



## **CGHE Annual Conference 22-23 May 2023**

### **Session Details**

#### **PANEL DISCUSSION - Tertiary education and research amid global crises**

23 May 2023, 10:30am - 11:30am (UK)

*Chair: James Robson*

*Speakers: Richard Watermeyer, Xin Xu*

No mass tertiary education system can be fully insulated from local, national, regional and global society, and all systems are profoundly affected by the major changes and crises. This session will discuss the ontology of the unexpected, responsiveness, resilience and potential remaking in the face of two great challenges in our time: (1) the Covid-19 pandemic, which transformed education and research practices everywhere almost overnight, and (2) the global stand-off between the United States and China which is having major and increasing impacts in cross-border people mobility and collaborative networks in science and technology.

#### **Leaving academia? The Consolidation of Crisis**

*Speaker: Richard Watermeyer*

The experience of the COVID-19 pandemic has ignited a near universal rethink of what is and what is no longer tolerable and/or desirable in the workplace. In sectors where job discontentment has been historically prolific – and more so since the onset of the pandemic – the potential of a ‘great resignation’ is ostensibly high. The academic workforce is a labour pool whose disconsolations, related especially to the leadership – and more recent crisis-management – of universities, have reached a tipping point. Many academics are found to have surpassed a point of no return. Yet not all are equipped with a viable exit strategy. In this presentation I will explore reasons provided by academics in the U.K. for leaving (and not leaving) academia and the implications of their attrition (or reluctant remaining) for the leadership of universities in a post-COVID yet far from post-crisis context.

#### **International Research Collaboration amid Geopolitical Tensions**

*Speaker: Xin Xu*

The COVID-19 pandemic has again spotlighted the significance of international research collaboration. The world benefited immensely from researchers collaborating from different countries and sectors to tackle this global crisis. Nonetheless, we also witnessed the pressures, challenges and limitations of international research collaboration caused by

geopolitical tensions. In particular, the 'New Cold War' between the U.S. and China have had a chilling effect on research collaborations between the two science powerhouses and their alliances. Researchers based in various countries faced relevant restrictions on cross-border mobility, exchanging information and knowledge, and establishing and sustaining international partnerships. Although the U.S. and China have long been top research collaborators with each other, the latest data shows a decline in joint research outputs between them. Will this decline continue in the post-COVID period? In this presentation, Xin Xu will unpack the challenges posed by geopolitical tensions on international research collaboration, and explore potential future directions not only between the U.S. and China, but also in the global research landscape.