

2025 Executive Director Report

A recap of UNICON activities, conferences, research and initiatives in 2024-25, and an overview of what we're looking forward to this upcoming year.

August 25, 2025 | Melanie Weaver Barnett



Message from the Executive Director



Dear UNICON Members,

This month marked my third anniversary as UNICON's executive director, and I feel more energized than ever as I share this annual report with you.

I am deeply grateful for the many ways our members contribute to the consortium—whether as board or committee members, prime representatives, affinity group leaders, coffee group facilitators, or as hosts, speakers, and panelists at our conferences. Your engagement is what makes UNICON thrive.

We are entering what may be one of the most challenging periods for universities and business schools. In times like these, the value of our connections, collaborations, and mutual support has never been higher. UNICON remains committed to listening closely to your needs and responding with the resources, programs, and opportunities that will help you succeed. You'll see evidence of this throughout the pages ahead, and you have my assurance that this commitment will guide us in the year to come and beyond.

This report highlights the accomplishments of the past year and offers a look ahead at what's next. The board and the UNICON team are determined to ensure the consortium continues to be exactly what you need it to be. I invite you to read on, reflect, and share your thoughts—I'd love to hear from you at MelanieWeaverBarnett@uniconexed.org.

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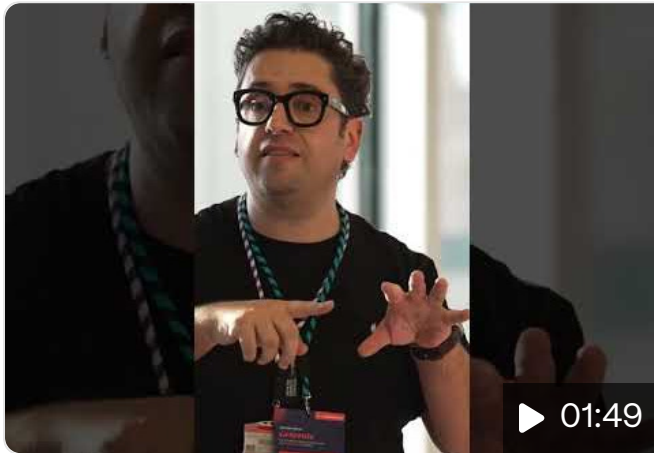
Upcoming Conferences

1

Team Development Conference

Host: Johns Hopkins University

Dates: November 5-7, 2025



 YouTube



2025 Team Development Conference | Executiv...

Join the world's premier gathering of executive education professionals at the 2025 Team Developme...

▶ 01:49

REGISTER NOW

Key Themes

- Making meaning: finding and creating purpose in our work
- Doing the work: real examples of innovative solutions in executive education
- Building a legacy that lasts and that matters

More information and registration is available on the [UNICON website](#).

2

Directors' Conference

Host: IMD in Lausanne, Switzerland

Dates: April 14-16, 2026. Theme and topics coming soon.

3

Annual Workshop

Host: MIT Sloan, Boston

Dates: July 16-17, 2026

Overarching Theme: Recognising, nurturing, and ensuring the best for and from the human side of our work, even in the midst of 'all things high-tech.'

FY25 Conference Highlights

i FY25 conferences were well-attended and well-received, achieving our highest ever participation rates.



YouTube



UNICON Team Development Conference 2024

Watch the highlights of #UNICONTDC at Nova SBE in Portugal. Thank you all for joining us!

Team Development Conference at NOVA University

230 participants from 72 member schools and 30 countries explored emerging trends including GenAI and Infinite Learning, transformative methodologies, and the pressing challenges reshaping our field.

230

Participants

72

Business Schools

30

Countries

Directors' Conference at The American University in Cairo

90 senior executive education leaders engaged on both AUC's old and new campuses, covering topics from personal leadership and work capabilities to expanding international operations to internal and external collaborations for impact.



YouTube



#UNICONDIRECTORS Conference 2025, T...

Benchmarking



 The previous year's benchmarking study yielded a response rate of **90%**

Annual Benchmarking Study

The annual Benchmarking Study and Report is underway, and the final **deadline for submitting your data is September 7th**. If you haven't yet, please begin putting your data submission together as the deadline is looming. **Don't delay**, because you receive this valuable report only if your school participates.

Members share that they use this study to:

- Identify opportunities
- Determine gaps they may want to close
- Share with their teams as input to strategic planning
- Communicate with deans and school leadership their performance relative to peer schools



Previous Year's Results

The previous year's benchmarking study yielded a response rate of **90%** and many **insights** that **members reported** being **instrumental in the evaluation and planning** for their respective businesses.

One important trend that stood out was the return to in-person learning experiences.

UNICON partners with Percept Research, which collects, validates, and analyses the data, and together we published the results in detail, as well as in an info-graphic format.



Pulse Surveys

A first of a **series of Pulse Surveys**, focusing on **how schools are experiencing** and navigating the **turbulent environment** driven primarily by **geopolitics**, was launched.

Look for the results of that survey with helpful infographics to come soon.

Keep an eye out for the second pulse survey as well.

Research Initiatives

FY26 Projects

Two soon-to-be released reports:

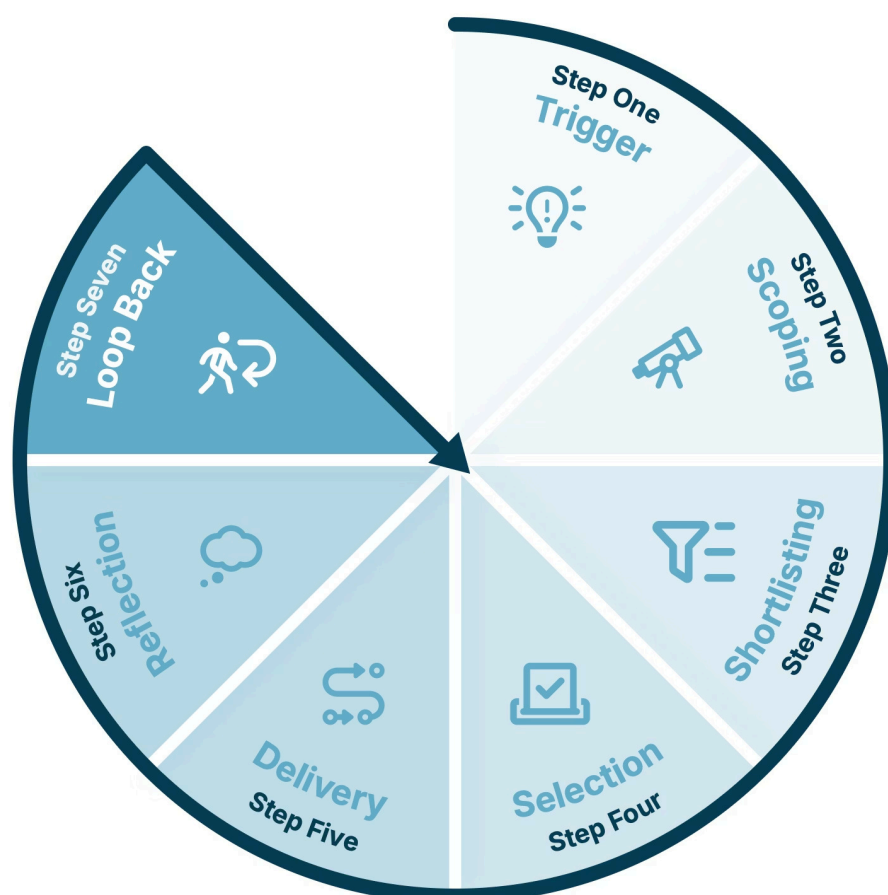
1. **How schools** are **using AI** and expecting its use to evolve
2. **How and why some schools are centralising** executive development and other continuing education activities at the university level



FY25 Primary Research

The FY25 primary research project, entitled "**Choosing the Right Learning Partner for the Right Job: How talent leaders choose learning partners and what drives their decisions,**" was the first research project in the newly established "NexED" research initiative with IEDP. All research papers can be found here: [UNICON Research](#).

[Download our latest report](#)



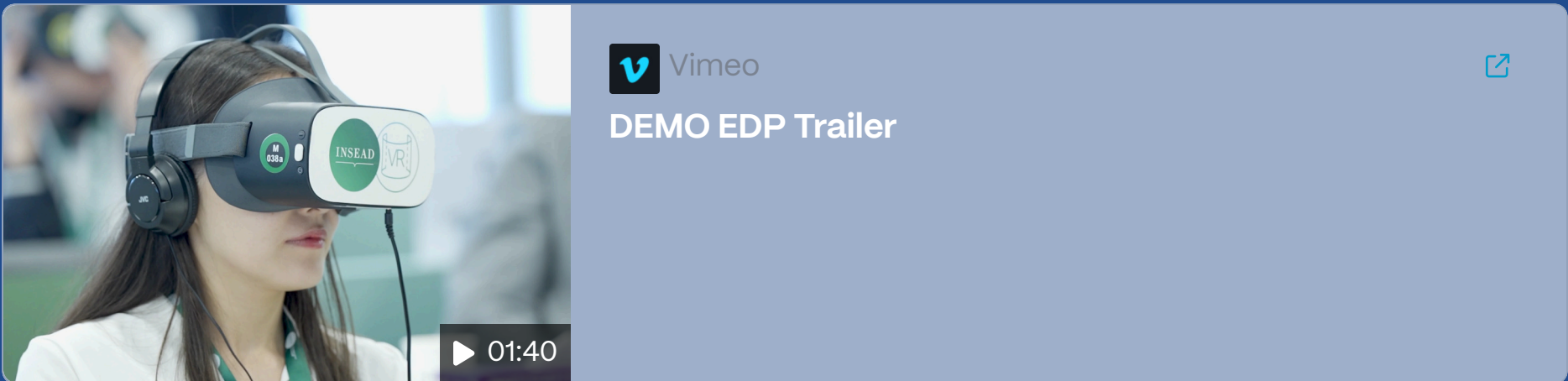
Affinity Groups: Technology Disruptors & CRM

Tech Disruptors: INSEAD VR & AI Webinar

Two slots available, contact Taryn at tarynstreed@uniconexed.org to register and join the group if you wish!

- **Tuesday, September 9th** at 5pm CET (Americas, Europe & Africa)
- **Wednesday, September 10th** at 9am CET (Asia-Pacific, Europe & Africa)

Join The Tech Disruptors Group webinar for an exciting & experiential webinar where **INSEAD will showcase how they are revolutionizing education with their Virtual Reality Immersive Learning Solutions**, adding significant value to the learning experience. As pioneers in developing VR experiences for MBAs and Executives, they are now also harnessing AI to create personalized and high agency learning experiences for in-class and asynchronous settings.



The vision is to continuously push the boundaries, transforming our learners to protagonists, making them active participants in the learning journey. **Discover how INSEAD achieved this and explore how you can leverage these solutions in your institution.**

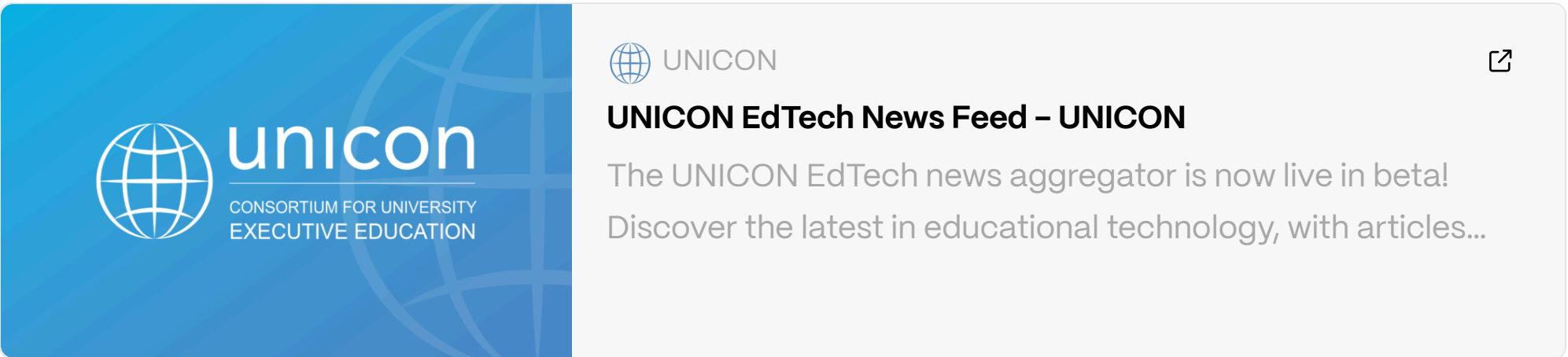
Technology Disruptors' Group (TDG)

Meets regularly to explore two key areas:

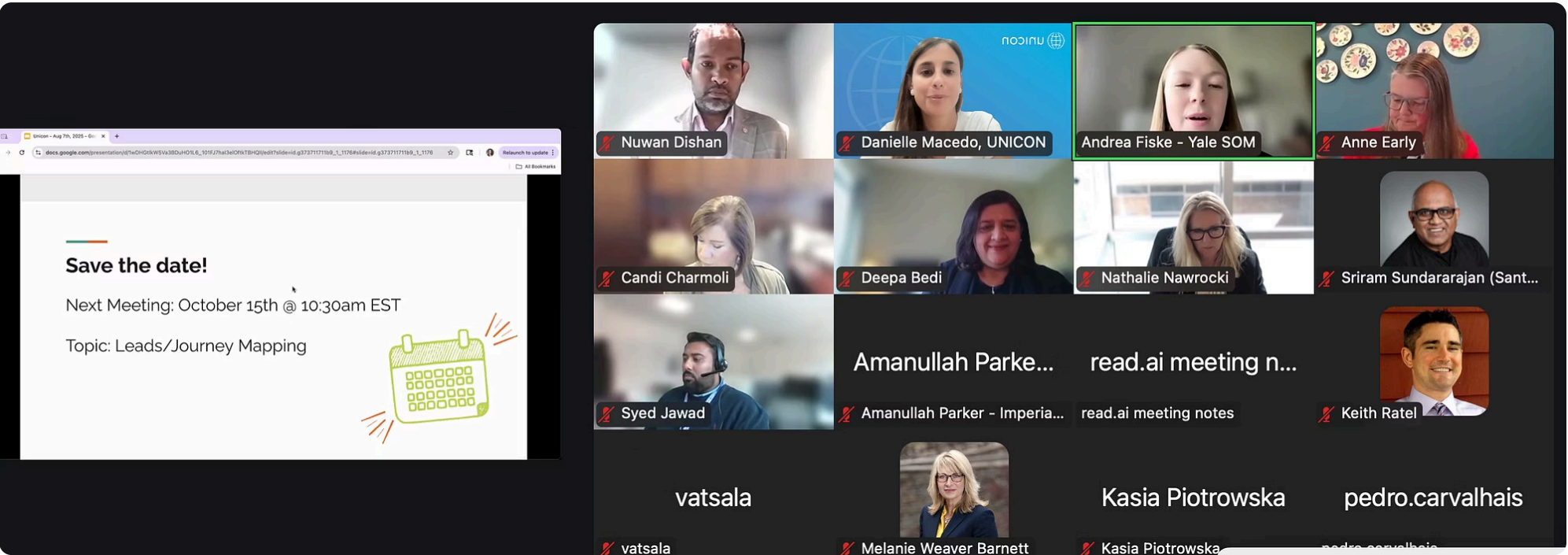
1. Sensing the leading edges of the landscape of new technologies to identify trends early that might impact our industry
2. Going deeper into how UNICON members can apply key technologies by sharing use cases in various forums

The group shares information with the membership at least three times per year, aligned with the timing of the three major UNICON conferences.

A highlight of the past year's TDG work was the adoption and launch of an aggregator platform for EdTech news, called Juicer.



CRM Group



Now with about 90 participants, meets virtually every other month to tackle key challenges including:

- CRM adoption and training strategies
- Lead scoring and grading systems
- Lead routing processes
- Reporting KPIs

 After holding a successful meeting with industry speakers Deepa Bedi and Anne Early, the group's **next meeting is scheduled for October 15th, 10:30am EST.**

To join the **CRM Group**, email daniellemacedo@uniconexed.org. Open to all staff working at UNICON member schools interested in CRM!

What began as a Salesforce-focused discussion has expanded to explore various CRM systems and solutions used across member institutions.

Future meetings feature peer case studies showcasing successful CRM implementations, tool demonstrations and walkthroughs of various platforms, and expert insights from industry specialists.

Affinity Groups: Coffee Groups & Regional Networks

1. Coffee Groups

Participation continued to increase with topics ranging from strategic (market trends, AI, program portfolio) to operational (organisation structure, program evaluations, faculty bench challenges).

These groups, started during the pandemic, continue to provide small networking, learning, and best-practice sharing.



2. European Meet-Up (EMU)

A group for members with their primary headquarters in Europe. This group meets once per year in person at a one-day event hosted by a Europe-based member school.



3. Latin America Coffee Group

Has recently gotten underway, providing schools based in Latin America with opportunities to discuss issues pertinent to their regional marketplace.

Professional Development: Leadership Academy

Leadership Academy 2025-2026

The Leadership Academy launches soon. Applications are now closed for our 2025-26 cohort - if you're interested in this 8-month learning experience on the business model for university-based executive education, visit the website and feel free to contact Taryn at tarynstreed@uniconexed.org or me to be added to the waiting list for our 2026-27 cohort.

This year Peter Methot (Rutgers) takes the faculty director reins as Monica Sacristan (ITAM) ends her dedicated and successful tenure leading this popular program.

Previous Leadership Academy

The previous year's Leadership Academy graduated 30 participants in June, with high levels of satisfaction.

Find information about this unique and powerful learning opportunity for your team members here:



UNICON Leadership Academy – UNICON

Join the UNICON Leadership Academy and elevate your executive education career, through an immersive 8-month...



Educational Webinars & Learning Opportunities

First Webinar: The People Side

We launched our first of two webinars in a series on navigating executive education in the current challenging environment.

That webinar focused on "the people side" of leadership and featured two member-school faculty members:

- Gretchen Spreitzer, Associate Dean at Michigan Ross
- Gianpiero Petriglieri, Associate Professor at INSEAD

Upcoming Webinar: The Business Side

The second in the series, being scheduled for October 1 and 2, will focus on "the business side" of leading during the current challenging environment. UNICON members on our database, watch out for your invite!


Not on our mailing list yet?



New Learning Opportunities

An education task force is exploring potential new learning opportunities for junior staff members.

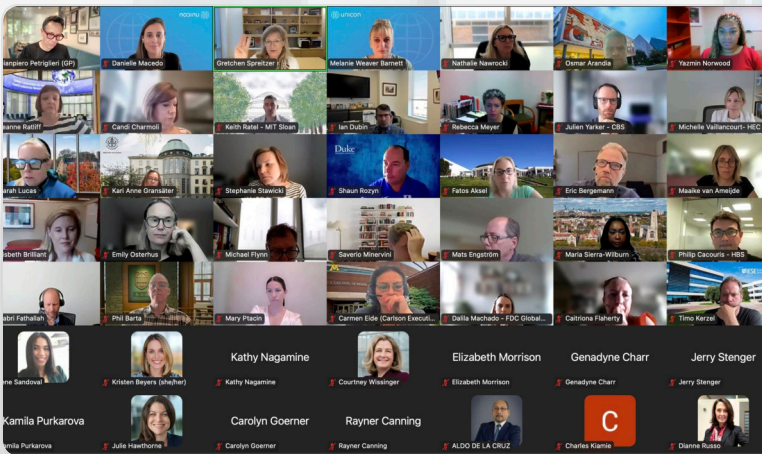
This endeavour is in response to what we learned from the Voice of the Customer Survey.



You will hear more about this soon.





Newsletter Sign Up ...
UNICON NEWS Sign Up
to Receive our...





Executive Education Leadership in Turbulent Times (We...
Learn strategies for leading executive education teams through turbulent times from this UNICON webinar with Michigan Ross...

New Members

Continually working to enhance your global network, UNICON welcomed six highly regarded schools into the consortium as Associate Members:



Aalto University

Finland



**Copenhagen
Business School**

Denmark



**Kelley School of
Business**

Indiana University, US



KOZMINSKI UNIVERSITY

**Kozminski
University**

Poland



**Vlerick Business
School**

Belgium

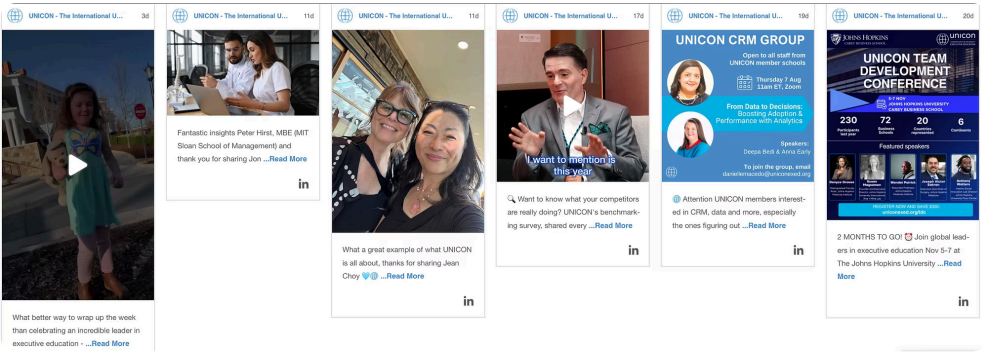


**Warwick
University**

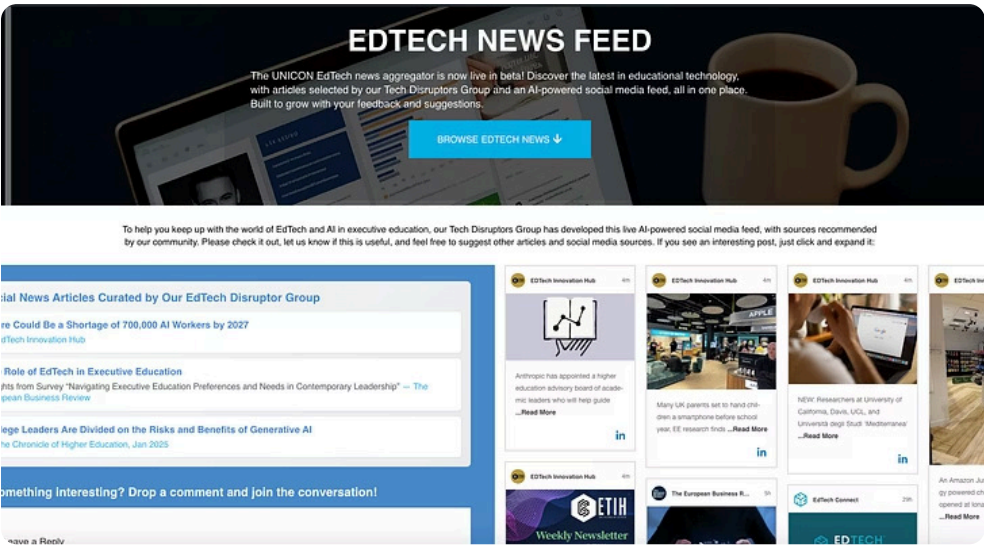
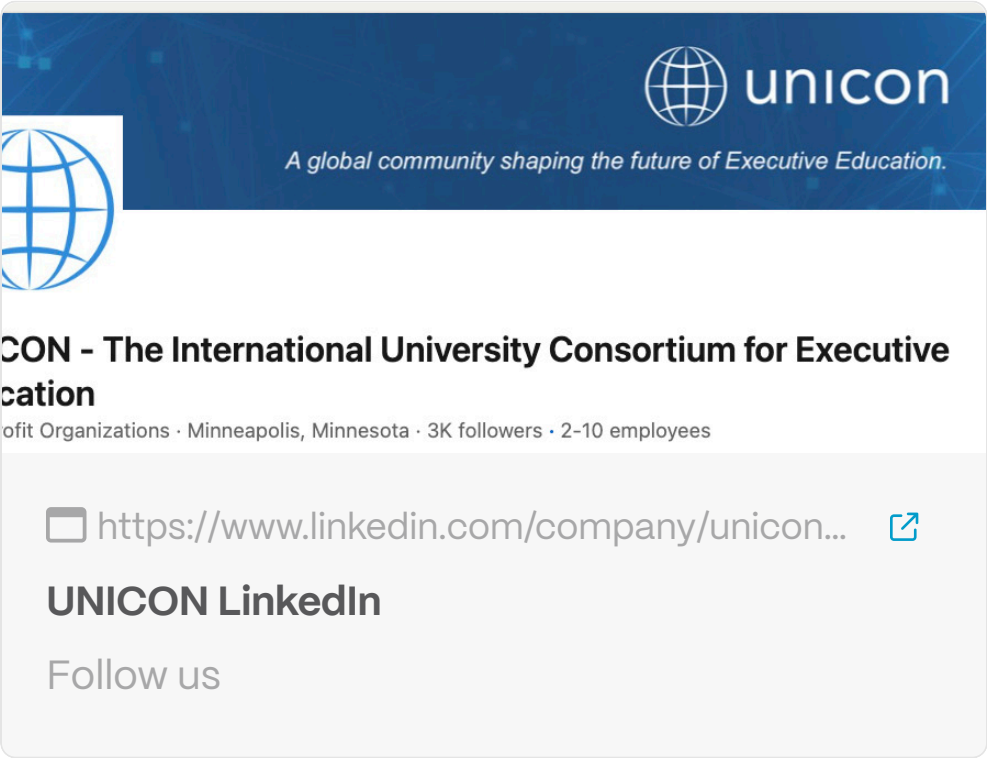
United Kingdom

Communications for Member Value

LinkedIn Community Growth

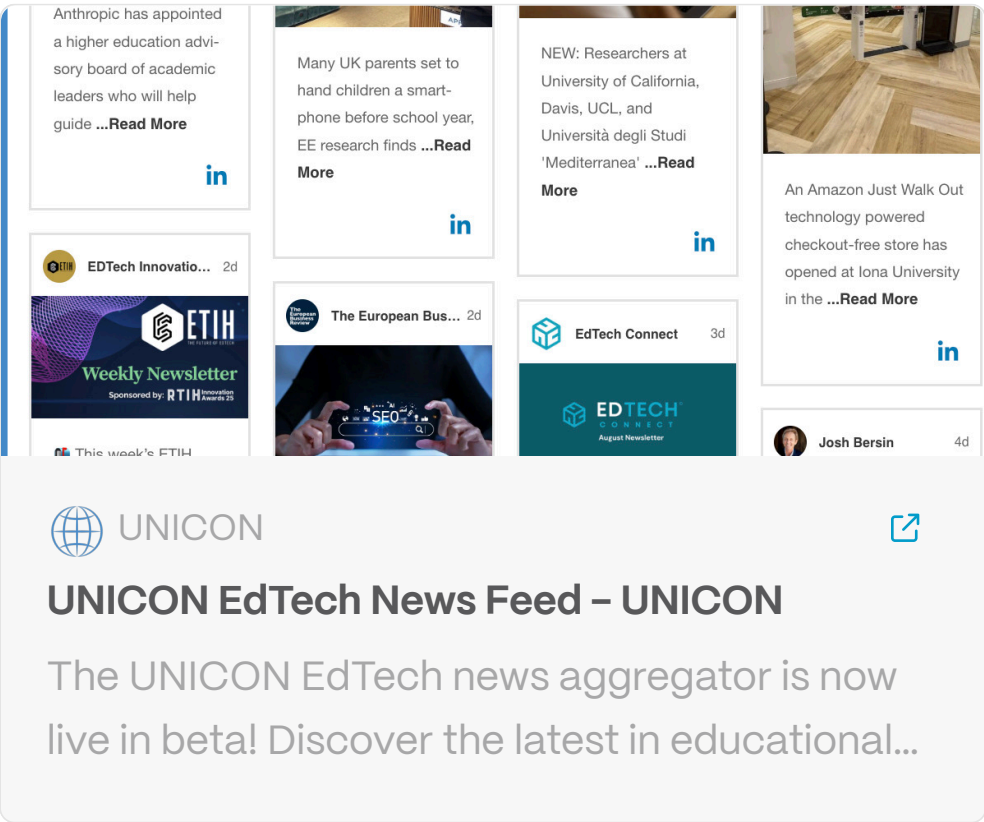


Our LinkedIn Community grew **63%** from **2,015** to **3,300** followers, creating an even richer community for conversation.



News Aggregator Launch

Working on research and recommendations from the Technology Disruptors Affinity Group, we launched a news aggregator.



This aggregator will, among other things, create an "Ed Tech in Exec Ed" digital board on our website so that you can quickly find the latest relevant developments in ed tech.

Board Leadership



1

New Board Members

We welcomed four new board members:

- Terance Wolfe (USC)
- Katarina Häag (Stockholm School of Economics)
- Nathalie Nawrocki (INSEAD)
- Alan Chen (CKGSB)

2

Outgoing Board Members

They replaced four board members finishing up their board service:

- Aisha Azhar (LUMS)
- Serge LaFrance (HEC Montreal)
- Jane Crombleholme (Manchester Alliance)
- Jean Choy (University of Washington)

3



Board Selection Process

Board members are selected via two methods:



1. The annual election
2. Appointment by membership committee recommendation and board sanction

You can always see who is on the board here:



 UNICON 
Board and Committ...
Current UNICON Board and Committees...



 UNICON 
UNICON Board Election Process: 8 Essential Things to K...
The UNICON Board Election Process guides member representation through strategic nominations and selection...

Primary Representatives Gathering & Strategic Priorities



Primary Representatives Gathering

As part of our efforts to increase engagement of, and value for, our members, we held our first "All Prime Reps Meeting" in March, during which we:

- Shared results of the Voice of the Customer survey
- Held breakout sessions to generate implementation ideas
- Reviewed the responsibilities of the prime rep's role
- Received input on the board's strategic priorities

We will continue to hold this meeting at least once each year.

Find out more here:



 UNICON

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UNICON Primary Representatives Meeti...

The UNICON Primary Representatives Meeting united leaders from 122 member schools to...

Strategic Priorities FY25/26

1

One UNICON

Even amidst a fragmented and sometimes divisive geopolitical environment, we recognise that UNICON's strengths come from the power of the global community as a whole. We work collaboratively across borders and boundaries to provide knowledge, inspiration, perspectives and capabilities.

2

Member Value and Engagement

Providing information, ideas, development, and support through our many activities and the network of colleagues, and listening to our members for opportunities to do more.

3

Financial Sustainability for Member Value

Providing membership and access to our channels of value at an affordable level, and ensuring we have the funds for regular investment in infrastructure and systems to sustain and enhance that value.

Annual dues: \$4300 with a standard \$90 processing fee

Closing Message



This past year, via conferences, Zoom meetings, emails, and other means, I had the chance to interact with several hundred of our member schools' team members. I want to continue to stay connected, to listen, and to work with the board to deliver the content and process that is most meaningful to you. In doing this together, we enhance the impact we have on our schools, clients, society, and, no less importantly, on ourselves!

With kind regards,

Melanie Weaver Barnett
Executive Director, UNICON