



من الرؤية الى العمل:
قيادة الطالب نحو النجاح

INSIGHT TO ACTION: DRIVING STUDENT SUCCESS

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Raffles Dubai | UAE
October 25-26, 2022



FINAL
Last Updated: October 21, 2022

About Zayed University

Zayed University, the UAE's flagship higher education institution, was established in 1998 and proudly bears the name of the Founder of the Nation – the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. In the spirit of Sheikh Zayed, the University is a pioneer and innovator in the field of education and research. The University currently has more than 10,500 Emirati and international students across its full range of undergraduate and postgraduate offerings.

Led by Her Excellency Noura Al Kaabi, Minister of Culture and Youth and Chair of the University's Board of Trustees, the University proudly serves the needs of the nation and contributes to the UAE's economic, social and cultural progress, at its state-of-the-art campuses in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. It embraces innovation and its virtual learning programs use best-in-class technology.

Through research, scholarship, creative activities and outreach, Zayed University provides educational leadership, expands opportunity, and enriches the knowledge of local, regional, and global communities.

The University is proud of its role in encouraging academic excellence, promoting leadership skills and advancing knowledge. The University strives to encourage the potential and inspire the promise of all its students, whilst also accelerating change in the UAE and contributing towards the nation's ambitious plan for the next 50 years.

Visit www.zu.ac.ae for more information.

About Explorance

Explorance is a provider of People Insight solutions. The company empowers organizations with actionable decision-making by measuring students' and employees' needs, expectations, skills, knowledge, and competencies. Through scalable automation with tools including Blue and Metrics That Matter and expert-based services, Explorance facilitates continuous improvement and accelerates the insight-to-action cycle leading to personal growth and organizational agility.

Founded in 2003, Explorance is headquartered in Montreal with business units in Chicago, Chennai, Melbourne, Amman, and London. Since 2014, Explorance has been consecutively ranked as a top employer by the Great Places to Work Institute® and is currently the #1 "Best Workplace in Canada" for 2021. Explorance works with 35% of the Fortune 100 and 25% of the top higher education institutions, including 8 of the world's top 10 business schools. The company has clients in more than 40 countries. To learn more, please visit Explorance.com and connect with us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#) @explorance.

About Bluenotes Community

Explorance is honored to sponsor the Bluenotes Community's learning activities. The Bluenotes Community is a united community of users of [Blue suite solutions](#) in Higher Education, with the mission of "Connect. Share. Learn. Grow." Since 2014, the Bluenotes Community hosts annual conferences and regional chapter activities connecting community members regardless of where they are located. The [Bluenotes conferences](#), aspiring to be a global exchange of ideas for feedback-based continuous improvement for teaching excellence and student success, have been attended by over 750 community members from nearly 300 institutions globally. Connect with the Bluenotes Community member institutions on [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

Conference Schedule - Day 1 at a Glance

Time	Tuesday, 25 October 2022
08:00 am – 09:10 am	<i>Registration and Morning Refreshment</i>
09:10 am – 09:20 am	Opening Remarks Yeona Jang, Explorance
09:20 am – 09:30 am	Welcome Address by Zayed University Presenter: Prof. Michael Allen, Zayed University
09:30 am – 09:45 am	From Insight to Action, the Road Ahead Presenter: Samer Jaffar, Explorance
09:50 am – 11:00 am	Panel Discussion Assessment at a Distance: Traditional vs. Alternative Assessments Facilitator: Solveig Nicklos, Zayed University
11:00 am – 11:20 am	<i>Mid- Morning Refreshment Break</i>
11:20 am – 11:55 am	Who, What, When, and Where Presenter: Candace Girard, Tufts University
12:00 pm – 12:35 pm	Students Feedback Empowers a Continuous Improvement Cycle at ADU Presenter: Merlyn Kulapurath, Abu Dhabi University (ADU)
12:35 pm – 01:35 pm	<i>Lunch Break</i>
01:35 pm – 02:10 pm	Closing the Loop at Module and Program Level Presenter: Garmon ap Garth, Birkbeck, University of London
02:15 pm – 02:50 pm	Gaining Deeper Insights from Student Comments Using Machine Learning Presenter: Alexis Tremblay, Explorance
02:50 pm – 03:10 pm	<i>Afternoon Refreshment Break</i>
03:10 pm – 04:20 pm	Squared Debate Dissemination of Summarized Course and Instructor Evaluations to Students Is Critical to Close the Loop; Should Every Institution Adopt this Practice? Facilitator: Samer Jaffar, Explorance
04:25 pm – 04:45 pm	Drawing for First Door Prize Group Photo
05:00 pm	<i>End Of First Day and heading for the dinner location</i>
<i>05:30 pm – 8:00 pm</i> <i>Bluenotes MENA 2022 Networking Dinner (Dubai Mal Musical Fountain Experience)</i> <i>At: Abd El Wahab Restaurant, Souk Al Bahar, Dubai Mall</i>	

Conference Schedule - Day 2 at a Glance

Time	Wednesday, 26 October 2022
08:00 am – 09:10 am	Registration and Morning Refreshment
09:10 am – 10:10 am	<p>Panel Discussion</p> <p>Revamping the Societal Image of Institutional Research Professionals Facilitator: Farah Otaki, Mohammed Bin Rashid University of Medicine and Health Sciences</p>
10:15 am – 10:50 am	<p>CUD Insights on Stakeholders Engagement in Closing the Survey Performance Loop Presenter: Tina Daaboul, Canadian University Dubai (CUD)</p>
10:50 am – 11:10 am	Mid-Morning Refreshment Break
11:10 am – 11:45 am	<p>Embedding Student Voice and Actionable Insights to Enhance the Student Experience Presenter: Brian Green, University of Strathclyde</p>
11:50 am – 12:25 pm	<p>Enhancing Quality of Education with Improved Evaluation Process: AUC Success Story Presenter: Nada Matar, The American University in Cairo (AUC)</p>
12:25 pm – 01:25 pm	Lunch Break
01:25 pm – 02:25 pm	<p>Squared Debate:</p> <p>Using Data Analytics to Gain Insights into the Academic & Survey Data of Students. Is it Ethical to Profile Students and Provide Targeted Support? Facilitator: Michael Weisman, Explorance</p>
02:30 pm – 03:05 pm	<p>Saudi Electronic University's Approach to Students, Faculty and Staff's Feedback Prof. Maysaa Mohammed Al Qurashi</p>
03:05 pm – 03:25 pm	Afternoon Refreshment Break
03:25 pm – 04:55 pm	<p>Regional Benchmarking and Roundtable Discussion for Aspirational Peer Comparison and Self-Assessment Speakers: Prof. Abhilasha Singh, American University in the Emirates, Prof. Mustahsan Mir, Ajman University Dr. Taoufik Zoubeydi, Unites Arab Emirates University Samer Jaffar, Explorance</p>
04:55 pm – 05:15 pm	<p>Drawing for Door Prize Closing Remarks Group Photo</p>
05:15 pm	End Of Second Day

Sessions Description

Tuesday, 25 October 2022

Session Time: 09:50 am – 11:00 am

Panel Title: Assessment at a Distance: Traditional vs. Alternative Assessments

Panelists: Prof. Mustahsan Mir, Ajman University
 Prof. John Matthews, Zayed University
 Brain Green, University of Strathclyde
 Dr. Reem Albuainain, Bahrain Polytechnic
 Prof. Nabil Zary, Mohammed Bin Rashid University of Medicine and Health Sciences

Facilitator: Solveig Nicklos, Zayed University

People within the educational community (i.e. policymakers, educators, students, parents, administrators) have different ideas regarding the implementation of assessment strategies. While some believe traditional assessment methods are more effective, others think that alternative assessment tools are superior. Assessment being one of the crucial components of instruction, this panel will shed some light on the benefits and shortcomings of assessments and which mode of assessments do universities prefer.

Session Time: 11:20 am – 11:55 am

Session Title: Who, What, When, and Where

Presenter: Candace Girard, Tufts University

Abstract: Tufts University has developed a process for automated and dynamic evaluation of the instructors and content of their veterinary school's clinical rotations across time periods and teaching sites. With the power of automated data, and the flexibility of dynamic dates, and a focus on instructor roles, Tufts has adapted the typical didactic course evaluation process that they use for the pre-clinical years. They have expanded it to work just as well for clinical rotations, and this same method could also be applied to continuing education, executive education, etc. - Blue can do it all! The secret to unleashing this power of Blue is building keys to connect the 'who' with the 'what', 'when', and 'where'.

Who? people

What? instance of instruction

When? time period

Where? teaching site

Session Time: 12:00 pm – 12:35 pm

Session Title: Students Feedback Empowers a Continuous Improvement Cycle at ADU

Presenter: Merlyn Kulapurath, Abu Dhabi University (ADU)

The Organizational Planning and Strategy department at Abu Dhabi University administers surveys seeking student feedback on teaching & learning, academic experience, campus life and university services. This feedback plays a vital role in our strategic planning and quality assurance processes towards continuous improvement of our academic and campus operations. This session presents Abu Dhabi University's approach to feedback and how partnering with Explorance has helped us in achieving our goals. Abu Dhabi University will also present key insights obtained through Blue dashboards and how this data has helped senior leadership take effective steps towards improving teaching and learning and overall student experience.

Tuesday, 25 October 2022

Session Time: 01:35 pm – 02:10 pm

Session Title: Closing the Loop at Module and Program Level

Presenter: Garmon ap Garth, Birkbeck, University of London

At the end of each module evaluation survey, we ask the module convenors to respond to the student feedback that they have received. We do this so that students can see that staff read the surveys and make changes based on the feedback received. With the ability to provide responses in Blue, we are now expanding the process to add a subsequent step, to ensure that the module survey results – and the module convenor’s response – are also sent to the Program Director, so that the Module Convenor has the opportunity to provide an overview to the Program Director. The report generated in Blue can then move beyond a simple ‘survey’ report and become a record of a broader conversation between students, lecturers, and senior faculty. The session will outline how we have set up the closing the loop process using Blue, and pose the question of how far it is useful to push the reporting capabilities of Blue?

Session Time: 02:15 pm – 02:50 pm

Session Title: Gaining Deeper Insights from Student Comments Using Machine Learning

Presenter: Alexis Tremblay, Explorance

Universities are increasingly dealing with unstructured feedback, whether this is obtained through surveys, evaluations, social media channels, discussion groups, ...etc. Most of the time, this rich source of information remains untapped because of the tremendous effort it takes to sift and dig out information manually. This session will present a new approach using Machine Learning to slice and dice unstructured data in real-time. This will allow you to gain new insights to identify trends, challenges, and opportunities and easily correlate themes with categories, behaviors, sentiments, and recommendations.

Session Time: 03:10 pm – 04:20 pm

Squared Debate Title: Dissemination of Summarized Course and Instructor Evaluations to Students is Critical to Close the Loop; Should Every Institution Adopt this Practice?

For Motion: Prof. Catherine Nickerson, Zayed University
Prof. Abhilasha Singh, American University in the Emirates

Against Motion: Dr. Adnan Satariyan, Islamic Azad University Dubai
Garmon ap Garth, Birkbeck, University of London

Facilitator: Samer Jaffar, Explorance

Traditionally institutions shared student feedback with administrators and summarized results with instructors. As students become partners in the teaching and learning ecosystem, universities are looking at the possibility to empower students to make decisions for their academic path and adopt an engaged approach where students form an integral part of improving the learning experience. Should summarized course and instructor feedback results be shared with students?

Wednesday, 26 October 2022

Session Time: 09:10 am – 10:10 am

Panel Title: Revamping the Societal Image of Institutional Research Professionals

Panelists: Prof. Esam Agamy, University of Sharjah
Maryam Aamir Khan, UAE Ministry of Education
Candace Girard, Tufts University
Dr. Hanadi Kadbey, Emirates College for Advanced Education

Facilitator: Farah Otaki, Mohammed Bin Rashid University of Medicine and Health Sciences

The field of institutional research developed more than 50 years ago to support improvement of postsecondary institutions through data-informed decision support and scholarly research. Today, offices of institutional research are nearly ubiquitous across higher education in the United States and are rapidly growing in collegiate settings around the world. Demand for data-informed decisions is high as institutions stretch to produce graduates while operating under economic conditions that require very wise use of resources.

Session Time: 10:15 am – 10:50 am

Session Title: CUD Insights on Stakeholders Engagement in Closing the Survey Performance Loop

Presenter: Tina Daaboul, Canadian University Dubai (CUD)

Engaging stakeholders in closing the survey performance loop is a challenging task yet a vital step in a survey's life cycle. A stakeholder is any entity that is involved, or has an impact on the survey process, such as students, instructors, managers, or parties from outside the organization, such as employers. The definition of Closing the Survey Performance Loop is a process that starts with the initiation of the survey until the execution of the improvement actions upon receiving the survey results. In this session, CUD will discuss two types of survey execution: the Student Course Evaluation and the Employer Survey. It elaborates on how CUD engaged stakeholders throughout the Student Course Evaluation surveys and closed the performance loop using Blue. It also discusses an enhanced approach to executing the Employer Survey developed and adopted with the support of Blue by modifying the 360 Evaluation feature. For continuous improvement, the challenges, and recommendations from the experience of the Student Course Evaluation and Employer Surveys' implementation journey, will be highlighted.

Session Time: 11:10 am – 11:45 am

Session Title: Embedding Student Voice and Actionable Insights to Enhance the Student Experience

Presenter: Brian Green, University of Strathclyde

The presentation will provide an overview of student voice and participation within Scottish Higher Education and at the University of Strathclyde. The session will highlight how data and student feedback are reported and used to enhance the Strathclyde student (and staff) experience. Building on the success of the introduction of Module Evaluation, the presentation will also reflect on institutional plans for the further integration of survey reports and data sets within an emerging Strathclyde Insights approach.

Wednesday, 26 October 2022

Session Time: 11:50 am – 12:25 pm

Session Title: Enhancing Quality of Education with Improved Evaluation Process: AUC Success Story

Presenter: Nada Matar, The American University in Cairo (AUC)

High-quality evaluations provide actionable insights to inform curriculum and educational decisions that will facilitate evaluation and improvement of education quality. Achieving high-quality feedback starts with vetting and designing relevant, criteria-based surveys and assessments that can measure satisfaction and effectiveness at different stages of a student's learning journey. The presentation will reflect on how Blue is helping AUC a) in assessing and improving the quality of education, b) enhancing the process of designing and publishing different types of surveys, and c) overcoming previous challenges concerning stakeholders' engagement.

Session Time: 01:25 pm – 02:25 pm

Squared Debate Title: Using Data Analytics to Gain Insights into the Academic & Survey Data of Students. Is it Ethical to Profile Students and Provide Targeted Support?

For Motion: Dr. Andrew Marrington, Zayed University
Prof. Hesham Gomma, Khalifa University

Against Motion: Tyler Dunham, Yorkville University
Prof. Habib Fardoun, King Abdulaziz University

Facilitator: Michael Weisman, Explorance

Data is routinely collected by the university at the point of registration, during assessment, surveys and throughout the academic journey for reporting purpose. Insights into this information can also be used to link students to relevant support interventions. Should students consent to their personal data being used for research aimed at enhancing the university's provision? Is it ethical to use machine learning algorithms to group and categorize students? Will this approach mean that some students receive a different level of support or opportunities than others?

Session Time: 2:30 pm – 03:05 pm

Session Title: Saudi Electronic University's Approach to Students, Faculty and Staff's Feedback

Presenter: Prof. Maysaa Mohammed Al Qurashi

The geographical spread of the Saudi Electronic University (SEU) in more than 90% of the Kingdom with 13 branches represents a unique competitive advantage. Maintaining high quality education across all campuses requires consistent feedback from all stakeholders. Several methods of gathering feedback are used at SEU including opinion polls, dialogues, open meetings, consulting committees and surveys to assess quality of education, quality of the spatial environment, and services provided to various stakeholders.

The Saudi Electronic University has implemented a survey ecosystem to disseminate, collect and analyze all data obtained through various feedback channels. SEU has setup a clear plan for discussing the survey data and closing the quality loop, which provides the management of the University with key insights to support decisions related to continuous quality improvement.

Wednesday, 26 October 2022

Session Time:	03:25 pm – 04:55 pm
Session Title:	Regional Benchmarking and Roundtable Discussion for Aspirational Peer Comparison and Self-Assessment
Presenters:	Prof. Prof. Abhilasha Singh, American University in the Emirates Prof. Mustahsan Mir, Ajman University Prof. Taoufik Zoubeidi, Unites Arab Emirates University Samer Jaffar, Explorance

Benchmarking allows institutions to have governed access to credible information about their peers. This information is extremely important for self-assessment as it helps with several external reviews. Opinions are immensely available; however, without credible evidence it is considered speculation. Benchmarking helps institutions to gauge against peer data and programs offered at other institutions especially if the institution is in the process of launching similar programs. Benchmarking also helps the institution to optimize resources while ensuring the university maintains adequate means to meet the expected demands.

During the last Bluenotes conference hosted in 2019 at Zayed University, a benchmarking initiative was discussed during a leadership roundtable with specific focus on benchmarking in general and the parameters that should be considered. A key outcome of the conference was to establish a workgroup to spearhead this initiative. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the project was postponed until recently. Zayed University started the discussion again in late 2021 with a goal to rollout the initiative in 2022. A group of institutions (Zayed University, Ajman University, UAE University, American University in the Emirates, and American University of Sharjah) were invited to join the planning and structuring of the benchmarking exercise. After almost six months of discussions and collaborative efforts, we are proud to announce that the benchmarking initiative will finally be introduced at the Bluenotes MENA Conference 2022. This session is dedicated to presenting the benchmarking indicators along with an overview of the data collection process. We will also discuss the methodology and confidentiality for sharing the results back with each participating institution. Universities interested in joining this initiative will have the opportunity to confirm their participation during the conference. The first data collection process will start after the conference.