Political Science and Government. He earned an Instructor Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language and a Master of Education (M.Ed.) in International and Comparative Education from Lehigh University.

Congratulations to Jennifer Maxwell, Master of Engineering in Technical Entrepreneurship, Lehigh 2026

Jennifer (Jenny) Maxwell is thrilled to announce she was awarded her M.Eng. degree at the 2026 Lehigh Commencement. She wrote, "If told years ago I would hold an engineering master's degree today, I wouldn't have believed it because it was financially out of reach and a distant dream." This was no dream at the Iacocca Institute, however. Jenny was a Program Manager from 2024-2025, and "expertly managed diverse programs and

events and leveraged social media to enhance marketing efforts." Jenny came to Lehigh and the Institute after she earned a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) from Muhlenberg College, where she studied with Roland Kushner. While a graduate student she also earned certificates in Agile and Project Management, and she was a Graduate Student Ambassador to the Lehigh University College of Engineering.



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Iacocca International Internship Program moves into LIIGL

Leah Mason, Interim Executive Director of the Lee Iacocca Institute, reports that the Iacocca International Internship Program has become integrated into the Lee Iacocca Institute for Global Leadership. Since its launch in 2011, IIP has placed nearly 900 students in summer internships across five dozen countries. “This is not just about adding a line to your resume,”



said Mason, “It’s about the opportunities that you choose to embrace and the moments that you are creating in a new place.” A total of 78 students will be interning in 19 different countries this summer, including Japan, France, Germany, India, Ireland, South Africa, Ecuador, Singapore, Thailand, and more. Students will be participating from all five of Lehigh’s colleges, in internships that span multiple fields and industries.

Congratulations to Bishop Pikinini, Master of Science in Management, Lehigh 2026

Omogolo (Bishop) Pikinini is thrilled to announce he has earned his MS in Management and named one of the “10 under 10” which recognizes ten outstanding young alumni who have graduated within the past decade and are already making “meaningful impact in their professions, communities, and fields of leadership.” Having held roles as Program Manager at the Lee Iacocca Institute for Global Leadership, Bishop has overseen

leadership training programs and educational programming such as the renowned Mandela Washington Fellowship and the Iacocca Global Village. With a diverse academic background in Philosophy and Mechanical Engineering, and now an MS in Management, Bishop brings an interdisciplinary perspective as well as a deep passion for improving higher education, leading teams, and enabling innovation.



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LIIGL Partnership Update

Priya S. Nayar, Executive Director of University Alliance Ruhr (Ruhr University Bochum | TU Dortmund University | University of Duisburg-Essen) and a LIIGL education partner, reports she is engaged in a mix of academic and cultural gatherings building science diplomacy programming in action. Topics span entrepreneurship, democracy, diplomacy, fellowships, and more. The Transatlantic Ruhr Fellowship Program offers researchers and scholars the opportunity to engage in collaborative work across the Atlantic, strengthening academic and research ties between the Ruhr region and North American Universities. This program fosters meaningful exchange and builds lasting partnerships that drive innovation and knowledge transfer between Germany and North America.

Leah Mason noted, “We will (once again) have Ruhr Fellows – 10 German graduate students – studying with us on the Lehigh campus during the last week in July 2026. We are planning for them to attend the Executive Fellows Dialogue scheduled for Thursday July 30th and to offer additional opportunities to engage with the Executive Fellows.”



Fellowship Advising & UN Programs

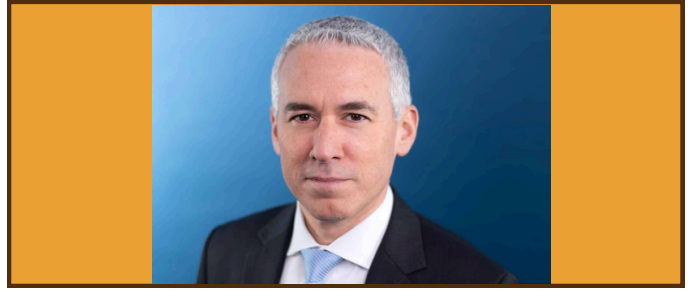
Bill Hunter, Director of the Office of Fellowship Advising and UN Programs, has multiple professional updates. He was named to the Board of Directors of the Committee on Teaching About the United Nations. He led a service/sustainability student trip to Antigua & Barbuda (see the photo with Bill in the back row, 3rd from right, with some of his students in Antigua). Bill also facilitated a student-based research project with UN-Habitat in Nairobi, Kenya, and led a team of students who certified the Mission of Switzerland to the UN as a model for sustainability. The Lehigh University/United Nations Partnership, which he directs, has now had more than 25,000 faculty, staff, and students engage in UN-related programming since its inception in 2004.

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Executive Fellow Updates



Jonathan Schanzer, Executive Fellow and Executive Director at Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), a Washington, DC-based nonpartisan 501(c)(3) research institute focusing on national security and foreign policy, provided links to two of his recent publications. Both were published in Commentary Magazine in the wake of the eruption of the Iran war on February 28. Both wrestle with key concepts that reflect the Trump administration's challenges. Winning the war, as we have learned in recent weeks, truly depends upon how one defines "victory." Jon is scheduled to be the

speaker for the Executive Fellows Dialogue on Thursday March 25, 2027.

Jon also suggests that Executive Fellows and others may also be interested in his tri-weekly (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) podcast, FDD Morning Brief, designed to provide an update on the news including an interview with a top expert on Middle East or US National Security.

Here are links to Jon's recent articles:

Regime Change Without Nation Building, April 2026

What Victory Looks Like When Your Foe Won't Surrender, May 2026

R. Kevin Grigsby, Executive Fellow, notes, "May 2026 marks the 5th anniversary of my retirement from academic medicine and science. Although I engage in some focused consultation with medical schools, I spend time with my grandchildren and antique VW beetles." Kevin continues, "I also invest effort in a DC-based organization,

SisterMentors. This organization offers support to women from under-represented groups who are pursuing PhD degrees. They also mentor female middle and high school students who aspire to attend college." Kevin also provides support and insight as an Executive Fellow and presented a Dialogue in June, 2025.



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Executive Fellow Update



Fermín Ezquer-Matallana, Executive Fellow, founder and managing partner of consultancy Think Creative, reports that his work over the past year has continued to focus on helping organizations across the US, Europe, and Asia turn innovation efforts into tangible business outcomes. He comments, “In the US market especially, I have been working with companies and leadership teams on the design of innovation operating models, venture-building approaches, opportunity evaluation frameworks, and execution structures aimed at helping innovation initiatives translate into measurable impact; whether through growth, operational improvement, or the development of new capabilities.”

More recently, a growing part of that work has been centered on helping organizations navigate AI-related strategic decisions. Rather than approaching AI as a purely technological challenge, he has been exploring how companies can better identify which opportunities are worth backing, how those opportunities align with business priorities, and what execution models are realistically viable inside the organization. This thinking recently led him to write *Navigating the AI Wilderness*, focused on the growing gap between innovation activity and strategic clarity.

Alongside this corporate work, Fermín continues to be actively involved in startup and venture ecosystems connecting the

US, Europe, and Asia. In recent years, this has included supporting Korean startups entering the US market, helping founders refine their go-to-market strategies, identify product-market fit opportunities, and navigate commercial expansion in a very different business environment. More recently, he has been involved in early discussions around a food-tech and agri-tech investment initiative in Korea.

A third area of focus has been venture-creation around research and intellectual property. Building on previous work, Fermín has been exploring the development of a European-based initiative aimed at helping research-driven and deep-tech ventures move from promising ideas into viable businesses. He concludes, “What I find particularly interesting today is the growing convergence between these worlds. Whether working with established companies, startups, or research institutions, the challenge increasingly comes down to the same core question: how to turn innovation ambition into focused execution and real-world impact.”

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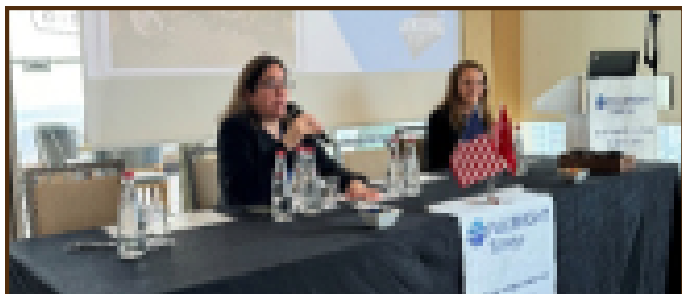
Executive Fellow Update



Hande Gündüz, Executive Fellow, reports that since joining the LIIGL community she has continued her academic and scientific work, most recently by accepting an appointment in the Department of Chemistry at Koç University, Türkiye. In this new academic environment with expanded interdisciplinary collaborations, she will continue her research in organic chemistry, organic synthesis, photodynamic therapy, and anti-cancer drug synthesis. For example, she recently became the principal investigator of a major national research project funded by The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye, leading an interdisciplinary scientific team working on innovative diagnostic and phototherapeutic approaches for cancer. Some of her chemistry publications are listed on her Google Scholar page.

Hande is also involved in an international collaborative research project with global research partners, further strengthening international scientific cooperation and knowledge exchange. She has also been appointed as the President of the Fulbright Alumni Association of Türkiye. In this role, she writes,

“I actively contribute to strengthening the Fulbright community, supporting academic and cultural exchange initiatives; creating new opportunities for collaboration among scholars and alumni; and organizing numerous cultural, academic, and networking events both within Istanbul and across different cities in Türkiye. Additionally, we currently have a collaborative project proposal with the U.S. Embassy, aiming to further support alumni engagement and international educational exchange initiatives.”



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Executive Fellow Updates



Roland Kushner, Executive Fellow and Inaugural Convener of the Fellows Dialogues, announced that he is retiring as Professor of Management after 20 years at Muhlenberg College. Roland's academic proficiencies have included teaching a range of leadership, strategy, and management courses, and developing the curriculum for the Master's in Organizational Leadership degree program.

He won't be bored in retirement, however. In addition to supporting the Executive Fellowship, he is active in Lehigh Valley arts and community organization, serves as a trustee of Martin Guitar Charitable Foundation, will continue to offer advisory services, including research in nonprofit strategy and cultural economics, and as a singer and songwriter, will continue to make music.

Larry M. Starr, Executive Fellow and Director of Applied Research, gave the keynote address for the Anniversary of the Founding of the HungsaDahn (Young Korean Academy). The Academy is dedicated to cultivating leaders, promoting democratic values, and preserving Korean cultural heritage including in the US. His topic was Framework for the Design of an Ideal Society. He gave an invited talk at the Cardiac Arrest Survival Summit on the topic "EMS Responders Rarely Apply a Systems Approach to Emergencies. Why and What to do about it."

He has also been editing submitted manuscripts to several publications including International Journal of Paramedicine and Systems Journal. He has had a paper accepted to the journal, Systems Practice and Behavioral Science, for a special issue on Cybernetic-Systemic Education.

With Executive Fellow Regina Tendayi, Larry also coauthored "Rethinking human resource management before it is too late," which was published in The People Factor Magazine: South African Board for People Practices, Vol. 7, No. 8 (August), 10-14.



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In the News

Political commentary cited in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*



Christopher Borick, Executive Fellow, provided expert commentary about candidate platforms for Primary Elections in Philadelphia (May 19, 2026) in which a new Representative for the 3rd Congressional District was on the ballot. The Pennsylvania Governor's race was uncontested. As Professor of Political Science and Director of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion in Allentown, Pennsylvania (recognized as one of the leading polling organizations in the US), his descriptions of policies and approaches were part of an article published in The Philadelphia Inquirer on May 13, 2026.



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Expressions



Expressions is a monthly online forum for Executive Fellows and Scholarly Partners of the Lee Iacocca Institute for Global Leadership of Lehigh University. Expressions make thoughts and feelings known and convey meaning about leadership challenges in our complex global environment.

May 2026 Challenge: How has evidence of polycrisis in an organization or globally been demonstrated in your professional work and experiences regarding leaders, emerging leaders, or leadership?

According to the [Cascade Institute](#), we are experiencing global polycrises defined as:

“...when crisis in multiple global systems becomes causally entangled in ways that cause major human harm. Humanity now faces a set of global systemic risks – among them climate change, biodiversity loss, widening inequalities, pandemics, financial instability, political unrest – all influenced by long-running demographic trends.”

We are also experiencing organizational polycrises defined as:

“...a situation where multiple, distinct, and interconnected crises—such as financial, operational, technological, and reputational shocks—strike simultaneously, creating cascading failures where the combined impact is far worse than the sum of individual crises.”



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Expressions



Joseph Sweeney

It's not simply crisis management. It is judgment under entanglement.

In my professional work, I have seen evidence of polycrisis less as a single dramatic event than as a pattern of interlocking pressures that make leadership increasingly difficult. Leaders are rarely responding to one clean problem. They are navigating overlapping systems: financial stress, technological disruption, labor constraints, political uncertainty, institutional distrust, demographic change, and rapidly shifting expectations from employees, customers, funders, and communities.

At the organizational level, this has been especially clear in my current work with a federal construction contractor. The company's strategic choices are shaped not only by ordinary business concerns but also by federal budget uncertainty, changes in procurement priorities, pressure on small and disadvantaged business programs, rising costs, workforce constraints, capital access, and the accelerating need to adopt new technologies. None of these pressures exists in isolation. They compound one another. A delay in federal appropriations can affect contract timing, which affects cash flow, which affects hiring, which affects execution capacity, which affects future competitiveness.

This is also visible in my work through the Decision Leadership Institute. Leaders and emerging leaders increasingly need more than technical expertise or traditional management skills. They need the ability to make decisions under uncertainty, recognize system-level interactions, separate signal from noise, and preserve human judgment in environments shaped by artificial intelligence, political polarization, economic volatility, and institutional complexity. In that sense, leadership development itself has become a response to polycrisis.

The central leadership challenge I see is not simply crisis management. It is judgment under entanglement. Leaders must learn to ask better questions: What systems are interacting here? Where are the second-order consequences? What assumptions are we making? What risks are correlated rather than independent? What capabilities will remain valuable across multiple possible futures?

The practical implication is that emerging leaders need training in systems thinking, probabilistic reasoning, ethical judgment, and adaptive execution. They also need humility. In a polycrisis environment, no leader has full visibility. The most effective leaders will not be those who claim certainty, but those who build organizations capable of learning, updating, coordinating, and acting wisely amid uncertainty.

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Expressions

Lesley Robinson



It's About Leadership Mindset

In my work across entrepreneurship education and global leadership, I've seen polycrisis emerge at the intersection of economic instability, rapid technological change, and widening inequities, all of which shape how leaders (and emerging leaders) navigate the world. These challenges are no longer isolated; they are deeply interconnected and require a different approach to leadership.

Most clearly, I've observed the growing importance of cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset and entrepreneurial leadership capacity in response to uncertainty and complexity. Today's leaders must be adaptable, opportunity-seeking, resilient, and comfortable navigating ambiguity. They must solve problems creatively, lead with empathy, and empower others to act amid constant change.

At the same time, I've seen many emerging leaders shift toward more purpose-driven innovation, building ventures and initiatives focused not only on profit but also on impact, sustainability, belonging, and systems change. In this era of polycrisis, more entrepreneurial leadership can lead to solutions, stronger communities, and more hopeful futures.

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Expressions

Priya S. Nayar



Our Leadership Pipelines

Thank you for framing this conversation around the Cascade Institute's work. The concept of polycrisis is not abstract in my professional life. It shows up in the day-to-day reality of transatlantic university partnerships, where disruptions rarely arrive in isolation. For example, when the war in Ukraine began, the partnerships universities worked with did not face a single geopolitical question. They faced a cascade of simultaneous pressures: funding pipelines tied to research programs under political stress, researchers from affected regions mid-project, institutional pressure to make public statements, and partners asking whether long-term commitments still held. While none of those was a crisis on its own, together, they were something harder to name and harder to manage.

The university presidents and research directors who navigated it best were not those with the clearest strategy. They were those who could hold ambiguity without freezing, who could say honestly to partners: "I don't know what the next six months look like, but here is what I am committed to." That kind of leadership, what I would call relational constancy under uncertainty, does not appear much in leadership courses. However, it is what a polycrisis environment demands.

I have also seen this in the emerging leaders I encounter. The ones who stand out are not defined by disciplinary mastery but instead by their capacity to work across fragmented and fractured systems that are no longer functioning as designed. They enter a room where a research agenda, a funding constraint, a political boundary, and a community expectation are in direct tension, and move that room forward when everyone's assumptions conflict. This is a new kind of competency in leadership, essentially the ability to stay in a complexity long enough to understand and build truly responsive and sustainability / resilient infrastructures.

Science diplomacy, the field I often quote I work within, is itself a polycrisis response mechanism, though we rarely name it that way. It exists precisely where national interest, research integrity, and geopolitical friction meet shared global risk. No single government, university, or sector can absorb what is coming alone. The question I keep returning to is whether our leadership pipelines are producing people capable of operating at that scale of interconnection, or whether we are still training specialists to manage siloed insular problems, in a world that is now producing global interconnected and interdependent complex ones.

I don't have a tidy answer. But I believe the Executive Fellows community is exactly the right place to ask the question seriously!

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Expressions

Fermín Ezquer-Matallana

When Everything Seems Urgent



In many organizations today, polycrisis does not appear as a single dramatic event. It shows up as a constant accumulation of overlapping pressures arriving simultaneously from different directions: geopolitical uncertainty, technological acceleration, AI disruption, sustainability demands, workforce shifts, economic volatility, and growing pressure to innovate while still delivering short-term results.

Through my work with established companies, startups, and innovation ecosystems across the US, Europe, and Asia, I have seen how these pressures increasingly interact with one another rather than operate independently. Decisions that once belonged to separate domains: technology, operations, talent, growth, risk, sustainability, or market expansion, are now deeply interconnected. As a result, leadership environments have become significantly more complex and harder to navigate through traditional linear planning models.

One of the clearest effects of this environment is the growing pressure on leaders to always demonstrate movement. Organizations feel compelled to react quickly, launch initiatives, adopt new technologies, experiment constantly, and signal responsiveness to rapidly changing conditions. In the case of AI especially, many companies are under visible pressure to “do something” before they have fully clarified where meaningful value actually exists for the business. In practice, however, activity and progress are not always the same thing.

In recent years, I have observed that many organizations do not necessarily struggle with a lack of ideas or opportunities. More often, they struggle with overload: too many possible directions, too many competing priorities, and too much pressure to move simultaneously on multiple fronts. Under those conditions, innovation efforts can easily become fragmented, reactive, and difficult to translate into measurable outcomes.

This is where I believe the leadership challenge is changing. Increasingly, the organizations that navigate complexity most effectively are not simply the fastest movers. They are the ones capable of creating moments of clarity amid constant pressure. Not long pauses that lead to paralysis, but disciplined pauses that allow leadership teams to quickly reassess assumptions, prioritize opportunities, eliminate distractions, align stakeholders, and decide what truly deserves commitment.

Despite the complexity of the current moment, I remain optimistic. Across different industries and ecosystems, I continue to encounter leaders and emerging leaders who are learning to operate with greater adaptability, sharper prioritization, and a more integrated view of change. In environments shaped by polycrisis, those capabilities may become some of the most important forms of leadership resilience.

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Expressions



Hande Gündüz

At the same time but on the other hand...

In my professional experience, the concept of polycrisis has become increasingly visible through the interconnected challenges affecting higher education, scientific collaboration, and civil society initiatives. Particularly in recent years, global issues such as political polarization, economic instability, climate-related concerns, and the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have directly influenced leadership practices and institutional resilience.

Through my work in academia and international exchange programs, I have observed that emerging leaders are now expected to navigate uncertainty while simultaneously addressing social, scientific, and ethical responsibilities. For example, disruptions in international mobility, funding limitations, and growing inequalities in access to education and research opportunities have required leaders to develop more adaptive, collaborative, and inclusive approaches.

In addition, recent shifts in research funding priorities have created further challenges within academia. A significant portion of available funding has increasingly focused on commercially profitable pharmaceutical production, defense technologies, and arms-related research. As a consequence, many fundamental scientific research areas and socially oriented academic projects experience substantial funding cuts. This imbalance negatively affects scientific diversity, limits opportunities for independent and interdisciplinary research, and creates difficulties for researchers working outside strategically prioritized sectors. The reduction in academic funding also directly impacts researchers themselves. Lower salaries, decreasing project opportunities, and unstable research conditions contribute to declining motivation among academics and research staff. In the long term, these conditions may lead to the loss of highly qualified researchers and skilled professionals, weakening both institutional capacity and scientific innovation. Emerging leaders in academia are therefore challenged not only to sustain research productivity, but also to protect academic integrity, support human capital, and maintain motivation within increasingly fragile research environments. Furthermore, fields such as the natural sciences are increasingly affected by declining salaries, high research and development costs, and shifting global professional trends. Since natural science disciplines often require substantial long-term laboratory infrastructure and research investments, financial instability within academia discourages many students from pursuing careers in these fields. At the same time, changing labor market dynamics and growing professional polarization toward more commercially attractive sectors have contributed to a decline in both the number and academic profile of students choosing natural science programs.

Expressions



Hande Gündüz

At the same time but on the other hand...

This trend creates long-term concerns regarding the sustainability of scientific talent pipelines, research capacity, and the future development of fundamental sciences.

At the same time, polycrisis has significantly restricted global academic mobility and researcher interaction. Increasing visa restrictions, ongoing regional conflicts and wars, and economic pressures such as energy and oil-related crises have substantially increased transportation and accommodation costs for international conferences and scientific meetings. As a result, many researchers face difficulties participating in global academic events and maintaining international visibility. This decline in mobility has deeply affected collaborative research opportunities, interdisciplinary partnerships, and the exchange of scientific knowledge across borders. The weakening of these international academic networks poses long-term risks for innovation, scientific diplomacy, and global problem-solving capacity.

On the educational side, the long-term effects of wars, pandemics, and prolonged online learning environments have also transformed student behavior and learning habits. Many students have become more accustomed to isolated and technology-centered educational models rather than interactive university environments that encourage discussion, debate, and collective learning. The growing reliance on artificial intelligence-based research tools and individualized learning practices has created both opportunities and challenges for emerging leaders. While digital tools increase access to information, reduced face-to-face interaction and critical discussion environments may negatively affect students' abilities in questioning, reasoning, analytical thinking, and developing multidimensional perspectives. In the long term, this transformation may influence how future leaders approach complex global problems, interpersonal communication, and collaborative decision-making processes.

Additionally, even long-established and prestigious international scholarship programs have been increasingly affected by the financial consequences of polycrisis. Rising tuition fees, inflation-driven living expenses, and reductions in available funding have made it more difficult for scholarships to adequately support students' academic and personal needs abroad. As a result, many qualified students are becoming discouraged from applying to international scholarship programs due to financial uncertainty and concerns about insufficient support. This decline in applications may ultimately reduce international academic exchange opportunities, cross-cultural engagement, and the development of globally minded future leaders.

Expressions



Hande Gündüz

At the same time but on the other hand...

On the other hand, funding limitations in research and development projects, particularly in developed countries, have also reduced the availability of PhD and postdoctoral positions for international researchers. Many young scholars who aim to pursue advanced academic training abroad are increasingly unable to secure research positions and financial support. This situation prevents emerging researchers from gaining exposure to global scientific trends, advanced laboratory environments, and innovative research methodologies that are essential for academic and professional development. Over time, the lack of sustainable academic opportunities and career security contributes to a growing shift of highly qualified researchers from academia to industry. While industry careers may offer greater financial stability, this transition also risks weakening academic research ecosystems and reducing the number of future mentors and scientific leaders within universities and research institutions.

Overall, the evidence of polycrisis in my professional experiences highlights the importance of resilient leadership, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Therefore, in the environments in which I have worked and observed, it has become increasingly evident that leaders must be capable of continuously adapting within a polycrisis context. They need to remain actively connected to global academic and professional networks, maintain an interactive and open approach to knowledge exchange, and be able to evaluate complex issues from multiple perspectives. In addition, effective leadership in this era requires strong analytical thinking and judgement skills, and the capacity to develop viable and sustainable solutions to emerging crises.

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The Institute is generously supported by the [Iacocca Family Foundation](#), [Lehigh University Office of International Affairs](#), and engaged alumni. We are grateful to our wider community for sustaining financial and other support for our programs and the work of our Executive Fellows. Donations are fully tax-deductible as provided by law.

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