explorance
summit

Amplifying Voices

Elevating Quality in Higher Education Through Innovation

📅 November 4-6, 2025 ✦ 📍 Dubai, UAE

Register Now

ZAYED UNIVERSITY — جامعة زايد

explorance

08:30 AM

8:30 AM to 9:30 AM
Registration and Welcome Refreshments ☕

09:30 AM

9:30 AM to 9:45 AM
Words of Welcome
Prof. Michael Allen, Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Zayed University
Jenny Karnjanavijaya, Vice Consul, Consulate General of Canada to Dubai and the Northern Emirates
Anastasia Tsimiklis, CMO, Explorance

09:45 AM

Keynote
Space Matters: Innovation Through Disruption
Adam Finkelstein, Associate Director for Learning Environments at Teaching and Learning Services, McGill University

Disruption in higher education—campus renovation, pandemics, digital transformation, generative AI—has reshaped how we teach, learn, and lead. This keynote explores how physical and digital learning environments can be strategic tools for institutional renewal. Drawing on McGill University's experience, we'll explore 25 years of disruptions and examine how intentional design—from active learning classrooms and teaching labs to the integration of generative AI — can catalyze pedagogical change and foster resilience. Learning environments are not just places for instruction; they are levers for equity, engagement, and innovation. When aligned with research-based principles and pedagogical principles, they become access points for transforming the student experience. Whether you're navigating strategic planning, digital infrastructure, or instructional design or campus planning, this session offers a roadmap for leading change through learning environments—because innovation doesn't just happen in response to disruption. It happens when we design through it.

10:30 AM

Keynote
Feedback as a Superpower: Turning Insights into Transformation
Samer Jaffar, General Manager, Global Higher Education, Explorance

Feedback isn't just a tool for fixing problems—it's a superpower that fuels innovation, shapes experiences, and drives transformation. In this keynote, we'll explore the concept of feedback for the future, shifting the conversation from reactive issue resolution to proactive value creation. Through real-world examples, we'll showcase how organizations have harnessed feedback to innovate, design transformative experiences, and create lasting impact.

11:00 AM

11:00 AM to 11:25 AM
Morning Break ☕

11:25 AM

Panel Discussion
Beyond the Survey: Innovative Practices for Quality and Feedback in Higher Education
Moderator:
Samit Lotlikar, Institutional Research and Data Analytics Manager, Zayed University

Panelists:
- Kelly Bokhari, Manager, Quality Assurance & Institutional Effectiveness, University of Dubai
- Joice Priya, Head, Office of Institutional Research, University of Wollongong in Dubai
- Dr. Sonakshi Ruhela, Assistant Professor, Rochester Institute of Technology Dubai
- Prof. Abhilasha Singh, Dean, American University in the Emirates

A panel discussion for Institutional Research (IR) and Quality Assurance (QA) practitioners focused on integrating innovative survey and feedback practices to enhance institutional effectiveness. Some of the areas covered will be Survey Design and Methodologies, Designing for Meaningful Feedback, Valuing Qualitative Insights, and Closing the Loop Responsibly.

12:20 PM

12:20 PM to 1:00 PM
Just-in-Time Learner's Insights, Better Teaching: Automating Feedback Collection in NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine
- Shaharudin Bin Mohamed Ishak, Assistant Director Digital Transformation, NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine
- Ng Sue Chia, Team Lead (Education Feedback), NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine

Students' feedback in NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine often comes too late to drive improvement. To solve this, we implemented a real-time system that delivers student feedback to clinician-educators by the next day, while also automating attendance and teaching-hour capture. By integrating the Blue feedback platform with robotic process automation (RPA), we streamlined workflows, removed manual tasks, and provided timely, actionable insights. This session will highlight the challenges, solutions, and outcomes, offering practical strategies for using feedback and automation to elevate teaching quality and the learner experience.

1:00 PM

1:00 PM to 2:00 PM
Lunch 🍽️

2:00 PM

2:00 PM to 2:50 PM
Fireside Chat: Building the AI-Empowered University: Creativity, Feedback, and Future-Ready Learning
Moderator:
Anastasia Tsimiklis, Chief Marketing Officer, Explorance

- Prof. Jerry Tomberlin, Academic Director of International Partnerships for the Business School, Carleton University
- Esam Agamy, Chancellor, University of Sharjah

As artificial intelligence reshapes society and the workplace, universities are challenged to reimagine how they teach, assess, and prepare students for the future. This fireside chat will explore what it means to build the AI-empowered university — one that embraces AI not as a threat to academic integrity, but as a tool to enhance teaching, spark creativity, and strengthen feedback loops. Together, we'll examine how institutions can equip students with the technical, ethical, and innovative skills needed for an AI-driven world, while ensuring higher education remains a space for discovery, critical thinking, and lifelong learning.

2:55 PM

2:55 PM to 3:30 PM
Innovating Together: Institutional Strategies for Students and Academics in Teaching Quality Enhancement
Nompumelelo Mazibuko, Evaluations Coordinator, University of Witwatersrand

This presentation explores how institutions can drive teaching quality enhancement through collaborative innovation between students and academics. Grounded in the principle that sustainable improvements in learning and teaching require active participation from all stakeholders, the session highlights a range of institutional strategies that foster reflective practice, constructive feedback, and shared ownership of quality assurance processes. Drawing on practical initiatives implemented to engage students as partners and support academics in pedagogical development, the discussion illustrates how evaluation tools, feedback campaigns, and capacity-building interventions can create meaningful dialogue and actionable insights. By showcasing both challenges and successes, the presentation provides a roadmap for cultivating a culture of continuous improvement in higher education, where innovation is co-created and teaching excellence is advanced collectively.

3:30 PM

3:30 PM to 3:50 PM
Afternoon Break ☕

3:50 PM

3:50 PM to 4:25 PM
Discovering Meaning in Data: Designing Visualizations for Perspective-Taking
Junaid Siddiqui, Learning Technology Center, King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals

Student feedback surveys are often conducted with evaluation as their primary goal. Consequently, reports of survey results tend to focus on the evaluative question: "How good is it?" This focus on the evaluative question overlooks the needs of those who also ask "how" and "why" questions—seeking to understand what is actually happening behind the numbers.

This talk will explore ways of presenting survey results that encourage inquiry and enable exploration from multiple perspectives, helping develop a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying reality. It will introduce a custom-built data exploration interface designed to guide users in interpreting the data and uncovering the stories behind the data. Multi-level data visualizations will be showcased which may help users broaden and deepen their perspectives.

Such an approach to presenting data not only supports richer understanding but also helps prevent misinterpretation—an important ethical consideration for anyone making evaluative judgments based on survey data.

4:25 PM

4:25 PM to 5:00 PM
On the Razor's Edge: Feedback as a Catalyst for Institutional Resilience and Renewal
Bradley Tucker, Vice-Provost and University Registrar, American University of Beirut

Between 2019 and 2025, Lebanon faced a series of unprecedented national and economic challenges that deeply affected every sector, including higher education. Throughout this period, the American University of Beirut (AUB)—the first American university established outside the United States—demonstrated extraordinary adaptability and resilience. This presentation explores how AUB used continuous feedback to navigate uncertainty, inform strategic decisions, and maintain academic excellence during times of disruption. From operational recovery to community engagement, feedback played a critical role in enabling leadership to respond with clarity and confidence.

In spite of these challenges and against all odds, AUB is now seeing record enrollment—greater even than before 2019. This presentation will outline the university's response across these years, with a focus on how feedback informed decisions and guided actions to ensure the university could continue to thrive while maintaining its reputation as one of the most respected institutions in the region.

5:00 PM

5:00 PM to 5:15 PM
Day 1 close

All Day

All Day
Customer Success and Tech Zones

6:30 PM

6:30 PM
Gala Dinner at Palace Downtown Hotel with a stunning view of Burj Khalifa and the famous Dubai Fountain 🌃

8:30 AM

8:30 AM to 9:30 AM
Registration and Welcome Refreshments 🥐

9:30 AM

9:30 AM to 10:10 AM
Explorance Product Vision and Roadmap
Zelbrey Bedard, Chief Product Officer, Explorance

Join our Chief Product Officer, Zelbrey Bedard, for an exclusive look into the future of our four core software products. In this keynote, he will share the strategic vision guiding our product development, unveil upcoming innovations, and provide a sneak peek at the roadmap ahead. Discover how we're evolving to meet your needs, drive greater impact, and empower your success.

10:10 AM

10:10 AM to 10:25 AM
Explorance Customer Excellence Awards

Join us as we shine a spotlight on the incredible achievements of our customers! The Customer Excellence Awards celebrate the innovation, impact, and dedication of organizations making waves with Explorance. Don't miss this inspiring moment of recognition and community pride!

10:30 AM

10:30 AM to 11:10 AM
Cultivating a Culture of Data-Driven Excellence: The Journey to Data-Informed Decisions and Student Success in Higher Education
Samit Lotlikar, Institutional Research and Data Analytics Manager, Zayed University

Zayed University is advancing institutional research and data analytics by building a strong data governance framework and a centralized ecosystem, DASS, that empowers staff at every level with accessible, intuitive dashboards. Leveraging AI innovations such as BlueML for qualitative analysis and predictive modeling for student outcomes, we are creating proactive feedback loops that directly inform strategy and practice. This integrated approach strengthens decision-making, accelerates improvements, and enhances student success by identifying at-risk learners and forecasting graduation pathways. Looking ahead, Zayed University is committed to expanding these capabilities to shape the future of higher education through continuous innovation in institutional research and data analytics.

11:10 AM

11:10 AM to 11:30 AM
Morning Break ☕

11:30 AM

11:30 AM to 12:20 PM
Panel Discussion
Reimagining Education: Leadership, Learning, and the Next Generation of Students
Moderator:
Dr. Hanadi Kadbey, Vice President, Strategic Affairs and Foresight, Khalifa University
Panelists:
- Dr. Narimane Hadj-Hamou, Founder and the CEO, The Center of Learning Innovations and Customized Knowledge Solutions (CLICKS)
- Adam Finkelstein, Associate Director for Learning Environments at Teaching and Learning Services, McGill University
- Dr. Hamad Odhabi ,Vice Chancellor for AI and Operational Excellence, Abu Dhabi University (ADU)

Higher education is at a turning point. Shifting student expectations, global challenges, and rapid technological change demand new approaches to leadership and learning.
In this panel, higher education leaders will discuss how institutions can adapt to prepare the next generation of students, by rethinking leadership, reshaping teaching models, and creating inclusive, future-ready environments.

The session will highlight the importance of listening to student voices and using feedback analytics to guide decisions, foster well-being, and ensure graduates are ready to thrive in a dynamic world.

12:25 PM

12:25 PM to 1:00 PM
From One-Size-Fits-All to Tailored Evaluation: Enhancing Course and Faculty Assessment at the University of Bahrain
Dr. Fay Abdulla Al Khalifa, Director, Quality Assurance and Accreditation Center, University of Bahrain

This presentation shares the University of Bahrain's transformation of its course evaluation system—from a single, one-size-fits-all survey applied across all courses to a differentiated model designed around course type and learning context. The new framework introduces customized instruments for lectures, studios, labs, and projects, ensuring more meaningful feedback and actionable insights. It also marks a structural shift by separating faculty performance evaluation from course content evaluation, enhancing data integrity and fairness. The session will highlight the design rationale, implementation process, and data-driven outcomes that have strengthened quality assurance and academic development at the University of Bahrain.

1:00 PM

1:00 PM to 2:00 PM
Lunch Break 🍽

2:00 PM

2:00 PM to 2:35 PM
Beyond Feedback: Transforming Survey Data into Institutional Impact across BMCs campuses
Dr. Maher Alandijani, Chief Quality Officer, Batterjee Medical Colleges

Unlock the true potential of student feedback with an intelligent dashboard that transforms survey data into actionable insight. This innovative tool provides a panoramic view of student satisfaction across programs — revealing response rates, performance trends, and benchmarks that matter.

By visualizing feedback in an intuitive, interactive way, academic leaders can pinpoint strengths, uncover improvement opportunities, and translate insights into measurable institutional outcomes across campuses.

Join us to explore how Beyond Feedback moves from data to dialogue, from metrics to meaning — driving a culture of continuous improvement and impactful decision-making powered by Explorance Blue.

2:40 PM

2:40 PM to 4:00 PM
Advancing Benchmarking in Higher Education: The Future of HEBC
This session provides an overview of the Higher Education Benchmarking Consortium (HEBC) — a collaborative initiative designed to enhance data-driven decision-making and continuous improvement across regional universities. Participants will gain insights into the purpose of benchmarking, the evolution of HEBC from institutional to program-level benchmarking, and the collective progress achieved through cross-institutional collaboration. The session will also highlight key outcomes from past cycles, current discipline-based benchmarking pilots, and the roadmap for the next phase of this regional effort.

4:00 PM

4:00 PM to 4:15 PM
Explorance World 2026 Spotlight

All Day

All Day
Customer Success and Tech Zones

4:30 PM

4:30 PM to 6:00 PM
Campus tour 🏛
Explore the state-of-the-art facilities and vibrant learning spaces of Zayed University's Dubai campus.

6:00 PM

Thursday, November 6, 2025

Workshops

9:30 AM

9:30 AM to 10:25 AM
Registration and Welcome Refreshments ☕

10:25 AM

10:25 AM to 11:10 AM
Mastering Automation & Integrations in Blue
Mohammed Sheraidah, VP of Client Solutions and Professional Services, Explorance

See how data flows automatically between Blue and your core systems. This session walks you through real integration scenarios and proven best practices to maintain data accuracy and consistency. You'll leave with the confidence to simplify workflows and eliminate manual data handling.

11:15 AM

11:15 AM to 12:00 PM
Unveiling MLY 3.1: Smarter, Safer, More Powerful Feedback Tools
Aya Alruzzi, Professional Services Consultant

See how the latest version of MLY transforms qualitative feedback into actionable insights with a new redaction workspace, alert categorization, and much more. In this live demonstration, you'll follow the complete analysis journey and learn how to interpret, visualize, and share results that drive decision-making across your institution.

12:00 PM

12:00 PM to 1:00 PM
Lunch Break 🥗

1:00 PM

1:00 PM to 1:45 PM
What's New in Blue 9: Smarter Insights, Seamless MLY Integration
Siwar Shaheen, Software Implementation Specialist, Explorance

Get a first-hand look at the latest Blue 9 features that make managing course evaluations and surveys more efficient than ever. Explore enhancements in automation, analytics, and reporting, including how the new MLY integration helps you extract deeper meaning from open-ended comments directly in your Blue reports.

1:45 PM

1:45 PM to 2:30 PM
Build Surveys in Minutes with BlueX
Mohammed Sheraidah, VP of Client Solutions and Professional Services

In this hands-on workshop, you'll learn how to design professional, on-brand surveys in BlueX with ease. Discover best practices for layout, logic, and question flow, plus creative strategies for using BlueX across your institution, from decentralized surveys to research projects. Walk away ready to launch your own survey before the session ends.

2:30 PM

2:30 PM to 2:50 PM
Afternoon Break ☕

2:50 PM

2:50 PM to 3:35 PM
Blue Expert Lab: Troubleshooting & Power User Tips
Hazem Al-Tamimi, Customer Support Manager, APAC & EMEA

Bring your questions and learn from real-world examples gathered from client support experiences. Our experts will share time-saving shortcuts, advanced troubleshooting techniques, and proven solutions to common issues so that you can handle projects more efficiently and with greater confidence.

3:35 PM

3:35 PM to 16:15 PM
Q&A Session

4:15 PM

4:15 PM to 4:30 PM
End of Day 3

4:30 PM