Navigating Opportunities and Challenges during Uncertain Times: Role and Value of Academic Development Units

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Abstract: What role do academic development units (ADUs) have to play in responding to rapid shifts in the global landscape, especially in times such as the recent pandemic? This paper retrospectively captured and reflected upon how an ADU at a research-intensive university in Asia responded during the pandemic. Using semi-structured interviews, perspectives were sought from multiple stakeholders at micro, meso, and macro levels including academic developers. Together, responses from these 17 respondents converge on who they reached out to and the areas of support they received from the ADU during these uncertain times. The implications for ADUs in supporting the faculty community both during crisis situations and in navigating changes are discussed.

Keywords: academic development; remote teaching; online teaching; uncertainty and crisis; higher education